

SEGREGATION & APARTHEID

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Prior to 1994, White South Africa had always practised some form of segregation i.e. separation of the races. Apartheid as a political policy was introduced only after the National Party came to power in 1948.



A fake cover attempting to show what 'White' mail might have looked like if Apartheid had been applied equally.

Hidden Messages in this Image point to it being a Fake.

- 1]. No date stamps marked 'EUROPEAN OFFICE' or 'WHITES ONLY' Registration labels were issued.
- 2]. The date in the PRETORIA EUROPEAN OFFICE is '6 VI 76', the start of the Soweto Uprising.
- 3]. The Registration Label contains Nelson Mandela's Robben Island prisoner number '46664'.
- 4]. The Block of four x 5c '50 Years SA Flag' was not issued until 11th November 1977.
- 5]. The London address was that of the SACP (South African Communist Party).

The early South African Post Offices were started for literate Europeans. Few thought that Black people would need to write and send letters. As Black people became literate they began to use the Post Office at much the same time as segregationists were locating the growing numbers of urban Blacks in 'locations' on the outskirts of towns. Discrimination against Blacks in the form of separate counters, post offices and Native, Indo-Native, Bantu, Non-European and Non-White datestamps and Registered labels became a feature of the Post Office. The 'European' service remained transparent i.e. White mail is identified by an absence of race-descriptors. This does not hide the fact that all South African mail pre-1994 was the product of a racist society.

The above cover is a computer-generated graphic which I created about six years ago after developing an interest in Apartheid mail. Because Apartheid discriminated against Black South Africans, i.e. its restrictions and regulations were largely aimed at them, I wondered what covers (letters) posted by White South Africans would have looked like had Apartheid's need to racially describe the sender been applied equally to Europeans. The main need would have been for 'Europeans Only' postmarks, as well as Registered Labels. But imagine this cover and the millions of others that went to the UK from kith and kin in SA every year arriving in London marked 'Europeans Only'. It would have added hugely to the international condemnation of Apartheid that then existed and which had isolated SA within the Western World. For that reason - and also because Apartheid only discriminated against 'Non-Europeans', not Whites, - European race-specific date stamps were never introduced.

The great irony is that Black people could post pre-stamped letters in mailboxes alongside White mail and that all letters handed in at a segregated Black counters ended up going into the same mail sack as White ones.