RESPONSE TO SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE CELTIC NATIONS AND THE AFRICAN AMERICANS

The Celtic in Us

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Muhammad Ali’s contempt for his ‘white heritage’ was made plain during his period of Yacubism, which held that white people were created by a black scientist named Yacub, and were born to commit evil.

Like thousands of black families, there were always rumors in mine about white family members or members so white looking that they crossed over to the other side. Like many black intellectuals of my generation, I showed no interest in my white ancestors. I was of a generation that thought of itself as part of the future and not of the past. I wasn’t concerned at the time about my ‘plural self’, as Daniel G. Williams (2010) puts it.

One day, however, while sitting at the kitchen table of my family’s home, my grandmother, who was spending the weekend with her family, from a nursing home, told me that her father, Marion Shaw Coleman, born in 1869, was an Irish-American labor organizer, who was driven from Chattanooga as a result of his efforts on behalf of the industrial pipe workers. My mother remembers him as ‘looking like a white man’.

I was ignorant of the extent to which there was interracial intimacy in the American past, and believed that whatever miscegenation had taken place resulted from sexual assaults committed by wealthy planters upon non-consensual African women. Later, I interviewed and recorded my mother and her cousin, the late Emily Pope, and Emily remembers a ‘mean’ Irishman on my mother’s father’s side as well. That might be Pleasant Hopson, born about 1830 in South Carolina. Both Muhammad Ali, and I viewed white ancestors, if we had any, as oppressors, rapists, and were not open to the possibility that poor black and famine afflicted Irish would enter into such alliances with mutual consent. (Before his death, publisher Bob Callahan and I were discussing whether the mean spirit that characterized the Reagan administration was the result of the lingering post-traumatic stress caused by the Great Famine. Ronald Reagan’s father was an alcoholic.)

Our version of Southern history was formed by Hollywood. Gone With The Wind, a racist movie based upon a book written by an Irish-American, Margaret Mitchell, whose attitude toward blacks supported the claim made by the great artist, Thomas Nash, that the Irish-American was prone to Negrophobia, while ancient tea baggers like members of the Teutonic League maintained that the solution to the race problem was to have an Irish man murder a black man and get hanged for it.
Gone With The Wind is still used to acquaint students with Reconstruction at the University of California at Berkeley, according to my youngest daughter, Tennessee, in her book, Spell Albuquerque. She graduated from Cal.

In this masterful piece of movie propaganda, the wealthy slave owners were white; being unsophisticated about white ethnicity, and lumping all whites together, we ignored the O’Hara part. As Williams points out in his special issue (Williams, 2010), ‘Many Celts were slaveholders in the United States, while at home many made money out of slavery’. Planters assigned the Irish to do some of the dirty work as well. They became the patrollers, an early version of the American police department, ‘nigger breakers’ like Edward Covey and the overseers. (One of Thomas Jefferson’s sisters blamed the presence of bi-racial children on the plantation on the Irish help, when it was her brother who was helping himself to the merchandise.)

The Irish have also been the cops for the establishment. In the movies they are ‘Dirty Harry O’Callahan’. When the Adamses were considered too soft on the Indians, Andrew Jackson, a Celt, was chosen to implement a plan of genocide, and when blacks were seen as becoming too sassy and bold, Ronald Reagan was swept to power as a result of Black Power activism, though Reagan referred to himself as an ‘Anglo’, having married into the ‘white’ establishment.

But there were also Celts who were opposed to Confederate rule.

It wasn’t until I began working on my Neo Slave Narrative, Flight To Canada, that I learned of a resistance to the secession by some poor whites, the majority of whom were probably Celtic, who, not owning slaves, felt no commitment to the Southern cause and, in fact, in some parts of the South, there were rebellions within the rebellion and secessions within the secession. I learned about the Richmond bread riots caused by white women, acts that are missing from the university curriculum, but I wasn’t aware that such riots happened on more than one occasion until I read Confederate Reckoning (McCurry, 2010). Many of these women were poor Irish or Scots Irish. Like the Irish in my background, they did not live like the O’Haras.

