



## Early skirmish in the Eurabian civil war

(Publisher in *The Daily Telegraph*, November 8, 2005)

[Mark Steyn](#)

Colaboraciones n° 685

December 2, 2005

According to its Office du Tourisme, the big event in Evreux this past weekend was supposed to be the annual fête de la pomme, du cidre et du fromage at the Place de la Mairie. Instead, in this charmingly smouldering cathedral town in Normandy, a shopping mall, a post office, two schools, upwards of 50 vehicles and, oh yes, the police station were destroyed by - what's the word? - "youths".

Over at the Place de la Mairie, M le Maire himself, Jean-Louis Debré, seemed affronted by the very idea that un soupçon de carnage should be allowed to distract from the cheese-tasting. "A hundred people have smashed everything and strewn desolation," he told reporters. "Well, they don't form part of our universe."

Maybe not, but unfortunately you form part of theirs.

Mr Debré, a close pal of President Chirac's, was a little off on the numbers. There were an estimated 200 "youths" rampaging through Evreux. With baseball bats. They injured, among others, a dozen firemen. "To those responsible for the violence, I want to say: Be serious!" Mr Debré told France Info radio. "If you want to live in a fairer, more fraternal society, this is not how to go about it."

Oh, dear. Who's not "being serious" here? In Normandy, it's not just the cheese that's soft and runny. Granted that France's over-regulated sclerotic economy profoundly obstructs the social mobility of immigrants, even Mr Debris - whoops, sorry - even Mr Debré cannot be so

out of touch as to think "seriously" that the rioters are rioting for "a fairer, more fraternal society". But maybe he does. The political class and the media seem to serve as mutual reinforcers of their obsolete illusions. Or as the Washington Post's headline put it: "Rage of French youth is a fight for recognition".

Actually, they're very easy to "recognise": just look out the window, they're the ones torching your Renault 5. I'd wager the "French" "youth" find that headline as hilarious as the Jets in West Side Story half a century ago, when they taunted Officer Krupke with "society's" attempts to "understand" them: we're deprived on account of we're deprived. Perhaps some enterprising Paris impresario will mount a production of West Side Story with choreographed gangs of North African Muslims sashaying through the Place de la Republique, incinerating as they go.

In fact, "rage" seems the least of it: it's the "glee" and "contempt" you're struck by. And "rage" in the sense of spontaneous anger is a very slapdash characterisation of what, after two weeks, is looking like a rather shrewd and disciplined campaign. This business of car burning, for example. In Iraq, the "insurgents" quickly got the hang of setting some second-hand Nissan alight at just the right moment so that its plume of smoke could be conveniently filmed from the press hotel balcony in time for NBC's Today show and Good Morning, America. For a while, every time you switched on the television in America, there'd be

some doom'n'gloom anchor yakking away in front of a live scene of a blazing Honda Civic - as reassuring in its familiarity as that local station somewhere or other in North America (Thunder Bay, I think) that used to show a roaring fireplace as its test card all night. What the Aussie pundit Tim Blair calls the nightly Paris car-B-Q looks great on television, but without being sufficiently murderous to provoke the state into forcefully putting down the insurgency.

Indeed, it's an almost perfect tactic if your aim is to have the entire French establishment dithering in grievance-addressing mode until you've extracted as much political advantage as you can. Look at it this way: after two weeks, whose prestige has been more enhanced? The rioters? Or Mayor Debré, President Chirac and Prime Minister de Villepin? On every front these past two weeks, the French state has been tested and communicated only weakness.

As to the "French" "youth", a reader in Antibes cautions me against characterising the disaffected as "Islamist". "Look at the pictures of the youths," he advises. "They look like LA gangsters, not beturbaned prophet-monkeys."

Leaving aside what I'm told are more than a few cries of "Allahu Akbar!" on the streets, my correspondent is correct. But that's the point. The first country formally to embrace "multiculturalism" - to the extent of giving it a cabinet post - was Canada, where it was sold as a form of benign cultural cross-pollination:

the best of all worlds. But just as often it gives us the worst of all worlds. More than three years ago, I wrote about the "tournante" or "take your turn" - the gang rape that's become an adolescent rite of passage in the Muslim quarters of French cities - and similar phenomena throughout the West: "Multiculturalism means that the worst attributes of Muslim culture - the subjugation of women - combine with the worst attributes of Western culture - licence and self-gratification. Tattooed, pierced Pakistani skinhead gangs swaggering down the streets of northern England areas are as much a product of multiculturalism as the turban-wearing Sikh Mountie in the vice-regal escort." Islamofascism itself is what it says: a fusion of Islamic identity with old-school European totalitarianism. But, whether in turbans or gangsta threads, just as Communism was in its day, so Islam is today's ideology of choice for the world's disaffected.

Some of us believe this is an early skirmish in the Eurabian civil war. If

the insurgents emerge emboldened, what next? In five years' time, there will be even more of them, and even less resolve on the part of the French state. That, in turn, is likely to accelerate the demographic decline. Europe could face a continent-wide version of the "white flight" phenomenon seen in crime-ridden American cities during the 1970s, as Danes and Dutch scam to America, Australia or anywhere else that will have them.

As to where Britain falls in this grim scenario, I noticed a few months ago that Telegraph readers had started closing their gloomier missives to me with the words, "Fortunately I won't live to see it" - a sign-off now so routine in my mailbag I assumed it was the British version of "Have a nice day". But that's a false consolation. As France this past fortnight reminds us, the changes in Europe are happening far faster than most people thought. That's the problem: unless you're planning on croaking imminently, you will live to see it.