



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on August 19, 2011

Violent Attacks in U.S., England: Wake-up Calls

As British doctor and author Theodore Dalrymple said, long before these riots broke out, “the good are afraid of the bad and the bad are afraid of nothing.”

Not only the trends over the years leading up to these riots but also the squeamish responses to them by officials — on both sides of the Atlantic — reveal the moral dry rot that has spread deep into Western societies.

Even when black youth gangs target white strangers on the streets and spew out racial hatred as they batter them and rob them, mayors, police chiefs and the media tiptoe around their racism and many in the media either don't cover these stories or leave out the race and racism involved.



In England, the government did not call out the troops to squash their riots at the outset. The net result was that young hoodlums got to rampage and loot for hours, while the police struggled to try to contain the violence. Hoodlums returned home with loot from stores with impunity, as well as bringing home with them a contempt for the law and for the rights of other people.

With all the damage that was done by these rioters, both to cities and to the whole fabric of British society, it is very unlikely that most of the people who were arrested will be sentenced to jail. Only 7 percent of people convicted of crime in England are actually put behind bars.

“Alternatives to incarceration” are in vogue among the politically correct elites in England, just as in the United States. But in Britain those elites have had much more clout for a much longer time. And they have done much more damage.

Nevertheless, our own politically correct elites are pointing us in the same direction. A headline in the *New York Times* shows the same politically correct mindset in the United States: “London Riots Put Spotlight on Troubled, Unemployed Youths in Britain.” There is not a speck of evidence that the rioters and looters are troubled — unless you engage in circular reasoning and say that they must have been troubled to do the things they did.

In reality, like other rioters on both sides of the Atlantic they are often exultant in their violence and happy to be returning home with stolen designer clothes and upscale electronic devices.

In both England and in the United States, whole generations have been fed a steady diet of grievances and resentment against society, and especially against others who are more prosperous than they are. They get this in their schools, on television, on campuses and in the movies. Nothing is their own fault. It is all “society's” fault.

One of the young Britons interviewed in the *New York Times* reported that he had learned to read only three years ago. He is not unique. In Theodore Dalrymple's book, *Life at the Bottom*, he referred to



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many British youths who are unashamedly illiterate. The lyrics of a popular song in Britain said, “We don’t need no education” and another song was titled “Poor, White and Stupid.”

Dr. Dalrymple says, “I cannot recall meeting a sixteen-year-old white from the public housing estates that are near my hospital who could multiple nine by seven.”

In the United States, the color may be different but the attitudes among the hoodlum element are very similar. In both countries, classmates who try to learn can find themselves targeted by bullies.

Here those who want to study in ghetto schools are often accused of “acting white.” But whites in Britain show the same pattern. Some conscientious students are beaten up badly enough to end up at Dr. Dalrymple’s hospital.

Our elites often advise us to learn from other countries. They usually mean that we should imitate other countries. But it may be far more important to learn from their mistakes — the biggest of which may be listening to fashionable nonsense from the smug intelligentsia.

These countries show us where that smug nonsense leads. It may be a sneak preview of our own future.

“Send not to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.”

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