Unlike Ali, I wouldn’t be able to locate the descendants of the Pleasants and Colemans, who were white looking enough to benefit from what Kevin Gaines calls ‘the assimilationist cultural aesthetic of uplift’. Ali had no problem locating his. The Columbia News Service, 13 March 2002, carried the headline, ‘New York Irish embrace Ali as a Native Son’. The article, written by Kerry Burke, reported that ‘Irish and Irish-American New Yorkers were celebrating the discovery of boxing legend Muhammad Ali’s Irish heritage’:

The Clare Heritage Centre in Corofin, Ireland, says a man named Abe Grady from Ennis, County Clare, who emigrated to America in the 1860s is the three-times heavyweight champion’s great-grandfather. ‘We knew it all along,’ said Brian McCabe, 46, a proud Brooklyn Irish-American and former fight trainer. ‘Anyone that could fight and speak that well has to have some Irish in him.’ The Irish ancestry was not, however, news to Ali. When Ali visited Ireland in 1972, ‘he mentioned his Irish forefather Grady twice to the press, but nobody picked up on it,’ said O’Brien, the genealogist. ‘A researcher discovered the interview while preparing a documentary for the Irish language TV channel TG4,’ she said.

Some Irish-Americans said that Grady’s marriage to a black woman was not very far-fetched, despite the racism of the time. After all, Grady’s social and economic position was not far removed from that of Reconstruction-era black farmers and sharecroppers.
‘Ali’s Irish great-grandfather was as good as a slave in the 1860s,’ said John Murray, 36, a sound engineer from Woodside, Queens by way of Dublin. ‘So, it’s no wonder an Irish immigrant laborer found companionship with an American black woman.’

The chief of the Grady clan is coming in from London, and three ladies related to Ali, Mary O’Dunovan, Imelda Grady, and Mary Grady Gormley, who all live in Ennis, will meet him. One of the three lives in a Grady family house in the same road his great great-grandfather came from.

There was scant coverage of Ali’s visit to Ireland in the American media, whose producers and owners are products of an education that views interracial intimacy as aberrational or rare, with a few perpetrators like that Francophile (of Welsh ancestry) Thomas Jefferson (maybe because the French have a reputation for mingling with native women) or Strom Thurmond. The American media, generally, has condemned race mixing, especially that between black men and white women. The inflammatory New York press of 1863 incited a mob to accost the interracial zones of the city. When Booker T. Washington dined at Theodore Roosevelt’s White House, the press complained about black men being in the company of white women. During Lincoln’s time, the Democrats, in an attempt to embarrass the Republican Party, printed cartoons of white men at ‘negro balls’, dancing with black women. Williams (2010) refers to the miscegenation controversy that arose in 1863. (Such was the fear that black women would invade the bedrooms of the North as they had in the South, Abraham Lincoln had to address the issue. During the fourth debate with Stephen Douglass, Lincoln said, ‘I do not understand that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife. My understanding is that I just let black women alone. I am now in my fiftieth year, and I certainly never had a black woman neither as a slave or a wife.’ In an 1857 speech about Dred Scott, he said, ‘there is a natural disgust at the idea of intermarriage’.)

Williams also cites the case of a fake pamphlet that was used to indict the Republican Party as being cozy with race mixing. The title of the seventy-two page pamphlet was ‘Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro’. The authors were New York World editor David Goodman Croley (some biographies have him born in New York, others, Ireland) and George Wakeman, a reporter.

The strategy of depicting the opposition as being too comfortable with race mixing has been an effective political strategy from the Confederate Restoration to the present day. George Bush, the father, benefited from the black rapist scare in his campaign against Michael Dukakis, and robo-calls about John McCain’s race mixing with black women producing a black child (she was from Bangladesh and adopted) won South Carolina, a Confederate stronghold, for Shrub. Without South Carolina, ‘Shrub’ Bush wouldn’t have become president (and without the help of Florida’s Secretary of State who erased up to 80,000 blacks from the voting rolls, a technique known as ‘caging’, which was perfected during Reconstruction).

In South Carolina, which some view as an overseas territory of Scotland — the Confederate flag is a duplicate of the flag of Scotland and much of KKK symbolism is derived from Scottish lore — there is still a strong secessionist movement. It was the senator from South Carolina, Jim DeMint who vowed to ‘break’ the black president, Barack Obama, like Edward Covey was assigned to ‘break’ Frederick Douglass.
After my grandmother, my mother and her cousin delivered the bombshells about the Irish-American men in the family’s closet, I began to consider ‘whites’ in terms of nationality instead of as part of a vast undifferentiated mass. Professor Werner Sollors and others have written that those whom we consider ‘whites’ weren’t always regarded as such. Former NAACP Secretary of Labor, Herbert Hill, wrote in the magazine *Race Traitor* that the Jews became ‘white’ in the 1960s:

