

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY
MONTH: MARKING A CENTURY
OF ACHIEVEMENT AND STRUG-
GLE

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 1995

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in this year's celebration of African-American History Month which provides an opportunity to consider the theme of "Reflections on 1895: Douglass, DuBois, Washington."

The 100 years since 1895 have been marked by some of the greatest advancements in the struggle for civil rights for the African-American community. An ability to look into the past reveals clear markers of significant progress in the status of African-American within the political, economic, and cultural life of the United States. A review of our Nation's past also leads us to identify certain heroic individuals who made a unique and lasting contribution to the great march forward toward equal rights for all Americans, regardless of color.

Individuals like Frederick Douglass, William Edward Burghardt DuBois, and Booker T. Washington are clearly outstanding heroic figures in the struggle for African-American dignity. What is less clear to many Americans is the fact that their lives were characterized by both triumphs and setbacks. The great strides they made on behalf of African-American civil rights did not always follow straight lines.

What is important to stress, however, is the fact that these three great African-Americans remain focused with their "eyes on the prize" even during periods of great challenge. The example they provide of commitment and perseverance is one that should continue to inspire African-Americans and Americans of all colors who are dedicated to the idea of equality.

The year 1895 marked a period of reconstruction and reaction in our Nation's history when African-Americans faced new oppression and violence. Hopes for the attainment of African-American civil and economic rights were being shattered by a resurgent racism no longer constrained by leadership from the Federal Government. An environment of violent oppression existed which was characterized by nightriders and lynchings. Legalized oppression took the form of poll taxes and Jim Crow segregation laws. Efforts by white political groups to deny African-Americans their civil rights would be given the sanction of the U.S. Supreme Court 1 year later in the 1896 Plessy versus Ferguson decision upholding the principle of separate but equal.

The year 1895 also marked the passing of Frederick Douglass who was an outstanding leader of the highest rank in the abolitionist movement. Frederick Douglass, who was born in slavery, dedicated his life to ending slavery and then securing the full legal rights of freed African-Americans. He confronted the harshest reality of his time—a brutal and dehumanizing

slave system—with an unending commitment to winning freedom for all African-Americans.

Frederick Douglass was a man of his time but he was not constrained by the attitudes and expectations of his time. He spoke boldly in the cause of abolition to both Presidents and slaveowners. He challenged all Americans to stand by the promises made with adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Frederick Douglass passed away in 1895 after a long lifetime in which he could still see both uncorrected injustices and signs of dramatic progress.

W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington both benefited from the legacy of Frederick Douglass but would make their own distinct contributions to African-American history. W.E.B. DuBois chose to take up the challenge of securing full political rights that had been left behind by Frederick Douglass. Booker T. Washington advocated setting aside political rights as a primary agenda so that full attention could be focused on achieving economic standing for African-Americans. They shared, however, a commitment to addressing the realities faced by African-Americans in 1895 and dedicated their lives to changing the times in which they lived.

Booker T. Washington was already well recognized as an African-American leader and founder of the Tuskegee Institute in 1895 when he gave a landmark speech at the Atlanta Exposition. He was an advocate of a ruralist agenda for African-Americans that steered clear of political activism in favor of economic attainments. Booker T. Washington believed that African-Americans could best secure a position in American society through industrial education and vocational training. While this position was controversial among many African-Americans, Booker T. Washington's views were instrumental in shaping relations among white Americans and African-Americans in the decades immediately following 1895.

In 1895, W.E.B. DuBois became the first African-American to receive a Ph.D. degree from Harvard University. He embarked on a lifelong commitment to using his writings and public remarks to advance the political liberties of fellow African-Americans. His many books and articles served to document the violence and injustice experienced by African-Americans. This work served to focus attention on the status of African-Americans to challenge the injustice of the system in which they lived.

Dr. DuBois emerged as a political leader in the tradition of Frederick Douglass and played a central role in the establishment of the NAACP. He helped to convince a generation of African-Americans that Booker T. Washington's vision of economic sufficiency would not be adequate to secure a proper respect for African-Americans as U.S. citizens. Dr. DuBois provided a new focus on political action that would bear its fruits in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's.

The lives of Douglass, DuBois, and Washington were characterized by over 70 years collectively of commitment to the advancement of African-Americans. The passing of Fred-

erick Douglass in 1895 marked a time when succeeding African-American leaders like Washington and DuBois would take on in turn the mantle of leadership. These were men who responded to political realities and provided the vital leadership necessary to create a new realities that advanced the standing of African-Americans in our society.

Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago in 1895, the United States looked to the leadership of individuals like Douglass, DuBois, and Washington at a time when reaction and retreat characterized the attitude of many white Americans toward their fellow African-American citizens. Today, we also have leaders in the African-American community who are ready to confront the forces of reaction and retreat wherever they may be found. The men and women active in the civil rights movement today have a right to be proud of the accomplishments of leaders like Douglas, DuBois, and Washington.

It is my hope that African-Americans will also be inspired by the example of Douglass, DuBois, and Washington as a new generation continues to work for the equality and civil liberties that should be available to all Americans.

TRIBUTE TO COL. AARON BANK

HON. RON PACKARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 1995

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a military legend, 92-year-old Col. Aaron Bank of San Clemente, CA. Heralded as the father of the Green Berets, Colonel Bank was instrumental in developing one of this country's most respected and renowned military divisions.

As a member of a small group of senior officers in the Department of the Army, Colonel Bank recognized the need for an unconventional warfare organization within the framework of the U.S. Army. His unique military vision and experience earned him the role as commander of the first special forces group in the history of the U.S. Army.

Colonel Bank translated the concept of a U.S. Army unconventional warfare organization into a practical reality. This elite fighting force represents some of the bravest, toughest, most resourceful, accomplished men in the world. Colonel Bank led the charge in organizing one of the most prestigious special force organizations in the world. He truly is the father of the Green Berets.

His unique, daring military experiences span the globe and history: executing operations within the French resistance; the three-man guerrilla team air-dropped behind enemy lines to pave the way for the Allied invasion; an incredible secret plot to capture Hitler; his remarkable meeting with Ho Chi Minh in Indochina. Colonel Bank was instrumental in

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changing the course of history and making the world a safer place for people everywhere. He truly is an extraordinary leader.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you and my colleagues will join me in recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of Col. Aaron Bank. I join friends and family who salute him.

THE STRANGE CASE OF EFRAIN BAMACA

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 1995

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the democratic Government of Guatemala has been put under a great deal of pressure to resolve the case of Efrain Bamaca, a commander of the URNG, a Marxist terrorist group that has been fighting for power in Guatemala for 34 years.

The Government says Mr. Bamaca was killed in combat in 1992. Jennifer Harbury, an American citizen who says she is Mr. Bamaca's widow, claims he is being held in a clandestine military prison.

As we weigh Ms. Harbury's claims, I urge my colleagues to take the following into account.

First, Ms. Harbury is a strong partisan of the URNG. In the press, this is seldom mentioned. But she makes it no secret. In fact she published a book, "Bridge of Courage," portraying the struggle of this Marxist movement in glowing, heroic terms. On the back cover, the top endorsement comes from one of the worst violators of human rights in the hemisphere, Daniel Ortega. In one chapter, entitled "How You Can Make A Difference," she points out that Americans are legally barred from aiding the military efforts of the URNG, but strictly humanitarian aid is legal. Given her intense commitment to the URNG cause, it is plausible that her campaign on behalf of Mr. Bamaca is, like the URNG's military and political actions, designed first and foremost to weaken the democratically elected Government of Guatemala.

Second, Ms. Harbury is seeking far better treatment than Guatemalans in her position.

Ms. Harbury demands that the government of President Ramiro de Leon Carpio—which took office over a year after the fateful military engagement involving Comandante Bamaca—produce her husband or his remains. This is in the context of a guerrilla war with countless human rights violations on both sides and no record of prisoner exchanges. Bamaca is one of thousands whose fate is unknown.

In fact, there have been so many abuses that the Guatemalan Government and the URNG agreed last June on a way to address them all. A special Historical Commission will conduct a sweeping investigation and issue a public report, as Chile's Government did after the Pinochet era.

So, even though her case received special attention last year, Ms. Harbury continues to demand higher priority than the thousands of Guatemalan widows of soldiers and guerrillas, who will await the Historical Commission.

Out of this, a few things are clear.

First, Ms. Harbury will be back in the headlines next month with her second hunger

strike, pressuring President Clinton to take action against Guatemala.

