

## WHAT AILS THE YOUTH OF BRITAIN

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind  
exceeding small...

Friedrich von Logau<sup>1</sup>

In an opinion piece in *The Australian* of 11 August, 2011, respected British commentator Theodore Dalrymple lambasted the British social system for producing a generation so self centred and bereft of conscience as to indulge in the conduct that wracked British cities for a week.<sup>2</sup> The analysis was admirable but it looked only to proximate, not to ultimate, causes.

The anarchy is testimony to the influence of an all embracing atheism, the legacy of five centuries of Protestantism. Britain's loss of moral principle may be charted in the resolutions of conferences of the Anglican Church, in legislation and in parliamentary debates since before the turn of the nineteenth century, the descent of its people the inevitable result of a loss of belief in God and a refusal to acknowledge His demesne. The highminded principles of Anglicanism, and the vehemence of chapel Protestantism have long since dissipated in dissension and compromise.

Protestants resolve into three categories:

- a) Those who persist with some belief in the Divine and in Christ and his teachings, but always with some qualification that suits the believers' personal choices. These amount to something above five per cent.
- b) The fortunate few who understand through actual grace that their faith is groundless if not subsumed into the fulness of the faith given by God through His Catholic Church, and who sooner or later submit to that rule—less than half of one per cent; and,
- c) the remainder, the vast majority, who lapse into agnosticism and, ultimately, into atheism.<sup>3</sup>

It is the systematic abandonment of principle by the members of this majority in their personal, family and social lives which has brought British society to its present pass. The embrace of socialism that followed the Second World War is simply one symptom of this abandonment.

Once a principle is admitted, the consequences flow. The rejection of the authority of God in favour of that of the believer, whose first effective exponent in England was Henry VIII, involves in the end the rejection even of belief. For one who believes in God relying only on his own authority has no basis for belief but himself. The

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<sup>1</sup> German epigrammatist, 1604-1655, *Sinnegedichte* (1654); trans. by H. W. Longfellow. The line is borrowed from that of Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* bk. 1, sect. 287. Ref. *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, Fourth edition, (Oxford, 1992), p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *British rioters the spawn of a bankrupt ruling elite*, reproduced in the appendix.

<sup>3</sup> One can see the progression towards atheism in the thought of the Protestant, Thomas Malthus [1766-1834]. His pessimistic doctrine demonstrated a loss of the sense of an all provident God who would never abandon his creatures in their need, let alone command them to some action—'increase and multiply'—without ensuring that each of their offspring was adequately provided for.

cares of the world, the deceit of riches and the desire for possessions soon choke the effect of God's revelation and render it fruitless.<sup>4</sup> What follows?

"Every sin consists formally in aversion from God. Hence the more a sin severs man from God, the graver it is. Now man is more than ever separated from God by unbelief, because he has not even true knowledge of God: and by false knowledge of God, man does not approach Him, but is severed from Him... Therefore it is clear that the sin of unbelief is greater than any sin that occurs in the perversion of morals."<sup>5</sup>

The atheist owes, he acknowledges, responsibility to no one. Confusing moral freedom (human freedom) with absolute freedom, he thinks he is a law unto himself. He acknowledges the demands of social order only so far as necessary for the attainment of his ends. He thinks that power 'comes from the people'. He takes his essence and his existence for granted, persuaded by the vapid rationalisations of modern thinking that he is nothing but a mindless effect of chance and accident. He buries any stirrings of conscience beneath the corybantic of opinion and the dazzle of television images constantly changing. His chief loss is the sense of sin, amply demonstrated in the words of the British offenders who were unremorseful, seeking to blame everyone but themselves for their behaviour.

If the young, rather than the parents, chose to conduct themselves toward their fellows worse than brute animals, it is because they lacked the parents' commitment to some sort of social stability. But the parents have committed greater evils. How many hundreds of thousands of them, for instance, have not been complicit in the legalised murder of an unborn child since the UK *Abortion Act* 1967? If the people of a nation can think it right to kill their offspring for convenience' sake, why should they be surprised at group behaviour only marginally less destructive?

Canadian journalist, Mark Steyn, remarks that in Wales, Northern Ireland and the north of England, the state accounts for some 78% of the economy.

"The United Kingdom seems to be evolving from a nanny state into a kind of giant remedial institution for elderly juvenile delinquents. At bus stops in London, there are posters warning, "DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON US." At the Underground station, you see the slogan, "IF YOU ABUSE OUR STAFF, LONDON SUFFERS"... I found this one of the bleakest comments on modern Britain: all the award-winning wit and style of the London advertising world deployed in service of a devastating acknowledgment of civic decay."<sup>6</sup>

Socialism and masonic inspired secular education are as much symptoms of unbelief in God as Darwinian evolutionary theory and politically correct obsessions such as 'global warming'. Implicit in each is the belief that man is on his own. He can look to no greater power to provide, or to care, for him. No God has preceded him, has had him in mind from all eternity; no God has made allowances for his excesses, and his limitations. No God is the Creator, no God is the proprietor of the universe in all its majesty.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Mark* 4: 3 and 18 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 10, a. 3

<sup>6</sup> In his *After America*, New York, 2011.