> The response of Jewish institutions to the effort of blacks to advance economically in New York’s garment industry demonstrates the profound changes that had occurred in the status of Jews in American society. With the rising affluence of the Jewish population and its assimilation into American society, the foundations of Jewish radicalism disintegrated. Many descendants of Jewish socialist immigrants now were upwardly mobile professionals or corporate managers with a stake in the perpetuation of existing social institutions. The intellectual skepticism cultivated by previous generations of radicalized Jews gave way to an acceptance of the legitimacy and indeed the virtue of existing values and institutions, including those related to racial dominance and subordination. By the 1960s Jews in America had become ‘white’, that is, they had become assimilated and successful enough in a society sharply divided by race that they regarded themselves as ‘white’ and by and large they were accepted as such by the majority of the population.¹

While Jews have entered the mainstream and are confident enough to advise blacks on how to become mainstreamed (Gertrude Himmlfarb (1995) has suggested that blacks adopt ‘Victorian values’; she’s apparently ignorant of the fact that Queen Victoria made an anti-Semitic crack when Lionel Rothschild was proposed for Parliament), Italian-Americans are still on probation.² I asked Professor Nancy C. Carnevale, author of *A New Language A New World, Italian Immigrants in the United States, 1890–1945*, when Italians would finally be accepted as whites. She signed my copy of her book, ‘still waiting’.

I invited Professor Lawrence DiStasi, who serves with me on the board of our multicultural organization, Before Columbus Foundation, to write a review of Spike Lee’s *Jungle Fever* about the romance between an Italian-American woman and an African-American man, in which Lee grants Italian-Americans ‘whiteness’. DiStasi (1991) wrote that ‘stealing white women’ was something of which the Italians were once accused. Indeed, some of the early riots occurring in the United States were between less-than-white Italians and the striving-for-white Irish, who were posed as role models for the latter by the enemies of both. One particularly violent one took place in my hometown, Buffalo, New York, on 18 March 1894. On 19 March, the *New York Times* declared the Italians the winners: ‘It was a war between the Italians and the Irish and the Italians won.’

Examining whiteness with new eyes, it occurred to me that some of my close friends in Buffalo were Irish-Americans. One of these was poet David Sharpe; another, Ed Callahan. If it weren’t for David Sharpe, I’d probably still be living in Buffalo. He was the one who encouraged me in my early writing, and persuaded me to accompany him to New York one weekend. When a screenwriter, who was in Chumley’s bar, praised a play that I had taken with me, I decided to move to New York.

It was after moving to California that I began to understand how the Irish and blacks had interacted over the years. This is because I met the late Bob Callahan,
publisher of the Turtle Island books, and the late Dan Cassidy author of *How the Irish Invented Slang: The Secret Language of the Crossroads*, a rebuttal to H. L. Mencken’s assertion that the Irish had ‘made almost no impression on English’. I also became acquainted with Pat Goggins from the Irish-American Cultural Center, which presented me with an award and the late John Mahar of the Delancey Street Foundation, who introduced me at a dinner held by the Celtic Foundation as an ‘Irish-American poet’. When I told Callahan of the Pleasants and Colemans back there, he got me admitted to the Foundation, where I mingled with Irish-American astronauts and movie actors. My being introduced as an Irish-American poet disturbed some members of the audience. Maybe it embarrassed them. Is it because the possibility that hundreds of thousands of blacks have Irish ancestry renders them less white, these people who were at one time referred to in a separate category as Hibernians, who were said to have possessed a ‘crime gene’, and to be fit for ‘paddy wagons’ and who, in some nineteenth-century cartoons, were placed on the same level as blacks? What was the joke, popular at the time? ‘An Irishman is a Negro turned inside out.’ Maybe I was interfering with the hard struggle they had waged to become white, the complexion preferred by the banks, the criminal justice system and the media?

On the other hand, when I asked an Irish-American audience during an Irish-American literary conference held in San Francisco whether assimilation had been worth it, there was agreement among those who answered that it hadn’t. They complained that they had had to change their names or marry Anglos. My outing by Callahan as having Irish ancestry began a new learning experience for me.

Bob Callahan was the Irish-American Langston Hughes, a writer who was responsible for my first novel being published. Like Hughes, Callahan had ties to a number of ethnic communities, but was, like Hughes, firmly rooted in his own. Hughes was influenced by and influenced international trends. He was one of the first American writers to become a world-class writer.

