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THEY SAID IT

Our Civilization has decided, and very justly decided, that determining the guilt or innocence of men is a thing too important to be trusted to trained men. It wishes for light upon that awful matter, it asks men to know no more law than I know, but who can feel the thing that I felt in the jury box. When it wants a library catalogued, or the solar system discovered, or any trifle of that kind, it uses up its specialists. But when it wishes anything done which is really serious, it collects twelve of the ordinary men standing round. The same thing was done, if I remember right, by the founder of Christianity.

G.K. Chesterton, *Tremendous Trifles*, 1909.

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THE LEFT IS RIGHT?

For a great many people – even a number of seasoned political observers – the debt-ceiling “debate” of the last several weeks has been powerfully disconcerting. The notion that 536 men and women could hold the immediate and long-term economic fate of the nation, if not the entire world, hostage to their petty political predilections has simply been too much for these poor souls to fathom.

For some, the scandal of the debt-ceiling debacle has been amplified by the broader political, social, and economic backdrop against which it has played out, which is to say that, for them at least, the now-concluding debt-drama has been made infinitely worse by the other failures and scandals associated with the rich and powerful, by the seemingly inexorable cascade of economic misery in both the United States and Europe, and by the manifest obtuseness of the global political elites.

One such disconcerted observer is the usually staid and exceptionally well respected Etonian newspaperman, Charles Moore, who has edited *The Spectator*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, and who now serves as a columnist for the last of these. A little over a week ago, Moore took stock of the debt-ceiling mess, the Murdoch-empire phone-hacking scandal, and the perpetual Eurozone crisis, and apparently threw up his hands in frustration and bewilderment, coming to the conclusion that perhaps “the Left might actually be right” in that “what the Right calls ‘the free market’ is actually a set-up.” Yeeeee-ikes, to put it mildly.

For a guy like Moore – whose credentials, education, career, and other assorted conservative *bona fides* are about as unimpeachable as they get – this is akin to Alberto Duran crying “no mas” in the middle of a fight. He continues:

This column's mantra about the credit crunch is that Everything Is Different Now. One thing that is different is that people in general have lost faith in the free-market, Western, democratic order. They have not yet, thank God, transferred their faith, as they did in the 1930s, to totalitarianism. They merely feel gloomy and suspicious. But they ask the simple question, "What's in it for me?", and they do not hear a good answer.

Last week, I happened to be in America, mainly in the company of intelligent conservatives. Their critique of President Obama's astonishing spending and record-breaking deficits seemed right. But I was struck by how the optimistic message of the Reagan era has now become a shrill one. On Fox News (another Murdoch property, and one which, while I was there, did not breathe a word of his difficulties), Republicans lined up for hours to threaten to wreck the President's attempt to raise the debt ceiling. They seemed to take for granted the underlying robustness of their country's economic and political arrangements. This is a mistake. The greatest capitalist country in history is now dependent on other people's capital to survive. In such circumstances, Western democracy starts to feel like a threatened luxury. We can wave banners about "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", but they tend to say, in smaller print, "Made in China".

As for the plight of the eurozone, this could have been designed by a Left-wing propagandist as a satire of how money-power works. A single currency is created. A single bank controls it. No democratic institution with any authority watches over it, and when the zone's borrowings run into trouble, elected

governments must submit to almost any indignity rather than let bankers get hurt. What about the workers? They must lose their jobs in Porto and Piraeus and Panchestown and Poggibonsi so that bankers in Frankfurt and bureaucrats in Brussels may sleep easily in their beds.

When we look at the Arab Spring, we tend complacently to tell ourselves that the people on the streets all want the freedom we have got. Well, our situation is certainly better than theirs. But I doubt if Western leadership looks to a protester in Tahrir Square as it did to someone knocking down the Berlin Wall in 1989. We are bust – both actually and morally.

On the one hand, it is difficult not to agree with Moore. What we know today as the "free market" is, indeed, a set-up. About that there is little question. The rich get richer. The powerful get powerful-er. And the middle class gets the shaft. Moral hazard has been eliminated for the select few, but not for the rest of us. German banks get their bailouts, while Greek citizens get "austerity."

