

London Burning!

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With camera in hand I decided to take the streets yesterday to see if I could document some of the riots happening around the corner from where I live. I know that Hackney maybe escaped yesterday's event lightly, at least compared to Tottenham and Clapham but I was still shocked to see what my neighbourhood looked like. I am a little afraid of sounding middle aged and middle class but had the riots at least had some purpose or some reason then it would maybe not be so hard to accept.

Not only do the rioters attack the police and big commercial chains, which could maybe be some sign of opposition to the establishment, but they rob, lute and attack corner stores and individual's houses as well as set light to cars, bikes and buses. This only effects local resedents who themselves struggle to make ends meet.

I often have a tendency to take sides with minorities or people who object to establishment but in this case I find it hard to empathise with anyone who is taking part in the destruction of the community in which we live in. Walking the streets I saw crowds of people, booing the police, filming on their i-phone and standing around waiting for something to happen. We live in a society where we expect the police to keep order, but with this mindless, widespread violence which seems impossible to police

It seems a shame that we as a community cannot stand up against the mindless destruction of out local community.

If a relatively small group of youngsters can gather to destroy independent shops and homes then why cannot the larger group of opposition gather to show that we do not accept this? I am painfully aware that I was only taking pictures and not stopping any of the rioting myself but it is something that needs to be done as a collective. It seems like the only people who did anything to stop the destruction of smaller businesses and communities were individual shop owners like the man below.

Don't get me wrong, the police should be able to control this but as it is evident that the people controlling the movement of the police cannot come up with a game plan that works then we should at least show that we care. The individual police officers I saw did their job to the best of their ability but the seemingly uncoordinated running of the police meant they were completely helpless. My concern is this that this is the first big consequence from the big cutbacks we are

experiencing?

As well as this we have the people who, "in the name of left wing politics", don't take part in the rioting but justify it as a symbol of protest although the people who suffer from this conflict are almost all from small communities and working class backgrounds. A friend of the looter below said to me: "Ah - you're not the right wing press are you?". At which I replied - "You don't have to be right wing to object to the destruction of your local community".

Lastly there are the cowards who sit on the fence, not considering themselves as a part of this, not taking part in the conflict itself but justify entering small corner stores that have been broken into to help themselves to a bottle of wine while the police are busy chasing the people who are throwing stones and setting vehicles alight.

PEACE!