

'VARSITY' – UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN NEWSPAPER**17 March 1988****Dr F van Zyl Slabbert**

1. *Do you believe that there is an "Afrikaner identity" and a "volk" as such?*

I do not believe there is anything such as an "Afrikaner identity or a "volk". But my belief in this regard is politically completely irrelevant. All that is important is that enough people believe in the existence of a particular kind of identity or volk to be politically significant, and if such a group of people control, or have access to the instruments of state power, their belief and commitment becomes part of the South African political reality.

2. *If so, what does this imply for those groups such as the NDM or IDASA who are attempting to draw support away from the NP?*

The existence of such a group of people and their relationship to State power is not only problematic for the NDM and IDASA, but any front, movement or organization that wishes to work for an alternative such as a non-racial and democratic South Africa. Therefore, the same logistical and strategic dilemmas face them as faces the NDM and IDASA, or anyone else, i.e. how does one persuade people not to support an exclusivist white minority domination position?

3. *From your experience of white politics and the NP and CP when in Parliament, how real is the difference between these two parties? How much is rhetoric?*

There is a fundamental difference between the NP and CP in terms of their concept of nationhood for South Africa. This lies at the heart of the split between them. The CP clings unflinchingly to the old National Party dream of South Africa being a multi-nation country, i.e. it is impossible to have one nation state which can accommodate both black and white. The NP shifted in 1983 with the Tricameral constitution to the concept of a multi-racial state without sacrificing white control. The CP believes this to be the thin edge of the wedge.

4. *Has the NP abandoned Verwoerd's dream? Has it started to compromise all that? Does this account for the rise in the right-wing of the 80's?*

In terms of the CP position, there is no doubt that the NP has abandoned Verwoerd's dream of partition and a multi-nation state. Consequently, they accuse the NP of compromise by abandoning segregation and separate development measures. The whole idea of white security being linked to partition is sacrificed for some vague concept of multi-racial nationhood. To the left of this is the demand of the majority for a non-racial South African nation. As the present State vacillates between these two competing concepts of nationhood, i.e. a multi-nation South Africa versus a non-racial South Africa, the CP exploits white insecurity by promising them the impossible, namely a partitioned white South Africa.

5. *Can you account for the fascist tendencies displayed within right-wing South African politics and the AWB now, and the Ossewabrandwag in the past?*

The potential for right-wing violence is the most sensational and dramatic manifestation of white fear and ignorance of what a non-racial South Africa could mean. It is also the manifestation of the fear of loss of control over the instruments of statehood.

6. *Given these militant fascist tendencies within the AWB that does this mean in terms of finding a negotiation settlement in South Africa?*

South Africa is nowhere near a negotiated settlement of its conflict. In fact, not even the conditions for a pre-negotiation phase, i.e. freedom of association, party formation, recruiting support and electing leaders are in existence.

Therefore, the struggle for nation building will have to move towards a clearer juxtaposition and pressures towards negotiation would have to escalate considerably before there is any possibility of it happening. In that process, no doubt, fascist and tyrannical tendencies on all sides will most likely play themselves out before negotiations, if at all, can start.

The key and unanswerable question is: How much damage will be done to both human and natural resources that are vital for a period of reconstruction.