

# Why Riots in Rochester? An Analysis from England

"To think that this sort of thing should happen here." That was more than a year ago, and the "sort of thing" the white Rochester lady was deploring then was a tiny cloud compared with the tornado that swept the city last week. Last year's troubles began with the usual incidents, small in themselves, but symptoms of a much more serious disease. The police had been accused of brutality in arresting Negroes. There were accusations of victimization, of defective trials. Then the Black Muslims moved in and were arrested in their turn. The rumbling of the storm continued, and all of a sudden the other night it broke.

There is indeed a special irony in it happening here, in a city that prides itself on civic virtue and a cultural life of a high order. "The Flower City" (more correctly called "The Flour City" for its early fortunes depended on a commodity much more useful than the vast beds of dillies that attract the tourists every June) was founded by a Colonel Rochester at the turn of the nineteenth century. But its Catholics at least prefer to link it with the city of Kent, and its bishop has been a munificent benefactor of the new Catholic church in the English Rochester. Moreover, St. John Fisher is patron of the diocese and of an admirable Liberal Arts college for men.

The prosperity of the city has been identified with the name of Eastman Kodak and with the more recent development of allied optical and electronic industries. Here the ever-growing share of Xerox have reflected the affluence of a city in which the labour unions are weak or virtually non-existent. It is a company town, employing many workers of high technical skill: a classic example of a community in which the Negroes suffer no legal discrimination, indeed, but where they are none the less almost wholly excluded from its essential life and from the prosperity that presupposes

This article by Dominican Father Illtud Evans of England was published in the August 8th issue of the London Tablet. Father Evans was guest lecturer at St. John Fisher College, Rochester, in 1962 and 1963. His article reveals he gained insights in a year that Rochester residents of much longer a time have failed to see — that a festering racial problem has deeper roots than just one hot summer.

educational opportunities that they lack.

Set on the shores of Lake Ontario, two hundred and fifty miles north of New York City, Rochester, like so many north-east American cities, is rapidly becoming a garden city, with its rich suburbs and country clubs, while the old down-town district gradually sinks into the peeling decay of every Negro ghetto.

There is an excellent university, strong in its medical school and the departments of optics and engineering. And the Eastman School of Music is perhaps the best in the United States; with a permanent city symphony orchestra, it provides concerts of remarkable excellence. Along the East Avenue are the grand churches, Gothic and secure, matching the merchants' mansions that remain.

As usual, the Negroes—perhaps an eighth of the population—are confined to the areas which the Whites have abandoned. Their schools are the most crowded; their academic record is far below that of the others. And of course Negroes are scarcely to be found at all in the schools and colleges which are the principal recruiting grounds for the executive and technical employees of the big city firms. There is only one Negro student in a Catholic college of seven hundred men, and perhaps two or three in a women's college of one thousand.

There is nothing specially strange, then, about the Negro's position in Rochester. It is the familiar and lamentable story

of a minority that is economically and educationally deprived, condemned to a separate and inferior status so long as it cannot compete in the cutthroat world of booming technological advance.

It is in this sense of bitter frustration that marks the Negro unrest in the cities of the north. Here it is not a question of sit-down strikes or demonstrations to secure the elementary rights of citizenship. On the contrary, New York State has every sort of provision, with its Human Rights Commission, its Fair Labour legislation and its statutory de-segregation of schools, to implement the demands for racial justice. The maddening dilemma for the Negroes is precisely this: on paper equally in their, but why is it far away as ever in practice?

The answer lies in such brutal facts as housing and schools, in the lack of opportunities for a stable family life and genuine educational advance. And the Negroes of the North, who

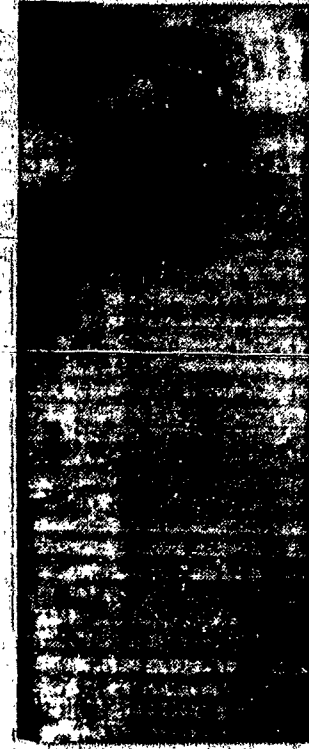
have of course arrived of recent years in such numbers from the segregated Southern States, carry with them the legacy of their past.

As Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples, has pointed out: "Most of the Negroes in the North are and products of the system in the South. For years the South has cheated Negroes out of any kind of training for citizenship or any opportunity to advance their economic skills or their artistic skills. Now, you say, 'These people are not good citizens.' Why, they never had an opportunity."

And the terrible irony of the Negro's lot in such a city as Rochester is that externally he is free and equal, but he feels himself to be still in chains.

The white observer, of course, will say that all this is a matter of time; a revolution of such magnitude as the full integration of the Negro into American life at every level cannot take place overnight. This is true, but it carries little weight with the Negro now. His mood is no longer one of gradual advancement and the very notion of the NAACP is anathema to many of the most articulate Negro leaders.

Token gestures, they say, are simply steps to a bad white con-



FATHER ILLTUD EVANS

science. And it is indeed of little use to quote the pious of the Negroes who have made good as doctors or as lawyers, for there have always been those, the exceptional men and women who have triumphed despite every handicap.

A more impressive achievement would be a serious attempt to end the basic wrong that poisons the daily life of a city: the homes that are crowded and insanitary, the schools that are old and ill-equipped, the want of effective social agencies that can deal generously with the problems that the circumstances of Negro life have inevitably created.

It is in a city like Rochester that the contrast between high-mindedness in public utterance and apparent indifference in the level of actual living seems most cruel. This is not to blame the leaders of the community, who can scarcely do more than lead; they can only hope to create a sense of urgency that should reach down to the local level at which gestures can become a practical manifestation of brotherly love.

One might suppose, for instance, that some small part of the resources of the better high schools and colleges could be devoted to evening classes and technical training for Negroes who, for all sorts of valid reasons, have had to leave school and simply lack the opportunity of qualifying for any further education. The pitifully small number of Negroes who are college students is certainly not due to any discrimination on the part of the authorities. On the contrary, they do their best to facilitate the entry of any

Negro who has even minimal qualifications.

A more immediate effort is needed not only to provide more opportunities for Negroes to be trained for higher skills but, too, to convince them that this is the indispensable way of entering into the full life of the community.

But for the immediate future Rochester and many other cities in the North will have to live with a problem that can only be adequately resolved by time and genuine acceptance.

That is why the work of such bodies as the NAACP and the more militant CORE (Congress for Racial Equality) is so important for all the time the extremists can discover fresh incidents with which to exacerbate a disillusioned people. The responsible Negro agencies work under tremendous pressures, and they deserve all the support that, for instance, the Catholic Interracial Councils give them. And no observer in this country has any right to feel in the slightest degree superior about what is happening in America now.

## On Anniversaries of Two Wars

# Pope Paul Sees 'Omens' of New World Conflict

Castel Gandolfo — (RNS) — Clinging "frightening" evidences of deteriorating conditions that could lead to another major war, Pope Paul VI called on the world's leaders to curb a "spirit of division" which threatens the peace.

His appeal came at a time when the world was marking the 50th anniversary of the start of World War I and the 25th anniversary of World War II.

The Pope's message was delivered before thousands of pilgrims attending a general audience in the auditorium of his summer residence here. It was translated into all major languages and broadcast throughout the world by Vatican Radio.

Observers saw in his words an implication that the pontiff hoped for greater cooperation from the American and United Nations in the United Nations.

Pope Paul said the "spirit of division" was evident in "nationalistic pride, prestige politics, the arms race, and social and economic antagonism."

In his message the pontiff specified no countries or incidents directly. However, he spoke of the "dark clouds" he witnessed in South Vietnam and in Cyprus. He referred to "the state of disagreements, already stained with blood and pregnant with menacing omens, existing today between various countries."

He charged that the warnings of Pope Pius XII and Pope John XXIII were being ignored. The pontiff then spoke movingly of his personal experience in attending Pope Pius as he made a desperate appeal for peace just before World War II began.

"There arises in our minds," he said, "the touching remembrance of the evening of the 24th of August, 1939, when, because of our service and duty to Pope Pius XII of venerable memory, we had the fortune to be present at his broadcast of his message, vibrant with strength and anguish, his voice grave and solemn like that of a prophet of God and father of the world."

"These resounding words still echo in our heart," he said and then quoted the message of Pope Pius:

"When the tensions of men's minds seem to have reached the point that the unleashing of the terrible whirlwind of war is judged to be imminent, we launch with paternal concern a new and warmer appeal to governments and to peoples."

