

Point of View

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"ALONG THE COLOR LINE"

SOUTH AFRICA IN TRANSITION

By Dr. Manning Marable

In the initial months of 1993, the political situation inside South Africa seemed headed for collapse. In the previous year, the country had experienced 8.5 politically motivated deaths per day. Last April, Chris Hani, the leader of the South African Communist Party and a popular spokesperson for the African National Congress (ANC), was murdered by a white racist outside his Johannesburg home. Despite his militant reputation

as former chief of staff of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, Hani had been in the forefront of a national campaign calling for peace and nonviolence.

Hani's murder was followed by the untimely death of another prominent ANC leader, Oliver R. Tambo, reinforcing the environment of crisis. Upon learning of Hani's death, ANC president Nelson Mandela warned that "our whole nation now teeters on the brink of disaster... We

must not let the men who worship war, and who lust after blood, precipitate actions that will plunge our country into another Angola."

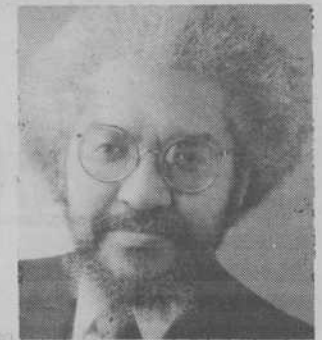
But in the recent weeks, despite the growing danger of political terrorism by the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement, progress toward a post-apartheid society has been maintained. The number of political assassinations and killings has declined by one-half nationwide so far this year. In January,

the ANC and the ruling national party reached an agreement which would permit minority parties with at least five percent of the national vote to share in governing the country. ANC general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa denied at the time that this as a "power sharing" agreement, because the majority party within parliament would get its way on the lion's share of the issues.

Nevertheless, the historic compromise meant that the

National party of F. W. de Klerk, the major architect of the hatred apartheid system, would be permitted to have junior governmental status throughout the remainder of the century. In June, the ANC and the National Party agreed to hold South Africa's first democratic election in mid-April, 1994, in which voters from that nation's black population of 30 million will cast ballots. No one doubts that Mandela will become South Africa's first democratic president.

As the ANC and the National Party move closer to the elections, many of the old parameters of debate have shifted, creating unlikely political bedfellows. For example, for many years the ANC was critical of apartheid-style authoritarian capitalism, and favored the democratic nationalization of large corporations and business. But fearful that its socialist politics might frighten away American and European investors, the ANC has moved its economic program decisively to the right. As quoted in Third Force magazine, ANC Foreign Relations Director Thabo Mbeki emphasized the ANC's new support for private



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market economics: "The issue of investor confidence is important. You can't threaten to nationalize property and expect people to invest. Economic growth is urgently required and it will necessitate massive foreign investment." By contrast, the South African trade union federation COSATU opposes any compromise which would undermine the living standards and wages of black workers.

This delicate balance between political accommodation and militancy is seen in the political language of Nelson Mandela, who continues to appeal to all currents within the ANC's broad and often-conflicting national constituency. Mandela cooperates with de Klerk on constitutional matters and increasingly on the economy, aware that the ANC will soon have to assume responsibility for the government. Yet to his more militant supporters who followed Chris Hani as their hero, Mandela continues to promote activism. At a New York anti-apartheid meeting last November, Mandela noted critically: "If we ever forgot our source of power which is the masses of people, both inside and outside of the country, then we would be committing suicide." Elements of South Africa's growing non-

(See Along Color Line, Pg 4)



POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



WATCH DOGS

Disparity is an issue that too many people would rather have you to believe does not exist. Rather than admit that a disparity exists between certain people because of reasons that clearly contradict the basic principles of every state constitution of the good ole U.S.A., policy would have you to think that all is well and we are all getting along and being offered the exact same opportunities across the board. What makes matters worse, there are some with the mentality who think those who challenge acts of disparity as seeking a "free ride." Combine this with the fact that in almost every case where disparity exists, those at the position of underdog are used to enhance the position of the "good ole boys" even more.

Even those of supposedly "good-will" try to evade dealing directly with the issue by starting still another study of studies. The study at least is supposed to justify a need to correct or deal with the problem. While at the same time a study is sort of an insult because the playing field is usually so uneven that even

Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder could see it miles away.

You have probably heard by now that most of the governmental entities in Clark County have agreed to participate in a countywide disparity study. It's been good to see cooperation among most except Henderson and the City of North Las Vegas. Henderson's nonparticipation didn't really raise many eyebrows but North Las Vegas' sure did. When you bring into account issues like economics, health, and other things that solidly affect the everyday lives of people, how would the only elected governmental body in the state that has a majority of African-Americans on it, reject participation in a disparity study? Anyway it's time for the watchdogs to wake up the sleeping dogs in North Town.

Now, taking a look South, several people are already starting to campaign for the office of sheriff that will be vacated by current top cop John Moran. One the hopefuls that is seeking this position is Metro Captain Randy Oaks. Mr. Oaks is also a lobbyist for metro at the Nevada State Legislature each legislative session. he maintains his regu-

lar salary paid by taxpayers while he is in Carson City. He refers to this as being a legislative watchdog. Anyway, to pick up their pace, it becomes really difficult for voters to get pass all of the campaign hoopla and get to know the real views of the candidates. However, with Mr. Oaks things are a little different. You see, while he was lobbying in Carson City he had already announced that he was running for Sheriff. As a result it became very difficult at times for legislators to tell whether Mr. Oaks was speaking as Randy Oaks the candidate for Sheriff or Randy Oaks the lobbyist for Metro. At least, though, we do know because he was giving what he calls "factual and expert testimony" quite often in Carson City, how he feels about certain issues. And here are a few: 1. He totally opposed limiting the use of the choke hold by police officers; 2. Opposed giving local government the choice of having a citizens review or control board; 3. Totally opposed giving the public the right to know when police officers committed acts of misconduct; 4. Opposed required reporting of tort claims against governments. He also



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

felt that establishing procedures for arresting students in classrooms so the arrest is made with the greatest amount of ease is a bad idea. These are only some of the bills that candidate Oaks strongly opposed, which gives you an idea how he will view these issues if he is elected. If your interest is piqued and you want more information on this candidate, drop me a line at the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice. It's time for the watchdogs to watch the watchdogs.

Quote of the month: Let the nation and the world know the meaning of our numbers. We are not a pressure group, we are not an organization, we are not a mob. We are the advance guard of a massive moral revolution for jobs and freedom. But this civil rights revolution is not confined to the Negro, for our white allies know that they cannot be free in a society in which six million Blacks and Whites are unemployed and millions live in poverty.

A. Philip Randolph,
March on Washington 8/28/63

CORRECTION

In the August 19, 1993 issue, the Sentinel-Voice misspelled the name of Robert Maxey, CEO of the MGM Grand.

It is the policy of the Sentinel-Voice to correct all errors. Call 383-4030.

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