

Amen!!!

Phony ethnicity abroad in the land

Universal Press Syndicate

The aftermath of the gang rape at Big Dan's tavern in New Bedford, Mass., is almost as strange as the night itself. As *The Washington Post* put it in an editorial last week, commenting on the reaction of the Portuguese-American community:

"Why have they chosen to view the conviction of these four men as an affront to their community? Why have they identified with the defendants instead of the Portuguese-American victim, Portuguese-American prosecutor and the jurors, some of whom are Portuguese-American?"

These questions become even more crucial because the Portuguese people are not given over to egomaniacal, chauvinistic excesses and excuses. Historically, they have been a seafaring people, with all that means in terms of national egalitarianism and being open to unknown worlds.

Yet, in New Bedford in the aftermath of the rape convictions, the Portuguese-American community was by the thousands marching and screaming on behalf of the convicted men. They exhibited all the hysterical self-righteousness of so many other "ethnic" peoples of the United States today who are railing against whatever American center remains.

So, what is going on?

What is going on is the mimicking of something that is occurring in the United States today on a massive scale and that should seem so absurd to anyone who knows the rest of the world. It is the self-conscious, retrogressive nationalism of special "ethnic" groups that take self-righteous joy in angrily demanding constant special dispensation and privilege for

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whatever they do. It is the spoiled-kid phenomenon writ ethnic.

There was a time, when the first foreigners (many of our grandparents, no doubt) reached our shores, when there was a reason for immigrant politics. It was natural. Immigrants clung together, and they formed sustaining groups and used their national ties appropriately in politics. But, today?

To be perhaps a little cruel but honest about it, the whole idea of self-righteous ethnic demands comes down to being phony. To listen to the rhetoric, whether it comes from Americans who are black, Hispanic, Jewish, Portuguese, Iranian or Arab, one would think this the most bigoted country on earth — one that must constantly be struggled against for the slightest bit of justice. Yet, the truth is exactly the other way around.

For anyone who bothers to look around the world, what must soon become clear is that this is the only country in the world that even bothers to hammer out a pluralistic ethic. If anyone bothers to look around the streets of the world, he will find that this is the only country in the world in which people of different races, much less different religions or even families, live and work together — a state of affairs that the law constantly and progressively supports. Everywhere else, tribe is killing tribe, religion

is killing religion, nationality is killing nationality, ideology is killing ideology, sex is killing sex.

This phony ethnicity — on the part of people who in many cases are ignorant of the basics of their ethnic history — comes about in certain ways. The social welfare programs of the post-World War II period, designed originally to help the down-and-out, soon became social entitlement programs for the individual. Then they became social entitlement programs for the groups. The old ethnic world of our grandparents, which by this time would have revolved around holidays and recipes and religion, now has become the self-centered demand for attention regardless of behavior.

When Ronald Reagan came to power, he was perceived as a threat to this new ethnicity. Actually, despite the unfortunate quality of some of his words, I see him more as a man trying to put some of these retrogressive trends in order. Mr. Reagan, to me, is saying, "Don't be only your group, be yourselves. Be the kind of individuals we need to prosper again."

We have been sorely missing and systematically losing an American ethic, and that is in part why you find "Portuguese-Americans," whom most Americans today would have just called "Americans" before this, marching on behalf of some convicted rapists. We will not have an America if this other part of the "Big Dan's" syndrome begins to predominate.

The rest of the world today is beginning to move away from this blame-the-other syndrome. The new ethic is actually an old American one, which the Japanese also understand; it is a reason for their success in this new world. It is this: Take responsibility for what you are.

READ OR GET IT TRANSLATED UNTIL
YOU UNDERSTAND IT!!!

ANONYMOUS
letter



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