

SEGUNDINO DIMITUI, ET AL., PETITIONERS, VS. COURT OF AGRARIAN RELATIONS OF PAMPANGA, ET AL., RESPONDENTS.

G.R. No. 20724. November 18, 1967

Ponente: REYES, J.B.L., J.

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REYES, J.B.L., J.:

Petition to prohibit the respondent Court of Agrarian Relations of Pampanga from proceeding with its Tenancy Cases Nos. 894 and 1095, entitled, "Ernesto Dimitui, et al. vs. Segundino Dimitui, et al." and "Ernesto Dimitui vs. Rosendo Diaz, et al.", respectively, and to declare as null and void, the court's order of 16 August 1962, on the ground of lack of jurisdiction.

Petitioners Francisco Bondoc, Andres Mandap and Placido Simon work as tenants in two sugar cane and rice landholdings located in barrio San Pablo Libutad, San Simon, Pampanga, and more particularly described as Lots Nos. 269-D and 269-C of the subdivision plan (LRC) Psd-7140.

On 1 December 1960, herein respondents Ernesto Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui filed with the respondent Agrarian Court a petition to order the above-named tenants to recognize and deal with them as their lawful landlords, instead of herein petitioner Segundino Dimitui and to stop him from molesting and interfering in the landholdings. The petition was docketed as Tenancy Case No. 894.

The respondents in the said case moved to dismiss the petition on the ground that title of claimants Dimitui and Bondoc to the land in question was disputed in Civil Case No. 1832 of the Court of First Instance of Pampanga; but the court, on 10 January 1961, denied the motion for the reason that until the purchase by Dimitui and Bondoc was invalidated, it was to be presumed good and should be recognized (Annex E, petition). Answer was then filed by defendants and trial proceeded. One witness, Emiliano Dimitui, son of Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui and brother of Ernesto Dimitui, testified that there was a pending case in the Court of First Instance of Pampanga regarding the ownership of Lot 269-D. Forthwith, the court pronounced itself without jurisdiction regarding lot 269-D. The petitioners in Case 894 moved for reconsideration; the respondents filed their opposition, and the court set aside its previous order of dismissal.

On 27 November 1961, Ernesto Dimitui filed another petition (Tenancy Case No. 1095-P-61) this time, to eject the tenants of Lot 269-D, namely, Rosendo Diaz, Leoncio Diaz, Numeriano Dantes, Claro Palma, Bienvenido Magpayo, and Aquilino Palasigui for failing, allegedly, to notify him of the date of reaping and threshing and not giving him his landholder's share in the harvest. Segundino Dimitui was impleaded as a party respondent to prevent him, as in the earlier case, from exercising the rights of a landholder in the landholding (Annex L). The respondents filed their answer, once more pleading lack of tenancy relationship, since the tenants were those of Segundino Dimitui, and contesting again the jurisdiction of the Agrarian Court.

On 18 June 1962, claimants Ernesto Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui moved to suspend the proceedings in the two tenancy cases, pending the final determination by the Court of First Instance of Pampanga of the right of ownership and possession of Lot 269-D in its Civil Case No. 1832, entitled, "Segundino Dimitui, et

al. vs. Ernesto Dimitui, et al." The complaint in the latter civil case alleges that the defendants Ernesto Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui secured Torrens titles to portions of Lot 269 thru a fictitious and fraudulent sale at public auction, and prays that the sale be voided and Lot 269-D be reconveyed to the plaintiffs-spouses Segundino Dimitui and Consolacion Pineda.

On 26 June 1962, the respondents in the two tenancy cases (petitioners herein) moved to dismiss the cases. The petitioners (respondents herein) opposed, and on 18 July 1962, the court denied both the motion to suspend proceedings and the motion to dismiss.

On 13 August, the petitioners Ernesto Dimitui and Bondoc (respondents herein) filed a motion in CAR Case 894-P-60 to implement the resolution of 10 January 1961 (Annex E), and for the order to the tenants to recognize them as landholders for the crop year '62-'63 (Annex T).