Second, she is hoping for a second free ride in the media. Human interest coverage brings few hard political questions. Her marriage alone provides a wealth of questions for a good political reporter. There are no photos of her with her husband, and records of her marriage in Texas can only be described as bizarre. When the URNG sought investigators' help locating Bamaca in 1992, their documents didn't mention that he was married. When Harbury has travelled to Guatemala, Bamaca's parents have declined to meet her.

Third, Harbury's campaign helps the URNG at a critical time. The rebels are in the process of abandoning U.N.-mediated peace talks, after those talks made major progress in 1994. The URNG doesn't want to face the next major issue—ceasefire and demobilization—so it is walking away from the table. Its futile military struggle, with the suffering it brings to the Guatemalan people, will continue.

That is the real crime in Guatemala—the trashing of a peace process that is close to ending a 34-year conflict. If U.S. media attention stays on a guerrilla commander lost in combat 3 years ago, it's a crime that won't get the attention it deserves.

WORK IS THE MAIN THING

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 1995

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House to an article by Mr. Lewis Lehrman that appeared in the Wall Street Journal on Friday, February 10. In the spirit of President's Day, Mr. Lehrman's article on Abraham Lincoln is something I believe that we as an institution should remember about a man who has taught us so much. I submit Mr. Lehrman's article for the RECORD. [From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 10, 1995]

WORK IS THE MAIN THING

(By Lewis E. Lehrman)

Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday we celebrate on Sunday, is generally remembered for winning the Civil War and freeing the slaves. He should be. But the great lost truth about our 16th president is that during most of his political career he focused, not on slavery, but on a policy for economic growth and equal opportunity for the new nation. As Lincoln explained over and over, slavery was an involuntary economic exchange of labor, based on coercion; and, therefore, it was theft. Slavery, in short, was the antithesis of free labor, and thus Lincoln opposed it on moral and economic principle.

One of the hidden strengths of Lincoln's political philosophy was its grounding in a thorough grasp of economic theory and policy. That Mr. Lincoln had a coherent economic philosophy is one of the most obvious facts that emerges from Roy Basler's definitive 11-volume edition of the 16th president's original writings, speeches and state papers. Anyone who doubts this should read Gabor Boritt's pathbreaking book on "Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream."

Though Jeffersonian populist in sentiment, Mr. Lincoln's economics were, paradoxically, Hamiltonian in policy. We can see this when, on his way to Washington in early 1861, he declared in Philadelphia, "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from

the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence." This idea he later vindicated at Gettysburg in 1863 by upholding "a new birth of freedom" in an America "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." One year later he explained to Ohio soldiers visiting the White House that the Civil War itself was a struggle to create "an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise, and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life. * * *

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Lincoln's equality was equality of opportunity. He denied explicitly that American equality was equality of result. In 1857 at Springfield, he said: "I think the authors [of the Declaration] intended to include all men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral developments, or social capacity. They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal—equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

He also opposed direct federal taxation, except by necessity of war, because, as he said, "the land must be literally covered with assessors and collectors, going forth like swarms of locusts, devouring every blade of grass. * * * Like Alexander Hamilton, he preferred a tariff because, Lincoln suggested, customs collectors on the coast would do less harm to the people than tax collectors roaming their neighborhoods."

He believed that government should be pro-labor by being pro-business; thus for 20 years, he advocated government help in creating canals, railroads, banks, turnpikes and other public institutions needed to integrate a free national market, to increase opportunity and social mobility, and to make the American economy more productive. As the economic historian Bray Hammond has noted, Lincoln was also a sophisticated student of banking and monetary policy, arguing throughout his political career that "no duty is more imperative on government, than the duty it owes the people of furnishing them a sound and uniform currency."

His economic philosophy, above all, was based upon "his patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people." He was an authentic populist. But he saw no necessary conflict between labor and capital, believing them to be cooperative in nature. Only co-operation could, in a society of free labor, produce economic growth and increasing opportunity for all. Lincoln argued that capital was, itself, the result of the free labor of mind and muscle. People were the most important resource, not wealth. In fact this idea was so important that President Lincoln argued in his first annual message of 1861 that "labor is prior to, and independent of capital. Capital is the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any other rights."

He went even further and, once and for all, defined the essence of the American dream: "There is not, of necessity, any such thing as the free hired laborer being fixed to that condition for life. . . . The prudent, penniless beginner in the world labors for wages a while, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself; than labors on his own account for a while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just, and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way to all—gives hope to all, and . . . energy, and progress, and improvement of conditions to all."