

Chapter 3

Official Stories

Telling Soweto, June 16, 1976—The Appropriation of the People's Story into Official Histories

Part 2: Narrative of Resistance: The African National Congress (ANC)

The South African apartheid state had brought to bear all of its authority on its efforts to reestablish dominance over the subordinate black population and to reaffirm, before whites and blacks alike, its legitimacy. Besides coercion and force, it used all of the considerable institutional and ideological resources at its disposal to persuade South Africans of its sincerity, worth, and integrity. But the state was not alone in its bid for authority and for the consent (and compliance) of the people it sought to represent and rule. The ANC and its leadership also claimed authority and standing to represent the people in South Africa, especially that part of the population whom the state had disenfranchised and subordinated. Common to both the state and the ANC was, though in different degrees, "a lack of hegemony"¹⁸⁰—incomplete control of the people and inability to completely secure their consent. The ANC's claims were, of course, severely undercut by the apartheid state, which held all the power and had outlawed the organization, and by the realities of its exile and remove. But its claim was also challenged internally—by "old" divisions of political thought and practice (exemplified by the Pan-Africa Congress [PAC]) and by a new generation of resistance whom *Black Consciousness* and a powerfully new sense of resolve and determination had shaped. The ANC too needed, therefore, to build and protect its position and to persuade the people it sought to represent that it possessed organizational and political integrity, ability, and worth. Although the ANC never used coercion to the extent that the government did, it did, unlike the PAC, make use of its superior organizational structures in exile as well make a point of emphasizing its moral high ground as it sought to rally the people to its cause.

Genesis of the ANC's Account

The focus of this chapter until now has been primarily on the official discourse of the apartheid government, its institutions, and spokesmen. (See: "Genesis of the Cillié Commission" on the previous page) Counteracting and contesting that, the African National Congress produced what I have called an official discourse, or narrative, of resistance around the events of the Soweto uprising. But the ANC functioned under a set of circumstances completely different from those of the government. The banning of the liberation movements in 1960 left an organizational void. The ANC had become an underground movement, represented in South Africa, though barely, through a number of small hidden cells and in the memories of those people who had been brought up with its

stories and its political ideals and thoughts. It had established headquarters and bases in exile but within South Africa it was functioning only nominally. It was, in many ways, far removed from the events in Soweto. However, the ANC had been "monitoring the mood of young township dwellers" and had been trying to make itself "more relevant" to the new generation of young activists imbued with *Black Consciousness* ideals. By 1975, the ANC had moved its bases closer to home—to bases in Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Angola—and was much less reliant on its administrative headquarters in faraway London.¹⁸¹ ANC's Radio Freedom had begun broadcasting regularly into South Africa on shortwave, and ANC leaflets and literature were circulating more widely than earlier.¹⁸² The senior Black Consciousness organizations in South Africa that emerged to fill the void during the late 1960s and early 1970s had avoided identification and contact with the exiled liberation movements, although there was some activity on the part of a few individuals who associated themselves with those movements. Steve Biko, for example, "through his lieutenants was engaged in protracted secret talks with underground representatives of the ANC and PAC in the hope of effecting a united front."¹⁸³

Although the ANC was hardly representative of all the people in South Africa, and although it had certainly not been a key player in the swelling resistance of the early 1970s—that had been dominated by SASO (*South African Students' Organization*), the Black Consciousness Movement, and the emergent trade unions—it had a long history of struggle and a pedigree of leadership that the young people of South Africa had not



Poster: "Black Power, Free Mandela," Alexandra.

forgotten.¹⁸⁴ As one student activist pointed out, the songs that demonstrating students sang in Soweto were about people like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Bram Fisher, "which means that they know of these leaders at least."¹⁸⁵ On their placards demanding the release of those arrested by the South African Police during the uprising, they included "old" detainees.¹⁸⁶ They used such old ANC slogans as *Amandla Ngawethu* (power is ours) and *Mayibuye i Africa* (return/come back Africa).

Nevertheless, the African National Congress had, by its own admission, struggled to assume its "place as the vanguard force of our struggling people, within the country."¹⁸⁷ The Soweto uprising presented it with a historic opportunity and, however taken aback by the force of the uprising, the ANC stood poised to take advantage of it.¹⁸⁸ The uprising had produced what all other resistance movements and rallying causes had until then failed to do: mobilize people on an unprecedented scale, in almost all black as well as Coloured communities, and all

over the country. Effectively, the *Black Consciousness Movement* had delivered the mobilization of the masses into the hands of the ANC.¹⁸⁹

This uprising ... propelled into the forefront of our struggle millions of young people, thus immeasurably expanding the active forces of the revolution and inspiring other sections of our people into activity.¹⁹⁰

Audience

In its pamphlets, and, possibly, through *Winnie Mandela* and the few remaining operatives within South Africa, the ANC addressed this newly mobilized mass of young activists and their parents. (Compare to "Cillié: Audience" previously in this chapter.) But the ANC also addressed several other and different types of audiences, connected to each other by a sense of outrage at what had happened and by a need to hear an alternative version of what was being said by officials within South Africa. Oliver Tambo, in his speech before the United Nations, was addressing the world for the first time, emphasizing not only the tragedy of the killing of children,¹⁹¹ but the standing of the ANC to be the spokesman for those oppressed by apartheid, and the historical context in which this latest show of force needed to be embedded. Later documents, especially those addressed to the Executive Committee of the ANC, spoke more directly from the leadership of the ANC to the rank and file, which by that time, already included young exiles who had escaped the townships after June 16.¹⁹²

Claiming Authority

Quickly, the ANC laid claim to represent all of South Africa in its struggle against apartheid. (Compare to Cillié: "Privileged and Knowing Position of the Author" previously in this chapter.) Oliver Tambo, acting president at the time of the uprising, later claimed that the ANC and its activists had planted seeds among the youth of Soweto, seeds that bore "bitter fruit for the oppressors" in 1976. And he claimed that the ANC's activists, "Comrades," had assisted "to guide the Soweto uprising."¹⁹³ Alfred Nzo even declared that:

some of these youths are long standing members of our Organization who, consistent with the revolutionary commitment of all the members of our movement to the cause of our people, have actively participated from the beginning of the uprising giving whatever leadership was possible under the exceptionally difficult circumstance. [Emphasis added.]¹⁹⁴

As described earlier, only a few days after the beginning of the uprising a pamphlet appeared on the streets of Soweto in support of the "people of Soweto" in their "actions and demonstrations against white supremacy." It urged the people to "rally to the call of the ANC—the tried and trusted organization of all our people." Tambo said:

We have set ourselves one task and one task only— ... to transfer

political power into the hands of the people.

[...]

