



Dr. Fred Schwarz

# The Schwarz Report

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## Barbarians Within the Gates—Part I

by Melanie Phillips

So now the chickens have well and truly come home terrifyingly to roost. The violent anarchy that has taken hold of British cities is the all-too-predictable outcome of a three-decade liberal experiment which tore up virtually every basic social value.

The married two-parent family, educational meritocracy, punishment of criminals, national identity, enforcement of the drugs laws, and many more fundamental conventions were all smashed by a liberal intelligentsia hell-bent on a revolutionary transformation of society.

Those of us who warned over the years that they were playing with fire were sneered at and smeared as right-wing nutters who wanted to turn the clock back to some mythical golden age.

Now we can see what they have brought about in the unprecedented and horrific scenes of mob violence, with homes and businesses going up in flames, and epidemic looting.

Clearly, there is some as yet unidentified direction and coordination behind the anarchy. But what is so notable and distressing is that, after the first day when adults were clearly involved, this mayhem has been carried out in the main by teenagers and children, some as young as eight.

The idea that they should not steal other people's property, or beat up and rob passers-by, appears to be as weird and outlandish to them as the suggestion that they should fly to the moon.

These youths feel absolutely entitled to go "on the rob" and steal whatever they want. Indeed, they are incredulous that anyone should suggest they might pass up such an opportunity.

What has been fuelling all this is not poverty, as has so predictably been claimed, but moral collapse. What we have been experiencing is a complete breakdown of civilized behavior among children and young people straight out of William Golding's seminal novel about childhood savagery, *Lord Of The Flies*.

There has been much bewildered talk about "feral" children, and desperate calls upon their parents to keep them in at night and to ask them about any stolen goods they are bringing home.

As if there were responsible parents in such homes! We are not merely up against feral children, but feral parents.

Of course these parents know their children are out on the streets. Of course they see them staggering back with what they have looted. But either they are too drunk or drugged or otherwise out of it to care, or else they are helping themselves to the proceeds, too.

As David Cameron observed, there are clearly pockets of society that are not just broken, but sick.

The causes of this sickness are many and complex. But three things can be said with certainty: every one of them is the fault of the liberal intelligentsia; every one of them was instituted or exacerbated by the Labour government; and at the very heart of these problems lies the breakdown of the family.

For most of these children come from lone-mother households. And the single most crucial factor behind all this mayhem is the willed removal of the most important thing that socializes children and turns them from feral savages into civilized citizens: a father who is a fully committed member of the family unit.

Of course there are many lone parents who do a tremendous job. But we're talking here about widespread social collapse. And there are whole areas of Britain, white as well as black, where committed fathers are a wholly unknown phenomenon.

In such areas, successive generations are being brought up only by mothers, through whose houses pass transitory

males by whom these women have yet more children—and who inevitably repeat the pattern of lone and dysfunctional parenting.

The result is fatherless boys who are consumed by an existential rage and desperate emotional need, and who take out the damage done to them by lashing out from infancy at everyone around them.

Such children inhabit what is effectively a different world from the rest of society. It's a world without any boundaries or rules, a world of emotional and physical chaos.

It is a world where a child responds to the slightest setback or disagreement by resorting to violence, a world where the parent is unwilling or incapable of providing the loving and disciplined framework that a child needs in order to thrive.

Yet instead of lone parenthood being regarded as a tragedy for individuals, and a catastrophe for society, it has been redefined as a "right."

When Labour came to power in 1997, it set about systematically destroying not just the traditional family but the very idea that married parents were better for children than any other arrangement.

Instead, it introduced the sexual free-for-all of "lifestyle choice;" claimed that the idea of the male breadwinner was a sexist anachronism; and told girls that they could, and should, go it alone as mothers.

This was the outcome of the shattering defeat of Tony Blair, in the two years or so after he came to power, at the hands of the ultra-feminists and apostles of non-judgmentalism in his Cabinet and party who were determined, above all, to destroy the traditional nuclear family.

Blair stood virtually alone against them, and lost.

