

# Point of View

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## ALONG THE COLOR LINE

### "BEYOND APARTHEID: SOUTH AFRICA'S STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY"

By Dr. Manning Marable

The electoral victory of Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress earlier this year was widely celebrated as a triumph for democracy. Despite the killing of 21 people and scores who were wounded in the Johannesburg area alone during the week of the election, and evidence of vote tampering by the conservative Inkatha Freedom Party in Zulu areas, most of the voting across the country was judged to be free and fair.

In the aftermath of the euphoria of Mandela's election as the country's first black president, it is important that we honestly and critically assess what has the decisive power of that nation's corporate and capitalist class been transferred to the black majority. The vast majority of businesses, the land and great economic wealth of South Africa will remain in white hands.

Within the national government, there is in effect a partnership between the ANC and the former masters of the apartheid dictatorship, the National Party of ex-president F.W. de Klerk.

The state's bureaucrats and managers reflect the racist hiring policies of the past. Among the top three thousand employees within the government, about 95 percent are white, and hardly any are women.

Most of the two million state employees are white Afrikaners. Some of them have been insubordinate to the point of outright rebellion against their new black supervisors. Several African administrators have moved into government offices which were completely stripped of computers, furniture and files. At the state-controlled South African Broadcasting Corporation, the phone number of the new chief executive was removed, so that he could dial out, but that no one could phone him.

A more complicated problem is that the liberation struggle did not prepare the ANC to actually run the government bureaucracy. The best and most educated ANC leaders and blacks from the labor unions were largely elected into the Parliament or provincial legislatures, leaving relatively few experienced activists to take over the jobs within the civil service.

But the greatest difficulty in charting a blueprint for democratic development inside South Africa is a massive class division within the African community itself, which may threaten to erupt into unanticipated political disputes and debates.

About one-fifth of the black population nationwide consists of Africans who represented a relatively privileged social group. This class includes civil servants, small entrepreneurs, factory workers and skilled laborers, clerks, teachers, and administrators. As a group, their salaries have risen dramatically compared to whites' wages during the previous two decades, even under apartheid. They are in a position to become the chief beneficiaries of the ANC government.

But about four fifths of the black population is incredibly oppressed and marginalized. This group includes unskilled and illiterate workers, farm laborers, domestic workers and millions of alienated young people. About half of the black labor force is either unemployed or works within the "informal" or "underground economy." About one

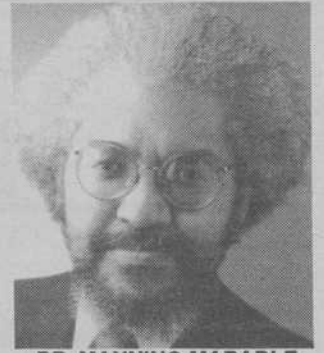
black family out of five is a squatter or lives in a shack without running water, toilets or electricity.

Two-thirds of all blacks' homes are without electricity and 70 percent lack running water. Experts state that South Africa would need 300,000 housing units per year just to meet the current needs of the poor black population; currently, the government has been building barely one-tenth that number.

The most oppressed blacks will not be patient with Mandela and the ANC government; they expect solutions to their problems immediately. In Soweto township near Johannesburg about 20 percent of the impoverished residents have refused to pay their utility bills for at least two years. Thousands of households have initiated rent strikes. Black families which have defaulted on their loans have refused to leave their homes and have forcibly stopped local police from seizing their personal property.

Mandela has been very careful not to alienate whites who benefited from and who supported apartheid for decades.

He has declared, "We have to be very careful and not create the fear that the (black) majority is going to be used for the purpose of coercing minorities." However, for democracy to mean real freedom for the majority, Mandela must quickly move to address the economic and social grievances of millions of Afri-



DR. MANNING MARABLE can people. The end of apartheid only marks one stage in the struggle for democracy.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR

This is in response to the Ray Willis report on KCEP-FM88. Mr. Willis tells us first that KCEP is a small budget station that can't compete with commercial stations for financial support because of FCC regulations. He then says that the station is not technically black or white because the license is held by an anti-poverty agency. After that, Mr. Willis advises us to get with the program and support the station because it is the only African American broadcast outlet in Nevada, as if to say we shouldn't care whether the station provides quality programming or not because we should support KCEP just because it is black. I find that notion to be offensive. Isn't it time that African Americans stopped allowing themselves to be taken for granted?