"It is by the strength of reason, not by that of arms, that justice imposes itself, and those empires not founded upon justice are not blessed by God. Politics freed from morals betrays the very ones who wish it emancipated. The danger is imminent, but there is yet time."

"Nothing is lost by peace. All can be lost with war. Let men return to understanding one another. Let the mist again be negotiable."

has it, then, taught nothing, with its millions of dead, mangled, wounded and orphaned, its fearful ruins?

"It is true that even after the First World War noble and powerful efforts were made to organize the nations into a society of peace, but they were made without that sufficient evolution of men's minds and of international acts toward trust in truth and love which must mark all men, brothers, and stimulate them to build world of mutual respect and common well-being."

"The drama of fury and blood of the First World War also bears from our present sort with us, and its admonitions, words of deploration and of sorrow."

Here Pope Paul referred to Pope Pius XII and his efforts to forestall the first world conflict. "It is wrong, it is absolutely anti-historical to accuse a meek and humble Pope like Saint Pius X — yet some have dared to write of his 'responsibility' in the outbreak of the War of 1914."

"And there still reaches with terrible truth in the hearts of those who suffered through that war the well-known message he gave: 'The war was a useless slaughter.'"

"At that time, too, the voice of the Vicar of Christ, though it resounded deeply in the hearts of people and was hardly recognized from the thinkers and the historians, had only scarce and inefficacious reception on the part of the leaders of nations and public opinion."

"The diffidence which surrounded the warning interventions of papal teaching," said Pope Paul, "does not discourage us from renewing our paternal appeal for peace whenever the moment of peace and especially the duty of our apostolic office require it."

"The solemn and pregnant words which our immediate predecessor, John XXIII, of happy memory, addressed to the world in his encyclical, Pacem in Terris, have not echoed in vain."

"The world sensed that his

words had the two-fold fascination of wisdom and of goodness. It seems to us that the anniversaries—ones of 50 years ago and the other of 25—of two world wars which bloodied the first half of our century offer a propitious occasion to recall those messages of peace."

Turning to the thousands of pilgrims, Pope Paul then stressed that "peace is a supreme good for humanity."

"But it is a fragile good," he added, "arising from noble and complex factors in which men's free and responsible will is in continual play."

"We are now watching this frightening phenomenon of the crumbling of some of those basic principles on which peace might be founded and which are thought achieved after the tragic experiences of the two world wars."

"At the same time we see the re-ignition of several perilous criteria which are once again serving to quash a short-sighted quest for equilibrium, or rather of an unstable truce and of the ideologies of peoples with one another."

"Yet again there is obscured the concept of the sacred and inviolable character of human life and other more men are being calculated in terms of their possible efficiency in war and not by reason of their dignity, their needs, their common brotherhood."

"New symptoms" the Pope warned "are noted of a re-growth of division and opposition between peoples, between the various races and different cultures. This spirit of division is guided by nationalistic pride, by prestige politics, the armaments race and social and economic antagonism."

"There returns the illusory concept that peace can only be based on the terrifying power of extremely homicidal weapons and while on the one hand noble but weak discussion and effort are made to limit and abolish armaments, on the other the destructive capacity of military apparatus is being continually developed and perfected."

"What if a vain means of resolving international questions by force," the Pope said, adding: "And in various parts of the world episodes of war explode in fearful sparks, expanding the widening capability of the organized institutions to maintain peace and security and to insure honorable diplomatic negotiation."

"This has resulted, the Pope said, from subjective propa-

ganda, revolutionary disorder, promotion of social and political contrasts, and "passionate tensions between peoples."

"Men of goodwill, listen to our humble voice," the Pope pleaded.

His message, he added, was "a forecast of joy and prosperity which can never again be born of war, but only of peace in sincerity and goodwill."

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## Why Didn't Pope Give Us Answers?

When Palmiro Togliatti, Italy's Communist boss, lay dying, Pope Paul asked pilgrims to the summer Vatican at Castel Gandolfo to pray for him.

The papal act of human sympathy recalled the statement of his predecessor that no matter how much we disagree with a political position, we still must respect the people who hold to that position—a position, he remarked, which often changes even if it keeps its old name.

Pope Paul also points this out in his recent encyclical in which he repeats the Church's oft-stated condemnation of atheistic Communism but admits Catholics should take part in a "dialogue" with Communists to search for a solution to the world's problems.

For the avid anti-Communists, all this is, in Scripture terms, "a hard saying."

Hard or not, it certainly is realistic.