On the other hand, there is a critical question here that Moore leaves unasked, the answer to which is absolutely crucial to any understanding of the series of global meltdowns that have him and many others so flustered and frustrated. And that question is, if we all agree that the system is "rigged," who then did the rigging? And the answer in every case is the liberal governments of the blighted nations.

Take, for example, the British phone-tapping mess, the scandal that probably has Moore most upset, which only makes sense, given that he is a British print-journalist. The Murdoch empire has been rocked by revelations of abuse of power by journalists in its employ and, even more so, by related revelations of collusion between those journalists and high-ranking and exceptionally powerful members of the British government, up to and perhaps including current Prime Minister David Cameron. As Moore put it:

But as we have surveyed the Murdoch scandal of the past fortnight, few could deny that it has revealed how an international company has bullied and bought its way to control of party leaderships, police forces and regulatory processes. David Cameron, escaping skilfully from the tight corner into which he had got himself, admitted as much. Mr Murdoch himself, like a tired old Godfather, told the House of Commons media committee on Tuesday that he was so often courted by prime ministers that he wished they would leave him alone.

And why, pray tell, do prime ministers and other powerful politicians court Murdoch? Because they must. Clive Crook, of London's *Financial Times* gives the game away here in an interview with NPR's Scott Simon at the height of the Murdoch furor:

Crook: An important aspect of this story in Britain is the close relationship between the newspaper business, Rupert Murdoch's business, and leading politicians – not just the Tories, though the current prime minister is very embarrassed by this.

Simon: Yeah.

Crook: But Labour is just the same, all the parties are just the same. They have to get on with the newspapers. And why is that? I think it's interesting that they have to because Britain has largely succeeded in getting money out of politics, something many Americans would like to do here. The consequence of doing that is that the newspapers become incredibly important and you have to have them in your pocket if you're going to do well.

That's just awesome, isn't it? The liberal British government has successfully eliminated "money" from politics, which is to say that it has eliminated the right of the people to participate in elections, leaving

only the media corporations to influence pre-election public-relations-hype and creating a near-perfect collusion between government and media.

This, of course, is the goal of campaign finance "reform" movement in this country as well – to eliminate the influence of money – except media money, naturally – and to make elected officials dependent entirely on friendly media for friendly coverage and friendly PR. It's a win-win, assuming, of course, that you can limit the influence to the "right kind" of media, which here in the good ol' U.S. of A. means *The New York Times* and NPR, and NOT Fox News.

In any case, government regulation of free speech and electoral behavior has, in essence, fabricated a crisis in Britain thereby threatening not only the integrity of the media but of the government responsible for the regulations in the first place. Good stuff.

As for the American debt and credit problems, Moore complains that:

The credit crunch has exposed a similar process of how emancipation can be hijacked. The greater freedom to borrow which began in the 1980s was good for most people. A society in which credit is very restricted is one in which new people cannot rise. How many small businesses could start or first homes be bought without a loan? But when loans become the means by which millions finance mere consumption, that is different.

And when the banks that look after our money take it away, lose it and then, because of government guarantee, are not punished themselves, something much worse happens. It turns out – as the Left always claims – that a system purporting to advance the many has been perverted in order to enrich the few.

This is all well and good, we suppose, except that it ignores two salient facts. First, the expansion of credit to consumers specifically for the purpose of conspicuous consumption disconnected from ability to repay was, by and large, a scheme undertaken at the insistence of a liberal government. The “subprime” market that created the initial collapse didn’t materialize out of nowhere. And the over-extension of the American consumer was hardly an accident. Both, rather, were the net effect of an “activist” government becoming more active in the free market, in this case with the expansions of Fannie and Freddie and the Carter-era Community Reinvestment Act.

As for the safety-net government guarantee that bailed out the big boys, it seems that we have all forgotten rather quickly just how that came about. Fortunately, the internet has a longer memory than does Mr. Moore. And on the internet, one can find dozens of stories such as the following, which comes from the Associated Press, circa May 2009:

The chief executives of the nine largest U.S. banks had no choice but to accept capital infusions from the Treasury Department in October, government documents have confirmed.

Obtained and released by Judicial Watch, a nonpartisan educational foundation, the documents revealed “talking points” used by former Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson during the Oct. 13 meeting between federal officials and the executives that stressed the investments would be required “in any circumstance,” whether the banks found them appealing or not.

