

Famine in Haiti Is Caused by International Banks

Brian Concannon Jr.

Brian Concannon Jr. recalls the Irish Potato Famine of 1845–1849, arguing that British economic policy was responsible for the over one million deaths that resulted from a potato blight in Ireland. He likens the Irish Famine to Haiti’s situation in 2008. He asserts that the World Bank and the Inter-America Development Bank loaned money to Haitian dictators, and now are requiring steep payments. Concannon asserts that this policy is causing widespread hunger and starvation in Haiti and that the banks should cancel the debts. Concannon is a human rights lawyer and the director of the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. Who was Sir Charles Edward Trevelyn?
2. Who were “Papa Doc” and “Baby Doc” Duvalier?
3. What did U.S. Representative Maxine Waters do in February 2008?

Saint Patrick is celebrated in Haiti, although not with the green beer and clothes he inspires in the United States. There he is better known as *Dambala*, a *loa* or spirit who of-

Brian Concannon Jr., “Saint Patrick Goes to Haiti,” *Global Research*, May 1, 2008. www.globalresearch.ca. © Copyright Brian Concannon Jr., Global Research, 2008. Reproduced by permission.



ten appears in the form of the snake in Haiti's Vodou religion. *Dambala* and the other spirits were brought from West Africa to Haiti in slave ships that brought the ancestors of today's Haitians across the Atlantic. Vodou was brutally suppressed, so the Haitians disguised their worship by representing their spirits with Christian symbols and icons. St. Patrick, often painted with snakes at his feet, and himself an escaped slave, must have seemed a good match. So centuries later, prints of St. Patrick with his staff and his bishop's mitre [hat], still preside over the drumming and chanting of vodou ceremonies in Haiti.

In the United States, St. Patrick is celebrated with sad songs that recognize the starvation and injustice that drove the ancestors of today's revelers across the Atlantic. One of the saddest and most popular of these songs, "The Fields of Athenry", can bring tears to your eyes, whether it is sung softly in the original folk version or shouted in the punk rock remake by the Dropkick Murphys. The song begins:

By a lonely prison wall
I heard a young girl calling
Michael, they have taken you away
For you stole Trevelyn's corn