One of these ultra-feminist wreckers was Harriet Harman. The other night, she was on TV preposterously suggesting that cuts in educational allowances or youth workers had something to do with young people torching and looting shops, robbing, and leaving people for dead in the streets.

But Harman was one of the principal forces in the Labour government behind the promotion of lone parenthood and the marginalization of fathers. If anyone should be blamed for bringing about the conditions which have led to these appalling scenes in our cities, it is surely Ms. Harman.

And this breaking of the family was further condoned, rewarded, and encouraged by the Welfare State, which conceives of need solely in terms of absence of money, and which accordingly subsidizes lone parenthood and

the destructive behavior that fatherlessness brings in its train.

Welfare dependency further created the entitlement culture that the looters so egregiously display. It taught them that the world owed them a living. It taught them that their actions had no consequences. And it taught them that the world revolved around themselves.

The result of this toxic combination of welfare and non-judgmentalism was an explosion of elective lone parenthood and dysfunctional behavior transmitted down through the generations at the very bottom of the social heap—creating, in effect, a class apart.

Once, children would have been rescued from their disadvantaged backgrounds by schools that gave them not just an education but structure and purpose to their lives.

But the liberal intelligentsia destroyed that escape route, too. For its onslaught upon marriage—the bedrock institution of society—with a tax system that penalizes married couples with a wife who doesn't work, was replicated by an onslaught upon the understanding and very identity of that society. Instead of transmitting knowledge to children, teaching was deemed to be an attack upon a child's autonomy and self-esteem.

Thus it was that teachers adopted the "child-centered" approach, which expected children not only to learn for themselves but also to decide for themselves about behavior such as sexual morality or drug-taking.

The outcome was that children were left illiterate and innumerate and unable to think. Abandoned to wander through the world without any guidance, they predictably ended up without any moral compass.

All of this was compounded still further by the disaster of multiculturalism—the doctrine which held that no culture could be considered superior to any other because that was "racist."

That meant children were no longer taught about the nation in which they lived, and about its culture. So not only were they left in ignorance of their own society, but any attachment to a shared and over-arching culture was deliberately shattered.

Instead of forging social bonds, multiculturalism dissolved them—and introduced instead a primitive war of all against all, in which the strongest groups would destroy the weak.

Closely related to this was "victim culture," in which all minority groups were regarded as victims of the majority. So any bad behavior by them was excused and blamed on the majority.

In similar vein, all criminal wrongdoing was excused on the basis that the criminal couldn't help himself, as he was the victim of circumstances such as poverty, unemployment, or as yet, illusory cuts in public spending.

The human rights of the criminal became seen as more important than the safety and security of his victims. Punishment became a dirty word. So the entire criminal justice system turned into a sick joke, with young hoodlums walking off with community sentences or Asbos (antisocial behavior orders) which they held in total contempt.

Mr. Cameron has declared that all those convicted of violent disorder in these riots will go to prison.

Really? Isn't it more likely that they will end up on some community penalty which will see them taken on trips to Alton Towers to make up for their disadvantaged upbringing? This is the normal response of our sentimentalized and addle-brained criminal justice officials.

In short, what we have seen unfolding before our horrified gaze over the past four days in Britain is the true legacy of the Labour years.

The social and moral breakdown behind the riots was deliberately willed upon Britain by left-wing politicians and other middle-class ideologues who wrap their utter contempt for the poor in the mantle of "progressive" non-judgmentalism.

These are the people who—against the evidence of a mountain of empirical research—hurl execrations at anyone who suggests that lone parenthood is, in general, a catastrophe for children (and a disaster for women); who promote drug liberalization, oppose selective education (while paying for private tutors for their own children) and call those who oppose unlimited immigration and multiculturalism "racists."

And the real victims of these people "who know best" are always those at the bottom of the social heap, who possess neither the money nor the social or intellectual resources to cushion them against the most catastrophic effects of such nonsense.

Britain was once an ordered society that was the envy of the world—the most civilized, the most gentle, and law-abiding.

Can Broken Britain be put together again? David Cameron is commendably talking tough: but will he have the stomach for tough action?