Paulson also told the bankers it would not be prudent to opt out of the program because doing so “would leave you vulnerable and exposed.”

It’s no secret that some of the banks had to be pressured to participate in the program, with several bank CEOs

saying they had been strongly encouraged to take the funds. But the documents are the first proof of the government’s insistence.

So . . . what this means, of course, is that the “cushy” bailouts that the bankers received and which Moore compares to “spongy, health-and-safety approved flooring,” was actually a case of government crossing the line from collusion to coercion. Again, good stuff.

Finally, there is the complaint about the eurozone and the dreadful consequences of the “austerity” budgets being pushed on the PIIGS so that German bankers may not feel the pinch of their foolish investments. Or as Moore complains:

[W]hen the zone’s borrowings run into trouble, elected governments must submit to almost any indignity rather than let bankers get hurt. What about the workers? They must lose their jobs in Porto and Piraeus and Punchestown and Poggibonsi so that bankers in Frankfurt and bureaucrats in Brussels may sleep easily in their beds.

But for what, exactly, was the zone borrowing? Was it for extraordinary measures or for national security? Or was it simply to allow nations like Greece, with no productive economy and no means to pay for the luxuries of 20th century Europeans, to live like the architects of a thriving economic enterprise and a modern state? Who then benefitted from the investment of the sweat of German laborers in a nation that had no intention whatsoever of doing anything to repay said investment? And who facilitated this investment? And who, when it yielded utterly predictable results, ran screaming to the rescue, insisting that only austerity, higher taxes (on whom or what, no one knows), and further bailouts could save the phony creation of a unified political state? The man who “saved” Europe, that’s who. The degenerate former head of the IMF. And was he, perchance, a global capitalist? Or something else altogether, a “socialist” perhaps?

You see, what all of these crises have in common can be summed up in one word, and contra Charles Moore, that word has nothing whatsoever to do with the free markets. That word, of course, is “government.”

These crises do not represent the collapse of the free market and the confirmation of the left’s fears about the inequity of liberal democracy. Not even close. Rather, they represent the collapse of the big government-big business collusive corporatist state that has perverted the values of democratic governance, that has exposed the weaknesses of the republican organizational structure, and that has, more or less, adopted the central planning and coercion of the Leninist model, all at the expense of true free markets, true liberty, and the true well being of the people.

We have written a great deal over the past several years about the corruption of the administrative state and, along with it, the rise of a bureaucratic ruling class that not only actively and aggressively detests the masses whom it purports to serve, but also seeks to eliminate said masses from the day-to-day administration of their own lives. To this ruling class, you see, the masses are stupid, poorly educated, benighted. And they need to be told what, how, when, and where to handle their affairs, lest they suffer the deprivations of relative misery – or worse yet, stumble accidentally into prosperity.

We will gladly concede (and have gladly conceded) that the founding intentions of the administrative apparatus were admirable, even noble. But they were also premised on an arrogance that presumed both a mental and moral superiority on the part of the ruling class relative to the ruled. The net effect of this arrogance, over time, has been to force the administrative ruling class into the role of Lenin’s *iskra*, his “spark” or “vanguard,” the party responsible for preserving the purity of the state, even at the expense of the people.

As a result, corruption, criminal collusion, coercion, and the advancement of the corporatist/administrative power at the expense of the people have followed

– and they have followed all too predictably and all too inevitably as anyone who has read his Hayek could attest. Not that Hayek was the only one to have seen it, of course. Even after the process was set in motion, warning-bells have been ringing for decades, furiously and frantically signaling the perversion of the system and the inevitable collapse to follow. From Weber to Lowi to Niskanen to Tullock, the descriptions of this “vanguard of the people” abusing its power to advance its own causes and the authority of the state – at the expense of personal autonomy and economic liberty – have been manifold and graphic.

What is shocking in all of this is not that we should end up here, in the midst of a multi-faceted global collapse, but that anyone should be surprised. More shocking still is that anyone should actually believe that this has anything whatsoever to do with the “free market.” To reiterate, these failures do not constitute the repudiation of the free market. Instead, they constitute the repudiation of the repudiation of the free market. They serve, more or less, as the condemnation of the paternalistic, administrative, deviant-republicanism that has served as the backbone of the political establishment in the Western democratic tradition for the better part of the last century. And they expose this establishment for what it is, a fraud.

