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CIVIL



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News Letter

How they live

In the Argus of May 13 there appeared an article on the re-settlement towns of Dimbaza, Sada and Ilinge, where 40,000 men, women and children are looking forward to a winter on a state grant of R2.50 a month each. The Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development has not enlivened the prospect by announcing that those who receive this grant will no longer get the free rations of R2.55 a month which they have hitherto had.

Rev. David Russell of King William's Town, who works among the people of Dimbaza, recently told the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Mr M.C. Botha, that he intended to live on the amount of R5 a month which these people were then receiving, and would keep the Minister informed of what it meant.

Mr Russell has now sent the Minister his first letter. In it he point out that R5 a month means 16½ cents a day, and gives the following details of what he spends it on:

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|------|
| 4 dessert spoonfuls of maize meal | ... | 1c | |
| Kupugani soup - 3 teaspoons | ... | 1c | |
| Pronutro - 2½ dessertspoons | ... | 1c | |
| Margarine - 8 teaspoons | ... | 1c | |
| Milk - 4 teaspoons | ... | 1½c | |
| Coffee - 8 teaspoons | ... | 1½c | |
| Sugar or syrup and a vitamin tablet | ... | 3c | |
| Bread or samp | ... | 2½c | 12½c |

This, says Mr Russell, leaves him 4c a day for fuel, salt, matches soap, toothpaste, stamps, church giving.

Space does not permit of quoting much from the Argus article, but the following items are significant enough.

"The Department (of Bantu Administration) has built three re-settlement townships which are pockets of human misery and despair. Too far from the towns to provide work, they house thousands of widows and migrant workers' families who are utterly unable to find work or earn a living. ... One cannot stop without being besieged by hungry children - who do not ask for money, but for food."

The Argus quotes Mr Russell as saying: "I have never seen such concentrated poverty. The alternative to allowing a Black man to live near town with his family is what the Government is now having to face. They have to subsidise people who would prefer to work.

"When their rations run out early - as they do - there is absolutely nothing these people can do. By the time the next supply arrives they owe their neighbours half."

And now the Deputy Minister is proposing to take away half these people's allowance ...

Practical help

Mrs Anna Pearce of the Quaker Service Fund (Quaker House, Rye Road, Mowbray) suggests that the best way we can help is to provide money for maintaining trained social workers in these areas, to help with applications for grants or pensions, to trace sons in the cities who might send money to their mothers to keep homecraft or sewing centres going. Donations can be sent to the Fund (W.O. 2316). We need not commend this cause to our readers.

Stop press

In an interview with the Cape Times (19/5/72) Mr Russell corrected certain typing errors in the diet sheet he had sent to the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, as follows: Not 8 teaspoons of margarine, but 8 teaspoons of milk. Not 8, but 4 teaspoons of coffee. 8 teaspoons of sugar.

Not much more nourishing, is it?

Mr Russell added that he could not have a hot bath, and that when he struck a match he did not throw it away, but saved it to use again!

Triumph for justice

The reversal by our Appellate Division of the verdict on the Dean of Johannesburg has been hailed both here and overseas as a triumph for our courts and - we hope with justification - as a b. for what the Cape Times described as "another, less distinguished and more recent tradition operating in South African life outside the judicial system"- detention without trial.

The Dean himself commented somewhat wryly, "Justice is not dead in South Africa, if you can afford it". And the Sunday Times paying tribute to the work of Advocate Kentridge, said (7/5/72),

"The case was not won and lost in the Appeal Court. It was won and lost in the trial court. What Advocate Kentridge built up in the trial court was a record of evidence upon which the Dean's innocence could be decided ... The Appeal Court based its judgment on the trial record ... even the world's most brilliant judges (and some of them are to be found in our Appeal Court) cannot acquit an innocent man unless the record actually establishes his innocence ..."

Weight of evidence

There have been several cases lately in which our judiciary and our magistrates have shown that they attach due weight to evidence in considering whether or not an accused is guilty, and refuse to find the person guilty unless the evidence is convincing. So, for instance, Mr Justice J.F. Marais found Quentin Jacobsen not guilty of charges under the Terrorism Act because he considered some of the evidence against him to be unreliable (in one case, he described the witness as "unreliable, and given to parrotlike reports of what he thought would please the authorities Cape Times, 22/4/72). The judge further commented that "the State must be held to the indictment as particularised".

The Appellate Division allowed the appeal by Mrs Winnie Mandela against a conviction in the Pretoria Supreme Court, saying that the State had failed to prove that Mrs Mandela had in fact been guilty of the charges brought against her of contravening her banning order.

A Cape Town magistrate acquitted Miss G.E. Lee, an elderly woman who had displayed placards in the street, of a charge of loitering, and an alternative charge of obstructing traffic, on the grounds that there was "insufficient uncontestable evidence" for a conviction.

Incidentally, Miss Lee conducted her own defence.

Implications

The Sunday Times (16/4/72) pointed out certain important implications of the Appellate Division's judgment on the Dean's case. The judgment, said the paper, "powerfully reinforces the doctrine (freely accepted by the judge in the lower court) that a man cannot be put on trial for his political opinions, however forcefully and persistently expressed.

"To denounce a law as unjust does not automatically imply that you are intending to break it, nor does it necessarily mean that you are inciting others to break it.

"Strong criticism of legislation and condemnation of its

effects are not in themselves crimes, and it is a good thing that this point should be firmly established once and for all. There are elements in South Africa which tend to forget it."

The paper also suggested that "another beneficial result of the judgment may be a re-thinking by the Security Police and other... authorities involved of the scope of the Terrorism Act ... If one result is a clearer and narrower definition of terrorism, this in itself will be a big step forward."

Well done, Maties!

We congratulate the University of Stellenbosch on the growing social conscience of its students. The Argus reports that this year they have become the first Afrikaans university to launch a welfare services programme for neighbouring Coloured people. The programme, known as Gemeenskaps Ontwikkeling, is to co-ordinate welfare services undertaken by students in all disciplines, including the coaching of a Coloured rugby club, the designing of toilet and change room facilities for the club, a course in motor repairs and maintenance, coaching in different high schools subjects, and the provision of legal aid. The organisation's chairman said in an interview that paternalism formed no part of the organisation's aims: "We want to get things started in the community, but as soon as its members are willing to take responsibility for these projects, we pull out." A sister organisation, Ontwikkelingshulp, is specifically aimed at assisting Africans in the homelands. This, it is said, will be a systematic project involving all South African Universities, English, Afrikaans and non-White.

More power to their elbows!

Dialogue?

One of the most interesting phenomena of current race relations in South Africa is the growing frankness with which the African, Coloured and Indian leaders and organisations express their opinions. This applies both to students (for instance, the widespread protests about the expulsion of the Turfloop students) and to African and Coloured leaders. These latter are using the platforms the Government have provided for them in a way that we suspect the Government did not anticipate. This is a most healthy development: without frankness, there is no hope of arriving at understanding... We hope that frank dialogue will continue and that it will lead to constructive co-operation and acceptance of each other as people.

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