The African National Congress, the vanguard organization of the broad liberation forces of our country, for many decades, remains unwavering in its determination to carry out its historic mission of heading all these forces to victory. Despite all attempts to suppress them, its ideas find a ready response among the masses of our people.¹⁹⁵

In Dar es Salaam, Alfred Nzo, secretary-general of the ANC, had said only a month earlier:

Our Organization enjoys the support of the masses of our people and that of the whole of progressive democratic mankind. It has therefore got the most reliable compass to steer our victory to the shores of victory.¹⁹⁶

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All the ANC needed to do was to direct all of this power, consolidate it and bind it to its own cause:

Our movement ... has a responsibility to take advantage of such moments when the activity of the masses is increased a thousand-fold, when the masses are prepared to fight to the finish for the destruction of their adversary.¹⁹⁷

Alfred Nzo reported that:

[o]ur Revolutionary Council, consistent with the mood and general expectations of the revolutionary masses inside the country, has been urged to advance its plans and subordinate every bit of its activities to the urgent question of the launching of armed struggle in our country. This demand runs like a red thread through all the reports and eye-witness accounts given by our people inside the country.¹⁹⁸

Was the ANC thrust into this position by the events of the uprising and its sense of obligation toward the students who fled the country? Or did it indeed seize the day and accept the responsibility and the opportunities the uprising offered? These are questions that await further research. What I will do in this chapter, however, is describe the particular way the ANC claimed the Soweto uprising for its own purposes, the means by which it produced its own narrative to accompany its newly invigorated struggle, and why the creation of this narrative itself is a product of and engaged with the actual material realities and actions facing the organization.

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The ANC's official narratives of the uprising¹⁹⁹ were shaped primarily by three factors—the resistance movement's distance from actual events in South Africa, the imperative to articulate its relationship to the *Black Consciousness Movement*, and its own political agenda at the time of the uprising (armed struggle and the

effort to countering attempts to create internal disunity and, in particularly, government attempts to infiltrate the movement) and later (creation of the United Democratic Front, reflecting unity in resistance, and efforts to establish its claim to being the sole representative of the South African people).²⁰⁰ Regardless of the ANC's authority, standing, and claims to representativeness, all of which without a doubt grew in the aftermath of the uprising, it was still an organization in exile and its leadership had to operate from afar. Both its understanding of and reaction to the uprising within the country were shaped by this distance. As Tambo said, "We work under the disability that the ANC is banned."²⁰¹

Distance was apparent and marked the narratives of the ANC in several ways. Outside South Africa the ANC was recognized, by many, as the leading resistance organization. Adelaide Tambo described how institutions and individuals appealed to the ANC for reactions to and explanations of the meaning of what was unfolding on television screens around the world. It needed to explain its own "relevance" to the new revolutionary situation, especially when it seemed as if "*the militants at home* often seemed to be acting independently." For a while, then, at international gatherings, the ANC's representatives, rather than those of the student movement itself, "spelled out the character of the movement, its perspectives for struggle and the requirements of the impending revolution" (emphasis added, to indicate Adelaide Tambo's identification of South Africa as *home*).²⁰²

Rhetoric

On October 26, 1976, four months after the beginning of the uprising, Tambo spoke in front of the UN General Assembly. (Compare with "Cillié: Rhetoric and Argument" previously in this chapter. See also Oliver Tambo—"Statement At The United Nations, October 26, 1976.") It was the same day that the South African government released the Transkei homeland into an "independence" not recognized by any other country in the world. This speech, marking the first time a senior representative of the African National Congress had been asked to address the General Assembly, represented international recognition for the ANC, putting the ANC's leadership on a par with the delegates from other member nations. In the words of Oliver Tambo, the ANC's acting president:

For the first time in the history of the United Nations, a representative of the majority of the people of South Africa has been allowed and invited to share this prestigious rostrum with the representatives of the independent and sovereign nations and peoples of the world. This is a development of considerable significance.²⁰³

Following on the heels of the beginning of the uprising, this speech was very **210** much marked by the dominant concern of the day, the "independence" of the Transkei. That development was understood by most black South Africans as being contrary to their political will and designed to further exclude Africans from full participation in the political community, from representation and common

citizenship. It was therefore the political will of the people that Tambo spoke to and their power as historical agents in their own right:

In the last four months, the apartheid regime has demonstrated to all who were ever in doubt that it is determined to fight to the bitter end, without regard for the numbers of our people it butchers in the process. In spite of that practical experience and, indeed, exactly because of it, our people are demanding freedom now. They do not ask that their masters should restore to them their rights as free men and women. Rather, by their own actions against immense odds, they are restoring to themselves the right to call themselves free. After three and a quarter centuries of the most brutal national oppression suffered by any people on the African continent, our people, the indigenous majority, are asserting their will to be free with breathtaking heroism.²⁰⁴

This speech was also a call to arms, powerfully rhetorical and full of emotion:

We are moved to speak out daily, as we must, to salute these extraordinary sacrifices, wherever they occur. Again as we must, we use extraordinary words to describe these sacrifices. They are heroic, they are selfless, they are noble... [S]hall we coin new words to describe the temper of the young man of ten years who marched undaunted on a French-built armoured car in the streets of Soweto, stone in hand, until he was cut down by a torrent of machine-gun bullets? We say no. No words are necessary at all. The blood that our people have shed calls for action, not for more words. It calls for action to destroy the fascist regime that continues to massacre the innocent.²⁰⁵

Speaking to an international audience, Tambo reached far beyond the boundaries of South Africa and, rather than discuss Soweto specifically or directly, he spoke dramatically of the broader contextual issues, appealing to the world's conscience vis-à-vis the apartheid system. But the events within South Africa had made everything suddenly more urgent and relevant to the ANC, and Tambo, fueled by outrage at what he called the wanton killing of schoolchildren, wove images of the uprising deep into the fabric of his speech:

The duplicity of those countries who join us in condemning the system, while buttressing it economically and enhancing its repressive, terrorist and aggressive potential through the supply of the most sophisticated war equipment, is consistent only with their hostility to African aspirations.

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[...]

We call on the aforementioned Member States, particularly the United States, France and the United Kingdom, to abandon their shortsighted policy. The young people wantonly killed in Soweto and elsewhere by Vorster's bloodthirsty policy using Western arms are survived by hundreds of thousands who are today swelling the ranks of the revolutionary forces in South Africa.²⁰⁶

For an inside account of what had happened, the ANC leadership, in exile and geographically far removed from the communities in which the uprising had begun, had to wait for young participants in the uprising to arrive at the ANC camps. However surprised the ANC may have been by the turn of events in South Africa,²⁰⁷ it was certainly prepared and willing to help those young men and women who had fled the townships and the country, be it for fear of the police or in search of "guns and ... military training."²⁰⁸ ANC representatives like Chris Hani in Lesotho, Marius Schoon in Botswana, and Stanley Mabizela in Swaziland were dispatched to meet those young men and women who had left South Africa and to help them find their way to the ANC.²⁰⁹ The ANC had a second incentive for its active engagement with these young activists. Ever aware of the threat that possible informants and infiltrators posed to its operations in exile and to any covert plans for actions within South Africa, the ANC needed to "debrief" and screen those who left South Africa and wanted to join its ranks in exile. In the words of one such exile, "they had to determine that you were leaving for political reasons."²¹⁰ Even then, the ANC in exile was infiltrated by informants, and its camps were hit with internal attempts, for example, to poison the drinking water.²¹¹

