

## The Economist says

... In 1993-94, recorded crime fell by 5% a year, and the 1994-95 figures, will show something similar. It is the biggest drop in the figures for 40 years.

Why is this happening? The Government, predictably, claims that its new, tougher penal policies deserve the credit. If that is true, why did similar policies fail to stop crime rising in the early 1980s? There are plenty of other explanations which, unfortunately for the government, sound more plausible.

One is the continuing fall in unemployment. The relationship between unemployment and crime is complex. There have been times, such as the second half of the 1980s, when unemployment has fallen and crime has risen. But a raft of studies (some of them, to the government's embarrassment, produced by Home Office researchers) have supported the idea of a positive correlation between unemployment and rising crime. Other things being equal, then, the current fall in unemployment should bring about a fall in crime.

Demographics could also play a part. Crimes are mostly committed by 15-24-year-old men. The fewer loutish youths there are around, the fewer crimes will be committed. And the number of men in that age group is falling rapidly – from 4.5m in 1989 to 4m in 1993.

The police prefer to think that they have something to do with it. Some forces – particularly in crime-ridden big cities – have been thinking hard in recent years about new methods of dealing with crime. London's Metropolitan Police, for instance, have been targeting a smallish group of suspects, using intelligence and undercover police to gather information about them. Operation Bumblebee, an anti-burglary campaign, and Operation Eagle Eye, against mugging, have both relied on such pre-emptive tactics; and it may be that they are having some effect.

Business may have been doing its bit, too. The rise in crimes against cars has led manufacturers to add security features to new vehicles to make life harder for car and car-radio thieves. Car crime makes up around a quarter of all recorded crime; and it fell by 10% between 1993 and 1994, thus accounting for half the drop in the total crime figure. ...

**'The Tories' new weapon against crime' The Economist September 23rd 1995**

## THE SUN SAYS

### Behind bars

#### CONSIDER these two facts.

**ONE:** The number of crimes has seen the biggest two-year fall for 40 years.

**TWO:** The number of people in prison has risen by a quarter in that time.

*The link between the two is obvious.*

The police are concentrating on locking up persistent known criminals and the policy is paying dividends all over the country.

So, too, is the use of closed circuit TV cameras. In one Norfolk town, car crime has dropped by 95 per cent.

#### Who says we can't crack crime?

**The Sun 30/8/95**