

**DA National Youth Day Rally  
16 June 2021**

**Speech by Tami Jackson – DA Youth Western Cape Metro Regional  
Chairperson**

---

Young South Africans,

Today is not only a day for us to commemorate the youth of 1976, but today also signifies a strong call to action – the youth of South Africa need to take back their future.

Forty-five years ago today, a generation rose up against an oppressive government.

They did not ask permission to protest the status-quo.

They did not ask permission to take back their power.

Our generation is no different to that of 1976.

Just like them – we are facing the same battle. The battle against an oppressive government that continue to sideline us.

They call us the generation of born-frees, yet – 75% of us remain unemployed and jobless.

They call us the generation of born-frees, yet – young people continue to be failed by a broken school system.

They call us the generation of born-frees, yet – we are more likely to be murdered and caught in gang crossfires than finding a decent chance at life.

This, fellow South Africans, is the reality brought to us by the same people who claim to have liberated us before – they patronise every day by reminding us to be grateful.

I, like you, am tired of hearing the same old clichés. Every youth month we are told that we are the future of this country and that the future lies in our hands. Yet, our reality tells different story.

Perhaps the time has come to liberate ourselves from them.

Growing up and living in the heart of Cape Town's Cape Flats communities, I have always been conscious about my position in society and the desire to empower myself as an individual and by extension, empower my community.

More often, than not, you will hear people tell you that the current system of political parties is not working for us as a country. This, I believe, is but a poor argument to deflect from the lack of participation and accountability, rather than it being a systemic issue.

We need to look at the facts.

When other political parties were too busy focusing on renaming buildings, the DA was pushing for solutions to solve the NSFAS funding crisis.

When other political parties were too busy focusing on shutting down all schools during the lockdown, the DA was pushing for nutritional programmes to continue at our schools.

When other political parties were too busy focusing on bailing out a dead airline, the DA was busy creating jobs for young people where it governs in Cape Town and the Western Cape.

The proof is in the pudding.

We can no longer allow ourselves to be led by empty narratives that seek to blind us. Even more so, we can no longer allow ourselves to be told that the only way we can be successful in life, is if we vote for people who have the same skin colour as us.

The DA remains the only political party that offers viable solutions to the issues that young South Africans face.

And we have proven that we where we govern.

Increasingly, it has become clear that more and more young South Africans do not know why we celebrate youth day. We need to change this.

We need to come to the harsh realisation that the solutions we seek will not simply fall from the sky. It will not come from the same current government who have led us here in the first place.

We must be more intentional about our existence and participation in our country's democracy.

The cost of political ignorance is high and we are paying for it with our futures.

We can no longer afford to take pride in our political ignorance.

We need to realise that;

It is because of politics that the price of basic food items like bread and milk will continue to increase because of inflation.

It is because of politics that a Grade R learner in the Eastern Cape died because he was forced to use a pit latrine at school.

And it is because of politics that school leavers are struggling to find education and employment opportunities.

In essence, what I am saying is that politics is not just about being an activist or holding a placard in a public space. Politics is about being informed. Politics is about making an effort to keep ourselves aware of what is happening around us. When we fail to do this, when we fail to pay attention, we allow other people to make decisions on our behalf that will affect us for the rest of our lives.

We don't have the luxury of time on our side. Simply put, we can no longer afford to not be interested in the political affairs of our country because once corrupt politicians are done exploiting the public purse, we will inevitably inherit a broken country and we'll be forced to deal with the aftermath. That will come at a very high cost.

On Youth Day, I am encouraging every single young person who feels disillusioned, who feels disempowered, who feels like they've been perpetually pushed to the peripheries of our society;

The DA hears you. The DA sees you. And we will continue to fight for you.