

Sam Mkokeli and Natasha Marrian with former president Kgalema Motlanthe

SAM MKOKELI: Thanks President Motlanthe for the opportunity to talk to you. We've been told that there's a foundation coming. We're excited to talk to you about that and many other things that are interesting in South Africa right now, including the student activism that we've seen, but tell us about your foundation first.

KGALEMA MOTLANTHE: Well, you know, at the beginning of this year, in February, we registered the foundation, because you know, as a former President I have an office, with, about four people, support staff, and so I do work, you know, as former President, but that kind of work is not enough to address all of the areas that interest me, so I established a foundation and the purpose really is to address a gap that I have identified. But if you take for instance, the project of creating a non-racial, united democratic South Africa, it is not doing that great, because there isn't enough dialogue where it matters most. So you will find, for instance, that business, the corporate sector and government ministries, economic cluster ministries, trade and industry and so on that there isn't correct conversation where it really matters most.

Instead what you'll find, these feel good, you know, meetings that happen generally with CEOs, now if you understand the nature of the corporate sector, you've known that they compete amongst themselves, but the government's responsibility is to get them also to contribute towards the growth of the economy as a whole and therefore to create conditions for them to grow and thrive. I'll give you a few examples, like, if you take the cement sector in South Africa, the only remaining South African company is PPC, and in terms of global size, it is minuscule, very, very small, and yet, if they were to try and merge with similar companies in South Africa to create a larger South African company, the Competition Commission would say to them, you are becoming a monopoly. And so you have policies which restrict mergers from taking place because it is policy informed by anti-trust or monopoly company because they are, if they collude be it the banking sector or the mobile phone sector, if they collude they are price givers, you see. So the Competition Commission is aimed at protecting citizens

from such abuse, and yet, in terms of the global economy, they can also unwittingly make South African companies to be sitting ducks for take-overs, because they're small. Their capital base is very small and so on.

And yet, in terms of our small South African economy they are viewed as monopolies. And so, I'm saying, I mean, I see a gap to get the right people to talk to each other on these kinds of questions. You see, for instance if PPC wants to merge with other companies to create a larger entity, and the Competition Commission says to them, no, you are on route to becoming a monopoly. Where do they turn to, who do they talk to? Because this is application of policy in general. So that's an example whether, in terms of the corporate sector.

Then the unions, for them to become progressive, they need to be streets ahead of employers, in terms of understanding where their sector is heading to and owning industrial sectors. So who do they engage with to take a long term view? Because they...unless we assist in getting them to talk to each other and create sectoral compacts which would enable them to benefit when the sector is thriving and prosperous and also to know how to pitch their demands in difficult times.

The German system, the Co-Determination System in Germany, which was crafted in the wake of the Second World War. Germany was faced with destruction of infrastructure, war reparations, they had to pay war reparations, and so to lift themselves out of that rut, they had to agree that government, organised labour and organised business will have what they called a Co-Determination System. It still works for them up to this day, and you have workers sitting on boards of companies. You have workers sitting in the Bundestag, in Parliament, representing workers, not...they may be affiliated to particular political parties but they go there as workers in Parliament. And so the flow of information enables them to assess their situation.

Before they get demands for their collective bargaining processes, they would work out what are the prospects for this company, in this sector, in this German economy, within the

global economy. And so they pitch their demands...and on certain occasions they go without increases. If, for instance, nationally there is a concern that they should guard against falling into a debt trap, they all forego increases and the workers are able to accept that, because they sit on boards and they know no CEO or Senior Managers are going to get bonuses and stuff like that because they sit on those boards. So it works for everybody because information is power. It would be very difficult in our situation given our history of the recent past where you have colour issues and all of this, to try and have a co-determination system nationally, and so I feel that through this foundation we can help to facilitate the crafting of such at industrial or sectoral level. Because....

SM: If I can interrupt you there, Mr President...

KM: Yes.

SM: You mentioned couple of interesting issues, let me take you back to the first one, non-racialism, and your assessment. Before you start solving the problem, I'd like to get your assessment of the state of society in terms of non-racialism. Your ruling party, you may have said this in your previous assessments as well, is battling with non-racialism. What is your own party's attitude towards non-racialism?

