

southern africa



FBI CONTINUES HARASSMENT OF SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMITTEE

On July 13, two agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation visited the offices of the Southern Africa Committee, which publishes the monthly survey of news and opinion, Southern Africa. The agents asked to see the financial records of the Committee, stating that they wished to do so on behalf of the Justice Department, which is conducting an investigation of the Committee. The agents further stated that the purpose of the Justice Department's investigation is to determine whether the Southern Africa Committee should be required to register as an "agent of a foreign principal."

The Committee became aware early in 1975 that the Justice Department was conducting a secret investigation into our affairs. Over the months since that time, our lawyers have on numerous occasions requested information and documentation from the Justice Department under the Freedom of Information Act. It has been our suspicion, openly stated to officials concerned, that the Justice Department has been conducting its investigation on the totally erroneous grounds that the Committee is acting on behalf of a "foreign principal." But we have consistently been refused access to any information or documentation, and have been denied the right to know why we are being investigated, on the grounds that the granting of such information would impede law enforcement procedures.

The FBI agents who visited us on July 13 therefore confirmed our suspicions regarding the pretext for the investigation, and in so doing underscored our belief that there is no basis at all for any investigation.

What has been clear and is now clearer still, is that our Committee has become a victim of harassment by the agencies of our own government. There is absolutely nothing that is secretive or sinister about what we do, which is to produce the magazine Southern Africa each month. We devote our time and energies to this task on a volunteer basis, and do so because we feel that information on this critical area in the world ought to be readily available to the public. We have often voiced our disagreement with U.S. policy with regard to African liberation movements and economic and political contacts with the white minority regimes of Rhodesia and South Africa. We cannot help but feel that there is a direct relationship between the harassment of our Committee, particularly this latest development of July 13, and recent events in southern Africa. The meeting between Prime Minister Vorster of South Africa and Secretary of State Kissinger, the massacre of Black South African demonstrators by the South African police, and other occurrences will increasingly require the American public to take a stand on the issue of whether the U.S. govern-

ment should support the status quo or forces for change in southern Africa. Southern Africa Committee, whose task is to provide the public with reliable information on which to base its stand, finds itself the victim of a clearly baseless investigation by agencies of the U.S. government. This, we feel, can hardly be coincidence.

At this critical time, it is vitally important that our Committee, and other organizations concerned with current developments in southern Africa, remain free from harassment and intimidation.

We call on you to support us in any way you can. We ask you to protest this direct challenge to our right to free speech by requesting that the Attorney General stop the investigation of the Southern Africa Committee immediately.

JULY 14, 1976