When I visited Kyoto, I was invited to appear before a literary club that was devoted originally to the works of Hughes but has expanded its exploration into Hispanic, Asian-American and Native American literature, a literature that is only begrudgingly paid attention to by the white cultural nationalists who dominate academia, book reviewing and the media. Hughes, the internationalist, surprised a reception for Leopold Senghor held by the Kennedys when Senghor heaped praise upon Hughes, who had been investigated by the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. Heather Williams in her essay included in this special issue; ‘“Me zo bet Sklav”: African Americans and Breton Literature’, mentions the interest in Hughes expressed by Breton writers. She writes, ‘Breton writers looked beyond their small audience to world literature — be it canonical or that produced by other lesser-known cultures’ (p. 126). The black writers of the 1960s, though cast as black nationalists by mainstream critics, also looked to world literature for inspiration, and began a revolt against ‘internal colonialism’. Some of them adopted other languages, such as Arabic, Swahili and Yoruba.

Black nationalists have always been more cosmopolitan than white ones. I wasn’t surprised to read of Michael Newton’s account of finding Gaelic speakers among the African-American population. It is always important for us to know the language of our adversaries, which is why there has been such opposition to black literacy, examples of which can be found in the autobiographies of Richard Wright and
Frederick Douglass. It is the white nationalists who have banned ethnic studies in Arizona, and Texas school board members who are insisting that information about Islam be excluded from the textbooks. The New York Times reported in September 2010 that:

The State Board of Education adopted a resolution Friday that seeks to curtail references to Islam in textbooks, as conservative board members warned of what they describe as a creeping Middle Eastern influence in the publishing industry. The board approved the resolution, which urges textbook publishers to limit what they print about Islam in world history books, by a 7-to-5 vote.¹

Unlike the white nationalists, who propose an Aryan purity, black nationalists have often entered into coalitions with whites, often with those of the right. White nationalists are usually ignorant of black writing, while black nationalist Martin Delany read books by white authors (in an 1853 letter to Frederick Douglass, he accused Harriet Beecher Stowe of plagiarism). He was attacked by blacks for supporting the candidacy of an ex-Confederate general.

The revolt begun by black writers of the 1960s spread to other communities. Hispanic poets wrote in Spanish. Leaders of the Asian American Renaissance, such as Frank Chin, began to examine texts written in Cantonese. These multicultural writers at the time heeded Dubliner George Bernard Shaw’s admonition: ‘Unless you do your own acting and write your own plays, your theatre will be of no use; it will, in fact, vulgarize and degrade you.’ Asian-American theater in San Francisco and El Teatro Campesino, a Hispanic theater, took up Shaw’s challenge until they were replaced or faced limited budgets. Black theater is under such attack that it’s close to extinction, and the Black Repertory Theater in Berkeley, California, where my plays dealing with the tough issues confronting African-Americans are performed, is being subjected to an embargo waged by the mayor of Berkeley, a neo-liberal. While the Berkeley Rep (a white nationalist theater) receives millions from the city, the mayor has held up a $25,000.00 payment for the Black Repertory Theater and refuses to do repairs.

As an example of how multiculturalism in the United States has come to mean everybody but blacks, when we met with the mayor over this issue, he introduced Hispanic and Chinese-American members of his administration so as to deflect charges that he was a racist. The Hispanic staff member must have given me his business card five times. Those who wish to cling to a United States based upon white power have found some middle-class immigrants, African immigrants, and Indian subcontinent immigrants more assimilative than American blacks, the traditional holdouts against an Anglo Saxon America, where everybody is ‘monoglot’ and knows where to rent a tuxedo. Cecil Brown, in his book, Hey Dude, Where’s My Black Studies, has complained about the white establishment’s importing of African and Caribbean blacks to oversee African-American Studies departments, the idea being that these blacks are less confrontational than American blacks, whose protests were responsible for the establishment of these departments in the first place. He views diaspora studies as an attempt to weaken the influence of African-American scholars and intellectuals. On the everyday level, some black Americans complain that colonial-minded African immigrants, employed by New York retail stores, service whites first, no matter their position in line.
To take the bite out of ethnic theater, a decision was made by the grants agencies that mainstream white theater produce ‘ethnic’ theater. The Right of the 1930s used radical black theater as an excuse to shut down the WPA (Works Progress Administration, the largest New Deal agency) projects.