KM: Well, you know, it's policy of the ANC, to...if you read the Strategy and Tactics Document, it will say to you, the strategic goal is to create a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous South African nation. That's the strategic goal. However, the tasks that flow out of that strategy goal are not internalised, they don't inform our attitudes, how we pronounce on certain issues, how we act and so on, and you need look no further than the National Assembly discussions and debates. If ANC MPs can view the presence of blacks in the DA as you know, something, you know, to be derided and that such MPs have been rented, as blacks and so on...

SM: You referring specifically to the leader, Mr Maimane?

KM: Yes, and some of them, from Lindiwe Mazibuko's time, now how and when will this non-racialism find expression? How is it

going to happen? If, when South Africans of all colours come together and we say, well, they have no right to do so, because why must the blacks be working with whites? Is it the expectation that this non-racialism is only going to happen through the ANC and no-one else? The impact of policy, if your policies are correct, and it has an impact and influences society in general, why would you want exclusive claims for having brought that about?

SM: When did this problem start President Motlanthe? When did the ANC lose its grip on this ideal?

KM: Well it shifts because it's practiced, because the policies haven't changed. The policies are still in place, but it's the consciousness. Are other people and leaders who have platforms conscious of their responsibilities and obligations, in terms of advancing the policies which are correct policies? And why would you quarrel with manifestation of the same policies being embraced by others who belong to other parties?

In the National Assembly, for instance, why would you question the sincerity of any of the other parties? Or the other representatives there? You ought to relate to them as people who truly represent whatever views they represent and engage with them. That's how we're going to build this united South African people. All of those people will be able to recite what the preamble of the Constitution says and so forth, but it's the awareness, the consciousness that seems to be very low, as it were.

SM: Is it...?

KM: And so, and so you see, by doing that, I mean the discussions in the National Assembly are beamed to people's homes live. If you rely on just numbers,...the ANC has a majority. If there's an issue for debate and they don't posit superior arguments, they don't argue in a manner that wins the argument by dint of facts and they rely on the votes that, well, regardless of what you say, we will push this through because we have the numbers. Now if you were at home and for whatever reason you regard yourself as a minority on whatever basis and you watch that, the message

that you get is that, that's how you're going to be dealt with because you don't have numbers on your side, you see, and that defeats this very effort of getting South Africans to have an identity of being South Africans first and foremost, because the constitution says we are united in our diversity, well...but you know, this sense, this identity of South Africanness, how are we going to develop it and consolidate it, you see? I've had on occasions shared platforms with former President FW de Klerk, and I find, in addressing in Afrikaans, his message harps on the fact that they are minorities, and he says, you see, all the protections and rights that you have against the minorities are going to be quickly whittled away from...by this government and the basis that on meticulous headcount of who belongs to the Communist Party and which position do they hold in cabinet and so on, so he has the numbers.

SM: Is that a correct assessment...?

KM: Well, I've said...I mean in those platforms I've said to him, no. You know, we...1994 happened and what 1994 did was to free all of us from the burden of racial discrimination. Its effects are still with us and the Constitution enjoins all of us together to address those accumulated disabilities and heal those wounds that were caused by this past. But it says we should do it together, because it can't be done by a section of the South African people. You have to mobilise the broadest cross section to be able to address these accumulated disabilities. Now I said to him, you know, former President Mandela put it very beautifully that, we only attained the freedom to free ourselves from poverty, from homelessness, from ignorance, from disease. So you can't assume that by, correcting the political system, you've then addressed all of these disabilities, because freedom is recognition of necessity, so, all of these issues, that's why the students are saying at university level that the fees are too high, they're prohibitive, they exclude many, many able young people. So...and President de Klerk to his credit understood and accepted that, yes indeed, there is room, but my sense, you see was that, as Afrikaners they were drawing back into their laager, you see, because they feel that even though I mean there was a deliberate decision not to pursue Nuremberg type trials, that's why we had the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission and that today no South African should feel that they are not quite South Africans.

SM: A lot of them feel that way.

KM: A lot of them feel that way. A lot of them feel that way, and our national discourse is not helping.

NM: President Motlanthe....

KM: Our rhetoric is not helping.

NM: Sorry to intrude, do you feel that it's because our political organisations are too inward looking, that there isn't a sense of South Africa first now in our political organisations, in the ANC for example? Do you think that, where do you really think that comes from. Why you think that is?