First of all, obviously neither Ray Willis or EOB LISTEN to KCEP because if they did they could stop telling the LIE that KCEP no longer plays gangster rap. Sure, they don't play Snoop Dog anymore, but they do play every other popular gangster rap song like "Regulate" and the "Player's Ball." I suppose those are great role model songs for KCEP listeners, and during the live remote fundraisers, you

almost hear nothing but gangster rap including Snoop Dog sipping on Gin and Juice. Some blacks do not wish to be funkified and referred to as hoers. Why should the station receive financial support for this kind of programming. How can self respecting working African Americans be asked to support KCEP when Mr. Willis tells us that EOB thinks that ratings don't matter to the station's success. Wake up and smell the coffee. All radio stations should pay attention to ratings because ratings determine if people will be willing to give financial support. Both KNPR and KUNV receive lots more financial support than KCEP because they pay attention to their listener's needs and give them what they want.

I have been a KCEP listener off and on for many years. I love soul music but now KCEP is so busy being funkified that it has forgotten that not all African Americans are low-income non-professionals. KCEP ignores the black professional during programming and then turns around and begs for money. Why shouldn't we as African Americans be able to make a choice not based on race, but on quality.

So I say tell Mr. Willis that he  
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## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

# THE LEARNING POINT

By Bernice Powell Jackson

A few weeks ago I wrote a column which was a letter to African American men asking them to get involved with our young men who desperately need role models. I said that we needed to find all different kinds of ways to help save our youth. Here's the story of one man's contribution.

Bob Moses has been on the front lines in the struggle for freedom for his people for thirty years. During the 1960's he was a field secretary for the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and one of the organizers for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project.

The latter brought hundreds of white college students to Mississippi in a massive voter registration project. In his effort to register black people in Mississippi to vote, he was determined to break open Mississippi as a closed society. It was a direct confrontation with the system and the system re-

sponded with numerous death threats.

Luckily, this warrior in the struggle for human rights survived the battle and today his efforts focus on a different aspect of the system — the educational system which often denies young African Americans an equal chance of success in our society. This is his contemporary version of civil rights organizing — organizing around literacy and in particular, mathematics literacy for African American children.

He calls it simply The Algebra Project and it's founded on a few basic understandings. It's based on the understanding that this country is undergoing a massive change in its requirements for effective citizenship. In earlier times, good citizenship was tied to literacy and particularly the ability to read and write. But citizenship in the 21st century will require heretofore unknown technical skills and mathematics literacy is the key to these skills. Without them, African American children are

doomed to failure since they will be unable to gain access to college and the math and science careers, where there is projected job growth.

The Algebra Project is also based on the understanding that African American children can learn mathematics despite the fact that often they are not expected to be able to do well in math by their teachers and by the educational system, which guarantees their failure. Indeed, the pervading cultural message is that mathematics requires some kind of innate ability which people of color don't have.

Finally, The Algebra Project is based on the understanding that the African American community can rally to save its children and that an organized community is key to creating the environment that allows our children to be educated. Parents, teachers, other educational institutions must become part of the solution in order for this to work.

In his work with urban children, Bob Moses found that there

was difficulty in connecting the different concepts of numbers which is required to successfully master algebra. So he began to look for ways to help the children associate real life experiences to symbolic representations. His non-traditional process of teaching algebraic concepts includes five steps, usually beginning with a subway or bus ride to help them understand the meaning of positive and negative numbers. A project in making lemonade helps children understand proportion and ratios. His use of African drumming traditions help teach fractions, average rates and ratios.

Just as important as the math skills The Algebra Project teaches are the critical thinking skills that the students learn as they work cooperatively in the construction of mathematics from the program's real experiences.

They learn how to challenge each other's assumptions while respecting and listening to other students' presentations. They

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NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

## Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice

BROWN PUBLISHING COMPANY'S AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.  
Published every Thursday by Brown Publishing Co., Inc.  
1201 South Eastern Avenue • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
Telephone (702) 383-4030 • Fax (702) 383-3114

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Community Papers Verification Service,  
6225 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705  
(608) 238-7550

Subscriptions payable in advance  
Six months \$15.00  
Twelve months \$25.00  
The rates apply to  
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