The ANC's Informants

Hounded by the police and aware of their relative vulnerability and lack of arms with which to counter police attacks, young activists of the Soweto uprising flooded out of South Africa. (Compare with "Cillié: Witnesses" previously in this chapter.) In this way, the uprising not only increased the numbers of people galvanized into action within the country but also dramatically swelled the ranks of the exile movement. It increased the proportion of youth and students within the ranks of the ANC, leading to what Tambo called the ANC's "responsibility" to many new members outside South Africa and to make use of a younger and more militant group of activists who were determined to return to South Africa as soon as possible to complete the task they had begun.²¹²

Once outside the country and safely in the midst of ANC Comrades, even those young men and women who previously "had had very little contact with the ANC, if any,"²¹³ could be and were relied on to proclaim that "the ANC is the answer," the title of one of the interviews in *Sechaba*, the official periodical of the ANC. In that interview Nkosazana Dlamini, vice president of SASO (*South African Students' Organisation*) and a member of the ANC underground in South Africa, described "the development of political consciousness among the youth of South Africa and the common stand on a number of current issues."²¹⁴ She was one of those who left the country in September 1976 to evade the police. She was a fifth-year medical student at Wentworth, University of Natal, when the Soweto uprising began. "Almost everybody who leaves the country looks for the ANC, and

makes for them," she said. "They know where to go, they know who is going to give them the necessary skills to overthrow the regime."²¹⁵ But for some students, like Nkosana Maoto, who left the northern Transvaal fleeing police persecution at this time, the role of the ANC and the PAC²¹⁶ either as political or organizational home was not nearly as clear. For many, both the ANC and the PAC were merely "part of a new generation's historical memory,"²¹⁷ and they would have felt ideologically closer to the PAC, which, with its rejection of white participation in the struggle against apartheid, probably felt closer to *Black Consciousness* (and to its hostility toward white liberals), whose ideology they were familiar with.²¹⁸

The ANC and the PAC were moribund at this time. We were going to form an alternative that was going to liberate South Africa. When people went outside, some of it was quite naïve. You thought the biggest hurdle was leaving. Then you get access to guns and training, and then you don't have to throw stones, [but] they're still talking conscientization. We missed something as students, we assumed Botswana would just let us through.

[...]

The ANC was caught off guard, even though they were scrambling to claim it... To most of us it appeared if we go to Tanzania [ANC headquarters and camps in exile], you are going to rot in a camp. These guys are not interested in going home, more in establishing territorial turf. But a lot of students joined the ANC and PAC. For some they had previous contact, either through family or in the underground in South Africa. The ANC and PAC gave them a sense of belonging. Some people joined. That depended on where you went: Botswana, Swaziland or Lesotho. They did not force me to join. They had to establish I was leaving for political reasons.²¹⁹

Once the students had arrived, though, many of them could be counted on to ²²⁰ support the ANC's cause. In the words of student leader Tebello Motapanyane:

It is important for the youth to know that they are part of the great movement which has the responsibility for bringing about our total liberation. It is above all important for the youth to connect their activity with this great national liberation movement, the ANC.²²⁰

Alfred Nzo, ANC secretary-general, conceded, "[W]e have learnt very valuable lessons from the accounts of leading representatives of revolutionary youth who have been participating in the current uprising."²²¹ In constructing its own official account of the uprising, the ANC made good use of these voices to address the issues the leadership thought most relevant.

Dlamini, for example, discussing the ANC and the *Black Consciousness* Movement, described the tensions and political differences that divided them as

generational. She split young people into two broad categories and, deliberately or unconsciously, thereby echoed the split between SASO (*South African Students' Organisation*) and SASM (*South African Students' Movement*):

There are those, age 18 or 19 and still at high school [SASM], who are more likely to believe in that kind of line [Africa for the Africans], for a few reasons: they haven't really come into personal contact with whites—except their mother's "master," or the policeman who demands a pass in the street. Their consciousness is formed from day to day experience, and they tend to be a bit more anti-white.²²²

She conceded that she went through the same process herself:

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I used to feel very bitter towards whites. But when I was doing matric I started coming into contact with older people, discussing art, literature, politics. Only then do you begin to appreciate the problem. When I got to university I made a few white friends, at science conferences, meetings and so on, we used to talk a lot... It dawned on me that not all whites were bad. So I became interested in knowing more of the intricacies of the system.²²³

Seemingly unaware of the privileged position she enjoyed because of her own access to education, a position out of reach for those who never left the schools in the "ghetto," she identified a process of becoming aware through age and experience, although consciousness, she acknowledged, was shaped in "day to day sufferings."²²⁴ By implication, this analysis clearly created parallels between two kinds of maturity—the personal maturity that comes gradually, with years and experience, as the young activist grows from childhood to youth to adulthood, and the political maturity the ANC sought to associate with a revolutionary path from consciousness-raising to mass mobilization and liberation and from racially exclusive liberation movements, like the various Black Consciousness organizations, to a more sophisticated and evolved nonracial nationalist movement. *Tebello Motapanyane*, another student in exile, also addressed this need for evolution to a higher form of struggle:

There is a place for what was happening to continue. But *it should be developed into something more advanced than the initial actions*. We know the struggle is not static. It is dynamic so we have got to get new approaches for struggle. The very act of struggle will teach the youth new advanced methods of *raising the struggle to a higher level* and to find new forms of organizing at home. [Emphasis added.]²²⁵

Narrative Time for the ANC

Distance was not simply a matter of geography. (Compare with "Cillié: Privileging of Narrative Time.") It was also one of politics and of generation. Oliver Tambo gave a second significant speech in June 1985.²²⁶ Almost ten years after the beginning of the uprising, he spoke with some hindsight as well as in consideration of a struggle by the oppressed people of South Africa who were now

unified under the United Democratic Front (UDF).²²⁷ Addressing the National Consultative Conference, this political report he gave before the National Executive Committee was less rhetorical and more specific in terms both of policy and of historical detail. By 1985 Tambo was ready to concede that the ANC had been ill-prepared when the uprising began and had been unable to "take full advantage" of the rebellious fury of the youth, to exploit the revolutionary potential of the movement, and direct the power of the uprising to challenge the apartheid state. Much worse, it was able only to lend minimal support, both material and psychological, to the new movement. Speaking almost ten years later, Tambo said:

Organizationally, in political and military terms, we were too weak to take advantage of the situation that crystallized from the first events of 16 June 1976. We had very few active ANC units inside the country. We had no military presence to speak of. The communication links between ourselves outside the country and the masses of our people were still too slow and weak to meet the situation such as was posed by the Soweto uprising.²²⁸

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Without ever overtly criticizing the student movement—the "magnificent combatants for the liberation of our country"—Tambo in his description of the necessary role the ANC was projected to play *after* the uprising began revealed some of the assumptions held dear by the movement. The Soweto uprising, he said, needed assistance and guidance and the leadership of the ANC. It was of "vital necessity," he said, "for us to have a leadership core within the country, *known by us* and in touch with the people, dedicated, brave, *with clear perspective* and thus *able to lead*" (emphasis added).²²⁹ It is only by inference that what were seen to be the failings of the student movement became discernible. Its leadership, at least initially, was an unknown to the ANC, which doubted the clarity of its vision and strategies as well as its ability to ultimately lead the country to democratic freedom. Adelaide Tambo, Oliver Tambo's wife, put things much more clearly in her introduction to his speech:

There had been a lack of political direction to guide the outbreak of collective anger in the townships and, although there was some solidarity between the youth and workers, the gulf had not been bridged. Among the youth there arose an awareness that revolution required organization and comprehensive policies capable of guiding struggle through different phases. Whatever the strengths of the upsurge of 1976 they lacked a strategy and tactics which could only be found in the leadership of the ANC.²³⁰

Participants as Represented by the ANC: Heroes or Threats?

