

Police water cannon and plastic bullets? After 50 years of the most lavish welfare state on earth? What an abject failure

By [Peter Hitchens](#)

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Bitter laughter is my main response to the events of the past week. You are surprised by what has happened? Why? I have been saying for years that it was coming, and why it was coming, and what could be done to stop it.

I have said it in books, in articles, over lunch and dinner tables with politicians whose lips curled with lofty contempt.

So yes, I am deeply sorry for the innocent and gentle people who have lost lives, homes, businesses and security. Heaven knows I have argued for years for the measures that might have saved them.



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Faced with reality: Left-wingers at last meet the filthy thing they have created, and which they ignored when it did not affect them personally



Fear, intimidation, cruelty, injustice, savagery: The mass criminality in the big cities is merely a speeded-up and concentrated version of life on most large estates

But I am not really very sorry for the elite liberal Londoners who have suddenly discovered what millions of others have lived with for decades.

The mass criminality in the big cities is merely a speeded-up and concentrated version of life on most large estates – fear, intimidation, cruelty, injustice, savagery towards the vulnerable and the different, a cold sneer turned towards any plea for pity, the awful realisation that when you call for help from the authorities, none will come.

Just look and see how many shops are protected with steel shutters, how many homes have bars on their windows. This is not new.

As the polluted flood (it is not a tide; it will not go back down again) of spite, greed and violence washes on to their very doorsteps, well-off and influential Left-wingers at last meet the filthy thing they have created, and which they ignored when it did not affect them personally.

No doubt they will find ways to save themselves. But they will not save the country. Because even now they will not admit that all their ideas are wrong, and that the policies of the past 50 years – the policies they love – have been a terrible mistake. I have heard them in the past few days clinging to their old excuses of non-existent 'poverty' and 'exclusion'.

Take our Prime Minister, who is once again defrauding far too many people. He uses his expensive voice, his expensive clothes, his well-learned tone of public-school command, to give the impression of being an effective and decisive person. But it is all false. He has no real idea of what to do. He thinks the actual solutions to the problem are 'fascist'. Deep down, he still wants to 'understand' the hoodies.

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Say to him that naughty children should be smacked at home and caned in school, that the police (and responsible adults) should be free to wallop louts and vandals caught in the act, that the police should return to preventive foot patrols, that prisons should be austere places of hard work, plain food and discipline without TV sets or semi-licit drugs, and that wrongdoers should be sent to them when they first take to crime, not when they are already habitual crooks, and he will throw up his well-tailored arms in horror at your barbarity.

Say to him that divorce should be made very difficult and that the state should be energetically in favour of stable, married families with fathers (and cease forthwith to subsidise families without fathers) and he will smirk patronisingly and regard you as a pitiable lunatic.

Say to him that mass immigration should be stopped and reversed, and that those who refuse any of the huge number of jobs which are then available should be denied benefits of any kind, and he will gibber in shock.

Yet he is ready to authorise the use of water cannon and plastic bullets on our streets (quite useless, as it happens, against this sort of outbreak) as if we were a Third World despotism.

Water cannon and plastic bullets indeed. What an utter admission of failure, that after 50 years of the most lavish welfare state in the solar system, you cannot govern your country without soaking the citizenry in cold water and bombarding them with missiles from a safe distance. Except, of course, that it is because of the welfare system that this is so.

Here is an example of how little he knows about Britain. He says that the criminals of August will face the 'full force of the law'. What 'force'?

The great majority of the looters, smashers, burners and muggers have not been arrested and never will be. Our long-eneebled police were so useless at the start that thousands of crimes were committed with total impunity.

Now we know why they don't call themselves 'police forces' any more. But they aren't 'services' either, for they certainly don't serve us or do what we want them to do, preferring to arrest us for defending ourselves. The criminals, who are cunning without being intelligent, all know this. They will wait for the next chance.

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Ablaze: A building in Croydon burns after rioters set it on fire, destroying homes and ruining businesses



Devastation: The emergency services were stretched beyond capacity as fires raged out of control during rioting

The loping, smirking, shuffling creeps who eventually appeared before the courts were the ultimate losers – the ones who came late to the looting and who were too slow or too stupid to run before they were put in the bag.



Ransacked: Looters targeted many shops

And what courts they are. In the one I sat in last week, self-confessed thieves are courteously addressed by magistrates and clerks as 'mister' and asked politely to stand up or 'accompany the officers' back to the cells or – more often – out into the street on bail. In the part of the dock reserved for those already free on bail, nobody has bothered to clean up the scribbled and disrespectful graffiti.

Why should anyone respect or fear this chamber of indifference? The wall-hangings behind the magistrates are scruffy and scratched.

There is no sense of awe or determination or of much purpose. There is only a strong sense of going through the motions for the sake of appearances.

Nobody is directly punished for what he has done. Excuses must first be sought, and indulgence arranged where there should be cold rage. There will be 'social inquiry reports' and 'youth offender teams' who bustle smilingly in and out ready to start work on yet another 'client'.

All this piffle enshrines the official (and hopelessly wrong) view that crime is caused by circumstances and background, not by unleashed human evil. It is precisely because of this windy falsehood that the cells are crammed with young men who broke the law because they felt like it.