Will he, for example, remove the incentives to girls and women to have babies outside marriage? Will he dismantle the concept of entitlement from the Welfare State?

Will he vigorously enforce the drug laws? Will he end

the kid-glove treatment of "victim groups," and hold them to account for their behavior in exactly the same way as everyone else?

Repairing this terrible damage also means, dare I say it, a return to the energetic transmission of Biblical morality.

Anyone heard from the Archbishop of Canterbury about the riots? Anyone care to guess what he will eventually say about them? Quite.

When church leaders stop prattling like soft-headed social workers and start preaching, once again, the moral concepts that underlie our civilization, and when our political leaders decide to oppose the culture war that has been waged against that civilization rather than supinely acquiescing in its destruction, then—and only then—will we start to get to grips with this terrible problem.

Until then, within the smouldering embers of our smashed and burned-out cities, we can only look upon the ruins of the Britain we have so dearly loved: the Britain that once led the world towards civilization, but is now so tragically leading the way out.

—*London Daily Mail*, August 11, 2011

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## Barbarians Within the Gates—Part II

by Theodore Dalrymple

The youth of Britain have long placed a de facto curfew on the old, who in most places would no more think of venturing forth after dark than would peasants in Bram Stoker's Transylvania. Indeed, well before the riots last week, respectable persons would not venture into the centers of most British cities or towns on Friday and Saturday nights, for fear—and in the certainty—of encountering drunken and aggressive youngsters. In Britain nowadays, the difference between ordinary social life and riot is only a matter of degree, not of type.

A short time ago, I gave a talk in a school in an exquisite market town, deep in the countryside. Came Friday night, however, and the inhabitants locked themselves into their houses against the invasion of the barbarians. In my own little market town of Bridgnorth, in Shropshire, where not long ago a man was nearly beaten to death 20 yards from my house, drunken young people often rampage down one of its lovely little streets, causing much damage and preventing sleep. No one, of course, dares

ask them to stop. The Shropshire council has dealt with the problem by granting a license for a pub in the town to stay open until 4 a.m., as if what the town needed was the opportunity for yet more and later drunkenness.

If the authorities show neither the will nor the capacity to deal with such an easily solved problem—and willfully do all they can to worsen it—is it any wonder that they exhibit, in the face of more difficult problems, all the courage and determination of frightened rabbits?

The rioters in the news last week had a thwarted sense of entitlement that has been assiduously cultivated by an alliance of intellectuals, governments, and bureaucrats. “We’re fed up with being broke,” one rioter was reported as having said, as if having enough money to satisfy one’s desires were a human right rather than something to be earned.

“There are people here with nothing,” this rioter continued: nothing, that is, except an education that has cost \$80,000, a roof over their head, clothes on their back and shoes on their feet, food in their stomachs, a cellphone, a flat-screen TV, a refrigerator, an electric stove, heating and lighting, hot and cold running water, a guaranteed income, free medical care, and all of the same for any of the children that they might care to propagate.

But while the rioters have been maintained in a condition of near-permanent unemployment by government subvention augmented by criminal activity, Britain was importing labor to man its service industries. You can travel up and down the country and you can be sure that all the decent hotels and restaurants will be manned overwhelmingly by young foreigners; not a young Briton in sight (thank God).

The reason for this is clear: The young unemployed Britons not only have the wrong attitude to work, for example regarding fixed hours as a form of oppression, but they are also dramatically badly educated. Within six months of arrival in the country, the average young Pole speaks better, more cultivated English than they do.

The icing on the cake, as it were, is that social charges on labor and the minimum wage are so high that no employer can possibly extract from the young unemployed Briton anything like the value of what it costs to employ him. And thus we have the paradox of high youth unemployment at the very same time that we suck in young workers from abroad.

The culture in which the young unemployed have immersed themselves is not one that is likely to promote virtues such as self-discipline, honesty, and diligence. Four lines from the most famous lyric of the late and unlamentable Amy Winehouse should establish the point:

I didn’t get a lot in class  
But I know it don’t come in a shot glass  
They tried to make me go to rehab  
But I said “no, no, no.”

This message is not quite the same as, for example, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.”