Unequivocal about its regard for the youth at the center of the uprising, the ANC nevertheless was preoccupied with their inexperience²³¹ and with other features of the movement that might pose a threat to the ANC and its leadership: (Compare with "Cillié: Representing Participants.")

There is no vocabulary to describe the nobility and the pathos of the conscious sacrifices that the black youth of South Africa have made over the last four months to free themselves, their people and their country from forces that are determined to keep us forever their chattels. Together with their mothers and their fathers they have seen hundreds of their compatriots pay the supreme sacrifice rather than accept a life of enslavement.²³²

Paying "glorious tribute" to the work of the older cadres, whose "steadfast commitment and loyalty" he praised, Oliver Tambo was adamant about the need to fully utilize the older leadership and "the full experience and maturity of these outstanding cadres of our movement."²³³

The ANC needed to transform the new vanguard, which "daily pour into the streets ready to join battle with the enemy," into a truly revolutionary force for the ANC. Though not with the intensity or pervasiveness of Gandhi's call to self-purification, abstinence, and discipline in the Indian noncooperation campaign,²³⁴ some of the ANC's calls for discipline and order were similar, and campaigns against alcohol and against material goods and celebration (especially around Christmas 1976) by the SSRC (Soweto Students' Representative Council) were accompanied by what sometimes sounded like Gandhian exhortations. In this manner, Alfred Nzo, secretary-general of the ANC, commanded all members of the ANC first and foremost to be:

intolerant of any form of lawlessness and lack of discipline. Drunkenness and other vices do not only reduce the efficiency of the affected but are weaknesses that can be easily exploited by our enemies.²³⁵

Undoubtedly electrified by the courage and tenacity of the students, the older generation of ANC activists was also taken aback by the fury unleashed in the townships. Nzo made the need for discipline quite explicit:

We must strictly observe security...
We must be exacting on ourselves.

[...]

No task must ever be considered unimportant and below one's dignity and revolutionary commitment.

[L]etting things slide or hiding mistakes under the carpet simply because our friends or next of kin are responsible for them is dangerous to the entire movement and can hamper the progress of our struggle.

We must above all be in a permanent state of combat readiness.²³⁶

Claiming Authority

Conditioned by fears of a "third force" and by the government's known imperialist tactics of divide and rule, the ANC in its call to order directly addressed the

potential political schism represented by a *Black Consciousness* breakaway from ANC nonracial nationalist ideals. (Compare with "Cillié: Privileged and Knowing Position of the Author" previously in this chapter.) The call to order also reflected the need to contain the generational rift—not only between the youthful demonstrators and their parents but also between the new "Comrades," who were significantly younger, and ANC activists, who were drawn from an older generation—and to harness the power of the young people at the center of the uprising:

It is very important that our leadership, by which we mean all those whom we consider the most mature among our ranks, must begin to involve itself directly in this work of internal organization. We have to be in daily contact with our people.[Emphasis added]²³⁷

Nzo too defended the ANC's leadership position:

We should at all times be ready to defend the African National Congress and its leadership. An attack on any of our leaders must not be regarded as of concern only to that particular leader. Those who are responsible for insulting the leadership and our Organisation are aiming at weakening our revolutionary movement for national liberation.²³⁸

The ANC wished, therefore, to claim leadership not only in terms of determining the political project of liberation according to its ideals but also in terms of the authoritative claims of an older, presumably more experienced, generation, no matter how remote:

[Tambo:] Since its foundation it has, for instance, fought tirelessly to ensure the unity in action of all the oppressed people. Today the fruits of that labour are evident to all.

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[...]

We are in the forefront of a struggle in South Africa whose victorious outcome is demanded not only by our people but also by the imperative of world peace.²³⁹

[Nzo:] We must be intolerant of all agents of division and disunity within our ranks. Those that are still hibernating within the movement must be flushed out and exposed for there can be no doubt that the expelled group that calls itself the "African Nationalists" has still got some hidden agents within our midst.²⁴⁰

In his 1985 speeches, Tambo reiterated the ANC's claims to national leadership, exclusive authority, and standing among "our people" in South Africa:

Despite the severe setbacks we had suffered during the sixties, the enemy had failed to remove the ideas and prestige of the ANC from among our people. This, together with the activities that we undertook within the country, meant that the youth whom the BCM [*Black Consciousness Movement*] was organizing were at least conscious of

the ANC, despite the fact that many had grown up without any direct contact with us.²⁴¹

Tambo made clear the need both for a united resistance against apartheid and for what that resistance would require: assimilation of new political movements and organizations within the country. The ANC executive leadership was prepared to recognize and pay tribute to the "contribution that the BCM made to the activization of our people into struggle." It also recognized the "significant input" that the *Black Consciousness Movement*, "by emphasizing the commonness of their oppression and their shared destiny," made to the effort to unite the black people of South Africa.²⁴²

The ANC and Black Consciousness

Despite all these contributions, the ANC insisted on the "limitations of this movement which saw our struggle as racial, describing the entire white population of our country as part of the problem."²⁴³ This represented quite a turnaround from Tambo's own indictment of the white rulers of South Africa before the UN General Assembly in 1976, nine years earlier. There he said:

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What distinguished South Africa from the rest of the world is that its rulers have chosen to put themselves outside the bounds of humanity.

[...]

We speak of those who—to paraphrase the words of the poet Bertold Brecht—because we want to live like human beings, slaughter us like savage beasts. We mean those in South Africa who by their daily actions deliberately impose death, even on the unborn, and consciously educate the young to deny their own humanity; those who pay and arm with guns—and with rubber stamps—a whole army of overseers to sweat and bleed the black majority in order to provide life and comfort solely and exclusively for the white minority.²⁴⁴

Now apparently the time had come to reveal that the ANC had indeed been negotiating with the Black Consciousness Movement:

[T]he ANC sought to establish relations with the forces represented in the BCM and to impart to them the collective revolutionary experience of our people contained in and carried forward by our organization. Our aim was to establish close fraternal relations with this movement and encourage it to grow, but as an instrument for the mass mobilization of our people into struggle. [Emphasis added.]²⁴⁵

The ANC certainly feared that the *Black Consciousness Movement* would grow into a political organization that would replace the ANC or, at the very least, become so powerful as to enjoy a degree of legitimacy equal to that enjoyed by the ANC. In this context, Tambo commented on the deliberate efforts of the apartheid government to exploit and foster any divisions among the black population and any enmity between the organizations that claimed to represent

the people:

The forces of counter-revolution continuously seek to separate these [nationalist and socialist] tendencies²⁴⁶ both politically and organizationally, set them at loggerheads and thus divide the national liberation movement. That is why the enemy always speculates about divisions between "Marxists" and "nationalists" within our ranks.