KM: No, you see, if you ask any one of them, they will say, you know they embrace the Constitution and they subscribe to its basic tenants and they live by it and they swear by it. Where if you say, ask if any of them would want to pursue racial interests, they'll say, no, all of them. But it is the consciousness, the consciousness of knowing how to pursue that goal, that these are ideals, and how do we pursue them? How do we ensure that they become attainable in real life? You see, that's where the deviation happens. So it's almost like lip service to these noble ideals that the actions and the pronouncement point in different directions and I'm saying there's a gap there, you see, where we could meaningfully facilitate dialogue and conversation on these kind of issues and questions.

Because, you see, as parents we transmit our own fears to our children, if you know what I mean, by saying, you know all the don'ts. Don't do this, don't do that, don't do this, don't do that and yet the boundaries are never quite clearly defined it, as to what is permissible or what is not permissible. And so, they end up gripped by this fear that, I mustn't step on the wrong side, listen to what my parents have said to me. So that's...and once that happens the younger people have difficulties and you know, that's why the recent "fees must fall" campaign by the university students was so laudable, so commendable that they had the

presence of mind to know that party political partisanship may undermine their campaign, and upfront they took decisions that it would be student matters that we would not allow any of the particular political parties to come in and impose themselves on their campaign. So it was really very commendable and laudable.

SM: What does it mean though that students have to go out there to protest the way they did to force the government and the ruling party to implement its own resolutions?

KM: Well, you know, what it means is, I mean young people, it's really and truly universal prerogative of youth to be radical and to push their boundaries all of the time. As I said, otherwise if they are paralysed by the fears of their parents, nothing will change, because the older you become, the more you adapt to circumstances, you actually lose the will to continue striving for changing for better change and so on. You actually lose that will, you adapt, you know you can offer 101 reasons why nobody must try and change the way you view the sector. So that's why there is value in getting young people to be radical, to push. It's not that everything they push for they will get and that they won't the benefit from the wisdom of the years, they will benefit from the wisdom of the years. But it's a commendable, commendable campaign, I think. They...for the movement, I mean the movement adopts resolutions at elective conferences and the timelines for giving effect to those resolutions are elastic you see, depending on...

SM: Should they be?

KM: No, there should be clear timelines, they should be very clear time lines, but you know, the 1942 conference of the ANC resolved to push its membership to one million...[laughter] it took a long, long time to crack that...

SM: Mr Motlanthe, you mentioned something about the nature of the conversation between business and government and you're saying these sectors hold feel-good meetings.

KM: Yes.

SM: Explain that.

KM: No, you know from time to time, I mean there's a meeting with the business sector. Remember, there's Nedlac where all of these sectors meet and so on... But from time to time the Presidency has a meeting with the organized business in the form of BUSA or Business South Africa, the leadership structures, and the preparations for those meetings, where business is organized, I mean if you take BUSA, it's just, an omnibus, everybody's there. There aren't the same, pecking order like you find in sporting associations. Sporting associations, you know, this is the professional wing, this is amateur wing and this is the under 17s and so on. So business is not organized in that fashion and when there is an official visit, like say the President, the President is in India now...this Africa-India Summit.

Trade and Industry has the responsibility...they have on their data base business companies and personalities and they are the ones we invite on each trip, business people, that are invited to be on this entourage accompanying the President to such and such a country. But there's no prior work conducted as to what opportunities exist in such a country for South African companies and which are those companies. Are they interested in those opportunities and so on? And what opportunities exist in South Africa for Indian companies and in which areas and which are those leading companies, so that these visits can achieve more than just, photoshoot opportunities and so on.

SM: If I can just tap into that...you were part of many of those trips.

KM: Yes.

SM: ...are you talking from experience?

KM: I'm talking from experience, I'm talking from experience, that's why I'm able to identify that there is a gap.

SM: So this delegation would go on the trade mission to India for example.

KM: or Turkey

SM: And the delegation wasn't properly prepared...the delegation includes ministers and the leader of government, could have been yourself or the President and businessmen.

KM: In the business sector, you would expect that the business sector...the delegation thereof would consist of businesses that actually have an interest in opportunities in that country, and that some groundwork...that's why you have missions, that's why you have High Commissioners and Ambassadors, so some ground work must have taken place prior to such trips.