And on 16 August 1962, the court issued, in said Agrarian case 894, the order that herein petitioners seek to nullify, on certiorari, in this Court (Annex W). Its dispositive portion states as follows:

"WHEREFORE, interlocutory order is hereby issued requiring and directing respondents Francisco Bondoc, Andres Mandap and Placido Simon, who are alleged to be tenants on the landholding in question, to recognize and consider petitioners herein, Ernesto de Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui, as their landholders. The lifetime of this inter-locutory order lasts during the pendency of this case or until such time as another order shall be otherwise issued by this Court.

"During the lifetime of this interlocutory order, the relationship of agricultural tenancy must be between the said three respondents above-mentioned and the herein petitioners over the landholding in question and that they should treat each other as such tenants and landholders in accordance with law.

"Atty. Santiago Sunga, of this Court, is hereby directed to implement this order by furnishing copies hereto to each of the three tenants and the petitioners, as well as to their respective counsel. Atty. Sunga will advise the three respondent-tenants accordingly. He may secure the assistance of the Philippine Constabulary, if necessary, in the implementation of this order.

"SO ORDERED."

The petitioners' objection to the Agrarian Court's jurisdiction in the two tenancy cases is the absence, in their opinion, of a tenancy relationship between them and the respondents. This view is untenable. It is true that the tenants never had a contract of tenancy, express or implied, with Ernesto Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui and that prior to 1959, petitioner Segundino Dimitui was, admittedly, the landholder; however, it is also admitted that Ernesto Dimitui purchased Lot 269-D in a sheriff's sale at public auction on 29 May 1959.

Now, Section 9 of the Agricultural Tenancy Act provides:

"Sec. 9, x x x x x the sale, alienation or transfer of legal possession does not of itself extinguish the relationship. In the latter case, the purchaser or transferee shall assume the rights and obligations of the former landholder in relation to the tenant x x x x x. (Rep. Act 1199, as amended by Sec. 3, Rep. Act 2263)"

The law, therefore, created a tenancy relationship between the tenants and Ernesto Dimitui where there was none by contract. As the lower court correctly pointed out, the auction sale of the lands here involved to Ernesto Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui are to be presumed valid, until annulled or set aside by the regular courts; and the mere pendency of a suit to that invalidate said sale does not, until final judgment of nullification, deprive the contested sale of its legal effect. The tenants, of course, may not arrogate unto themselves the right to decide the validity of their landholders' ownership.

But Segundino Dimitui insists that certainly he is not a tenant, and, there being no tenancy relationship between

him and the respondents Dimitui and Bondoc, it follows that the Court of Agrarian Relations has no jurisdiction to order him not to interfere in the landholding. This argument is equally in vain. The Court's order to the tenants to recognize the respondents Ernesto Dimitui and Mamerta Bondoc Vda. de Dimitui as their landholders could not be fully and adequately operative if petitioner Segundino Dimitui were allowed to remain free to interfere with the landholding and to insist that the tenants recognize him instead as landholder. The Court of Agrarian Relations, like any other court, has the inherent power to do all things reasonably necessary for the administration of justice within the scope of its jurisdiction;^[1] hence it may, in the words of Sec. 5, Rule 135 of the Revised Rules of Court, "compel obedience to its judgments, orders and processes" (subpar. C) and "control, in further-ance of justice, the conduct x x x of all other persons in any manner connected with a case before it" so that its orders and decrees will not be rendered nugatory. No abuse of discretion was committed by the Court in so doing.

FOR THE REASONS AFORESTATED, the writs of certiorari and prohibition applied for are denied. Costs against petitioners.

SO ORDERED.

Concepcion, C.J., Dizon, Makalintal, Bengzon, Zaldivar, Sanchez, Ruiz Castro, Angeles, and Fernando, JJ., concur.

[1] *Shioji vs. Harvey*, 43 Phil. 333, 344.

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