

Home Secretary's Meeting with Mr. Jackson, M.P.
and Mr. Hooley, M.P.

The Home Secretary saw Mr. Peter Jackson, M.P. and Mr. Frank Hooley, M.P. on 25th February to discuss their letter to him of 26th January.

Mr. Jackson referred to the report of the meeting of the anti-apartheid movement which had appeared in the "Daily Express" on 22nd January. He said that it contained certain inaccuracies, for example, Miss Doris Leaning was not present and Mr. Idris Cox was no longer Secretary of the Communist Party International Department. More particularly, the report referred to a transcript of the meeting: the meeting had been confined to members of the movement and although there had been minutes there had been no transcript. There was a suspicion that a transcript had been obtained by Special Branch and supplied to the "Daily Express", but he agreed that this was only supposition and he had no actual evidence. He wondered why Special Branch attended meetings of the anti-apartheid movement but not meetings of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society. Mr. Hooley asked whether the taxpayers' money was being wisely spent in providing policemen to attend meetings of the anti-apartheid movement, which could not in any sense be regarded as subversive. He wondered whether their purpose was to obtain information on behalf of the South African Government.

Mr. Jackson went on to describe a suggestion that members of Special Branch had given information to the "Times" about preparations made by the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign before the demonstration in Grosvenor Square in October 1968. He said that Mr. Deedes had approached him in the House of Commons and told him that this information had been given by a detective to a "Times" reporter in the Dive of St. Stephen's Tavern.

The Home Secretary

E.R.

The Home Secretary said that he was grateful for this information. As regards the information given by Mr. Deedes, this was the first clear statement he had heard of this kind and it should be followed up. Mr. Deedes should be seen either by the Home Secretary himself or by the Commissioner of Police and asked to identify the officer concerned.

As regards the article in the "Daily Express", the Home Secretary said he was informed that Special Branch did not attend the meeting concerned, but that they had obtained the transcript some time after it had taken place. This transcript had been produced commercially and it might be supposed that the "Daily Express" had obtained a copy from the same source. Special Branch did not attempt to attend private meetings, but were prepared to attend public meetings if they thought it advisable to do so. Their practice was to attend only if they thought the organisation concerned might be infiltrated by agents of other Governments or that violence would be planned. He put it to Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hooley that they should ask themselves whether the anti-apartheid movement might be of interest to other Governments and might be infiltrated by its agents, but not to take him as making any assertion of his own on this point.

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Hooley thanked the Home Secretary for receiving them and said that they had been reassured. Mr. Jackson agreed to speak to Mr. Deedes, explain that he had mentioned his conversation with him to the Home Secretary and say the Home Secretary thought that Mr. Deedes should himself approach him.

DJL

25th February 1970