Furthermore, all the young rioters will have had long experience of the prodigious efforts of the British criminal justice system to confer impunity upon law breakers. First the police are far too busy with their paperwork to catch the criminals; but if, by some chance—hardly more than one in 20—they do catch them, the courts oblige by inflicting ludicrously lenient sentences.

A single example will suffice, but one among many. A woman got into an argument with someone in a supermarket. She called her boyfriend, a violent habitual criminal, “to come and sort him out.” The boyfriend was already on bail on another charge and wore an electronic tag because of another conviction. (Incidentally, research shows that a third of all crimes in Scotland are committed by people on bail, and there is no reason England should be any different.)

The boyfriend arrived in the supermarket and struck a man a heavy blow to the head. He fell to the ground and died of his head injury. When told that he had got the “wrong” man, the assailant said he would have attacked the “right” one had he not been restrained. He was sentenced to serve not more than 30 months in prison. Since punishments must be in proportion to the seriousness of the crime, a sentence like this exerts tremendous downward pressure on sentences for lesser, but still serious, crimes.

So several things need to be done, among them the reform and even dismantlement of the educational and social-security systems, the liberalization of the labor laws, and the much firmer repression of crime.

David Cameron is not the man for the job.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, August 15, 2011, p. A13

Founded in 1953, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, under the leadership of Dr. Fred C. Schwarz (1913-2009), has been publishing a monthly newsletter since 1960. *The Schwarz Report* is edited by Dr. David A. Noebel and Dr. Michael Bauman. The Crusade’s address is PO Box 129, Manitou Springs, CO 80829. Our telephone number is (719) 685-9043. All correspondence and tax-deductible gifts (the Crusade is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization) may be sent to this address. Permission to reproduce materials from this *Report* is granted provided our name and address are given.

# Barbarians Within the Gates—Part III

by Joyce Lee Malcolm

As wild gangs of youths burned homes, shops, and cars and severely beat anyone who tried to stop them last week, English people tried to defend themselves. Their desperation triggered a 5,000% increase in purchases of baseball bats from Amazon.

This is a sad symbol of the failure of the British approach to crime—with its sympathy for offenders, intolerance of self-defense, and unwillingness to pay for adequate crime control. A people once proud of their peaceful country and unarmed policemen had to resort to clubs to protect life and limb.

Great Britain's leniency began in the 1950s, with a policy that only under extraordinary circumstances would anyone under 17 be sent to prison. This was meant to rehabilitate young offenders. But the alternative to incarceration has been simply to warn them to behave, maybe require community service, and return them to the streets. There has been justifiable concern about causes of crime such as poverty and unemployment, but little admission that some individuals prefer theft to work and that deterrence must be taken seriously.

Victims of aggression who defend themselves or attempt to protect their property have been shown no such leniency. Burglars who injured themselves breaking into houses have successfully sued homeowners for damages. In February, police in Surrey told gardeners not to put wire mesh on the windows of their garden sheds as burglars might hurt themselves when they break in.

If a homeowner protecting himself and his family injures an intruder beyond what the law considers "reasonable," he will be prosecuted for assault. Tony Martin, an English farmer, was sentenced to life in prison for killing one burglar and wounding another with a shotgun during the seventh break-in at his rural home in 1999. While his sentence was later reduced to five years, he was refused parole in 2003 because he was judged a danger to burglars.

In 2008, a robber armed with a knife attacked shopkeeper Tony Singh in West Lancashire. During the struggle the intruder was fatally stabbed with his own knife. Although the robber had a long record of violent assault, prosecutors were preparing to charge Mr. Singh with murder until public outrage stopped them.

Meanwhile, the cost of criminal justice has convinced

British governments to shorten the sentences of adult criminals, even those guilty of violent crimes, and to release them when they have served half of their sentence. Police have been instructed by the British Home Office to let burglars and first-time offenders who confess to any of some 60 crimes—ranging from assault and arson to sex with an underage girl—off with a caution. That means no jail time, no fine, no community service, no court appearance.

