

## Theft, Hunger, Fear and Abuse at Home: Surely the Capitalist Experiment has Failed to Dignify Humanity

### News:

An article in the Guardian on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September was titled: “‘It’s organised looting’: UK in grip of a shoplifting epidemic, say store owners.” The article written by Emine Sinmaz reported that “Shop thefts have more than doubled in the past three years, costing retailers £953m a year” and interviewed many British retail staff who described the miserable situation that they face on a daily basis.

### Comment:

The cost-of-living is skyrocketing, people are poorer and hungrier, and crime is rising. However, the stories in this article demonstrate a fractured society and a shamelessness that would be completely alien to past generations who were poorer and hungrier than today’s generation, but could never have imagined what we witness today of gangs of people just walking into stores, threatening staff and taking whatever they want in broad daylight with almost complete impunity.

Some of the personal stories presented in the Guardian article give a sense of what is happening on a human scale.

According to the Co-op, the police “failed to respond to 71% of serious retail crimes, and that bosses were considering whether it was safe and commercially viable to keep some branches open”. Paul Gerrard, the Co-op’s director of public affairs said that; “gangs would climb over kiosks and brazenly empty shelves into rucksacks, construction bags and even wheelie bins.” According to the Co-op: “even when staff apprehend shoplifters, officers attend only 20% of incidents.”

“Not one or two items – they come in with bags, sacks or clothing, which can conceal hundreds of pounds’ worth of stock – coffee, meat, wine, laundry gel, anything that can be re-sold. It is looting. They are known in the city centre as repeat offenders ... They know the police don’t have the resources or can’t attend quickly enough.”

A Cambridge shop-keeper said: “shoplifters terrorised his small business every other day, costing him about £300 a week.”

Some people are stealing just to feed themselves as the cost-of-living rises, but this has also “created a bigger potential market to sell stolen goods into, in particular food goods.”

Surely the capitalist experiment has failed to dignify humanity. And that is before we talk about the repulsive decadence that leaves no one surprised about the Russell Brand predatory sex allegations or the 100,000 drug overdose deaths each year in the US.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by**

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