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Announcer:In March of last year, ex-CIA agent Philip Agee wrote an open letter to members of Congress, asking them to support his efforts to return to the United States from his self-imposed exile in Britain. Agee wanted the Congressional support because he was afraid of prosecution for his revelations about the CIA. But apparently that support was not forthcoming, or not strong enough, because he has announced that he's not coming back. Paz Cohen reports:

Cohen: Unable to learn from the Justice Department whether he would be indicted for past actions if he returned to the United States, former CIA agent Philip Agee, author of "Inside the Company; A CIA Diary," has decided to remain abroad. In a statement released through the public interest research group, Fifth Estate, Agee explains that, even if not prosecuted on return, he would surely be forbidden by the court to speak or write about the CIA without prior CIA approval. That would prevent his finishing a book and other projects in which he is presently involved.

His attorney, American Civil Liberties Union legal director Melvin Wulf [phon] tried several times to learn from the attorney general whether Agee could return to the states without fear of prosecution or other legal action. But the attorney general and his assistants replied that Justice Department policy has long been not to respond to an inquiry from an individual or his attorney as to whether that person is or is not under investigation.

In his statement of intent not to return, Agee cautions that the Congressional investigations into the CIA's activities are not focussing on the real victims of the CIA's operations, those millions of people who, he said, were assassinated, tortured or imprisoned without trial after having organized to change conditions in their own countries. Focussing on past abuses instead of on the CIA's support of political repression abroad, Agee said, must be seen as covering up the real issues.

As to his decision, he said, the positive response from so many individuals and organizations in the U.S. to my book and other political acts, will compensate if I have to live still a few more years outside the country. This is Paz Cohen, Pacifica Radio in Washington.

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