In 2009, 70% of apprehended burglars avoided prison, according to British Ministry of Justice figures. The same year, 20,000 young offenders were electronically tagged and sent home, a 40% increase in the number of people tagged over three years.

All sorts of weapons useful for self-defense have been severely restricted or banned. A 1953 law, the "Prevention of Crime Act," made any item someone carried for possible protection an "offensive weapon" and therefore illegal. Today there is also a list of devices the mere possession of which carries a 10-year sentence. Along with rocket launchers and machine guns, the list includes chemical sprays and any knife with a blade more than three inches long.

Handguns? Parliament banned their possession in 1997. As an example of the preposterous lengths to which zealous British authorities would enforce this law, consider the fate of Paul Clark, a former soldier. He was arrested in 2009 by Surrey police when he brought them a shotgun he found in his garden. For doing this personally—instead of asking the police to retrieve it—he received a five-year prison sentence. It took a public outcry to reduce the normal five-year sentence to 12 months, and then suspend it.

The ban on handguns did not stop actual crimes committed with handguns. Those crimes rose nearly 40%, according to a 2001 study by King's College London's Center for Defence Studies, and doubled by a decade later, according to government statistics reported in the London *Telegraph* in October 2009.

Knives? It's illegal for anyone under age 18 to buy one, and using a knife for self-defense is unlawful. In 1991, American tourist Dina Letarte of Tempe, AZ, used a penknife to protect herself from a violent attack by three men in a London subway. She was convicted of carrying an offensive weapon, fined, and given a two-year suspended sentence.

The result of policies that punish the innocent but fail to deter crime has been stark, even before the latest urban violence. The last decade has seen a doubling of gun crime. According to the latest annual report of the

Home Office (2009), there was a 25% increase in crimes involving contact, such as assault and battery, over the previous year.

The Conservative government came to power pledging to end the police “caution culture” and permit more scope for self-defense. But old habits die hard. The Conservative recommendation in December 2009 to permit householders to use any force “not grossly disproportionate” against an intruder was described in the *Guardian* newspaper as “backward and barbaric.”

And despite the uselessness of police during the recent urban violence—standing in line while thugs hurled bricks and bottles at them and looted and burned—Home Secretary Theresa May initially ruled out the use of water cannons or asking for army help, insisting on Sky News that “the way we police in Britain is not through use of water cannon. The way we police in Britain is through consent of communities.”

Subsequently Prime Minister David Cameron warned looters and arsonists that they would be prosecuted, and he authorized the use of plastic bullets and water cannon. But the people of London have taken matters into their own hands. In a Turkish neighborhood, shopkeepers and their families protected their street standing guard all night.

“They come to our shops,” one man told the *London Daily Mail* last week, “and we fight them with sticks.” When a gang invaded an upscale restaurant, threatening customers and demanding their valuables, the staff attacked them brandishing knives and drove them out.

The lesson from many years of failed criminal justice policies is that deterrence matters, police cannot always protect the public from violence and criminality, and ordinary people must be allowed to protect themselves. Reducing them to baseball bats is unconscionable.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2011, p. A13



## Barbarians Within the Gates—Part IV

by Peggy Noonan

The riots in Britain left some Americans shaken. In the affluence of the past 40 years, and with the rise of the jumbo jet, we became a nation of travelers. We have been to England, visited a lot of those neighborhoods. They were peaceful; now they’re in flames. But something else raised our unease as we followed the story on TV and on the Net. I think there was a ping on the national radar. We saw something over there that in smaller ways we’re starting to see over here.

The British press, left, right, and center, was largely united in a refusal to make political excuses for the violence. Almost all agreed on the cause and nature of what happened. The cause was not injustice; this was not a revolt of the downtrodden masses, breaking into stores looking for food. The causes were greed, selfishness, a respect and even lust for violence, and a lack of moral grounding. Conscienceless predators preyed upon the weak. The weak were anyone who happened to be passing by, and those, many of them immigrants, who tried to defend their shops and neighborhoods. The iconic scene was the 20-year-old college student in East London who was beaten for his bicycle and fell bloody to the ground. His tormentors, with a sadistic imitation of gentleness, helped him up. Then they rifled through his backpack to get his phone and wallet. It was cruelty out of Dickens. It was Bill Sikes with a million YouTube hits.