Over the years, we have repeatedly noted our admiration for the republican-minded Founders and our personal distaste for mass democracy. And we have been repeatedly chided by friends and colleagues who insist that whenever the “people” and the political class clash – be it on the streets or at the ballot box, the “people” choose freedom, liberty, and prosperity every time. And while we remain skeptical, we have to admit that the failures of what passes for republicanism in the modern West are more and more undeniable and more and more dangerous to the entire Western enterprise.

Given this, the group nearly universally acknowledged to be the “bad guys” in the debt debate – the Tea Party freshman – represents, in our estimation, the

only hope for the future of this great nation and for those that follow its example. The Tea Party caucus may be intransigent, incensed, and rash, but it is also independent, which sets it apart from all the rest. The challenge for the Tea Partiers does not lie in maintaining support or acquiring power. They've already acquired considerable power. The challenge will lie in resisting the temptations of that power, the most damning of which is adopting the paternalistic condescension of the ruling class.

In his far lesser known and far less-often cited follow-up to *The End of Liberalism*, the aforementioned Theodore Lowi discussed *The End of the Republican Era* and suggested not only that the establishment wing of the GOP would collapse under the weight of its own inherent contradictions but that it would also threaten the entire American experiment in republican governance. Between the two books, Lowi's depiction of an America in which the institutions of the Founders have been sufficiently perverted by the powerful and politically connected is remarkable accurate and devastating. His suggestion that the only way forward for a nation thusly shattered is the development of a newer, small-party democracy more dedicated to liberty has Hayekian echoes and also is suggestive of the Tea Party (though we caution to note that Lowi himself would likely not make such a connection).

In any case, the great statist experiments of the 20th century have reached their nadir with the crises of the last several months. It is all too easy, we're afraid, to lay the blame for these crises at the feet of free markets. But free markets are no more responsible for these crises than are the Dodo birds – given that both are extinct.

Can the Tea Partiers save the great Western democratic experiment? Who knows? But certainly they stand a better chance than anyone else in government does at this point. In Britain, David Cameron is suggesting tighter control of the media. In Europe, the new bailout simply extends into the future the inevitable collapse. A few hundred billion in largely symbolic cuts is a joke, we'll concede. But it could be worse. At

the very least, it's a step in the right direction – away from greater government control and toward the concession that government must be reined in. And at a time when even conservatives are wondering if maybe the left isn't right and that the free markets are to blame for all the world's ills, that's something.

NORWAY AND THE MULTICULTI FAILURE.

For years now, we have been told – mostly by people with whom we agree – that Europe is doomed, that it will, by the middle of the century, if not sooner, be a Muslim continent dominated by Sha'ria law and no longer dedicated to the principles of liberalism, tolerance, and freedom. Indeed, we have been told this so often and so convincingly at times that we have tended more often than not to believe it ourselves, to expect that the combination of the high Euro-Muslim birth rates and the cultural ignorance and self-loathing of the European elites would combine to create an inevitable collapse of Western civilization in the place of its birth.

We used the phrase “more often than not” because we are not wholly convinced that the entire indigenous population of continental Europe is willing to go quite so gently into that good night. Indeed, we are quite certain that at some point between now and this storied takeover there will be a nasty battle of epic proportions. Indeed, one would be remiss when considering this question to ignore the propensity of European political leaders to deflect the anger of the masses away from the mismanagement and incompetence of the elite establishment and onto the backs of a scapegoat.

In the past, of course, the Jews were the scapegoat of choice, even though they had assimilated comfortably into the Christian culture, presented absolutely no threat to it, and lived quite peacefully and in accordance with the local law. That cannot be said of the European Muslims. In fact, it appears that as their numbers have increased, they have become more rather than less assimilated, and have thus increased

their potential for inciting anger among the masses and for becoming a scapegoat for the plague of economic and social troubles that the European nations face.

The following, taken from a recent column by Mark Steyn, provides an interesting insight into the inroads that the Islamic community in Canada is making into that nation's culture; inroads that were once viewed favorably by most Canadians as evidence of their own kindness and openness, but that are increasingly becoming a source of fear and anger among some.