The ANC did not represent all racially oppressed South Africans, nor was it an **255** active force within South Africa at the time of the uprising. In fact, as will be shown in chapter 4 of this book, unity, like the ability to claim that it represented a majority of black South Africans, was something that eluded most organizations. Divisions of identity marked every movement, every organizations, as did the constant struggle for unity or solidarity of effort, thought, and action.

What at first glance appeared to be a potential for conflict and diffusion of energies among the diverse organizations representing students was offset by the cross-affiliation of students with several organizations and by a series of active links and lines of communication between the students and among organizations. (See Chapter 4 – The Participants, "Dissent, Division, Difference — Solidarity") Tebello Motapanyane, a student at Naledi High School, was elected secretary general of SASM (*South African Students' Movement*) at the General Students' Council meeting at St. Ansgars Conference Centre in Roodepoort in May 1976. The links and between SASM and SASO (South African Students' Organisation) and the feedback between them were apparent during this meeting, as was the centrality of *Black Consciousness* to the discussion: Puso K. Khutsoane of SASO read a paper on Black theology, the Commission on Policy presented SASO's Black students' manifesto and the meeting adopted it, and Aubrey Mokoena gave a speech on Black Consciousness. In an interview in January 1977, Motapanyane, who had fled the country, described the limits of Black Consciousness:

Black Consciousness as a concept did play a role in sensitizing the students. The banning of the ANC left a sort of political vacuum... We had no direct contact with those who could direct us politically and many of us turned to the general idea of Black Consciousness... We did not however, believe that *Black Consciousness on its own* would lead us to liberation. It was a useful tool.[Emphasis added.]²⁴⁷

But, as Tambo would say almost ten years later, the ANC, as an organization in exile, was both intensely aware of the precariousness and remoteness of its position vis-à-vis this new student movement and acutely sensitive to the danger that the government would employ divide-and-rule tactics. Repeated efforts to exploit divisions in the "national democratic revolution" had undoubtedly contributed to the fear that the Black Consciousness Movement "would emerge, survive and grow ... *independent* of the ANC" (emphasis added).²⁴⁸ Consequently, the ANC had begun negotiations with the Black Consciousness Movement:

This is the appropriate occasion to disclose that in the course of this work²⁴⁹ we had, by 1976, arrived at the point where the time had come for us to meet that leading representative of the BCM, the late Steve Biko. By this time Steve and his colleagues had arrived at the following positions:

- (a) That the ANC is the leader of our revolution;
- (b) That the Black People's Convention should concentrate on mass mobilization.
- (c) That the BPC (Black Peoples Convention) should function within the context of the broad strategy of our movement; and
- (d) That a meeting between the leadership of the BPC (Black Peoples Convention) and ourselves was necessary.

Arrangements were made for us to meet Steve Biko in 1976. Unfortunately, it proved impossible to bring Steve out of the country for this meeting. Another attempt was made in 1977 but this also did not succeed. Subsequent arrangements also failed as, for instance, Barney Pityana was arrested when he was due to lead another delegation.

Steve Biko was of course subsequently murdered.²⁵⁰

But things were never this straightforward, and the relationship between the ANC ²⁶⁰ and Black Consciousness remained ever ambiguous, as did the relationships between the various organizations that represented the student movement and, indeed, between the various groups of students those organizations did or did not represent. Biko himself saw the Black Consciousness Movement very much as an equal to the other liberation movements. In 1977 he commented at length on his own vision for change in South Africa:

I personally would like to see fewer [liberation] groups. I would like to see groups like ANC, PAC and the Black Consciousness movement deciding to form one liberation group. It is only, I think, when black people are so dedicated and so united in their cause that we can effect the greatest results.²⁵¹

The warmth implicit in Tambo's use of the familiar *Steve* is offset by Adelaide Tambo when, in the introduction to his speech, she describes Steve Biko as "one talented leader" (emphasis added). Black Consciousness ideology, she wrote, had "limitations" revealed by "the fact that the popular rebellion did not become an insurrection."²⁵² Nkosazana Dlamini spoke for the ANC in *Sechaba* in 1977 (in an issue that was devoted almost entirely to the topic of the Soweto uprising) when, with similar ambivalence, she commented about Steve Biko in her response to a query about outside attempts to buy over the student leadership:

Inside there are people being put forward by some liberals. There was a lot of pressure from British liberals to release *one former SASO leader*, Steve Biko, because, they said, if there was to be any peaceful solution in South Africa, he's the one who should be free. I thought that was not really fair, because there are lots of national leaders who have been languishing for many years in jail. I don't know who is behind the whole thing, but it did strike me as peculiar that they should single out one person when there are more well-known national leaders in jail.[Emphasis added.]²⁵³

What separated the ANC from the Black Consciousness Movement was more than fear of division and consequent weakness in what needed to be a united nationalist resistance against apartheid. The Black Consciousness Movement had rejected the paternalism of white liberalism, which young Black Consciousness activists first experienced in their dealings with white liberal student activists in the university setting. It wanted no organizational ties with whites and affirmed a black cultural identity and pride. Consciousness-raising, the proclamation and delivery of the psychologically liberating potential of black pride and power, and the implications that such pride and power had for the prospect of strengthening and rallying the masses of black South Africans—these were the BCM's features that the ANC felt most comfortable with.

The ANC: What Really Happened—The Confrontation

Because of its remove from the actual events of June 16, the ANC was not in 265 a position to present a definitive account of what had happened during the first confrontation between students and police. (Compare with "Cillié: Rhetoric and Argument" previously in this chapter.) It was not until the second quarter of 1977 that *Sechaba*, its official periodical, registered any response to the events in Soweto. In "How June 16 Demo Was Planned," an interview, *Tebello Motapanyane* only briefly addressed the moment of confrontation:

The demonstration we planned was to be peaceful because as students we were, of course, unarmed. But we knew that the police would be violent against the students. So we said no, immediately there is violence from the police, we would have to defend ourselves and, if possible, hit back.²⁵⁴

Similarly, Nkosazana Dlamini, vice president of SASO and a member of the ANC underground in South Africa, fled South Africa in September 1976 while evading the police. In an interview in *Sechaba*, she also mentions the confrontation only briefly, in part to make the argument that it radicalized Soweto parents:

Even initially, during the peaceful demonstrations, parents supported the pupils. It was they who opposed the original introduction of *Bantu Education*, and the forced introduction of Afrikaans as a medium revived their original rejection of the system. But what really got the parents into action was the brutal police killings. Though the police had always been ruthless with peace demonstrators, nobody expected they would immediately and cold-bloodedly murder young children. So besides their solidarity with young people they were angered—and their hatred and rejection of the whole system came to the surface. They were completely with the students in their militancy.²⁵⁵

Without a doubt, the ANC had no need to interrogate the moment of confrontation. For its spokesmen, there were few uncertainties: the youth of Soweto were "heroic, they are selfless, they are noble;" whereas the police were considered members of a "Fascist regime that continues to massacre the

innocent."²⁵⁶

The ANC's Means and Method of Appropriation

Perhaps the most glaring difference between the ANC and the government was **270** that the ANC wanted to harness the crowd to its cause not by force but by persuasion.²⁵⁷ (Compare with Cillié: "Means and Method of Appropriation/Exclusion" previously in this chapter.)

