

The ZIONIST RECORD

The Organ of South African Jewry

"Zionism aims to establish a publicly-assured, legally secured Home for the Jewish people in Palestine."

—Basle Programme.

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The Reddingsdaad Examined

THE story of the Reddingsdaad movement has many important morals. In its original inspiration, it was intended by the late Rev. Kestell as a sincere and large-scale "act of redemption" aimed at alleviating what is an undoubted problem in this country—the incidence of "poor-whiteism," especially among sections of the Afrikaans-speaking community. Whether the project as conceived by the Rev. Kestell could itself have improved the position is very problematical. When the movement was, however, formally launched twenty months ago at the Bloemfontein Congress it was given a different direction. Little emphasis was placed on the problem of poor-whiteism, but a good deal on the need for having the "Afrikaner" represented in greater numbers in trade, industry and the professions.

This objective itself involved an over-simplification of the facts: for while it is true that for well-known historical reasons the Afrikaans-speaking group are not numerically strong in certain spheres of our economic life, they are present in larger numbers (in fact, often "over represented") in certain other spheres. Agriculture is largely in their hands; they play a leading role on the control boards, in insurance, and on boards of executives; they hold the highest positions in the iron and steel industry; and, of course, in the public service, particularly in the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, Defence, Justice and the Police Force, their numbers are very great.

Actually, the principle of dividing the economic life of the country along racial lines is entirely unsound—that, indeed, is the basic objection to the whole ideology of the Reddingsdaad. From the very outset, despite the fact that its sponsors claimed that the movement was entirely non-political, it had very much in common with the segregation doctrines of "Afrikaner Christian Nationalism." To many it appeared to be merely the economic wing of the Republican movement. Now in the light of the recently-created Afrikaner Unity Front—whereby the Reddingsdaadbond is linked with the Ossewa Brandwag and the Herenigde Party—its claim to be non-political is obviously no longer tenable. Despite the elaborate explanations which have been offered, it is clear that the Reddingsdaadbond is now inseparable from the political aspirations of Republican Nationalism.

These latest developments are to be welcomed, in a sense, because they help to make the issues clearer for those people who may have been misled by the humanitarian facade of the Reddingsdaad and so have misunderstood its real character. This clarification has also been aided by the closely reasoned pamphlet just issued by Prof. A. C. Cilliers, entitled "Hertzogism and Commerce." Prof. Cilliers rightly emphasises that the Reddingsdaad movement rests on a false political basis, namely, a "two-stream" or isolation policy in economic life. He points out that the organised support which is being claimed for Afrikaans undertakings by Afrikaans-speaking people, must, inevitably, be looked upon by the

other side as a boycott, and, therefore, if persisted in, is likely to "unleash an economic struggle on racial lines." He explains that since, in the economic field, two blades of grass cannot be made to grow where one grew previously, an organised support for one section can only be accomplished at the expense of the withdrawal of support from the other section. "It means that one side can win only what it takes from the other side. In practice this means an economical and political war on racial lines." Moreover, he believes that the Afrikaans-speaking people cannot succeed in such an effort. "The reason lies in the fact that the two races in our country are interwoven to such an extent by vested interests of a social, political, organic and economic nature, that any attempt to divide them on racial lines must inevitably fail."

This commonsense viewpoint must commend itself to all who regard the matter dispassionately. It is sincerely to be hoped that in the interests of the future unity and tranquillity of this country, the truth of that viewpoint will speedily be realised by all.

In Spite of War—

CIVILISED nations have long recognised that war imperils the pursuits and practices which in peace are the marks of civilisation. Among all such peoples in this war the public mind has been at great pains to ensure that the conflict should not involve the sacrifice of the very things for which they are contending. It should cause no surprise, therefore, that in Eretz Israel to-day the Yishuv, in spite of wartime hardships, should cling more tenaciously than ever to its cultural activities. For the Jewish people the distinctive Hebrew civilisation that it is building up in Eretz Israel is its most precious achievement of modern times. And the Yishuv knows that literature, music, drama, art, do not spring into being at the word of command; their life is a continuous process growing within itself, and a break in its continuity may be irremediable.

If, in some directions, the war has caused a partial dislocation in these cultural activities, every effort has been made to correct the dislocating influences. If quantity has sometimes had to be sacrificed, quality has been maintained at its former level. Because paper, for instance, is severely rationed and the buying capacity of the public reduced, books are now being published in smaller editions, on poorer paper and in cheaper form. But in the first year of the war the Yishuv still produced some 60 new Hebrew books. The size of newspapers has had to be curtailed, but the written word has been supplemented by the open forum of the "living" or "vocal" newspaper.

Although guest conductors cannot now come from abroad, there has been no diminution in the number of concerts of the Palestine Orchestra, nor in the public's enthusiasm for music. More than ever, indeed, music plays a part in the life of the people comparable to the performances of the plays of Sophocles and Euripides in ancient Athens. Not only has the war not been permitted to re-

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