Given the conservative mood of the times, the plays preferred by Broadway and Off Broadway are those that blame minority men for the problems confronting minority communities or attribute the condition of minority communities to ‘self-destructive’ behavior, which deflects attention from multinationals and other forces that are harming Americans, the polluters, the banks, the gun lobby, and the pharmaceutical industry, which is aware of the toxic drugs that it is dumping into markets. My most recent play, Body Parts, is about the use of black Americans and Africans as unwitting guinea pigs for the pharmaceutical industry. All of my plays have been staged at black theaters and New York’s Nuyorican Poet’s Café; otherwise they would never have been staged.

When August Wilson, during a debate with Robert Brustein, restated Shaw’s call for a nationalist theater, those who were responsible for his fame dropped him. Frank Rich, the powerful New York Times critic who had supported Wilson, wrote about Wilson’s comments as though, he, Rich, had been betrayed. It’s not surprising that black American writers Claude McKay and Derek Walcott would respond to Shaw’s charge.

The Celtic influence on African-American arts wouldn’t be a new trend. The black playwrights of the 1930s and 1960s acknowledge using the Celtic theater as a model. Charles Gordone’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play, No Place To Be Somebody, was based upon Eugene O’Neil’s The Iceman Cometh, and when Gordone ran his own theater in Berkeley, he played the lead in its production of the latter. (O’Neil continues to influence American playwrights, most recently, the young Wajahat Ali, whose play, The Domestic Crusaders, about three generations of a Pakistani-American family, has begun the Pakistani American Renaissance.) My Neo-HooDooism, an effort to reconstruct an indigenous inclusive Neo-African aesthetic, grew out of my examination of the Celtic Revival, to which I was introduced at the University of Buffalo. At the same time, Celtic cultural and political movements have been influenced by African-Americans. When Sinn Fein’s Gerry Adams came to the campus of the University of California at Berkeley, he spoke of how Rosa Park’s sitting in front of the bus revived the spirit of Irish resistance, which had experienced a lull, the sometimes despair and discouragement that sets in when a besieged culture feels overwhelmed by a more powerful one, such as the situation of Breton literature in France.

There are parallels between the treatment of Breton literature by the French government, which doesn’t recognize it as an official language, and the situation of black English or Ebonics in the United States. While Gwalarn, the literary supplement of Breiz Atao, sought to elevate a Celtic-based language that had been shunned by the French, the language of Hip Hop, composed by the younger generation of black poets, successors to the black poets of the 1960s, began with the producers selling tapes from the trunks of cars and became an international movement. Susan LaPolla, an Italian Hip Hop star told me that Hip Hop was the mainstream music of Italy. The Muslim Fest, held in Mississauga, a Canadian town located near Toronto, recently became a Hip Hop festival as young Muslims took turns performing the art.
Daniel Williams’ (2010) comment that, ‘Those who equate a minority language with race are ultimately denying the possibility that a multicultural and multiethnic society can express itself through the medium of a minority language’, reminded me of a scene that I witnessed at Frank Ogawa Plaza in downtown Oakland, California. Members of the Hip Hop generation, white, black, yellow, red and brown, had assembled there before leaving for San Francisco where they conducted sit-ins at those hotels that had contributed money to a proposition that would treat youth offenders as adults. What united these kids from different races and backgrounds was the ‘minority’ language of Hip Hop.

Unlike Scotch-Irish writer, Thomas Dixon, whose work *The Clansman* was admired by Scotch-Irish president Woodrow Wilson, and whose book is dedicated to his uncle, ‘The grand titan of the Klan’, the Hip Hop generation see no need to fabricate an identity with what some continue to call ‘the Anglo Saxon mainstream’. In his forward to the Pelican edition of Dixon’s *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, James P. Cantrell writes:

Reflecting his time, when all Americans had been taught to see the Anglo-Saxon Puritans as spiritual and intellectual forefathers, rather than reflecting the antebellum South that was, as eminent historian Eugene Genovese has noted, somewhat Anglophobic and widely anti-Puritan with much interest in the injustices suffered by the Irish, Dixon links Scottish heritage to the Puritans via Dissenter Protestantism. In so doing, he is undercutting his emphasis on Scottish heritage and correlating it to Anglo-Saxon Puritan and perhaps WASP culture. Even so, Mrs Cameron, for example, feels ‘the heritage of centuries of heroic blood from the martyrs of old Scotland’ after Dr Cameron is falsely arrested. Dixon also notes that the Scots-Irish settlers in the colonial South tended to hate Great Britain.

