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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

21 July 1983

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA:
ORGANIZATION, STRATEGY, AND COMMUNIST TIES [redacted]

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Summary

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The African National Congress, the principal anti-South African insurgent group, has a long history of ties to the Communist Party in South Africa. Since at least the 1960s, pro-Soviet Communists have been well-represented in the ANC's leadership and have exerted considerable influence on it, especially with regard to military strategy. The ANC's heavy dependence on Soviet Bloc military aid is an important source of leverage for the South African Communist Party. [redacted]

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The Communists in the ANC leadership--along with moderate oldtimers--have chosen to restrain a faction of young black nationalists who are eager to begin a terrorist campaign directed against white civilians. We believe that the recent car bombing in Pretoria by the ANC may signal a new phase in strategy, and that this new phase may represent a compromise between the two factions in the Congress.

-- In the near term, we think that the ANC is unlikely to engage in indiscriminate terrorism.

-- We believe it will, however, strike government targets--especially security-related facilities and security personnel--more frequently than in the past. In addition, its efforts to avoid civilian casualties probably will be less stringent, or--as in the car bombing incident--non-existent. [redacted]

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This memorandum was requested by Frederick Wettering, Director of African Affairs, National Security Council. It was prepared by [redacted] the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. Assistance was provided by the Office of Central Reference. Comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to Chief, Africa Division, ALA [redacted]

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2 We believe that Moscow and the South African Communist Party are realistic about the limited prospects of the ANC's military campaign because of Pretoria's substantial security resources. In our view, this enhances their interest in using the ANC's appeal among blacks to gain control of the growing black labor movement in South Africa. [redacted]

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Origins of the Relationship Between the ANC and the Communist Party in South Africa

3 The Communist Party in South Africa and the ANC have been intertwined during most of the last 60 years. The ANC was formed in 1912 as a black reformist group composed mainly of tribal chiefs and educated elite. The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), which was founded in 1921 and joined the Comintern the same year, began recruiting black members and infiltrating black organizations in the mid-1920s after the government enacted a series of discriminatory laws. By 1928, 1,600 of the CPSA's 1,750 members were black, many of them members of the ANC. [redacted]

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3 The CPSA's initial success in gaining influence within the ANC came to an abrupt halt in 1930. After a visit to Moscow in 1927, ANC President Josiah Gumede triggered a conservative backlash in the ANC by advocating a program of civil disobedience. Gumede was replaced in 1930, and the ANC returned to a slow-moving reformist campaign. At the same time, internal dissension over political strategy and a purge of socialists by pro-Moscow radicals almost caused the demise of the CPSA. Its membership dropped from 3,000 in 1929 to 150 in 1931, and the party was moribund for more than a decade. [redacted]

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3 The CPSA experienced a revival in the 1940s, when some of its members rose to prominent positions in other organizations. J.B. Marks, a Colored CPSA member in the ANC hierarchy, led a major strike by the African Mine Workers' Union in 1946. Strong efforts by Marks and other CPSA members on behalf of blacks tightened the links between the ANC and the CPSA and gained the latter organization new recruits. [redacted]

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3 The revitalized CPSA suffered a temporary setback when it was banned by the Afrikaner-based National Party (NP) in 1950, two years after the NP came to power. The CPSA announced its dissolution one month prior to its banning. Black Communists who had not previously done so now joined the ANC, while Communists of other races infiltrated existing organizations and established new ones. Former CPSA members secretly reorganized the party in

1953 and renamed it the South African Communist Party (SACP). They also achieved domination over the Congress of Democrats (COD)--a parallel, legal organization for some 400 leftist whites--that had been formed a year earlier. The SACP and the COD controlled a coalition of ethnically-based groups--including the ANC--known as the "Congress Alliance" by taking over joint working committees. [redacted]

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A major split in the ANC in the late 1950s reflected in part the growing influence of the Communists within the organization. Blacks with militant and nationalist attitudes broke with the ANC and formed the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1958-59. The PAC argued that non-black--especially white Communist--domination of the Congress Alliance was reinforcing black African servitude. [redacted]

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The South African government banned both the ANC and the PAC shortly after the Sharpeville riots of 1960. Forced underground, the ANC lost its ability to generate income inside South Africa and began to turn more directly to the SACP. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted] we believe the aid came at a critical time for the ANC and was instrumental in tying the ANC to the SACP. [redacted]

