

suburbs is offsetting Democratic gains over the last decade in the more established—and often more affluent—inner-tier suburbs,” they concluded. Kaine, the Democrat, won the three close-in suburbs of Washington—Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax—with over 60 percent of the vote.

Loudoun and Prince William were not as vote-rich for Bush last year as many other exurbs. Of the 100 fastest-growing counties, according to Brownstein and Rainey, “Bush

took 70 percent or more of the vote in 40 of them and 60 percent or more in 70 of them. In all, Bush won 63 percent of the votes in these 100 counties.”

So Loudoun and Prince William aren’t quite typical in yet another way: They’re not landslide Republican counties. But the fact that Kilgore fell far short of the president’s showing in the two Virginia exurbs is bound to be a matter of concern to Republicans as they focus on 2006 and 2008. ♦

# A Continent of Broken Windows

How do you say ‘asphalt jungle’ in French?

BY GERARD ALEXANDER

**R**IOTERS IN FRANCE have torched thousands of cars, injured scores of police, burned and shattered dozens of buildings, and killed at least one person. Not knowing what to make of it all, Americans may be forgiven if they file this away as an event that has nothing to do with normal life in France in particular and Europe in general. After all, U.S. media coverage routinely portrays Western Europe as a much more civil place than America. But that stereotype is badly out of date. Granted, riots like these are unusual, but they are taking place amidst rising crime that has left many European countries more uncivil than we often think, much more dangerous than in the past, and in important ways more crime-ridden than the United States. Europeans are now saddled with a crime problem that has been building for years and isn’t disappearing anytime soon—alongside their high

unemployment, slower growth, and social strains that were evident long before the recent round of rioting.

European crime rates have been converging with U.S. rates for years and have now overtaken them in several categories. This is partly the result of the decline in U.S. crime rates since the start of the 1990s, a decline that has taken rates below the levels that once kept Dirty Harry busy at home and gave America a violent reputation abroad. But the real story is relentlessly rising crime in Europe. Any serious report has to say from the start that the headline crime of homicide remains rarer in Western Europe than in the United States. But most other crimes have reached distressing levels across the continent. However dicey it is to use cross-national crime statistics, several major trends are clear.

An impressive rise in theft, robbery, and burglary began in several European countries in the late 1950s and accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s. By the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the rates at which English,

Swedes, French, Italians, Spaniards, and Dutch reported being victims of nonviolent crimes was in the same neighborhood as American rates. These crimes, and violent ones as well, kept climbing into the 1990s. By the end of that decade, when the United States was finally getting a handle on its problem and U.S. rates were heading downward, European crime stabilized at its new, high rates. Some countries, like Britain and Denmark, have since managed to nudge several categories of crime downward through expanded and improved police efforts. But the crimes they proved best at containing were often not violent crimes. Worse, violent crime continued to rise sharply into the early 2000s in France, Spain, and the Netherlands.

The latest figures, scattered from 2000 to 2005, suggest that more assaults are committed per capita in England than in America, while Swedes, Norwegians, and Dutch experience roughly the same assault rates as Americans. Robberies (which involve force or the threat of force) are as common in England and the Netherlands as in the United States. Theft rates have surged ahead of the United States in Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway. Separately, auto thefts are now a European specialty, with Scandinavians, Brits, French, and Italians worse off than Americans. And the U.S. burglary rate is now lower than those in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Britain.

Data from some European cities make the change even more dramatic. Robbery and burglary rates in British cities like Nottingham and Manchester exceed New York City’s. In 2004, charming Copenhagen reported five times New York’s theft rate, two and a half times its auto thefts, and over four times its burglaries. Moreover, some European cities suffer certain crimes that Americans don’t know at all. As the *New York Times* understatedly observed, the French government was slow to respond to the recent riots “in part because the initial

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SIPA / Boreas

*French riot policemen in Toulouse, November 9*

nights of unrest did not seem particularly unusual in a country where an average of more than 80 cars a day were set on fire this year even before” the riots began.

America is even losing its distinctiveness among the advanced industrial countries when it comes to murder, as European homicide rates edge upward. Twenty and thirty years ago, Europeans experienced a tiny fraction of U.S. murder rates, and individual murders were still shocking. By 2001, though, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Vienna, and Brussels were suffering 40 percent or more the homicide rate that New York City has today. For that matter, Finland has fully half the U.S. murder rate nationwide. Now, 40 percent isn't 100 percent. But it's a far cry from stereotypes of European civility.

Especially urban Europeans now routinely live in fear of being attacked or robbed, just as Americans did in past decades. This shows up both in opinion surveys and in the many costly measures Europeans

now take to secure their homes, cars, and personal safety. Burglar alarms adorn quaint houses on cobblestoned streets. High crime also means that most European populations now contain a class of people who routinely engage in theft and low-grade violence. Europeans often insist that these criminals are either East Europeans who have arrived since 1990 or come from communities of immigrants mainly from North (but also sub-Saharan) Africa. But while immigrants and their children may be in the mix, the “new” crime started so long ago and is so widespread that it's clear Europe has also generated a homegrown class of people who see other members of their own societies as marks.