It's the scene every Friday at the cafeteria of Valley Park Middle School in Toronto. That's not a private academy, it's a public school funded by taxpayers. And yet, oddly enough, what's going on is a prayer service – oh, relax, it's not Anglican or anything improper like that; it's Muslim Friday prayers, and the Toronto District School Board says don't worry, it's just for convenience: They put the cafeteria at the local imams' disposal because otherwise the kids would have to troop off to the local mosque and then they'd be late for Lesbian History class or whatever subject is scheduled for Friday afternoon.

The picture is taken from the back of the cafeteria. In the distance are the boys. They're male, so they get to sit up front at prayers. Behind them are the girls. They're female, so they have to sit behind the boys because they're second-class citizens – not in the whole of Canada, not formally, not yet, but in the cafeteria of a middle school run by the Toronto District School Board they most certainly are.

And the third row? The ones with their backs to us in the foreground of the picture? Well, let the *Star's* caption writer explain:

At Valley Park Middle School, Muslim students participate in the Friday prayer service. Menstruating girls, at the very back, do not take part.

Oh. As Kathy Shaidle says:

Yep, that's part of the caption of the Toronto Star photo.

Yes, the country is Canada and the year is 2011.

Just so. Not some exotic photojournalism essay from an upcountry village in Krappistan. But a typical Friday at a middle school in the largest city in Canada. I forget which brand of tampon used to advertise itself with the pitch "Now with new [whatever] you can go horse-riding, water-ski-ing, ballet dancing, whatever you want to do", but perhaps they can just add the tag: "But not participate in Friday prayers at an Ontario public school."

Some Canadians will look at this picture and react as Miss Shaidle did, or Tasha Kheiriddin in *The National Post*:

Is this the Middle Ages? Have I stumbled into a time warp, where "unclean" women must be prevented from "defiling" other persons? It's bad enough that the girls at Valley Park have to enter the cafeteria from the back, while the boys enter from the front, but does the entire school have the right to know they are menstruating?

But a lot of Canadians will glance at the picture and think, "Aw, diversity, ain't it a beautiful thing?" . . .

In 1978, the female students in Cairo looked little different from the female students at the University of Toronto, or Kingston. Now the schoolgirls of Toronto look no different from Cairo . . .

If you didn't know it before that Valley Park photograph, you should now: "Diversity" is where nations go to die. If local Mennonites or Amish were segregating the sexes and making them enter by different doors for religious services in a Toronto grade-school cafeteria, Canadian feminists

would howl them down in outrage. But when Muslims do it they fall as silent as their body-bagged sisters in Kandahar. If you're wondering how Valley Park's catchment district got to be 80-90 per cent Muslim in nothing flat, well, Islam is currently the biggest supplier of new Canadians, as it is of new Britons and new Europeans. Not many western statistics agencies keep tabs on religion, but the Vienna Institute of Demography, for example, calculates that by 2050 a majority of Austrians under 15 will be Muslim. 2050 isn't that far away. It's as far from today as 2011 is from 1972: The future shows up faster than you think.

A world that becomes more Muslim becomes less everything else: First it's Jews, already fleeing Malmö in Sweden. Then it's homosexuals, already under siege from gay-bashing in Amsterdam, "the most tolerant city in Europe". Then it's uncovered women, already targeted for rape in Oslo and other Continental cities. And, if you don't any longer have any Jews or (officially) any gays or (increasingly) uncovered women, there are always just Christians in general, from Egypt to Pakistan.

More space for Islam means less space for everything else, and in the end less space for you.

That's bracing stuff, and ample grounds for the pessimism about the West's ability to deal with the growth of Islam in its midst that Steyn exhibited in his last book *America Alone*. But, of course, not everyone is willing to accept the fate that Steyn and others see as inevitable.

Some, namely Pope Benedict XVI, see it as their mission to rekindle the faith and the culture spawned by that faith in what was known for centuries as Christendom. They see it as their responsibility to reassert the supremacy of the religious doctrines that preach the intrinsic value and godliness of each

individual soul and that fostered a rich, diverse, and pluralistic culture derived from this principle. God bless him and his efforts.