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A high command--comprised of leading ANC and SACP members--directed the military wing, which launched a campaign of sabotage bombings in 1961. Police terminated the short-lived campaign with a series of arrests of ANC and SACP leaders in 1963-65. Those members of the ANC and SACP hierarchies who escaped the dragnet went into exile to rebuild their organizations. The SACP was able to expand its influence on the ANC during this period largely because the SACP had more contacts outside of South Africa than the ANC and was more experienced in operating underground. In 1966, a "Congress Consultative Committee" was established in London to coordinate activities within the Congress Alliance. [redacted]

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The ANC officially opened its membership to non-blacks in 1969, but influential white Communists who joined apparently

33 chose initially to maintain low profiles and work through black SACP members in the ANC hierarchy. [redacted]

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1 The ANC attempted to attract greater levels of external support in the early 1970s, but was largely unsuccessful until the Soweto riots in 1976. Thousands of young blacks fled South Africa in the wake of the riots and joined the ANC. [redacted]

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8 Moscow, probably believing that the riots signalled an extended phase of violent unrest in South Africa, increased its military aid to the ANC. [redacted]

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1 Bolstered by the new aid and recruits, the ANC launched another campaign of bombings and attacks in 1980 to increase its support among South African blacks and to focus international attention on the grievances of South African blacks. The ANC has conducted some 105 attacks in the last four years. [redacted]

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Current State of SACP Influence on the ANC

1 Today, the SACP and the ANC maintain separate organizational structures. This helps to play down the image of a Communist/Soviet-controlled ANC, but the two organizations openly describe their relationship as an "alliance." [redacted]

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Overlapping Organizations

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8 The SACP--a semi-secret party based in London with a strong pro-Soviet line--remains well-represented in the ANC's leadership. [redacted]

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[Redacted]

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The SACP is solidly entrenched in the ranks of the ANC itself.

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[Redacted] it is generally known that the majority of the ANC rank and file is comprised of three categories of blacks: non-ideologues, anti-Communist nationalists, and moderate socialists who are comfortable working with Communists but do not fully embrace Marxism-Leninism, especially its doctrine of atheism. [Redacted]

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SACP influence on the ANC's activities outside of South Africa is more difficult to discern. These activities are run by the ANC's so-called political wing, which works primarily out of Lusaka and London and has representatives in more than 30 countries. The political wing is responsible for producing radio propaganda, distributing propaganda literature, raising funds, and organizing political protests abroad. In its official pronouncements, the political wing frequently supports the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, but lists only moderate socialist aims for the ANC rather than strictly adhering to a Marxist-Leninist line.* [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

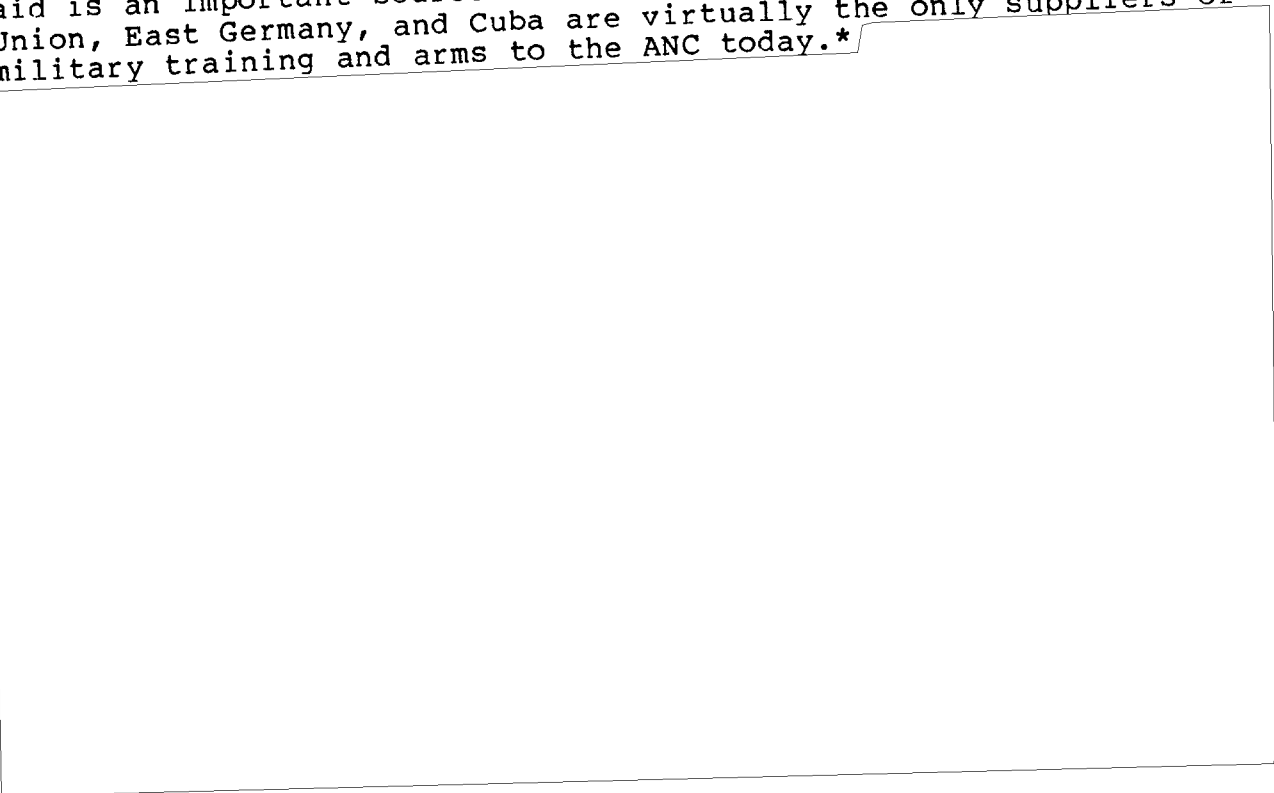
*This is compatible with ANC tactics on philosophy. Since its inception, the ANC has avoided officially adopting a specific ideology probably to broaden its internal and international support. [Redacted]

