

EXTRACT OF SPEECH BY DR. F. VAN ZYL SLABBERT MP DELIVERED
IN NEWTON PARK DURING BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN on 24 APRIL 1985

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It is not good the President making "verligte" noises in Parliament, whilst the NP footsoldiers talk verkrampt in the constituencies. The Nationalist Party is running away from the fact that its own policies have broken down by whipping up a sense of fear and anxiety amongst the voters of Newton Park and making a scapegoat of the PFP.

For the last 10 years, the PFP has warned that the policies of the Nationalist Party will result in economic decline, political mismanagement and unplanned urbanization. We warned time and again that this will result in over crowded Black urban slums where law and order is bound to break down and violence erupt. Here in Newton Park the NP tries to blame the PFP because this happened. This is absolutely ridiculous. There are three things that have to be dealt with immediately and that involve deliberate lies being spread about the PFP.

(a) Law and Order

We have made it quite clear that there can be no law without order, but equally there can be no durable order without justice. Nothing threatens stability and order more than laws without justice. Particularly if unjust laws are applied arbitrarily and without respect for the dignity of the person.

This Session in Parliament this Government has admitted that they themselves have put such laws on the Statute book and that they have to be removed.

(b) Violence

We are revolted and disgusted by bodies and buildings being burnt and destroyed. We say that mob rule and arbitrary violence has to be strictly and promptly dealt with. We also say that those who exercise law and order and have to use coercion to restore stability must do so with restraint and discipline. Nothing spreads a sense of anarchy and chaos quicker if it is believed that those in authority use violence arbitrarily and without restraint. The PFP deplores and condemns the use of violence as the only means to change or maintain the status quo.

(c) The Police

We have time and again said that the police have an unenviable and difficult task to perform. They, more than anyone else, have to cope with the most unpleasant consequences and breakdown of Government policy. We have also said that politicians cannot expect the police to do their job.

We have to provide the political answer. But at the same time, we insist that even and especially the Police, are not above the law or beyond criticism. We must guard against the police becoming involved in questionable actions. That is why we insist on impartial Commissions of Inquiry whenever controversy and accusations surround incidents which involve the Police.

But these are simply red herrings to draw your attention away from the NP's own incompetence and embarrassment about their inability to govern. Port Elizabeth is in dire economic difficulties; people are losing jobs; companies are leaving or going bankrupt; GST and the cost of living increases; the Rand is devaluing and inflation increases. No wonder a climate prevails in which unrest, agitation and confrontation thrives. People say to us - "Can the PFP do any different if they were in power?" The answer is "Yes, most certainly". Our steps to remedy the situation of unrest and economic decline would involve both short-term and long-term measures.

AS FAR AS THE UNREST IS CONCERNED

1. Keep the police away from funerals in the townships.
2. As far as possible, let the police patrol around and outside the townships and not inside them.
3. At all times the police should be fully equipped with the latest riot control equipment.

4. All policemen should have the latest protective clothing and shields to help protect their persons.
5. Use the latest and most modern techniques of riot and crowd control, i.e. coercive violence should always be a last resort.
6. The Government should talk to the leaders that the community trust and follow and not those whom the Government imposes or wants.
7. The Government should come with a clear declaration of intent in terms of which the community will be prepared to co-operate. This inevitably will include : the right to South African citizenship; freedom of movement to look for work and shelter; the freedom to participate in the informal economic centre.
8. Call a national conference of parents, teachers and SRC's to meet and discuss the crises in Black education.
9. Set up local Government structures independent of Homeland Governments and state how they are to be financed.
10. Educate and inform both Black and White about the mutual problems, fears and aspirations in the different communities.

STEPS FOR THE ECONOMIC REVIVAL IN PORT ELIZABETH

1. Grant Port Elizabeth the same industrial incentives as East London, pending a re-appraisal of the industrial decentralization scheme.
2. Establish uniform steel and power prices throughout South Africa.
3. Establish the next medical faculty in Port Elizabeth.
4. Decentralize some Government departments and offices to Port Elizabeth.
5. In order to alleviate the unemployment problem, immediately grant funds for large scale housing - money spent on this relief work would not be wasted, but would be used for the creation of a capital asset.
6. Stimulate the small business and informal sector by abolishing the multitude of regulations which hinder a small business.
7. Ensure that administered prices do not exceed 10% per annum. In the past 10 years administered prices have exceeded the CPI.

8. Reduce personal tax and the tax burden in general. The present structure is a disincentive to work harder and it has destroyed the ability to save.

9. Sell off public assets to the private sector, e.g. Transport Services, energy, steel. It will create new job opportunities. In the United States this kind of deregulation is estimated to have created 600,000 new companies.

10. Remove GST from all essential foodstuffs.

These are practical measures that will immediately ease the tension and improve the climate. Why does the Government not do them immediately? Because it is still caught up in the trappings of its own outworn ideology. They try to please both the verkramptes and the verligtes; the right wing behind them and the reformers ahead of them. They succeed in pleasing neither. Here in Newton Park the voters must show the Government that it must move by voting for the only party that has consistently been ahead of the Government - the P F P.