

# An Unjustifiable System

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*The National Conference of the Black Sash was held in October. This is the text of Mrs. Sinclair's presidential address to the Conference.*

If we were not so concerned with the injustice and the inhumanity in the South African system perhaps we could view the political situation dispassionately. But our daily work brings us into personal contact with the people whose lives are ordered, restricted and deprived by legislation and Government decree.

The deprivation is so all-embracing that it amounts to a denial of their humanity and a denial of the most fundamental human rights which are the birthright of mankind. In this situation it is difficult either to be dispassionate or indifferent.

Public opinion is being sidetracked into discussion on subjects, many of which, if they are not irrelevant, are remote from reality or are of a minor importance and which have no bearing on the future wellbeing of the country and all its people.

When one considers reality, what is the purpose in endless discussion on whether urban Africans are permanently in the urban areas or whether they are temporary sojourners? We know from the facts of our economy that Africans will be permanently in the urban areas.

One asks why a rootless migrant should be preferable to a settled worker living under family conditions. It is unrealistic to discuss whether Africans should be allowed to perform skilled work when we know that there is a shortage of skills and that the economy will eventually collapse if Africans are not allowed to do any work of which they are capable.

We are given the impression that it is better to die for want of a White doctor or nurse rather than to accept with gratitude the services of Black doctors and nurses — and live.

We spend hundreds of millions of rand on defence to protect the country from outside attack and the infiltration of terrorists. Yet inside the country we create the situation in which terrorism can flourish by disrupting family life and discriminating against Blacks in every sphere of life.

We profess to be a Christian country, but arrest, detain, charge, ban, house arrest and deport Christian clergy who in all humility are trying to put into practice, their Christian principles.

The Government is hurriedly establishing more homeland authorities to implement its Separate Development policy, but is denying them adequate land on which to support their populations.

The Government has not devoted its energy or its resources to achieving any meaningful development in the homelands. It is surprised and angry when certain of the homeland leaders ask for more land and more power.

The National Party, which last year appeared to be making some progress with its *verligtheid*, took fright when it seemed to be losing ground in the political field.

The fear of the *Herstigtes* and the pressure from within the party led to a change of direction and a return to *Baasskap* and *Kragdadigheid*. The call to the blood and the raising of old bogeys like "*boerehaat*" and the flag were revived.

The *Broederbond* appears to be in the driving seat once more and key broeders occupy key positions both in the Cabinet and in Government departments.

From all this we observe that the more opinions seemed to be changing, the more they remain the same.

Issues which are in need of urgent attention in the interests of the country such as how to make the best use of our manpower resources are being neglected. The country needs the institution of compulsory free education for all; the establishment of technical and agricultural colleges to train Africans, as well as others, in skills to meet the new needs imposed by a rapidly industrialising economy; the recognition of trade unions whose membership will represent all workers; to remove the factors which lead to an increase in crime, such as the pass laws and influx control, and

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