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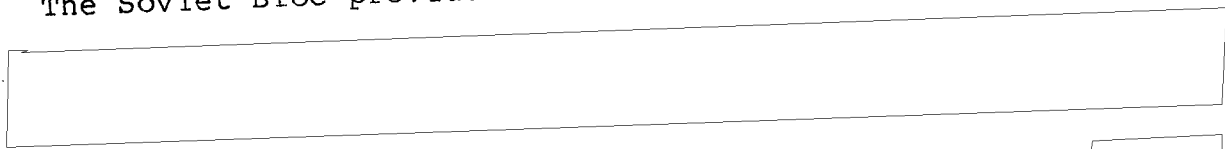
Communist Assistance to the ANC

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The ANC's heavy dependence on the Soviet Bloc for military aid is an important source of leverage for the SACP. The Soviet Union, East Germany, and Cuba are virtually the only suppliers of military training and arms to the ANC today.*

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The Soviet Bloc provides other assistance as well.



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-- The Soviet Union gives financial support to the ANC

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*Although we can confirm that the Soviet Bloc is virtually the sole source of ANC military aid, we do not know the exact extent or value of this aid.

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**The ANC's main sources of funds and non-military support, however, are the Scandanavian states, the World Council of Churches, and various other international organizations.

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| -- Most ANC literature is printed in East Germany.

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The Period of Restraint

Since the ANC resumed its military campaign in 1980, Slovo has directed attacks by the military wing against energy and transportation targets, government buildings, and security personnel and facilities. The low rate of casualties in 1981 and 1982 supported the ANC's claims at the time that it planned its attacks to avoid harm to civilians: 28 civilians were injured



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and 5 were killed* during 78 operations (7 security personnel were killed and 14 injured in the same period). [redacted]

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Some 60 of the incidents during 1981-82 were bombings and about 85 percent of these occurred at night, primarily in unoccupied buildings or on isolated railways. Daylight bombings, on the other hand, often occurred only minutes before a crowd was expected or after a train had passed. The pattern of these "close calls" suggest that they were intentional and designed to increase media coverage. [redacted]

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We believe that the ANC's operational restraint during this period reflected the leadership's concern that the organization might not survive a series of determined South African counterattacks against ANC personnel in neighboring countries. The cautious attitudes of moderate oldtimers and Communists in the ANC may be a result of lessons learned in the early 1960s when a concerted effort by the government almost wiped out both organizations. The Communists also may be concerned that a campaign of indiscriminate violence would trigger a South African response which would threaten various states in the region where the Soviets enjoy footholds. [redacted]

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Possible Shift in Strategy

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The car bombing by the ANC on 20 May in downtown Pretoria may signal a sharp change in the group's policy of avoiding civilian casualties. The car bomb--designed to inflict casualties rather than damage buildings--was detonated during rush hour outside of Air Force Headquarters. More than half of the 200 injured and 19 killed were civilians, many of them whites. In addition, the US Embassy reports that on 9 May Durban police defused a bomb--identical to the one used in Pretoria--in a heavily traveled area near a public airport with Air Force facilities. [redacted]

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Signs of Compromise

We believe that the ANC's apparent shift in strategy may represent an internal "compromise." The South African raid on Maseru last December, in which about 30 ANC personnel were killed, probably was the most important single factor that could

*Two of the deaths were by assassination--a former ANC member labeled "traitor" and his wife; another victim who died in a bombing may have been the ANC member planting the device. [redacted]

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have prompted such a shift.

