

INTERVIEW TO BRITISH PRESS**Johannesburg, March 1990*

Question: You have spoken about blacks and whites sharing power. Would you consider a system of separate electoral rolls for blacks and whites?

Answer: No, because the perception that would then arise among our people would be that, in so far as the West is concerned, they are prepared for democracy on the basis of one man one vote, but not as far as South Africa is concerned. The democratic principle is the only answer and we are saying that one man one vote follows the same principle which is adopted in England. The only difference is that we have a large and important minority whose fears must be addressed.

This is why I favour a bill of rights which would be above politics and give every citizen protection through the courts, if necessary against the government.

The first democratic government that is formed must contain representatives of every population group. This will inspire confidence that we now have a new government which has ceased to think in terms of colour. There will then be no need to think in terms of separate rolls.

We don't want to do anything to perpetuate racialism. In Britain you have a minority of blacks, but there is no talk of separate rolls.

* Interview by Lord Nicholas Bethell, published in *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, April 1, 1990. Only extracts are reproduced here.

In America you have got a substantial group of blacks, but no talk of separate rolls. That is the proper way.

Question: What about the problem of the economic disparity between white and black people?

Answer: People have been disturbed by the statement I made about nationalisation. It happened because of an interview given to a newspaper (*The Sunday Telegraph*) by a friend of mine, Richard Maponya, a very wealthy black businessman. He is married to my cousin. He visited me in Victor Verster prison and then he said: "Mr Mandela has turned his back on nationalisation."

You must understand that our policy on this was set out in the Freedom Charter as far back as 1959. So this quotation of what I was supposed to have said could have created a storm amongst my own people. Especially the ANC.

So I issued a statement in which I merely reaffirmed our policy: "The nationalisation of the mines, the financial institutions and monopoly industries is the fundamental policy of the ANC and it is inconceivable that we will ever change this policy."

I was replying to a specific statement that was made about me. That is what led to this hue and cry. Now, in the first place, there is a misunderstanding over the history of this country. The economy of this country is based partly on nationalisation. The railways, the post office, South African Airways, are all in the public sector. The steel industry was only privatised towards the end of last year.

So what is wrong with saying that we will nationalise the mines, financial institutions and other monopoly industries? Especially if we plan to leave the rest of the economy based on free enterprise, on a market economy? And then on nationalisation itself. We don't propose to force it down the throats of the people. We will have a referendum on things of this nature....

We want businessmen in this country to remain. We want businessmen to support us. And we will discuss this issue with them of how nationalisation should be structured. I mean, it can take the

form of the government having 51 per cent of a particular industry. It may actually have 40 per cent of that industry, with other interests allowed to take shares....

What we want is an equitable distribution of the wealth of the country and nationalisation must just be understood to be one strategy in that grand aim....

Question: And you are not thinking in terms either of a one-party state, or of a Marxist state?

Answer: Oh, no, we're not thinking in terms of a one-party state.

Question: Or of a Marxist state?

Answer: No, the ANC is not a Marxist organisation. We have got an alliance with the Communist party and that alliance has been there since the 1920s.

It has been defended by Africans who themselves were anti-Communists in the 1940s when we young ANC members wanted the Communists driven out of the organisation.

Just as in Britain, France and other European countries, Communists are allowed to be elected to parliament; we allowed them in our ANC parliament here. This is our tradition.

So in the 1940s we young people who wanted them thrown out were defeated. And the Communists themselves in the ANC never opened their mouths. It was our leaders who got their education in America, England and Germany who insisted on keeping them in the ANC.

Any African who is against apartheid, no matter what his individual views are, is entitled to join the ANC.

And we have kept that tradition. There is no idea of establishing a Communist state from the point of view of the ANC. But we respect the alliance between the ANC and the party.