Hulking louts – black and white, for this was an equal-opportunity crimewave – are accompanied before the bench by alleged 'parents' who are obviously afraid of their broods. Nothing is said or done to express official disapproval of crime. The accused are treated more like patients than like wrongdoers.

Many in this rogues' parade are still trying to qualify for prison, but are only, as it were, at the GCSE stage. They have sheaves of previous convictions, no doubt a tiny sample of their many acts of spite, selfishness and cruelty.



Missed the point: Many of the protesters appeared to be of school age but pupils are currently enjoying their summer holidays

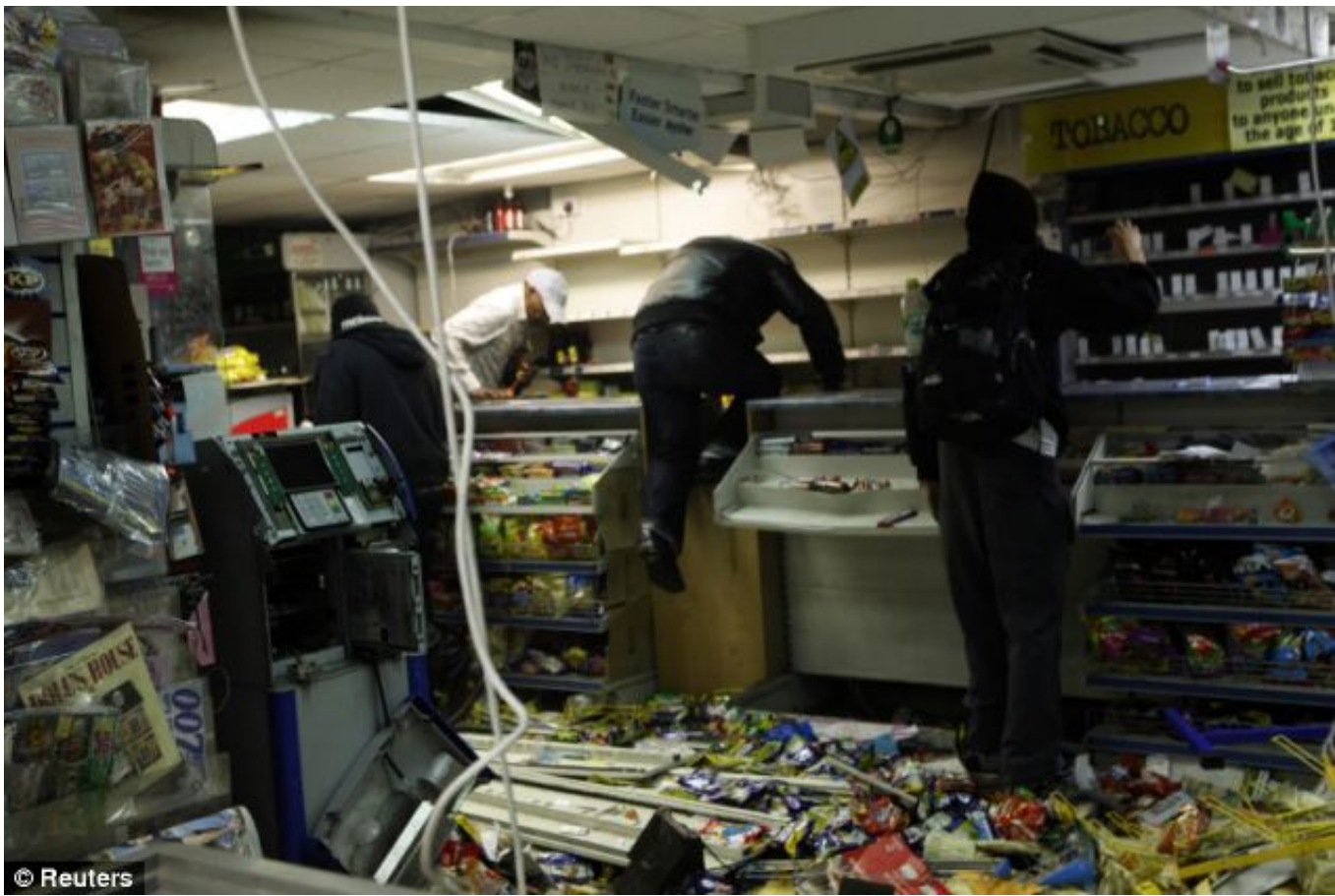
You can bet their neighbours hate and fear them. Some are on bail for other offences, a state of affairs so common that it is almost funny. At least one is subject to a 'suspended' prison sentence, one of the many fake penalties handed down by the courts to fool the public into thinking that something significant happens to criminals.

They have all learned what most British politicians somehow cannot grasp – that the more encounters you have with our justice system, the less you fear it. A few 'exemplary' sentences – none of which will be served in full, or anything near it – will only help to spread the word that arson, robbery, violence, spite and selfishness are not punished here any more. Indeed these are the things we are now famous for around a world that once respected us.

And that is why we have many more nasty surprises waiting for us, here in The Country Formerly Known as Great Britain.



Rioting: The UK has sustained days of violence and senseless crime following the death of a 29-year-old in London last Friday



Carnage: Those guilty should be banned from electronic gadgets, according to R.E. Fisher

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