SM: But that's unprofessional. At that level of government, things should be much simpler and smoother to prepare for that. So what does it mean, that it's not happening? It's quite simple isn't it?

KM: Yes. It sounds simple, but I think the problem is where if you take trade and industry you need in trade and industry, people who are on the other side of the fence and who had experienced the bottlenecks...who'll be able to know that, on such an occasion? This is what we need to do. When we say we have our ducks in a row, this is what...because the work must happen way before the actual trip. But...I mean, you can ask some of these business people, who go on these trips as to whether, they find them productive or not.

SM: I've spoken to many business people, who've complained about such trips and also the nature of the delegation of... I'll raise a controversial topic in South Africa, the Guptas. They are complaining that the Guptas have an increasing influence on the government leadership and that they seem to be the people at the forefront of such delegations and they're uncomfortable with such.

KM: Yes, and it should be that way in spite of the, you know, inspite of the relationship that the Guptas have. The point that I'm making is that there are High Commissioners and Ambassadors on the ground. DTI has staff, people who are in those countries, who should...whose task is to identify opportunities, speak to the business community there and identify the opportunities and know that there's an organisation of organised business in South Africa and these are the opportunities. So you send a list to them and they should work out who among these business players, would have, you know, an interest in those opportunities and how they

want to actualize those opportunities, you understand what I'm saying.

SM: I do, definitely.

KM: And so I'm saying there's a gap that, you know, the conversation is not happening.

SM: Make us understand, Mr President, how you'd start. You've identified the problems. Let's take an issue here, give us an example. How would you approach, let's say the government and say, this is the gap, this is what is needed here and there.

KM: Well, I have direct access to most of the ministers and so on, and so if you take the development of small business where there's a ministry now under minister Lindiwe Zulu. My sense is, she is swimming in those murky waters without knowing exactly where to start. The Japanese experience is that the best way to create and build small enterprises is to link them with your major corporations. Toyota for instance, no longer has warehouses in Japan. What they do, where the component parts are produced and packed in smaller enterprises and they are supplied at the point of assembly of the vehicle. It's timed that way so the long chain, production chain, they've long done away with it. It is a positive impact of lowering overheads, and so here for instance, if I were to assist her, I would go and talk to big shots like Johann Rupert and say you know, in all these outfits that you have, how can you help the creation and growth of small business people. What are the areas in which you can have some of those things produced by small business people and so on?

SM: What does it mean?

KM: And once we've had that conversation I would ring the Minister and say here's an opportunity to talk about how best we see it with creating small business enterprises.

SM: I am going to ask this question and I'm not suggesting there's anything wrong with your plan. What does it mean, I'm trying to get to the answer and the meaning of it and why this is happening, that a former president finds himself in a situation where he can't fold his arms, he gets up and links the Minister of

Small Business and Johann Rupert and gets them to talk. What does it mean that we find someone like yourself who is retired from active politics and government doing this...this shouldn't be happening. What does it mean about leadership in South Africa?

KM: As I said, given our history, people like Johann Rupert would be thinking that they know what they do best. He runs a big operation and they carry on with that in spite of government and with no contact to government at all. Now government has no other source of revenue other than taxes and loans, borrowings. So it is in the interest of government to ensure that the environment is conducive for business to thrive and to create more jobs so that there are less people becoming dependent on social grants and charity, otherwise you will have social upheavals. The more these pressures are exerted...remember your local municipality, Joburg Metro will just issue...they're thinking that they must increase the rates for water, refuse removal and this and that...that's how they collect their revenue. But they don't realise that for every additional cost that may actually be the last straw that breaks the back of a middle class family even.

SM: Surely we're in trouble as a nation if we have the economic situation we have, with government battling with raising enough revenue to meet the requirements, we've got these leadership problems, we've got this gap between business and government and other... We are in trouble as a nation.

KM: Yes, well you know it's not for us to continue describing the difficulties. That's why I've identified a gap that I can make a humble contribution by addressing this gap that exists.

SM: The question I'm asking is in line with statements you've made in the past. In 2012 you gave an interview to the Financial Times where you referred to a tipping point situation and a couple of months later, early 2013 you said things have to get worse before they can get better. I am trying to understand your view of the situation right now in that context.