He was very [interested] the old man Tambo. He was our father. He played a very much important role in taking out the anger out of us. Because he, you know, if you sit down and looked at it when, immediately after our first training, if most of would return into the country I don't think we could have achieved what we have achieved.

[...]

They make us you know to sit, to teach certain [things] to understand correctly, what type of ... we are not going to be, like PLO for example, when they are fighting against the Israelis, even the kids ... with us was very different. We select, deal with police, deal with the army. Civilians, if there ... is a very serious thing... He really managed to do that, and ... when the time comes for one to be taken to the front, already you don't have the ideas of somebody who came yesterday from the country. You understand correctly what is needed of you, and so they manage it. It was that. I remember at one point in time when we wanted action, he used to say no, if you are not prepared, ready now, then take us to Zimbabwe, take us to Namibia, so that we at least equip ourselves with fighting and all these things. But the ANC told us, wait ... a time will come. So there, systematically reducing this tension, taking away the anger, ... [we will] take you to Europe, take you to where the best ... you come back, no, after some time, you are normal again. So, once you come into the country, you know what is wrong and what is right.²⁵⁸

On occasion, however, material, geographical, and emotional distance resulted in incongruous appropriations that were the result of images and meanings randomly and bizarrely associated with each other. Beyond the curiosity of these haphazard inventions, they also revealed something about their inventors. In the same issue of *Sechaba* that included the interview with Motapanyane, a photograph accompanied the text of Tambo's speech before the UN General Assembly about a month after the uprising. In the forefront a person lies awkwardly, prone, on the edge of a sidewalk, and surrounded by what look like stones, perhaps a box, a pipe of some sort, and a dented metal garbage canister. On the sidewalk, between the body and a hedge behind it and the objects surrounding it, stand seven people—from left to right, two white policemen in camouflage uniform (one of them carrying a gun); a white man, dressed in a suit and holding what looks like a writing pad, mostly obscures the two policemen; another white policeman, in uniform, looking at the body and apparently taking a step or possibly nudging the body with his foot, although what appears as his proximity to the body may be

a result largely of the picture's perspective; next to him stands another white policeman, armed and in camouflage uniform, looking away; finally, almost obscured by the shadows from the hedge, a small African boy and a tall African man in a suit stand with heads bent and faces averted. The caption that accompanied the picture reads: "Casual murderers, left, father and son in grief and anger, right." The implications are unambiguous: The man in the road was the victim of the white policemen now gathered around his corpse, while the two African bystanders mourn the death of one of their own.²⁵⁹

A careful comparison of this image with another published by black photographer Peter Magubane in the photo essay entitled *June 16: The Fruit of Fear* (1986) reveals, however, that the victim on the road is not black but white and that what we are dealing with is, quite without a doubt, a picture of Mr. J. H. B. Esterhuizen, a *West Rand Bantu Administration* (WRAB) official who was stoned to death by students on the first day of the uprising:

Ten or so youths dragged Mr Esterhuizen from his car and assaulted him for about three minutes. He was struck with stones and sticks, and left for dead on the ground. Three students fetched a rubbish bin from a house and emptied out hot ash onto him.²⁶⁰

Although Magubane's picture is taken from a slightly different angle (the viewer **275** looks down the sidewalk instead of at it), but the stones on the ground, the edge of the metal can, the end of a long stick, the curved edge of the sidewalk, and several of the policemen in camouflage uniforms, as well as the awkward angle of the victim's arm, which was bent in an unnatural position under his body—all can be distinguished in both photographs and are evidence that we are looking at the same deadly episode. However, the caption of Magubane's photograph in his book reads: "An official of the West Rand Administration Board lies dead on the side of a street in Orlando West, Soweto, on June 16, 1976."

What has happened here? It seems as if, in their haste to illustrate Oliver Tambo's words (presented in a box on the facing page)²⁶¹—"No less than one thousand of the cream of our people have been shot down in cold blood in the streets of our towns and cities and far-flung villages"²⁶²—the editors of *Sechaba* have wrongly appropriated an image that illustrated one of the most contentious moments in the uprising. The killing of Esterhuizen, a white man, by the violently angry black youth of Soweto not only fueled the government's condemnation of the students but also magnified the profound importance that race had to this struggle.

Such appropriations are nothing new, nor are they surprising. In this case it is probably the result of misunderstandings and confusions of the sort that distance causes. The use to which the photograph in *Sechaba* was put, the appropriation of

what turns out to be the death of a white man to illustrate the brutality and callousness of the South African Police, "casual murderers," serves to illustrate a more fundamental truth: Death in the context of apartheid South Africa threatened to envelop everyone and every thing. It is, in Tambo's words, "aberration and a freak incident" and, simultaneously, "the concrete expression" of a brutally violent state that had drawn everything and everyone under its spell.

The catalog of appropriations does not end here. On the page that includes the photograph in *Sechaba*, the text of Tambo's includes reference to "charade of the 'Independence of Transkei.'" These were his words: "With the orchestrated chorus of a coterie of handpicked placemen, Vorster is today declaring the Transkei 'independent.'" Outraged, Tambo spoke of a "spectacle in Umtata," the principal town in the Transkei. In an old ritual dear to Africans who had seen the old colonial flags replaced as one African nation after another declared independence, one flag (the new flag of the Transkei) was raised and the other (the South African flag) lowered, to symbolize the end of South African rule and the beginning of "independence." Tambo was clearly disgusted at the appropriation of these images and rituals for what he, and the ANC and many South Africans with him, thought of as a travesty and an insult.

Soon after that, in continuation of the charade, the national anthem of the oppressed, sung by liberation fighters since 1925, was played in glorification of national oppression in a new guise.²⁶³

Part 3: Confronting Each Other: the ANC and the Cillié Commission

In so far as public inquiries usually arbitrate between conflicting accounts and interpretations of events, the officially-approved version had to confront, incorporate and suppress the alternative, unofficial version, which was often hidden, or muted. This alternative, unofficial version is the discourse of the Other, those—mostly black—who opposed the government and the participants in the uprising. Not all of the alternative voices were silent though. *Winnie Mandela* quickly stepped in as the adult spokesperson for the students and their families. Because of her direct links to the ANC, the organization needed her on the ground in the townships but could ill afford for her to be caught up in the discursive propaganda of the government. When it became clear that the Cillié Commission was being used to set up a case against her, the ANC—in the person of George Bizos—stepped in.

The ANC and the government confronted each other most directly in the following story which centered on the dangerous question of whether or not *Winnie Mandela* could be held accountable for the uprising. The confrontation between *George Bizos* and Judge Cillié—played out via the testimonies of student participants in the uprising who had been arrested by the police—forms the discursive bridge between the two most powerful official stories.

Notes:

Note 180: Ranajit Guha, "Discipline and Mobilize," 69.

Note 181: Heidi Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the African National Congress* (New York: George Braziller, 1990), 189; Gail Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 315.

Note 182: Karis and Gerhardt, *From Protest to Challenge*, 5:161.

Note 183: Ibid., 5:162.