One need be no more than a novice in observing world events to note that, despite all the continued posturings of the cold war antagonists, the United States and Soviet Russia are linked in a new and still developing alliance for keeping world peace. Both came to the brink of war over Cuba, tested each other's nerves and drew back aware that each could overkill each other in a matter of minutes and neither be the victor. There are, of course, other factors—China, for example.

The whole point is, however, that we live (as Adam is said to have told Eve) "in an age of transition."

There is a nostalgia about "the good old days" when problems had solutions, like the catechism has answers—nost, complete.

That is why so many people were so confident Pope Paul in his first encyclical would give us the answers we need—and why, in large measure, they were so disappointed when at last it was published.

Here, they thought, was the Church facing a world that was fifty per cent hungry, seventy five per cent ignorant of the Saviour, ninety per cent not Catholic, a world with weapons enough to annihilate the planet, and the Church itself with its members openly divided in an ecumenical Council as to whether it is better to be conservative of the status quo or to be willing to risk bold new experiments for whose outcome even their champions were reluctant to promise success—certainly the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in his unique vantage point at the summit of Christendom, would give the world the urgent advice it so sorely needs.

And he left all the problems unresolved.

He wrote long and in many cases difficult to understand comments on the world's agony but at the very end, he admits he doesn't have the answers.

And this, we think, is the encyclical's truest significance.

Pope Paul is utterly honest.

He asks Catholics of all ranks in the Church to join in long and careful discussion with men of other faiths and with those of no faith so together we can respond to the needs of all men. The answers we forge will never be adequate and they will never be final because the tides of change create new problems even before we solve the older ones.

Yet in all this the Pope reveals he has a faith far superior to that of the mere pat answer.

He has confidence that the Lord who once walked the stormy waters of Tiberias still treads the waves of history—that despite all the to-and-fro slog of events, the Church will gain its greater victory not by dominating the world but by suffering with it in the agony of a quest, often frustrating, to make this world what its Creator envisioned it, a demi-paradise as prelude and promise of a greater one to come.

—Father Henry Awall

### Bishop Kearney's Appointments

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Saturday—Sacred Heart Academy—I.F.C.A. Mass in honor of Our Lady—9:30 a.m.
- 8 Sunday—St. Joseph Church—Opening of Central Vespers—8:00 a.m. Manger Hotel—Central Vespers—Lunch—12:30 noon
- 10 Thursday—St. Mary's Hospital School of Nursing—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:30 a.m.
- 11 Friday—Mercy High School—Mass in honor Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m.
- 13 Monday—Nazareth College—(Freshmen)—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—8:30 a.m. Mt. Saviour's Benedictine Monastery, Elmira—Blessing of new building—1:00 p.m.
- 15 Tuesday—St. Joseph Church—Laymen's Red Mass—9:00 a.m. St. Joseph Church—Golden Jubilee Mass of Rev. William Murray, C.S.S.R.—10:15 a.m.
- 16 Wednesday—Sacred Heart Academy—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m.
- 17 Thursday—Nazareth College—(Upperclassmen)—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—11:00 a.m. Behr's Restaurant—Tenth Anniversary Dinner of Our Lady of the Sacred Council, K. of C.—9:30 p.m.
- 18 Friday—Aquinas Institute—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m.
- 19 Saturday—St. Bernard's Seminary—Ordination to Minor Orders—9:00 a.m.
- 20 Holy Republics Cemetery—Blessing of Graves—9:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Rush—Preside and preach at Centenary Mass—9:00 p.m.
- 22 Tuesday—War Memorial—Closing of Diocesan Teachers Conference—2:30 p.m.
- 23 Wednesday—St. John Fisher College—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m. St. Michael of U. of R. Newman Oratory—8:00 p.m.
- 24 Thursday—Mercy Motherhouse—Preside and preach at Fraternal Feast Mass—10:00 a.m.
- 25 Friday—St. Agnes High School—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m.
- 27 Sunday—St. Bernard's Seminary—Ordination to Minor Orders and Eldonate—9:00 a.m. St. Francis Xavier—Blessing of new school—4:00 p.m.
- 28 Monday—Nazareth Academy—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m.
- 29 Tuesday—St. Mary's Church—McQuaid High School—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m.
- 30 Wednesday—St. Andrew's Seminary—Mass in honor of Holy Ghost—9:00 a.m. Columbus Civic Center—Opening of USO Campaign—Law Mass—9:00 p.m.

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Pope Paul VI is shown as he warned the world's leaders that recent incidents indicated a "frightening crumbling" of the foundations of peace. Recalling the horrors of two World Wars, the pontiff said the world must not forget the tragic lessons of past conflicts.