KM: In that context, as they say, a crisis must never be wasted. We have a crisis and people who understand that are the people in Treasury because every week they have to go and borrow money from us asset managers in order to manage the current account.

And so they know and they deal with 23-year old and 24-year old asset managers who have no regard for sentiment, there's no room for sentiment there. They just crunch figures and that's it. And so the people in Treasury understand the gravity of the challenges we are faced with, but the rest of the other people don't understand that and that's why decisions can be taken about major, mega projects with huge financial implications but because it sounds right, decisions are taken.

SM: And the Nuclear deal, does it come to mind?

KM: Nuclear for instance, it's going to cost trillions and if you have no regard for public debt, public debt! Many people think the government is in trouble here, its fine, they don't have the money... but its public debt. It's not the government it's us who are in debt and it would affect us, each individual South African will be affected by that debt, not government...but many, many people don't understand the concept of public debt. So what I'm really saying is those of us who are aware of this challenge have got to do our bit... as things get worse you need to have sufficient awareness and effort, and human capital...lifting you from the bottom of the abyss at that point. The reason why things will have to get worse is because likeminded people create very easily...Likeminded people I mean create stagnation because there is no debate...you see and everywhere it's a rather banal point I'm making but half the time we're not quite alive to it. That progress in life and everything else is the function of the working out of opposites. That's put very simply...when you have a monopoly in the realm of ideas, or you have people who have a consensus even before they discuss any subject matter, they've already agreed on it, things can only go south. It leads to stagnation, things get worse.

SM: Mr President you used similar words in an interview with Business Day in 2012, describing the state of the ANC alliance.

KM: Well you know talking about the alliance, my reading, and I am a member of the ANC, my reading is that there is no alliance, there is one organisation existing inside the integuments of erstwhile independent organisations, but today to talk about

Cosatu as an independent organisation from the ANC or the SACP I think is a delusion.

SM: So the alliance is dead? It exists only in name..?

KM: There is one organisation that it takes the form of what used to be three independent organisations in the past, but today its one organisation.

SM: So it's a delusion to think that the alliance still exists in that shape?

KM: Yes, it doesn't exist. They are not independent organisations, its one organisation and that's why when one experiences problems, the others can't hang because it's the same thing. The Cosatu situation, Cosatu is the trade union federation and its members are made up of trade unions, not individual workers, it's affiliated to the unions that make up this federation and it elects office bearers, national office bearers, and so when you have problems among the national office bearers, the first step you take is to ring-fence the national office bearers to ensure that whatever differences they have are not transmitted into the affiliated trade unions. Affiliated unions have their own...they're independent organisations. They have their own constitutions, they hold conferences, they elect their own leaders, they adopt policies and the role of the federation is to coordinate those activities. But you have a situation where the office bearers actively go and divide the unions. I can't think of anyone who claims to be a trade unionist who can with clear conscience expel 350,000 workers, its unheard of...it's unheard of.

SM: That's Numsa?

KM: Yes. It's unheard of. How will such a trade unionist respond to an organiser who says I've just organised a factory with 30 workers. If you can expel 350,000 workers it's unheard of. But was that a decision of Cosatu or the SACP or the ANC. How was it that such a decision just went through? But if there was an alliance, there's no alliance, its one organisation, the same people taking decisions and that's why I can't think of the SACP at any given time agreeing to such a decision, or the ANC...

SM: Why is the SACP playing the role its playing now, what's happened to it?

KM: Because it is one organisation. What we have here is one organisation.

NM: So the interests are all subsumed in that one organisation...?

KM: It's the same people who are taking decisions...an alliance, the strength of the alliance is made...the fact that it's made up of independent component organisations who will come with issues from their own perspectives and starting points, because you see the debate, the necessary debates and so forth is what makes it a progressive alliance. But once you have monopoly of ideas, an absence of debates, from then onwards it's a hit and miss...

SM: What are the implications for the ANC going into next year's elections, future elections that the alliance has really morphed into this one unit? How does it perform in the future and what does that mean for the future of the ANC?

