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Don't blame the drink [1]

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On Wednesday, three youths were convicted of murder after kicking and beating a man to death outside his own home. His sin? Telling them off for vandalism.

Peter Fahy, Cheshire's Chief Constable, blamed [3] Britain's drink culture and called for a 'crackdown' on cheap alcohol. Apparently, supermarkets and off-licences are to blame for selling booze too cheaply. He even claimed that some of the youths involved in the attack were "reasonably decent people who drink too much and do something stupid and attack someone".

Rubbish. These youths did not kick a man "like a football" as his daughter watched because they were drunk. They did it because they are ignorant, savage, brutal people without a shred of respect for anyone else.

Blaming supermarket prices is absurd. The vast majority of people enjoy inexpensive alcohol responsibly. Most of us drink more than we should from time to time, but it doesn't end in violence. In any case, alcohol is already more expensive and more strictly controlled in Britain than in many other European countries.

'Drink culture' is a handy excuse for the social ills that plague many communities in Britain, but it is not the real reason. It is the welfare state that has promoted family breakdown and eroded personal responsibility. It is politically-correct, target-driven policing that has abandoned our streets to violence and thuggery. And it is the rotten state school system that has left so many young people without any aspiration beyond the bottom of a beer bottle.

Ultimately though, it is the abandonment of parental responsibility that is most appalling and pernicious. And without real change, that threatens to become a vicious intergenerational circle ? which will not easily be broken in the years to come.

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