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We believe that the Communists and the oldtimers in the ANC's leadership may have viewed the Maseru raid as the "last straw" and subsequently yielded to the black militants' longstanding demand for harsher tactics, but without sanctioning indiscriminate terrorism. In its communiques on the car bombing, the ANC emphasized that the target of the attack was military: South African Air Force Headquarters and the Directorate of Military Intelligence.

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Prospects

The SACP-ANC Relationship

Despite the tensions, the ANC and the SACP will undoubtedly continue their symbiotic relationship if only because the alliance facilitates the ANC's access to Communist assistance.

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The SACP, for its part, recognizes the value of its ties to the ANC--the most popular opposition group among South African blacks--and is unlikely to end the relationship.

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We expect non-Communist ANC leaders to continue to seek alternative sources of military aid to offset the influence of the pro-Soviet faction.

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Military Strategy

2 We believe that, in the short term, Slovo will continue to plan attacks against state targets, primarily security-related facilities in urban areas. Casualties, especially among white security personnel, probably will increase. Moreover, we believe that the ANC's efforts to avoid civilian casualties will be less stringent in the future, or--as in the car bombing incident--non-existent. Assassination attempts against government officials cannot be ruled out. Black militants dissatisfied with the leadership's cautious strategy could begin at any time a renegade campaign of killing white civilians. [redacted]

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4 The ANC's increasingly hostile rhetoric against US and Western policies in general may eventually be matched by attacks against Western businesses and diplomats. The ANC has vigorously condemned the US policy of "constructive engagement" and has accused the US of playing the leading role in perpetuating apartheid. [redacted]

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Focusing on Black Unions

1 We believe that ANC and SACP leaders alike fully recognize that their organizations are a long way from posing a real threat to white control of South Africa, and that the current terrorist campaign will not soon evolve into a viable insurgency. Both organizations have shown remarkable resilience, patience, and determination to stay with a long campaign. As the two look for other ways to promote their goals, they seem to have focused increasingly on the growing black labor movement in South Africa. [redacted]

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2 We believe that the Soviets also have doubts about the long term prospects of the ANC's military campaign because of Pretoria's capable security resources. In our view, this enhances their interest in using the ANC's appeal among blacks to gain control of the black labor movement. [redacted]

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4 ANC Acting President Tambo told the press in June 1983 that political action, notably among the 500,000 black members of the trade unions, is the ANC's first priority. [redacted]

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29 [redacted] Many workers undoubtedly are strongly in sympathy with the ANC; several of the more militant unions have openly endorsed the ANC's political aims. [redacted]

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The main vehicle for SACP entry into the black labor movement is the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), based in Lusaka, Zambia. Founded in 1954, SACTU today operates in self-imposed exile and acts in our view as the labor arm of the SACP. The president of SACTU, Stephen Dlamini, is an SACP member, and SACP literature in recent years has vigorously promoted SACTU as a key organization in the black labor movement.

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On balance, however, we believe that neither the ANC nor the SACP has had any substantial success so far in achieving direct influence in the black trade unions. Union leaders, for their part, are highly sensitive to the dangers that explicit connections of this sort would pose to the survival of individual unions.

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APPENDIX IV

A CHRONOLOGY OF TIES BETWEEN THE ANC AND
THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

- 1912 3 South African Native National Congress is established and later renamed as the African National Congress. 25X1
- 1915 3 Leftists split with South African Labour Party and form International Socialist League (ISL). 25X1
- 1921 3 ISL members, many of whom had a special interest in the black labor movement, and other leftists form the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). The CPSA joins the Comintern and complies with Soviet orders to concentrate on gaining control of white trade unions. 25X1
- 1922 3 Mine owners trying to offset declining gold prices precipitate a violent strike by announcing plans to lay off more highly paid white employees and replace them with blacks. The CPSA initially supports the miners' campaign, over which it has little direct control, but becomes disaffected after white miners attack black workers who remain on the job. 25X1
- 1924 3 Pact by the Labour and Nationalist Party gains them an electoral victory. New government enacts a series of discriminatory laws, some of which entrench white labor privilege. CPSA subsequently shifts its attention to recruiting black members and infiltrating black organizations. Main target is the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa (ICU). Begun as a trade union of black dock workers in 1919, the ICU grows in the 1920s and becomes a mass political movement with well over 100,000 members, eclipsing the ANC during this period. 25X1
- 1926 3 CPSA's four members on the ICU's National Executive Committee lead the left wing of the ICU in calls for a more militant program. The remainder of the ICU leadership responds by expelling all CPSA members from the ICU. CPSA focuses on the ANC as a result. 25X1