But he is up against others such as Anders Behring Breivik, who see it as their responsibility to assert the supremacy of their "kind" and to do whatever it takes to ensure that their kind are not forgotten. Breivik, of course, is the man who murdered more than 70 of his countrymen in the name of anti-Islamic, European purity. And he may also be a harbinger of things to come.

Now, we know that in the couple of weeks since Breivik committed his atrocity, the purveyors of conventional wisdom have done a great deal to exaggerate his connection to the conventional political "right." And we know that that these same purveyors of conventional wisdom have done their very best to portray him as part of a broader movement of murderous, right-wing "Christianist" bigots. We also know that almost all of this is complete fantasy. As the onetime intelligence analyst Michael Ledeen put it:

It is thoroughly understandable, then, that some have responded to the Norwegian mass murder with myths of their own, beginning with the fable that Breivik is the tip of a very large iceberg, that includes not only deranged would-be killers but also writers and politicians. Thus they conjure up yet another phantasmagorical mass movement — a vast conspiracy with countless followers, some hidden, others public. There is no such movement. Yes, there are crazy people who think they are fighters in the great cataclysmic struggle of the days of the Last Judgment . . . But I doubt there are enough of them to feed more than a handful of Knights Templar, let alone a full-fledged political movement.

In general, we agree with Ledeen. There is no organized political movement in Europe to destroy Muslims or attack their "enablers." There is no

evidence of such a movement, and the presumption that one exists serves simply to allow the multiculti fetishists to preen about their moral superiority.

But just because Breivik does not represent a broad-based movement does not mean that there are not innumerable flakes out there who feel just the way he does, who are aggrieved the way he is, who have as little to lose as he did, and who might thus undertake the same steps in pursuit of the same ends. Under the circumstances, we'd actually be surprised if there are not. And we would be further surprised if no ambitious politician were eyeing these flakes as a possible foundation for a right wing party. Or, has that already happened?

It is worth remembering in this context, we think, that the last great mass genocide in Europe did not take place seventy years ago and was not perpetrated by the now-fictional-seeming Nazis. It took place less than twenty years ago in Bosnia and was perpetrated against the Muslim Bosniaks by Serbian slavs. Indeed, more than 8000 Muslim Bosniaks were slaughtered just 16 years ago last month at Srebrenica.

What does this prove? Nothing really – except that there are still people in the allegedly “civilized” world who are capable of great atrocities and heinous, vicious crimes against humanity in the name of racial purity.

Throughout Europe last spring – from Germany to France to Great Britain – political leaders declared “multiculturalism” to be a failure. And while many applauded these insightful assessments and brave declarations, we wondered whether any of those making such statements understood that a retreat from the multiculti pabulum of the last four or five decades would involve something akin to that which Pope Benedict has suggested, namely an acknowledgement

that the cultural traditions of Europe are not only not deleterious but are, rather, glorious, beautiful, and splendid. It would involve the acknowledgement that the religious tradition of the continent, while far from perfect, had spawned a unique and fundamentally dignified interpretation of human life which, when coupled with the remnants of Hellenic philosophy, produced the most effective culture for the creation of wealth and expression of liberty in the history of mankind. It would, in short, involve a willingness to address the beauty of that tradition, the strength of its true pluralism, and to acknowledge the damage wrought by the competing doctrinaire secularism.

We feared then that those decrying the rise of multiculturalism would nonetheless lack either the guts or the understanding to make this necessary leap and to reassert the benevolent cultural heritage of their forefathers, fashioning a civil society accepting of diversity but confident in its own cultural strengths. We appear to have been right, sadly. And the consequences, we're afraid, are likely to become more and more obvious and more and more violent over time.

Anders Behring Breivik is a vile, murderous degenerate who deserves far worse than the punishment that the Norwegian justice system will deliver upon him. But the circumstances that moved him to action were hardly fanciful. They are real, and they are troubling.

Worst of all, they are entirely unnecessary. A simple healthy dose of confidence and faith in the cultures of the West would go a long way toward defusing the grievances of lunatics and murderers like Breivik. But, of course, such a dose of confidence would involve making common cause with Popes, bishops, priests, vicars, imperialists, crusaders, and the like. And we can't have that, now can we?

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