

THE CASE AGAINST POVERTY—

(Contd.)

same charge of *inaction* against previous governments. Both, for instance, quoted the 20-year-old work of that distinguished nutritionist, the late Dr. T. W. B. Osborn, M.P., and its failure to evoke official response.

On the fourth proposition, I feel it imperative to quote Mr. Moltano directly—I wish very much that it could be in full:

“It is my final proposition that this poverty is totally unnecessary. I wish first to debunk a fallacious approach often repeated—that the Government, or the privileged White class, “does so much” for the non-White people, the main victims of poverty. . . . Even if this were true, and I dispute it, I believe it to be a total fallacy to imagine that poverty can be abolished by any form of bounty. . . . The only way in which poverty can be alleviated . . . is by an increase in the national income, which, in turn, is dependent upon the co-operative efforts of all classes of the community directed to the best use of material resources. The role of governments, therefore, is . . . to promote the conditions for increasing productivity.

“On the physical side the evidence is clear that South Africa is materially well endowed. Twenty years ago, the Van Eck Commission presented irrefutable evidence of this. . . .” Mr. Moltano then quoted extensively from the Report (very exciting to hear, “for this evidence has never been contradicted”) and its recommendations (very depressing to hear, “because never acted on”).

“The country therefore possesses the human and material resources to enable it to overcome poverty. The problem thus is one of organization: to mobilise those resources and direct their use to the alleviation and ultimate abolition of poverty.

“And that task pre-eminently is the function, I suggest to you, of Government, and should be one of any government’s two principal functions—the other is the promotion of personal freedom. The two must go together, they are complementary: the one is impossible without the other.”

And, after detailed advocacy of the economic measures, like anti-cyclical budgeting, necessary to the conquest of poverty, Mr. Moltano warned: “Although Parliament is the only organ that can take or authorize the measures that I have suggested to you are required, I do not think it is likely to do so, so long as it is exclusively composed of the privileged class in this country. . . . I know of no historical case where an organ exclusively composed of the privileged has made the radical reforms needed to alleviate the condition of the masses of the people. . . .”

The Black Sash, throughout the length and breadth of the Republic, must surely respond to these sentiments with a very solemn AMEN—and act accordingly.

A BRILLIANT and telling exhibition was arranged for the Seminar by Aileen Moodie, the Research Social Worker in the Nutrition Unit of the University of Cape Town, in kiosks around the hall, giving facts and figures of malnutrition in diagram form.

Dr. O. Wollheim also set out on a table the actual food which could be bought from the average weekly wage of an unskilled worker.

Posbus

A. J. Marais, Johannesburg, skryf:

Die Radio se Plig

EK stem saam met die inhoud van u inleiding in die Maart/April 1962 uitgawe. Ek wil graag die gevaarlike rigting onderstreep deur te herinner aan 'n praatjie wat geruime tyd gelede uitgesaai is oor die Afrikaanse sender. Dit was in die reeks „Uit ons Aarde”, 6.45 vm. In die besondere praatjie word die volk gewaarsku dat hulle nie kan beskik oor alle feite nie en dus maar „die oogklappe moet dra” en vertrou op die oordeel van die leiers.

Die Radio het 'n dure plig om opvoedkundig op te tree en die volk aan te moedig om so wakker te loop as moontlik voordat hy by die stembus sy oordeel uitspreek. Dit is betreurenswaardig dat in die genoemde geval mense aangemoedig word om blindelings te volg.

Freedom is not a gift from a State or leader, but a possession to be won every day by the effort of each and the unity of all.

Albert Camus.