Note 184: Some of the trials against ANC activists inside South Africa were not only evidence of the ANC's continued struggle to establish an underground presence and to mobilize, as Gerhart has pointed out (*Black Power in South Africa*, 315). They would also have contributed to a sense of the continued relevance of the ANC for those inside South Africa who wanted to recognize it, as these trials and their outcomes were consistently reported in the press.

Note 185: Nkosazana Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," 31.

Note 186: For example: "Mandela / The True / Leader—Kruger / Release / Seth / Mazibuko" And "Dr Kissinger Go And Talk With Our Leaders In Robben Island." Source: List of Slogans on Banners and Placards Carried During the Soweto Uprising SAB K345, volume 84, file 2/2/1/12/12. .

Note 187: Oliver Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising" (extract from the Political Report of the National Executive Committee to the second National Consultative Conference, Lusaka, 16-23 June 1985), in *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks*, ed. Adelaide Tambo (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 128.

Note 188: Ellis and Sechaba go so far as to say the ANC was "well organized and had a coherent strategy" to meet the needs of the new generation of activists who poured out of South Africa. See Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), 84.

Note 189: In the epilogue to *Black Power in South Africa*, published in 1978, Gail Gerhart described the generation that had just come of age in Soweto as "proud, self-reliant, determined. The founders and stalwarts of the Black Consciousness movement, however heavy the price they have paid in death, imprisonment, bans and exile, have handed intact to their as-yet-undetermined successors their movement's major achievement: an urban African population psychologically prepared for confrontation with white South Africa" (315).

Note 190: Oliver Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them," speech, Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 26 October 1976, reprinted as "The Victory Of Our Cause Is Assured," in *Sechaba* 11, no. 2 (1977); (Historical Documents, United Nations, United Nations in the Struggle Against Apartheid, Speeches by Oliver Tambo to the United Nations Committees and Conferences, Support Our People Until Power Is Restored To Them, Statement at the Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, New York, October 26, 1976 [accessed 9 September 2004]).

Note 191: Ibid.

Note 192: Oliver Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising", 127-9.

Note 193: Ibid., 127.

Note 194: Alfred Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee to All the Units of the African National Congress of South Africa on the Current Situation" (Dar es Salaam, 14 September 1976), A2176/12 Riots in Soweto, Pamphlets and Publications, Historical Papers Collection, University of the Witwatersrand.

Note 195: Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them."

Note 196: Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 197: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 128-29. See also Francis Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the ANC* (London: James Currey, 1988), 186, 190. Meli writes of the "profound impact on the ANC" that these "heroic struggles" had, but he also recalls the "indescribable ... shock, anger and bitterness" at the number of deaths and injuries, "repercussions of the Soweto uprising [that] are still with us today."

Note 198: Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 199: There are several authorized texts that focus on the Soweto uprising. Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising" and "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them"; and Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee." Book-length histories of the ANC that address the uprising include Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us; Holland, The Struggle*; and Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid*.

Note 200: This separation in time is in some ways artificial, since issues of solidarity and unity in resistance never quite disappeared, although the exact source of threats to such solidarity and unity changed: factions within the movement, challenges from other black resistance movements (e.g., Inkatha, the leaders of the Bantustans), and direct if covert attempts by the government to exploit and aggravate divisions among Africans to foster disunity and conflict. To this latter end, the government used "the services of various counterrevolutionary Black mercenaries, mainly the thugs of the Matanzima [Transkei] army," who, "assisted by a motley mess of declassed elements from amongst the ranks of African people and under the direction and leadership of the fascist regime[,] murdered, looted and raped our women folk." Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 201: Oliver Tambo, interview by Carlos Cordosa, Mozambique Information Agency, July 1983, reprinted as "Our Bases Are inside South Africa," in Tambo, *Preparing for Power*, 166.

Note 202: Tambo, introduction to "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," in *Preparing for Power*, 115.

Note 203: Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them." The Assembly adopted Resolution 31/6A rejecting the declaration of "independence" and pronounced it invalid. No state recognized either this independence or that of any other Bantustan that subsequently obtained this status.

Note 204: Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them."

Note 205: Ibid.

Note 206: Ibid.

Note 207: Holland, *The Struggle*, 189. Holland's *The Struggle* was published in 1990 with clear support from the ANC. In her acknowledgments she thanks Tom Sebina, who worked for the ANC's information department in Lusaka, for his help in arranging interviews and correcting factual errors. Thabo Mbeki, then the chief spokesman for the African National Congress, and Helen Joseph, ANC stalwart, had given the project their support and help. Holland, a South African-born

daughter of a British father and Swiss mother, had been a journalist in Zimbabwe and South Africa for many years, and the point of view from which she was writing becomes clear from the book's prologue, where she cites the response of a black priest who on 20 May 1987 had witnessed the deadly bombing of the magistrate's court; four policemen were killed and many others injured; the bombing was later claimed by the ANC and, as Holland points out, came exactly four years after a similar bomb blast outside an air-force office building in Pretoria had killed 19: "[T]here are many kinds of violence in South Africa for which the ANC is not responsible. We should all pause to consider those other forms of violence when we see a response as dreadful as this" (12).

Note 208: Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid*, 84.

Note 209: Ellis and Sechaba use the phrase "steered adroitly" (*Comrades against Apartheid*, 84). Later, networks were set up *within* South Africa, to facilitate the way out for those young activists who wanted to leave. See the stories of Lilli Mokganyetsi and Zakes Molotsi in chapter 4. Maanda Mulaudzi, one of the activist students who fled the northern Transvaal into Botswana, said that many of the students joined because the ANC (and the PAC) gave them a sense of belonging but that "they did not force me to join" (Maanda Mulaudzi, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, Minneapolis, February 1994).

Note 210: Nkosana Maoto, student activist, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, notes, Johannesburg, October 1998.

Note 211: Zakes Molotsi, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, tape recording, Johannesburg, May, 1995.

Note 212: Tambo, *Preparing for Power*, 127. Nkosazana Dlamini, one of the students who left South Africa in this way, commented that "[!]ots of people who left the country did not do so to apply for asylum as refugees. They have left determined to acquire the necessary skills to fight and to help their people in their struggle" (Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," 30).

Note 213: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 127.

Note 214: Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," 25.

Note 215: Ibid., 31.

Note 216: The PAC, Pan-Africanist Congress, broke away from the ANC in 1959 under the leadership of Robert Sobukwe, who was then 35 years old and a graduate of Fort Hare from Graaff-Reinet in the Cape Province of South Africa. While not completely against white participation in the liberation struggle, Sobukwe argued that whites could not identify with the African cause because they profited from the established social order. The breakaway of the PAC reflected the tensions and divisions among black political activists and thinkers, some of whom, like Luthuli and Mandela, stood for a nonracial struggle that would include whites, while others, among them Sobukwe, wanted a purely African liberation movement. It was the PAC that had organized the campaign against the pass laws, an effort that resulted in the police shootings of 67 Africans at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. Both the PAC and the ANC were outlawed in 1960, and its leaders, Mandela, Sisulu and Sobukwe, were jailed on Robben Island, the South African prison island four miles from Cape Town. Sobukwe was released in 1969, but a banning order kept him silent until his death in 1978. Driven into exile, and by now convinced that passive or peaceful political protests could achieve nothing against the violent South African state, both the ANC and the PAC formed militant wings (*Umkhonto we Sizwe* [the spear of the nation] for the ANC, and *Poqo* [pure or we go it alone] for the PAC) to counter the state's violence with revolutionary violence. Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 209-11.

