

"WITH BEST WISHES AND KINDEST THOUGHTS"

AT THE END of September, 1963, there was a theft from the Black Sash office in Johannesburg. A portable typewriter and membership lists were stolen. This theft was immediately reported to the police, and the following day a detective came to the office and took a statement.

Offensive Photographs.

On Christmas Day and on several days afterwards, many of our members received in the post a typed envelope containing photographs of atrocities allegedly committed in Kenya and Angola. Each envelope contained a full-page sheet of Agfa photographic paper folded in four on which two or three photographs were printed, and two or three separate photographs. Typed on the face of the large sheet were the words: "This is Kenya, attached is Angola. At home may I remind you of Paarl and Bashee Bridge murders and the Rivonia Trial evidence."

On the back of the large sheet was typed:

"With the New Year on our hands we have to do some serious
"thinking concerning both our membership and the policy of
"our movement. Enclosed is something to be borne in mind.
"With best wishes and kindest thoughts.

"A. FELLOW-MEMBER."

We have heard that members in Johannesburg, Bryanston, Benoni, Witbank and Barberton received these "greetings", and also four members in Pietermaritzburg. Complaints to the police were made by individuals, and the President went to the Special Branch to make an official complaint. As neither the President nor any members of the Headquarters Executive with the exception of the Magazine Editor had received the photographs, it was not possible to make an official complaint on behalf of the Black Sash.

The Police, however, have promised to investigate the matter, and a Detective-Sergeant has been appointed to go into the matter and has interviewed some members who received photographs.

Anonymous Telephone Call.

At 4 a.m. one morning early in January, Mrs. Janet Sinclair, an old lady 81 years of age, received an anonymous telephone call. The speaker called her "that communist", and said he was coming to kill her. This call was obviously intended for Mrs. Jean Sinclair, National President of the Black Sash.

Not Intimidated.

If either or both of these incidents were intended to intimidate the Black Sash, they have certainly failed.

We will not be deterred in our chosen work by anonymous letters, "Christmas cards" or telephone calls, and, in the end, right and justice will prevail.

NEWSPAPER COMMENT

The "Rand Daily Mail" says:

BY WAY OF CONTRAST

THAT members of the Black Sash received in their Christmas mail horror photographs of atrocities said to have been committed in Kenya and Angola is not in itself of much importance. The women of this gallant body are too accustomed to abuse, hooliganism and much other oafish behaviour to be unduly upset by further coarseness of this kind.

Yet the episode is revealing in several ways. First, it seems clearly linked with the theft two months ago of documents from the Johannesburg offices of the Black Sash, including membership lists. The theft was reported to the police but from what we can gather no special interest has been taken in the matter. Compare this with the

considerable hoo-ha over the alleged theft of documents belonging to the Broederbond. No less than the head of the Security Branch investigated the matter personally and a squad of detectives raided the offices of the biggest Sunday newspaper in the country. A discredited secret society of known fascist outlook gets top-level attention

for its complaint; a public-spirited group of women who could scarcely conduct their activities more fully in the open encounter what looks very much like indifference.

The horror pictures and their crude message are no doubt the work of some lunatic fringe Right-wing body of which there are several in existence. They seem quite free to pursue their deplorable activities, sending through the postal system scurrilous material of a race-baiting nature. By way of contrast, it is the liberal organizations dedicated to race harmony and the elimination of discrimination that are liable to attract the notice of the authorities.

This, of course, is part of the main sickness from which South Africa suffers to-day and which the Black Sash letters illustrate — the attitude that those who stand for social justice and the upholding of Western moral values are really working for the collapse of our society in an orgy of violence and bloodshed. This is a simple-minded view indeed, a pathetic excuse for resistance to change, but alas, it is close to becoming our official national outlook. Such are the straits in which South Africa finds herself to-day.

The "Natal Mercury" says:

SICK SYMPTOMS

The sending through the post of hideous Congo and Mau Mau atrocity pictures to the members of the Black Sash could normally be ignored as the work of misguided cranks.

But the incident, about which the Black Sash movement is rightly protesting, has . . . unsatisfactory features which ought not to pass unnoticed.

. . . The despicable imputation behind the despatch of these gruesome pictures to members of what the senders no doubt consider to be a "liberal" organization is in itself an inevitable outgrowth, and an extremely distasteful one, from the extremist thinking which is manifesting itself in various forms in the Transvaal.

In a healthy society sick political minds can be ignored. The danger occurs when society does not recognize the cause of the sickness.

POLICE DOGS AND THE INDIAN COMMUNITY (Continued from Page 25)

A reader of the "Star" replied to this letter, which he described as "arrogant", and put the following questions to "this arch-champion of rights and liberty":

Three questions

- Since when has it become traditional to stage protest gatherings at the Union Buildings?
- Why is it wrong for the majority of White South Africans to preserve their heritage?
- Is the writer contemplating a note of protest to the Minister of Justice about the commendable way in which a lone policeman and his dog kept a crowd at a Johannesburg cinema in check on Boxing Day?

. . . and three answers.

MR S SINCLAIR replied:

- It has been traditional for many years for protests, petitions and letters to be taken to Cabinet Ministers at the Union Buildings. The Union Buildings are the administrative seat of Government and in them are the offices of some of the Cabinet Ministers. Your reader may remember that on June 22, 1940, 9,800 Afrikaner women, dressed in Voortrekker costume, marched

from Church Square to the Union Buildings with a petition to the Prime Minister, General Smuts, begging the Government to come to terms with Adolf Hitler. On many occasions since then petitions, protests and letters to the Government have been taken to the Union Buildings.

- It is not wrong for the majority of White South Africans to preserve their heritage. The Indian women too are South Africans, who went in an orderly manner to present a letter to the Prime Minister protesting against the Group Areas Act.

At this time the Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Maree, on behalf of the Government, was assuring representatives of the Indian people that they are regarded as South African citizens and that he wished them to express their views. I fail to understand the connection between White South Africans preserving their heritage and Indian women voicing their grievances to the proper authority.

- I stand by the statement made in my original letter in the "Star": "We have been given to understand that the police use these trained dogs for the apprehension of criminals and the breaking up of unruly crowds." The crowd outside the cinema on Boxing Day was presumably unruly.