



# Shrink Shrank Shrunk

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“Shrinkage.” A big problem.

I’m not talking about the delicate issue identified in the classic *Seinfeld* episode, “[The Hamptons](#).” I refer, instead, to the business lingo for *theft*.

It’s rampant and taking a sad toll.

Dick’s Sporting Goods is the first major retailer to blame declining profits on the “shrink” of its inventory because of mass theft. “The sporting goods and athletic clothing seller reported second-quarter results Tuesday morning that included a 23% drop in profit, despite sales that rose 3.6% in the period,” CNN [explains](#).

But it’s not just a Dick’s problem. “Retailers large and small say they are struggling to contain an escalation in store crimes

— from petty shoplifting to organized sprees of large-scale theft that clear entire shelves of products. Target warned earlier this year that it was bracing to lose half a billion dollars because of rising theft.”

The cause?

No mystery.

Leftists have long been uncomfortable with private property. Their socialism seeksto replace private property with public property and private control over the means of production with *governmental* control. No wonder they often excuse private thievery as something like a revolutionary act.

When Pierre-Joseph Proudhon put the idea boldly onto paper in 1840, that private property is itself theft, he [really meant](#) landed property, not personal property. Today’s leftists, unburdened by subtlety, keep coming back to opposing what is the core institution of civilization: respect for other people’s things.

Which allows for everything from privacy to progress.

Encouraging petty theft, as the left has *knowingly*, and organized theft, as the left has *unwittingly* (I hope) is not without consequences.

Our wealth, our liberties, our peace — they shrink.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.