Note 217: Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa*, 284. Murphy Morobe, one of the student leaders of 1976 (see chapter 4), said: "We thought we were the first people to fight the government. We did not know about the Defiance Campaign and the school boycotts in the 1950s" (quoted in Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid*, 83).

Note 218: Ellis and Sechaba call the PAC "the natural home" of the youth of the Soweto generation whose political philosophy or organization, if any, was Black Consciousness (*Comrades against Apartheid*, 84). Similarly, Holland writes that the PAC was "ideologically more compatible with Black Consciousness" (*The Struggle*, 194-95). All three authors agree, however, that the PAC in exile was in complete organizational disarray and had little to offer the students. In *South Africa Belongs to Us*, Meli, a member of the ANC, writes from within the struggle—although lauding it as one of the rare histories of the ANC written by a participant and a black South African, Stephen Ellis calls this a "highly sanitised version" (Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid*, 7). Meli makes no attempt to hide his critique of the PAC ("the ANC is becoming tired of carrying the PAC on its back, more so because it is said dead wood is very heavy" [xi]), and the PAC in this context receives no mention of youth exiles. Closely echoing Oliver Tambo's speech, Meli comments merely that the flow of exiles increased the relative proportion of young people in the ANC's ranks, young people who "had had very little, if any, previous contact with the organisation" (190). Meli, like Tambo, was struck especially by the willingness of these fearless young activists to return to South Africa almost immediately to take on even the most challenging tasks. His words almost exactly echo those of Tambo in his speech "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising" in 1985. It was precisely over this issue of racial exclusivity, and of the divisiveness that the PAC had caused within the broader movement of resistance, that the ANC had broken with the PAC: "I don't think there is room to discuss the PAC at all. It is not a factor" (Tambo, *Preparing for Power*, 117).

Note 219: Nkosana Maoto, student activist, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, notes, Johannesburg, October 1998.

Note 220: Tebello Motapanyane, "How June 16 Demo Was Planned," *Sechaba* 11, no. 2 (1977): 59.

Note 221: Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 222: Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," 28.

Note 223: Ibid.

Note 224: Ibid.

Note 225: Motapanyane, "How June 16 Demo Was Planned," 59.

Note 226: Oliver Tambo, "Make South Africa Ungovernable" (extract from "Political Report of the National Executive Committee" to the second National Consultative Conference, Lusaka, 16-23 June 1985), in *Preparing for Power*.

Note 227: Ellis and Sechaba also remark on the fact that several Black Consciousness "firebrands" over time became part of the ANC, among them Murphy Morobe, who became a leader of the UDF, and Curtis Nkondo, who was the first president of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) which replaced the Black Consciousness organizations that had been banned after Steve Biko's death, but who was later suspended from the presidency because of his ANC sympathies. Others were Jackie Selebe, newspaper editor, Zwelakhe Sisulu, and a number of young Black Consciousness leaders who had been sent to Robben Island prison where they came under the powerful influence of the older generation of ANC activists, like Nelson Mandela, who were already there. Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid*, 83-86.

Note 228: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising" 117.

Note 229: Ibid., 129.

Note 230: Adelaide Tambo, introduction to Oliver Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 114.

Note 231: Not everyone put it as strongly as Ellis and Sechaba (*Comrades against Apartheid*, 84): "Schoolchildren were mouthing revolutionary slogans they hardly understood."

Note 232: Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them."

Note 233: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 127-28.

Note 234: "If it is true that this movement is for self-purification, then, in addition to wearing khadi, you should give up liquor, eschew immorality, learn to be upright, see that you do not lose your head as the people of Malegon did" (Gandhi quoted in Guha, "Discipline and Mobilize," 116).

Note 235: Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 236: Ibid.

Note 237: Tambo, "Make South Africa Ungovernable", 159.

Note 238: Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 239: Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them."

Note 240: Nzo, "Message of the National Executive Committee."

Note 241: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 116-17.

Note 242: Ibid., 118.

Note 243: Ibid., 127.

Note 244: Tambo, "The Victory Of Our Cause Is Assured." This section—on white South Africans—is printed only in the 1977 *Sechaba* version of the speech and not in the text that the ANC holds in its document archives ("Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them"). Among the possible reasons for its omission there is that it may have been seen as too inflammatory.

Note 245: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 116 and 118.

Note 246: The ANC claimed that its movement encompassed both the class and nationalist concerns resulting from the nature of South African society and the historical experience of racial oppression. It had articulated its position in the Freedom Charter, which was accepted by all in the ANC regardless of differences in ideological positions (Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 117).

Note 247: Motapanyane, "How June 16 Demo Was Planned," 59.

Note 248: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 117-18. Note that this speech was presented on behalf of the National Executive Committee (NEC) in Lusaka—i.e., outside of South Africa—in June 1985, nine years after the uprising. It reflects both some historical perspective on what had happened in 1976 and also the outside, executive perspective of the ANC leadership, which

needed to represent the ANC as the chosen representative of a South Africa unified behind it and supportive of its national political agenda.

Note 249: The ANC had, after 1975, expanded contacts with the people in South Africa as well as with democratic organizations that had begun to represent them in the absence of the ANC, such as the trade unions, the Black Consciousness Movement, and South Africa's religious community.

Note 250: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 126.

Note 251: Steve Biko, "Our Strategy for Liberation" (1977), in *Steve Biko: I Write What I Like: A Selection of His Writings*, ed. Aelred Stubbs (London: Bowerdean, 1978), 148.

Note 252: Tambo, "Black Consciousness and the Soweto Uprising," 114-15.

Note 253: Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," 37.

Note 254: Motapanyane, "How June 16 Demo was Planned," 56.

Note 255: Dlamini, "The ANC Is the Answer," 31.

Note 256: Tambo, "Support Our People Until Power Is Restored to Them." This speech addressed to the United Nations General Assembly, 26 October 1976, was reprinted as "The Victory Of Our Cause Is Assured," in *Sechaba* 11, no. 2 (1977).

Note 257: Heidi Holland tells the story about a 10-year-old boy who had displayed extraordinary courage vis-à-vis the police and who insisted on being trained for armed combat. All attempts to "reason with the child" had failed until Tambo, "the fatherly ANC supremo," took it upon himself to convince the boy to go to school instead so that he might grow "a little older and wiser" before returning to South Africa as an armed rebel and better-prepared to serve the revolution (*The Struggle*, 195).

Note 258: Zakes Molotsi, interview by Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, tape recording, Johannesburg, May 1995.

Note 259: See *Sechaba* 11, no. 2 (1977), p. 12; and Peter Magubane, *The Fruit of Fear—June 16* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1986). This issue awaits further research.

Note 260: *Cillié Report*, 1:123-24.

Note 261: A second box, in the bottom right hand corner of the facing page, showed a silhouette of a pistol, its muzzle pointing at the photograph opposite.

Note 262: Tambo, "The Victory Of Our Cause Is Assured," *Sechaba* 11, no. 2 (1977).

Note 263: Ibid.