

Gun Control Causes Crime Increase In Australia?

(Unintended consequences of gun control)

By: Vin Suprynowicz

Can gun control reduce crime?

One year ago, Australian gun owners were forced to surrender for destruction 640,381 personal firearms (including semi-automatic .22 rifles and shotguns). This program cost the Aussie government more than \$500 million and produced heart-stopping photos as veritable boneyards full of Browning A-5 shotguns and other beloved collector's items were surrendered up to be crushed by steamshovels in a kind of steel-and-walnut charnel field. Now, Keith Tidswell of Australia's Sporting Shooters Association reports the results are in.

Drum roll, please. Mr. Tidswell reports, based on a full 12 months of data: Australia-wide, homicides up 3.2 percent. Australia-wide, assaults up 8.6 percent.

Australia-wide, armed-robberies up 44 percent (yes, 44 percent.) In the state of Victoria, homicides-with-firearms are up 300 percent. (Up until the government gun grab, figures for the previous 25 years had shown a steady decrease in homicides with firearms, as well as armed robberies, Mr. Tidswell notes.)

Although at the time of the victim disarmament order, the Aussie prime minister decreed "self-defense is not a reason for owning a firearm," there has also been a dramatic increase in break-ins and assaults of the elderly, now left with no means to protect themselves. (One wonders whether the prime minister's personal bodyguards gave up their military-style weapons.)

Mr. Tidswell reports: "Australian politicians are on the spot and at a loss to explain how no improvement in 'safety' has been observed after such monumental effort and expense to successfully 'rid society of guns.' "

-- Meantime, efforts to systematically remove such weapons from the hands of the unruly, untrustworthy commoners of England have been underway at least as far back as the end of World War II. (By 1946, most of the valuable private rifles donated by American NRA members in response to an emergency call after the 1940 military disaster at Dunkirk had been rounded up from the British "home defense" auxiliaries and either dumped at sea or else poured into new concrete foundations, where -- Londoners confided to me on my last visit, in 1998 -- their steel outlines still occasionally surface out of well-traveled concrete walkways.)

Thus, the recent effective outlawing of handguns for civilian Britons after some nut killed schoolchildren in Dunblane, Scotland (the government teacher charged with their safety was, needless to say, unarmed and thus useless), was only the last straw.

Given that the English peasant populace has thus been unarmed somewhat longer, are there any trends developing there, to which the Australians can themselves now look forward?

In an article by Helen Searls, titled "Trial by Fury" and scheduled for release in the October issue of Reason magazine, we learn:

"In recent months the British government has unveiled an array of measures that promise to change the legal system profoundly. This spring, British citizens learned that Tack Straw, the home secretary (the rough equivalent of the American attorney general, though with more political power), plans to abolish trial by jury for all but the most serious crimes. He is also considering lifting the rule against double jeopardy, which prevents a defendant from being tried more than once for the same crime, and is thinking of criminalizing offensive language even when it is spoken in the privacy of one's home. ...

"These days, defendants' rights are under attack. The right to silence is now severely qualified, trial by jury is under review, legal aid is being wiped out, defendants now have to disclose their defense strategy to the prosecution well in advance of trial, and in rape cases the cross-examination rights of defendants have been drastically restricted.

"All of these measures have been introduced in the name of victims' rights. It seems that when we worry too much about ourselves as victims, the price we pay is our right to a fair trial. ..."

But here in America, we're assured that those who would cling to the right to bear arms are nothing but psychiatrically disturbed Neanderthal throwbacks, clutching at the last talisman of 19th century male privilege and power, a kind of combination surrogate penis and security blanket which they hope will magically protect them from the stresses of a changing world.

Yeah, that must be it. There's no practical reason to cling to such an outmoded, violent and dangerous technology. It's not as though, were we to give up our guns, armed criminals would take advantage of the situation to commit more violent crimes against us, or the ever-beneficent government that brought us Ruby Ridge and Waco would take the opportunity to start eroding any of our other rights.

Unless you're some kind of paranoid, black helicopter conspiracy nut, where on earth would you get ideas like those?

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