KM: The dangers are there...they're written all over the wall. The expulsion of Numsa means in the Eastern Cape, in the Nelson Mandela metropolitan area that Volkswagen workers are Numsa workers. You know while Zanoxolo Wayile was the mayor there in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro and in 2013 he was swapped with comrade Benson Fihla from the National Assembly and why he went to the National Assembly. Come 2014 when the lists were compiled Wayile's name fell through the cracks. He was not in the legislature list, he was not in the National Assembly list, he was not in the NCOP list and so after the elections he was unemployed and subsequently got a seat in Cope and so when Numsa, because prior to him becoming mayor he was Cosatu's regional...no, provincial secretary...he was Cosatu's provincial secretary so when Numsa started talking about forming a United Front they found Wayile unemployed, out in the streets and they made him the organiser of that project.

SM: Yes, so you've lost Numsa, you've lost Julius Malema as an individual, with him he took a big chunk of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and you've commented in the past on the decision,

saying it wasn't a wise decision to handle the matter the way the ANC handled it.

KM: Yes. No it wasn't. I admit problems from the manner in which the decision was made. You see the disciplinary procedures of the ANC are based on facts. That's where the efficacy comes from. That members know whoever you are, wherever you are, you know that should you be made to appear before the disciplinary committees, you will receive fair treatment, a fair hearing. That's what makes you have confidence in those procedures. Now if you take away that fairness, what happens is you are essentially saying to these members, well, should disciplinary procedures be set in motion against you, you will never receive a fair hearing and therefore you must resort to other ways of protecting yourself. And that's how people ended up organising factions and so forth and that was the situation in Cosatu. The manner in which they dealt with Willie Madisha who was their president meant that both Vavi and Ivan Jim knew upfront that well, there's no fairness, there will be no fair hearings for them so they will not subject themselves to those hearings. Instead they will go out and organise, and protect themselves.

SM: Did you ever feel when you were nominated ahead of the Mangaung elections that the process was at some stage unfair? There were complaints that the process leading up to the credentials and other things, there some processes were not fair. Did you ever feel that you concurred with the people who made such comments?

KM: Well I served as the secretary general of the ANC and I was well aware of the procedures, I know the constitution of the ANC and my sense was well, I can't serve in an organisation that does not respect its constitution. So to be honest I knew that I really did not want to be part of that leadership.

SM: So is that the reason that you turned down the nomination for deputy president, you turned down the opportunity to sit on the ANC NEC?

KM: Well you know I was clear that if I continued serving in that leadership it would be a constant battle just to get them to operate on the basis of the constitution. My experience, I can give

you an example of the recent youth league conference. You know rule 7.5 of the ANC constitution explains the relationship between the ANC and the leagues. The youth league, that is an autonomous body because it has its own constitution, it holds its own conference, and elects its own leaders and adopts its own policies. The only proviso is that all of that must not be in conflict with ANC constitution, policies and that's all. But otherwise they're an autonomous body...but you know what happened is the youth leaguers were not involved in preparing for the conference. It was NEC members who were in charge of that process and convened the conference. The NEC members are supposed to guide the youth leaguers in preparing for their own conference. Not to take charge of that conference because then you end up with a youth league of the ANC and not the ANCYL, you understand. So, and they were told at that conference that they must never ever mention the word autonomy and they kept quiet which to me said they are not the youth league, they are not the ANCYL.

SM: Surely the ANC is dying if this is the state, it's no longer in touch with its own constitution, its values, ideals?

KM: No, if you are in a leadership position, it's not a leadership committee, and you knowingly breach your own constitution, it raises the question as to how you hope to invoke the provisions of the constitution, in guiding the rest of the structures in the membership. It's not possible, if you know what I mean, and it's an ethical question, that you can't be inconsistent about your adherence to the constitution and how you uphold the constitution, you can't.

NM: President Motlanthe is internal democracy then dying in the ANC if that's happening, if those things are happening?

KM: Well it's been impaired quite seriously yes, it's been impaired. But it's there, you see the point I'm making is that the policies are in place, the constitution is in place, but if those in power can pick and choose when to adhere, when not to adhere then we have a very difficult situation.

SM: It must have been difficult for you, having made the assessment that you are articulating here, of the problems in the ANC and not wanting to serve in the organisation like that... If I

remember well, you left the Mangaung conference halfway through and having made a speech, How did you personally...

KM: I didn't leave, I left at the end of the conference...