France's riots probably cannot be understood without reference to a welfare state so expensive that it stifles job-creation and closes the doors of social advancement to young people, especially minorities. The official French unemployment rate has fluctuated between 8 percent and 12 percent for almost 25 years straight

(even more joblessness is concealed by early-retirement schemes). Ironically, Europeans used to lecture Americans that expensive welfare states at least ensured social peace by preventing the rise of an alienated underclass of the kind seen in American inner cities. Higher taxes for lower crime was a tradeoff many Europeans were prepared to make. Now they find themselves saddled with both high welfare costs *and* high crime. But placing blame on the welfare state only gets us so far, because crime is also high in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, where unemployment is lower thanks to serious reforms of their welfare states.

The only silver lining is that Europe's high crime rate may yet play something like the role it did in the political and intellectual turn that America took in the 1970s. Crime helped force America's first neoconservatives and neoliberals to confront questions of social order,

civic virtue, and moral standards, questions that usually don't come up in debates over taxes and spending. Amidst the rioting, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin remarked, "What is in question today is the effectiveness of our model of integration," meaning France's approach to "social cohesion." De Villepin believes social cohesion comes from government and its subsidies. Crime does of course raise some financial issues. But, if anything, property crimes reflect the something-for-nothing mentality that welfare states already inculcate and legitimize. And crime as a political issue is freighted with moral significance, involving, as it does, a rejection of the mores needed for any ordered society. In this country, the rising crime rates of the 1960s and 70s eventually brought a renewed appreciation, among liberals and conservatives, for the indispensability of certain social mores, like minimal respect for character, national traditions, and virtuous individuals. Crime helped many Americans remember how important it is that mores like these be instilled in society's members, especially its newest and youngest ones.

President Jacques Chirac and his cabinet have been busy condemning violence and demanding respect for the authority of the state. But everyone, including the rioters, knows these words are being uttered against a backdrop of decades of excuse-making, the bigotry of low expectations, and the brushing aside of those who wanted to enforce minimal standards of social comportment, especially on immigrants and their children. Across Europe, the public arena has been stripped of civic standards, with the watery exception of "tolerance." Still awaiting its Rudy Giuliani, Europe is a continent of broken windows, in which government leaders and intellectuals don't defend or repair civic values under assault. The experience of New York City suggests it's never too late to start. Maybe Europeans, too, will be mugged by reality. ♦

# My Friend Maury

Maurice Rosenfield, 1914-2005

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

IN THE SUMMER OF 1988, I had a phone call from a man who identified himself as Maurice Rosenfield. He claimed he had been reading me in magazines for years, said that he had an option on F. Scott Fitzgerald's story "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," and asked if I would mind reading a manuscript he had commissioned in which an Englishman attempted to turn the story into a musical. "Sure," I said, "send it."

After I read it, I told him the manuscript seemed hopeless. He agreed but said that he was glad to have me confirm his instincts. Would I, he wondered, like to attempt the job? I was to think about it. And might he take me to lunch so that he might thank me in person?

Writers are fantasists, and the notion of writing a successful musical was fodder for a grander fantasy than I am generally accustomed to indulge. "We saw Joe Epstein's *Diamond* in London." "Really? We saw it New York, and then again in Chicago. The New York cast was better." Gold rained down upon me, in this fantasy, normally cold maitres d' smiled and bowed as I entered their outrageously expensive restaurants. In the shower I worked on the lyrics for the show's big song, but all I could come up with in the way of rhymes for Ritz was blitz, kibbitz, and a chauffeur named Fritz. I dropped the idea.

When a few weeks later I met Maury Rosenfield for lunch, he turned out to be a large man, handsome, well turned out, in his mid-seventies but full of energy, and with no crap about him. I liked him straightaway. We met at his posh

country club, the Lakeshore, whose membership was once strictly limited to German Jews. When I told him that the story was that the only Jewish event celebrated at this club in the old days was *Kristallnacht*, he roared with laughter. He had a great laugh, Maury.

He also, as I was slowly to learn over the next eighteen years, had a great life. We had attended the same Chicago high school, and we had both gone to the University of Chicago. He went on to law school there, graduating at the top of his class; he didn't tell me this—he had no brag to him—I learned it from his son Andy.

He had a successful legal practice, one both lucrative and important. He specialized in First Amendment cases—at different times he defended Lenny Bruce and *Playboy* magazine—and in 1941 wrote an important article, "The Contemporary Function of the Class Suit," that is said to have paved the way for class-action lawsuits.

The law apparently wasn't enough to hold his wide interest and abundant energy. Ben Hecht, the Chicago journalist and later playwright and screenwriter, set Maury on a case to free a falsely convicted (for murder) black man who was languishing in Joliet prison for fifteen years. Maury took the case to the Supreme Court, where the conviction was reversed. Hecht next convinced him to go in partners on a movie about the case, but he died before it got off the ground.

Maury and his wife Loie were enormous appreciators of talent in all its forms. He was large and earnest, she small and witty. (Note to casting director: As a couple, imagine them as a Jewish version of Joel

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