- 1927 3 ANC President Josiah Gumede attends the Brussels Conference of the League against Imperialism and visits the USSR. Upon his return, he unsuccessfully lobbies for a new ANC strategy of demonstrations, strikes, tax boycotts, pass burnings, and close ties with the Soviets. [] 25X1
- 1928 3 New directive from Comintern states that, in response to the "united white front arrayed against the non-whites," the CPSA must work towards establishing "an independent Native Republic--with full guarantees for minority groups--as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government." Many in the CPSA (especially former ISL members) object to the Soviet line because they prefer to regard blacks as an "exploited class of workers" rather than as a "persecuted race." A pro-Moscow group of ultra-leftists, however, eventually gains control and purges the CPSA of black members and whites with ties to trade unions. The purge is sparked by a Comintern directive which accuses all socialists of not being "true revolutionaries." [] 25X1
- 1930s 3 CPSA is virtually moribund despite abandonment of its ultra-left line; ANC continues to follow a slow-moving reformist campaign after Gumede loses reelection bid in 1930. [] 25X1
- 1941 3 CPSA membership increases after Hitler invades the Soviet Union. Black Communists gain new footholds in the ANC. [] 25X1
- 1944 3 A group of young black nationalists--disgusted with the lack of progress resulting from the ANC's moderate tactics--form the ANC Youth League. Most Youth Leaguers are initially anti-Communist and believe that there is no role for whites to play in the struggle for black rights. [] 25X1
- 1946 3 J.B. Marks, a Colored Communist in the ANC, leads a major strike by the African Mineworkers' Union. [] 25X1
- 1948 3 Afrikaner-based National Party comes to power. [] 25X1
- 1949 3 Youth Leaguers dominate ANC National Conference and push through a new "Program of Action" that calls for civil disobedience, strikes, and boycotts. [] 25X1

- 1950 3 Suppression of Communism Act bans the CPSA and also gives the government wide powers to counter extra-parliamentary opposition groups. CPSA announces its dissolution one month prior to passage of the act. Portions of the organization continue to operate underground; three years later the South African Communist Party (SACP) is formed. [] 25X1
- 1952 3 The ANC and the Communist-led SAIC join in a "Defiance Campaign" of passive resistance, which reflects the growing influence of Communists and Youth Leaguers in the ANC. Defiance Campaign is aimed at changing six "unjust" laws, including the Suppression of Communism Act. [] 25X1
- 1952-55 3 Congress Alliance is formed between the ANC, the South African Colored Peoples Organization, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions. A "Congress of the People" is held in 1955 and a "Freedom Charter" is adopted that lists the basic aims of the movement. Later that year, the government arrests 156 Congress Alliance leaders on treason charges. The defendants eventually gain acquittals, but the six-year trial consumes the energy of the Congress Alliance, which loses its earlier momentum. [] 25X1
- 1958-59 3 Black nationalists, angered by the influence of white Communists on the ANC, split with the ANC and form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). [] 25X1
- 1960 3 The government bans both the ANC and the PAC after the Sharpeville incident. [] 25X1
- 1961 3 The ANC forms a military wing--Spear of the Nation-- and launches a campaign of sabotage bombings. [] 25X1
- 1962 3 The SACP draws up a new Party Program and adopts as short-term objectives the goals listed in the Congress Alliance's Freedom Charter. [] 25X1
- 1963-65 3 A series of mass arrests cripples the ANC and weakens the SACP. Among those captured and sentenced to life imprisonment are ANC President Nelson Mandela and SACP Chairman Bram Fischer. ANC and SACP leaders who escape the dragnet go into exile to rebuild their organizations. [] 25X1

- 1969 3 ANC opens its membership to non-blacks at a conference in Morogoro, Tanzania. [redacted] 25X1
- 1976 3 ANC recruits thousands of young blacks fleeing South Africa in the wake of the Soweto riots and trains them for service in the military wing. [redacted] 25X1
- 1980-83 3 The reinvigorated military wing of the ANC renews its "armed propaganda" campaign by attacking security targets and bombing symbols of apartheid. [redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: The African National Congress of South Africa:
Organization, Strategy, and Communist Ties

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