Unlike the members of the Hip Hop generation, who are linked through Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Blackberry, etc, my generation learned little of the white ethnic communities that surrounded us. What little I know now has been acquired through my membership of multicultural organizations and writers with whom I have had contact since the mid-1960s. I know enough now so that when someone asked me my opinion of Charles Murray’s *The Bell Curve*, which echoes the old quack Kantian anthropology that Europeans are smarter than Africans, I said that it was merely a repeat of the old Scots Irish feud (all of the founders of the Klan were Scots Irish; Tom Wolfe, whose portraits of blacks are so vile that a Nazi book club promotes his books, is also Scots Irish). Moreover, it was an example of a member of an ethnic group redirecting a slander once used against his group as a way of courting establishment acceptance. When Vice President Cheney made the joke that he had Cheneys on both sides of the family and he wasn’t from West Virginia, he was invoking the incest libel that has been aimed at the group to which both Wolfe and Murray belong.

Reporters from the big cities wrote about ‘white savages’ and ‘West Virginia barbarians’. (The *New York Times*, for example, said of people in eastern Kentucky: ‘They are remarkably good shots and effective assassins’, adding that they ‘are so accustomed to murder that they do not look upon it with the horror with which it is regarded in civilized communities’.4) Writing about violence in the South where the
white on white homicide rates are still higher than those in the North, Fox Butterfield, author of *All God’s Children: The Bosket Family and the American Tradition of Violence*, offers:

Another contributor to Southern bellicosity was the heavy influx of Scotch-Irish among the region’s settlers. These immigrants shocked the good Quakers of Pennsylvania, where they first arrived in the new world. Benjamin Franklin chastised them for being ‘white savages’. Their way of life was an outgrowth of seven centuries of fighting between the kings of England and Scotland over the borderlands they inhabited. They had grown inured to their towns being sacked and burned and their kinsmen tortured to death. Many had been forcibly resettled in Ireland. When they came to America, they brought with them a penchant for family feuds, a love of whiskey, and a warrior ethic that demanded vengeance.

Not only did Charles Murray in his book, *The Bell Curve*, whose co-author was Richard J. Herrnstein, attribute to blacks stereotypes that had haunted members of his ethnic group, but the book received endorsement from the Irish-American *National Review*, and the Jewish-American magazine, *Commentary*. Nativists like cartoonist Thomas Nash gave his Irish simian features and when Jews arrived in the United States they were classified as Orientals. (The Nazi press regarded them as Negroses.)

So the history of relations between the Celtic nations and African-Americans has been mixed. Jefferson Davis was Celtic, but so was Ulysses S. Grant, the South’s Nemesis.

John Adams disparaged a Boston mob as made up of blacks, mulattos, and Irish. This mob provoked the Boston Massacre, one of the seminal events in the American Revolution. A 1700s rebellion, whose members were Irish and black, so scared New Yorkers that when it was crushed church bells were rung. But then there were the New York Draft riots when Irish-Americans visited mayhem and murder upon New York blacks. Blacks were burned, mutilated, and castrated. Sections of the city where the races mixed were singled out for attack.

But it was an Irish-American president who lent his prestige to a revival of the Civil Rights movement which had stalled in the 1870s. (He was called a ‘nigger lover’ by some members of his secret service.) It was also an assimilated Irish-American president, Ronald Reagan, who referred to himself as an ‘Anglo’, who sought to dismantle the social reforms that had been initiated by Franklin Roosevelt, reforms that brought millions of Celtic Americans into the middle class — reforms that were denied to blacks as a result of a deal that Roosevelt made with Dixiecrats.

Africans and Celts have made love with one another and fought one another.

Speaking before an Irish-American group, I mentioned the riot between blacks and Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn that resulted in one death. Afterwards, members of the black and Jewish intelligentsia were given grants to resolve the tensions between Jews and blacks. All that resulted from this brain trust meeting over the matter, I am told, were lengthy lunches in five-star hotels. I told this group that if blacks and Celts were given a grant for every time they’ve squared off in the streets, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, New Orleans, etc, they could have a conference in the Greek Islands and sail there on Carnival Cruise, first class.
Notes


References


Notes on contributor

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