The denunciations were swift and fierce. Max Hastings, in the conservative-populist *Daily Mail*: “The depressing truth is that at the bottom of our society is a layer of young people with no skills, education, values, or aspirations. . . . Nobody has ever dared suggest to them that they need feel any allegiance to anything, least of all Britain or their community. . . . Not only do they know nothing of Britain’s past, they care nothing for its present.”

In the left-tilting *Guardian*, youth worker Shaun Bailey called the rioters opportunists. “Young people have

### The Schwarz Report Bookshelf

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been looting the shops they like: JD Sports and mobile phone shops have been hit, yet Waterstone's [a bookstore] has been left alone. These young people like trainers [sneakers] and iPhones; they are less interested in books. This is criminality in a raw form, not politics."

In the right-leaning *Telegraph*, Allison Pearson asked: "Where are the parents?" She told of a friend who'd called a mother to tell her her son was out and acting up. The mother yelled at her for calling at 2:15 a.m. "The adults are afraid and the children, emboldened by adult timidity, are fearless."

More stinging and resigned was the brief essay by Theodore Dalrymple in the intellectually bracing *City Journal*. The subject—the decline of Western society—has been his for 20 years. He has written what he saw as a doctor working in British prisons. "The ferocious criminality exhibited by an uncomfortably large section of the English population" in the riots did not surprise him. "To have spotted it required no great perspicacity on my part; rather, it took a peculiar cowardly blindness, one regularly displayed by the British intelligentsia and political class, not to see it and not to realize its significance."

At fault in the riots were the distorting effects of the welfare state and a degenerate British popular culture: "A population thinks (because it has often been told so by intellectuals and the political class) that it is entitled to a high standard of consumption, irrespective of its personal efforts; and therefore it regards the fact that it does not receive that high standard, by comparison with the rest of society, as a sign of injustice." Much of what they have is provided by others, but they are not grateful: dependency doesn't encourage gratitude, but resentment.

What does this have to do with America? What we're seeing on the streets in Britain right now is something we may be starting to see here. It hasn't come together in a conflagration, but it is out there, and I think it's growing. And as in Britain, it doesn't have anything to do with political grievances per se.

Philadelphia right now is under curfew because of "flash mobs." Young people send out the word on social media, and suddenly dozens or hundreds of them hit a targeted store, steal everything on the shelves, and run, knowing no one will stop them or catch them. It's happened in other cities, too. Sometimes the mobs beat people up on the street and take their money. There are the beat-downs in McDonald's, where the young lose all control and the old fear to intervene. There were the fights and attacks at the Wisconsin State Fair. You've seen the YouTubes of

fights on the subways. You often see links to these stories on Drudge: He headlines them "Les Miserables."

Some of these young people come from brokenness, shallowness, and terror, and are bringing those things into the world with them. Here are some statistics of what someone last week called a new lost generation. In 2009, the last year for which census data are available, there were 74 million children under 18. Of that number, 20 million live in single-parent families, often with only an overwhelmed mother or a beleaguered grandmother. Over 700,000 children under 18 have been the subject of reports of abuse. More than a quarter million are foster children.

These numbers suggest the making—or the presence—of a crisis.

Some of these youngsters become miracle children. In spite of the hand they were dealt, they learn to be constructive, successful, givers to life. But many, we know, do not. Some will wind up on YouTube.

The normal, old response to an emerging problem such as this has been: The government has to do something. We must start a program, create an agency to address juvenile delinquency. But governments are tapped out, cutting back, trying to avoid bankruptcy. Which means we can't even take refuge in the illusion that government can solve the problem. The churches of America have always helped the young, stepping in where they can. That will continue. But they, too, are hard-pressed these days.

Where does that leave us? In a hard place, knowing in our guts that a lot of troubled kids are coming up, and not knowing what to do about it. The problem, at bottom, is love, something we never talk about in public policy discussions because it's too soft and can't be quantified or legislated. But little children without love and guidance are afraid. They're terrified—they have nothing solid in the world, which is a pretty scary place. So they never feel safe. As they grow, their fear becomes rage. Further on, the rage can be expressed in violence. This is especially true of boys, but it's increasingly true of girls.

