

## POINT OF VIEW

## Our View

## Gore, Bradley spar over black voters

Vice President Al Gore and former New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley have officially dumped the sparring partners, stopped hitting the speed bags and halted the roadwork. They've donned boxing gloves, headgear and mouthpieces for what's shaping up to be a brutal 15-round slugfest for the Democratic Party's undisputed heavyweight title — in this case the presidential nomination.

Each recorded a significant number of low blows in the first televised round of their prize fight for the black vote. The famed Apollo Theater in Harlem served as the ring. The judges represented a who's who of Black Americans — former New York Mayor David Dinkins, civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton, actress Whoopi Goldberg, lawyer and multimedia personality Johnnie Cochran and film director Spike Lee, who is starring in a television commercial for Bradley, a former New York Knickerbocker.

The crowd was treated to a knock-down, drag-out, tit-for-tat battle of records and recollection. They stumbled over each, and themselves, to put on a dance. Each candidate endured jeers for dancing around issues, for beliefs and decisions perceived as detrimental to African Americans. Each scored also with hooks — Gore with his admonition that infighting sapped Democratic punching power and distracted the party away from "the real enemy, the right wing extremists, Confederate flag-waving Republicans," and Bradley by highlighting, among other things, that Gore didn't support national health insurance.

Bradley, as he has since the campaign for the Democratic nomination began heating up, came out swinging. He landed solid blows on Gore, the party's front-runner for the nomination, calling him a poster boy from the National Rifle Association and a closet conservative who's running from his past. He jabbed at Gore with his record on right-to-life issues concerning abortion.

Both tried to rope-a-dope each other. Gore tried to elbow Bradley into discussing a 1995 vote that rejected expanding ownership of minority broadcast stations. Bradley countered with a head butt, challenging Gore to explain a series of votes between 1979 and 1981 that preserved tax-exempt status for schools that racially discriminate.

Both also took care to showcase fancy footwork — in this case, highlighting votes they've made or beliefs they hold. In a chest-thumping moment of narcissism, Gore touted his support among members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Bradley, who's used his status as a former NBA star to gain favor with black athletes, including Michael Jordan, talked of signing an executive order to eliminate racial profiling once he's elected president, to which Gore quipped, "racial profiling practically began in New Jersey."

The tussle went on for 90-minutes. Momentum ebbed and flowed, leaving no clear-cut winner, though it appeared Gore scored a narrow split-decision win.

And the true winner is ... We'll have to wait.

The definite winners that night were black people. Sharpton put it succinctly: "It was heartwarming to see two candidates fight over us rather than take us for granted."



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## White supremacy still reigns in Dixie

## Special to Sentinel-Voice

How far has America actually progressed toward more constructive race relations? Judging by some recent events, not much.

During this year's legal holiday marking the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I was invited to speak at a small, predominantly White Southern college.

For decades, this school had been racially segregated, like other all-White public educational institutions.

The college's first Black faculty member had been hired only in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, the initial reception I received was friendly and positive, from administrators, faculty and representatives of the student government association, who had sponsored my visit. Nothing up to that point had prepared me for what I would soon encounter that evening.

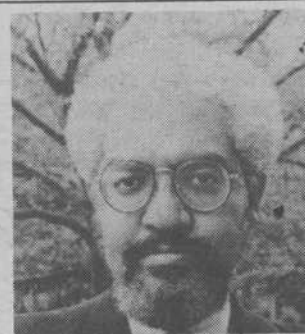
My lecture that night was before an audience of perhaps 500 people, consisting mostly of students and a significant number of African-Americans from the surrounding community. I spoke about the enduring legacy of Martin, the necessity to achieve social justice, and the urgent need for constructive dialogue across America's racial chasm.

As I concluded, most of the audience responded favorably to the message, but many sat in silence.

A White male student jumped out of his seat even

## Along the Color Line

By Dr. Manning Marable



before the audience had stopped clapping, and raised his hand to ask the first question.

When I acknowledged him, the White student launched into an attack against affirmative action, which was characterized as "reverse discrimination."

He insisted that both he and many of his friends had lost scholarships and jobs to unqualified minorities.

I replied that statistically less than two percent of all university scholarships were "race-based," that is, designated for Blacks and Hispanics. Affirmative action was necessary because job discrimination was still rampant, and Blacks frequently were unfairly charged more for goods and services than Whites.

I cited one major study illustrating that Blacks who negotiated and purchased automobiles at White car dealerships were charged significantly more than Whites who bought the identical cars.

The White student was unimpressed and unapologetic. His precise

words were unclear, but his essential response was, "then the Blacks ought to shop somewhere else!"

Suddenly, a significant number of White students burst into applause, and a few even cheered. Surprised and saddened, I quickly responded that this discrimination was illegal and morally outrageous, and that Blacks shouldn't have to shop in another country in order to be treated fairly in the market place.

Don't misunderstand my point here. As a middle-aged Black man, I spent many summers in Dixie during the 1960s. I experienced Jim

Crow segregation firsthand, and White racism is hardly a new phenomenon to me.

But the White students at this formerly segregated college had no personal knowledge of what Jim Crow was about.

They never saw Black people being denied the right to vote, or signs posted on public restrooms reading "White" and "Colored."

Yet they felt no hesitation, no restraint, to proclaim their prerogatives as Whites, over and above any claims that Black people made for equality. In effect, this was "White supremacy": blind to the historical dynamics and social consequences of racial oppression, jealous of any benefits achieved by Blacks from civil rights agitation, and outraged by the suggestion that racial minorities should be compensated for their exploitation.

The twisted logic of White supremacy is that reformers who champion racial equality

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