

Inquest on Timol hears letters

STAFF REPORTER

MR. I. MAISELS, QC, read to the resumed Timol inquest yesterday a letter from Mrs. Stephanie Sachs (née Kemp) in which she denied she had ever met Ahmed Timol.

The inquest into the death of the 30-year-old Roodenport schoolteacher, who fell from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square in October last year, is being heard in the Johannesburg Regional Court by Mr. J. J. L. de Villiers.

Mr. Maisels, for the Timol family, told the court he wanted to put it on record that on May 10 he received a letter from Mrs. Sachs from London.

He read the letter and his reply to the court.

The letter reads: "I have read a report of the inquest on Ahmed Timol in the Rand Daily Mail of April 27th. In a statement alleged to have been made by Timol, my name is mentioned in several instances. I should like you to know that I have never met Ahmed Timol on any occasion. I did not form a "firm friendship" with him, I did not take him to the residence of Jack Hodgson, I am not a member of the central committee of the South African Communist Party."

The letter in signed Stephanie Sachs, née Kemp) and the address given is South Hill Park, London.

Mr. Maisels also read his reply to the court: "The position is that Timol apparently told the police that "Stephanie", whose name appeared at the foot of the number of letters written to him, was Stephanie Kemp. However the police made it clear in evidence given by them that in fact the name "Stephanie" was a nom de plume for Rika Hodgson.

Earlier Mr. Maisels resumed his examination of Detective-Sergeant P. J. du Preez, a handwriting expert attached to the Security Branch, Pretoria, who had given evidence at the previous hearing.

Mr. Maisels handed Detective-Sergeant Du Preez a number of cheques, saying that the signatory had put a line under his signature in each case. The length of the lines varied from cheque to cheque.

UNSAFE

Detective-Sergeant Du Preez agreed it was "very unsafe" to draw inferences from the length of lines in a person's writing.

The detective-sergeant had previously told the court that marks which appeared on a document written by Mr. Timol had not been made by the same person.

Questioned by Mr. S. A. Cilliers, for the police, Detective-Sergeant Du Preez said Mr. Timol's handwriting looked "perfectly normal". It was difficult to say anything about the emotional state of the writer, he said, but "there was nothing to indicate undue emotional upset".

Asked by Mr. Maisels with what he had compared the writing to enable him to come to the conclusion that Mr. Timol had had no emotional disturbance, Detective-Sergeant Du Preez said he had compared it with documents written by Mr. Timol before this.

UPSET

He had not been asked to direct his mind to the possible emotional upset of the writer when examining the document. He said he had had the possibility in mind.

Mr. De Villiers said his impression was that the handwriting was "normal and fluent". If the writer had been nervous one would have expected shakiness.

Mr. P. A. J. Kotze, who led the evidence, read out an affidavit by another handwriting

Fourie said he had examined carefully certain documents and cards handed to him by Major-General Buys. The handwriting was fluent and normal and no attempt had been made to disguise its characteristics.

NEXT

Mr. Kotze then told the court that two pathologists would be the next witnesses. He wanted to call Dr. N. J. Schepers, the State pathologist, first, he said. But Dr. Schepers had had to attend court in Pretoria yesterday.

Major-General Buys had been told by a medical specialist "not to do any work at all" and could not attend court, Mr. Kotze said. He would be medically examined again on June 1 and could not be called as a witness before then.

Major-General Buys collapsed in the witness box on May 4 while giving evidence at the Timol inquest.

Mr. Maisels said it was "absolutely essential" that Major-General Buys should be recalled for further examination.

The hearing continues today. Mr. I. A. Maisels, QC, and Mr. G. A. Bizos, instructed by Cichalia and Loomat S. A. Cilliers, for the Timol family; Mr. S. A. Cilliers, instructed by the State Attorney; is appearing for the police; Mr. P. A. J. Kotze is leading the evidence.

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