Every minute of every hour of every day, the atheist looks for causes of the multitude of things and actions that surround him. He could not conceive of living without doing so. Yet when it comes to his own being—*what* he is, and *that* he is—he refuses to acknowledge a cause other than the gross matter of which he is made. He turns his face from reality. He is the ultimate fool.

The society which rejects God's authority is doomed to self destruction. Of its members the words of Homer may aptly be applied: *Quem Jupiter vult perdere, dementat prius.*<sup>7</sup>

Michael Baker

21 August 2011—*Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time and Memorial of St Pius X*

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### *Appendix*

#### **BRITISH RIOTERS THE SPAWN OF A BANKRUPT RULING ELITE**

The riots in London and elsewhere in Britain are a backhanded tribute to the long-term intellectual torpor, moral cowardice, incompetence and careerist opportunism of the British political and intellectual class.

They have somehow managed not to notice what has long been apparent to anyone who has taken a short walk with his eyes open down any frequented British street: that a considerable proportion of the country's young population (a proportion that is declining) is ugly, aggressive, vicious, badly educated, uncouth and criminally inclined.

Unfortunately, while it is totally lacking in self-respect, it is full of self-esteem: that is to say, it believes itself entitled to a high standard of living, and other things, without any effort on its own part.

Consider for a moment the following: although youth unemployment in Britain is very high, that is to say about 20 per cent of those aged under 25, the country has had to import young foreign labour for a long time, even for unskilled work in the service sector.

The reasons for this seeming paradox are obvious to anyone who knows young Britons as I do.

No sensible employer in a service industry would choose a young Briton if he could have a young Pole; the young Pole is not only likely to have a good work ethic and refined manners, he is likely to be able to add up and -- most humiliating of all -- to speak better English than the Briton, at least if by that we mean the standard variety of the language. He may not be more fluent but his English will be more correct and his accent easier to understand.

This is not an exaggeration. After compulsory education (or perhaps I should say intermittent attendance at school) up to the age of 16 costing \$80,000 a head, about one-quarter of British children cannot read with facility or do simple arithmetic. It makes you proud to be a British taxpayer.

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<sup>7</sup> *He whom God wishes to destroy he first makes mad.* Seventeenth Century Hellenist James Duport's rendition of a fragment from Homer:

I think I can say with a fair degree of certainty, from my experience as a doctor in one of the areas in which a police station has just been burned down, that half of those rioting would reply to the question, "Can you do arithmetic?" by answering, "What is arithmetic?"

British youth leads the Western world in almost all aspects of social pathology, from teenage pregnancy to drug taking, from drunkenness to violent criminality. There is no form of bad behaviour that our version of the welfare state has not sought out and subsidised.

British children are much likelier to have a television in their bedroom than a father living at home. One-third of them never eat a meal at a table with another member of their household -- family is not the word for the social arrangements of the people in the areas from which the rioters mainly come. They are therefore radically unsocialised and deeply egotistical, viewing relations with other human beings in the same way as Lenin: Who whom, who does what to whom. By the time they grow up, they are destined not only for unemployment but unemployability.

For young women in much of Britain, dependence does not mean dependence on the government: that, for them, is independence. Dependence means any kind of reliance on the men who have impregnated them who, of course, regard their own subventions from the state as pocket money, to be supplemented by a little light trafficking. (According to his brother, Mark Duggan, the man whose death at the hands of the probably incompetent police allegedly sparked the riots, "was involved in things", which things being delicately left to the imagination of his interlocutor.)

Relatively poor as the rioting sector of society is, it nevertheless possesses all the electronic equipment necessary for the prosecution of the main business of life; that is to say, entertainment by popular culture. And what a culture British popular culture is!

Perhaps Amy Winehouse was its finest flower and its truest representative in her militant and ideological vulgarity, her stupid taste, her vile personal conduct and preposterous self-pity.

Her sordid life was a long bath in vomitus, literal and metaphorical, for which the exercise of her very minor talent was no excuse or explanation. Yet not a peep of dissent from our intellectual class was heard after her near canonisation after her death, that class having long had the backbone of a mollusc.

Criminality is scarcely repressed any more in Britain. The last lord chief justice but two thought that burglary was a minor offence, not worthy of imprisonment, and the next chief justice agreed with him.

By the age of 12, an ordinary slum-dweller has learned he has nothing to fear from the law and the only people to fear are those who are stronger or more ruthless than he.

Punishments are derisory; the police are simultaneously bullying but ineffectual and incompetent, increasingly dressed in paraphernalia that makes them look more like the occupiers of Afghanistan than the force imagined by Robert Peel. The people who most fear our police are the innocent.

Of course, none of this reduces the personal responsibility of the rioters. But the riots are a manifestation of a society in full decomposition, of a people with neither leaders nor followers but composed only of egotists.

Theodore Dalrymple

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