What's needed can't be provided by government. When the riot begins or the flash mob arrives, the best the government can do is control the streets, enforce the law, maintain the peace.

After that, what? Britain is about to face that question. We'll likely have to face it, too.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, August 12-14, 2011, p. A13

# Barbarians Within the Gates—Part V

by Max Hastings

A few weeks after the US city of Detroit was ravaged by 1967 race riots in which 43 people died, I was shown around the wrecked areas by a black reporter named Joe Strickland.

He said: “Don’t you believe all that stuff people here are giving media folk about how sorry they are about what happened. When they talk to each other, they say: ‘It was a great fire, man!’”

I am sure that is what many of the young rioters, black and white, who have burned and looted in England through the past few shocking nights think today.

It was fun. It made life interesting. It got people to notice them. As a girl looter told a BBC reporter, it showed “the rich” and the police that “we can do what we like.”

If you live a normal life of absolute futility, which we can assume most of this week’s rioters do, excitement of any kind is welcome. The people who wrecked swathes of property, burned vehicles, and terrorized communities have no moral compass to make them susceptible to guilt or shame.

Most have no jobs to go to or exams they might pass. They know no family role models, for most live in homes in which the father is unemployed, or from which he has decamped.

They are illiterate and innumerate, beyond maybe some dexterity with computer games and BlackBerries.

They are essentially wild beasts. I use that phrase advisedly, because it seems appropriate to young people bereft of the discipline that might make them employable; of the conscience that distinguishes between right and wrong.

They respond only to instinctive animal impulses—to eat and drink, have sex, seize or destroy the accessible property of others.

Their behavior on the streets resembled that of the polar bear which attacked a Norwegian tourist camp last week. They were doing what came naturally and, unlike the bear, no one even shot them for it.

A former London police chief spoke a few years ago about the “feral children” on his beat—another way of describing the same reality.

The depressing truth is that at the bottom of our society is a layer of young people with no skills, education, values, or aspirations. They do not have what most of us would call “lives:” they simply exist.

Nobody has ever dared suggest to them that they need feel any allegiance to anything, least of all Britain or their community. They do not watch royal weddings or notice Test matches or take pride in being Londoners or Scousers or Brummies.

Not only do they know nothing of Britain’s past, they care nothing for its present.

They have their being only in video games and street-fights, casual drug use and crime, sometimes petty, sometimes serious.

The notions of doing a nine-to-five job, marrying and sticking with a wife and kids, taking up DIY or learning to read properly, are beyond their imaginations.

Last week, I met a charity worker who is trying to help a teenage girl in East London to get a life for herself. There is a difficulty, however: “Her mother wants her to go on the game.” My friend explained: “It’s the money, you know.”

An underclass has existed throughout history, which once endured appalling privation. Its spasmodic outbreaks of violence, especially in the early 19th century, frightened the ruling classes.

Its frustrations and passions were kept at bay by force and draconian legal sanctions, foremost among them capital punishment and transportation to the colonies.

Today, those at the bottom of society behave no better than their forebears, but the welfare state has relieved them from hunger and real want.

When social surveys speak of “deprivation” and “poverty,” this is entirely relative. Meanwhile, sanctions for wrongdoing have largely vanished.

When Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith recently urged employers to take on more British workers and fewer migrants, he was greeted with a hoarse laugh.

Every firm in the land knows that an East European—for instance—will, first, bother to turn up; second, work harder; and third, be better-educated than his or her British counterpart. Who do we blame for this state of affairs?

Ken Livingstone, contemptible as ever, declares the riots to be a result of the Government’s spending cuts. This recalls the remarks of the then leader of Lambeth Council, “Red Ted” Knight, who said after the 1981 Brixton riots that the police in his borough “amounted to an army of occupation.”

But it will not do for a moment to claim the rioters’ behavior reflects deprived circumstances or police persecution.

—London Mail Online, August 10, 2011