SM: I misunderstood it...my apologies

KM: I stayed throughout the conference.

SM: But how did you at a personal and even a psychological level deal with it...it would have been a very difficult moment for you to see the movement you've served all your life veering from these principles and its own constitution, how do you deal with that?

KM: No I wasn't, I'd long arrived at the conclusion that we were in trouble so the conference was really the tail end of it.

SM: So you knew there was no chance of being elected, and you stood for your principles?

KM: Yes, because the...in the first legal conference of the ANC after unbanning in 1991, there was...you see the ANC always had the position of national chairs but that position was known as the speaker of the house because the ANC was formed as a parliament of the people. And so the last speaker of the house was Govan Mbeki before the ANC was banned. But in exile, in the exile conditions, this position of national chairperson was done away with because there were only three consultative conferences. One in 1962, Morogoro and Kabwe. So there was no role for such an office, but in 1991 that office was reinstated and Oliver Tambo who stood aside from the position of president general, then became...was made national chairperson and there were clear considerations why. And Madiba took over as president. Now for position of deputy president, the late Chris Hani and former president Mbeki were nominated. Now both Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki had decided that they don't even want to serve on the NEC...they want to go to the regions, the provinces were called regions then. They would rather go back to the regions and work with the structures at that level.

But upon consideration that this was the first legal conference of the ANC after 30 years of illegality and that was meant to bring together different strands and membership of the ANC. Hardly

20% of the delegates to that conference were made up of people who belonged to the ANC before it was banned. Almost 80% were people who got into the ANC after it was unbanned. So it was felt that the primary consideration for that conference was to unite all these...brand new members of the ANC, the ones from the underground, the ones from exile and those that were inside the different formations of the UDF and so on, the labour movements. So it was felt that this contestation between Chris Hani and Thabo Mbeki would be divisive in the sense that the majority of the people didn't know them, other than the people who were in exile and...

So, following discussions the elders then said no, Walter Sisulu must avail himself to serve as deputy president and when that decision was arrived at and he was nominated, both Chris and Thabo withdrew from that contest. Now Harry Gwala who was part of that decision decided that no, he himself, he explained that to me, I spoke to him personally, and he said to me you know...when I asked him why he was standing, and he said to me, no, the ANC constitution says every member in good standing has the right to nominate whosoever and be nominated for any position of leadership in the ANC. And he said to me, you know 80% of these delegates at this conference don't know how the legal ANC operated and said if we do not teach them by example, here at this conference. He said to me by the time we reach the third conference following this one, leadership in the ANC will not be elected, it will be arranged. That's what he said to me. And he said look that's why I'm accepting nomination for deputy president, but I'm going to vote for Walter Sisulu myself.

SM: Who did you vote for? [Laughter]

SM: And the Premier League? it's an interesting group...

KM: Well I don't know much about the premier league, it's not a constitutional structure. But as I said, the constitution of the ANC now is no longer the glue to hold the organisation together.

SM: So the foundation, is there anything happening, launching, the first meeting or...?

KM: No we have trustees, Professor Firoz Cachalia, Dr Oscar van Heerden, GG Maonyana and James Lekoma . They are initial trustees because we need trustees to register it and so on and we've had workshops to try and workshop what the foundation focuses on because I served on the Nelson Mandela Foundation, I served on the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, I chaired the Lilisleaf Trust and so I'm aware, we've had discussions, with Thabo Mbeki Foundation, so to...and we've good relations with the Adelaide and Oliver Tambo Foundation.

SM: So this is a network of foundations you're likely to work on?

KM: Yes. I've addressed gatherings organised by the FW de Klerk Foundation, so even that foundation we felt the Leah and Desmond Tutu Foundation...because all of these foundations can contribute and do make very serious contributions in trying to address the weaknesses that we have. Now...so we've had those kinds of workshops. We're trying to...this work that I was describing, in order to do it properly we'll need some protocol so that any people we bring together understand upfront that this is the protocol to be followed. Because you see, for meaningful dialogue to happen, it must be a dialogue of equals. If you bring your baggage into a dialogue, it doesn't work. I mean, Nelson Mandela was a prisoner when he held that confidential dialogue with Kobie Coetsee who was Minister of Justice at the time, and had commitments he had brought into those discussions. The baggage of being a minister in the nationalist government, and Nelson Mandela brought him into those discussions the limitations and baggage of being prisoner and so on, they would not have made any progress whatsoever. You have to discard all of that, come as equals...that's how you make a meaningful dialogue. So we want to develop that into a protocol that then...

