

# The Triggers of History



by Theodore Dalrymple

**The London School of Economics** has decided that it will not use dreadful words such as Christmas, Easter, Lent, and Michaelmas to designate its term times and holidays. Presumably, its management now congratulates itself that it has made a step toward true diversity, equity, and inclusion, the modern equivalent—irony of ironies—of faith, hope, and charity.

An article in *The Daily Telegraph* was headed “The LSE’s decision is not just drearily woke. It’s completely pointless.” Alas, if only this were true, if only the decision were merely pointless; but on the contrary, the decision was extremely pointed. It was part of a tendency—I won’t go so far as to say part of a conspiracy—to destroy all links of the present with tradition, particularly (but not only) with religious tradition.

Tradition and pride in institutions are obstacles to a managerial class who prefer people whom they manage to be birds of passage, or particles in Brownian motion in the ocean

of time, who are completely fixated on the present moment. The managerial revolution, when it takes place, is very thorough, and nothing is too small to escape its destructive notice.

To give an example in the medical field: Hospitals in Britain have been prohibited from having their own distinctive shields or coats of arms printed on their headed notepaper, even those hospitals with a history going back hundreds of years, all such emblems replaced by a single logo. By this means, staff are reduced to mere pieces on a chessboard (to quote Prince Harry's psychopathic manner of describing those whom he claimed to have killed in Afghanistan). Attachment of staff to place or institution complicates matters for managers.

That is why those who want to manage the whole of society love the kind of history that sees no grandeur, beauty, or achievement in it, but only a record of injustice and misery (which, of course, really existed, and all of which they, and only they, will put right). The real reason for the enthusiasm for pulling down statues is to destroy any idea of the past as having been anything other than a vast chamber of horrors, and since everyone has feet of clay, and the heroes of the past always had skeletons in their cupboard (to change the metaphor), reasons for destroying statues, even of the greatest men, can always be found.

But to return to the expunging of words with Christian connotations or meanings from the calendar of the London School of Economics. *The Daily Telegraph* said that it was insulting to Christians, but actually it was far more insulting to non-Christians, such as I, for it assumed that they are so sensitive and intolerant that they are offended by the slightest reference to the Christian religion or to any vestiges of the Christian past of the country in which they live, either permanently or temporarily. In other words, non-Christians are made of psychological eggshells and are so delicate constitutionally that they need the protection of the LSE apparatchik and nomenklatura class—which after all has to

occupy itself with *something* (it held meetings to make this decision, no doubt under the mistaken impression that it was working, even working very hard).

No one wants to live under a theocracy, other, that is, than theocrats (and even they only want to live under a theocracy so long as they are the rulers), but the danger of that is vanishingly remote, at least until Islam becomes the majority religion. It is said that only a minority in Britain now claim to be Christian—about 44 percent—but the Christian past of the country can hardly be denied. The physical evidence is overwhelming, even if quite a number of churches in formerly industrial cities have now been converted either to nightclubs or mosques and the Protestant chapels of Wales into luxury apartments (as all poky dwellings in Britain are now called).

Perhaps one day, when decolonization is complete and Newton discovered to have been originally from Burkina Faso, attention will be turned to the triggering effects of so many Christian churches in countries such as Britain, edifices that so powerfully remind descendants of victims of Christian persecution of their ancestors' traumatic experiences, which they are thereby forced to relive.

To this, of course, there is only one solution: pull them down, raze them to the ground. Likewise, cemeteries should be cleansed, crosses removed, religious inscriptions expunged.

Language, *mon dieu*, how it needs reforming! The place to start, of course, is schools, where the future of the nation is being developed. Any child who is heard exclaiming "God!" or anything like it should be told that he must in future use the good, solidly secular expletive "Fuck!" (this, of course, is happening spontaneously as well), under pain of punishment. The Bible should be made as illegal to bring into school as it is to bring it into Saudi Arabia, and expressions derived from that triggering work should be removed from common usage. Sufficient unto the day are the unjust social circumstances

thereof.

I am hesitant to write in a satirical vein because, as I and others have remarked, satire is prophecy. A number of current policies would have been regarded as satirical exaggeration only a few years ago. Who would have thought, say a decade ago, that a serious, or at any rate a prominent and powerful female politician (I refer here to the First Minister of Scotland), would argue that a man convicted of rape was actually, that is to say in reality, in fact, in every sense, a woman? Such propositions now elicit only irritation, not laughter; and irritation declines before long to resignation. Absurdity is first discussed, then adopted by a vanguard of intellectuals in search of a cause, and finally becomes an orthodoxy that it is socially unacceptable to question. Intelligent people give up opposition because it is boring to argue against what is not worth entertaining in the first place.

The American journalist Lincoln Steffens famously (or infamously) said on his return from Bolshevik Russia, "I have seen the future, and it works!"

I have seen the future, and it is absurd—as well as nasty.

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