SM: Would the nature of engagement between EFF and the leaders of the JSE the other day have be an example of dialogue that isn't quite at the level you want...

KM: No, the EFF...

SM: What I'm saying is the tone when the EFF goes to the JSE which is somewhat a representative of business, and say you have

to give us this, we demand this and we demand that. It's not a question that says: business what can you do?

KM: Hmmmm yes, that's their allowance...that's how they pitch it and of course you have to ask the question, where does the authority come from because for you to have the ability to give effect to what you are demanding, there must be a basis...some authority. Either law or sheer numbers, so I suppose they rely on their numbers, and how they will use those numbers, it's a moot question, whether they would resort to boycotting and so on. But you see they describe themselves as Economic Freedom Fighters that this phase is a phase where economic justice must be attained.

Now the economy...you have to at least...that's why Karl Marx started off with data...volume one of Das Kapital started is all about data. He had to understand...in volume three deals with the public debt among other issues. So the capitalist system according to the political economy and materialist conception of history is that production is social...many people are involved in production. The distribution of society's products is private because property relations are private and because of that it creates a contradiction that distribution is decided upon by those who own and control the means of production, and so they appropriate society's products and to the exclusion of the majority of society and hence more people become poorer and fewer people become richer and richer. And so that creates a contradiction in the sense that you have to leave behind gated walls to keep away...the people who are unemployed, poor and so on. So that's a fundamental contradiction of the capitalist system.

The EFF is giving vent to that contradiction, but you know social science teaches us that solution will not happen if the forces of production haven't matured to a state where we can no longer thrive and grow and develop within the property relations, then that contradiction will have to be resolved one way or the other. So the EFF is merely giving vent to that situation. In the same way the trade unions give vent to that from time to time, and ordinary people as well who cannot afford the means to support life, where they resort to crime and all manner of other things, social ills

and so on. So I take it that the EFF is pursuing that view. And of course they have lots of resonance of feelings of young people, who feel excluded, no opportunities and so on. And so what the EFF is saying resonates with their own feelings and given the fact that the ANCYL doesn't enjoy autonomy and freedom of expression, young people will gravitate into the EFF because they value the fact that there they can say what they want to say, do, the powers that be do and so on. They can't say that inside the ANC its ill-discipline.

NM: Just the last parting shot, President Motlanthe, do you have any regrets from either Polokwane or Mangaung?

KM: No, not at all because right up to Polokwane the organisation was operating on the basis of the constitution, in that leadership, even when the majority wanted to act in a particular way, if you invoked the constitution they would back off...the difference is that now you can't invoke the constitution and get people to back off it.

SM: Sorry did you invoke the constitution at the NGC in 2005 with the discussion about deputy president then, Jacob Zuma stepping down?

KM: Well you know at that NGC there was misunderstanding that the comrade Jacob Zuma as deputy president had been stripped of his authority and responsibility of his position, but I was SG so in my report I explained exactly, step by step what actually happened. And I had a letter from him because through discussions he actually said he would step back from all of his responsibilities as a member and as an elected leader. So however, there was a misunderstanding that some people were labouring under the impression that he had been stripped of those responsibilities.

But the way we operated was that you are a leader you lead the general membership and you hold them accountable and you expect them to live up to the standards set by the constitution and policies of the organisation. So when you are in the wrong, before the organisation can tell you that because of this you can't do the following...what does your own conscience tell you to do? And so it was in that context that he wrote the letter and

withdrew. And I can give you other examples, in the Free State the speaker of the legislature was Joe Mafereka who has passed on now. And at some point whilst he was speaker, an old case in the old days of apartheid he had been a taxi operator and so there was some violence and people died, and so they charged him with that. You know the charges were preferred today. The following morning he was at Luthuli House to say I will not continue as of today as speaker, I will not speak on behalf of the ANC in any capacity until I am a free agent. Now that's how your own conscience would guide you in those circumstances.

SM: President, thank you so much. I've taken too much of your time...