

La France Orange Mécanique
Laurent Obertone

The French edition of a worldwide story. Read it to pull the pieces together

The book leads off with two anecdotes. A horrible rape by a perpetrator with a Muslim name. He catches the victim, throws her 25 feet down a staircase, breaking her back, and then spends the night ravishing her ruined body, leaving her only at dawn. And... French criminal justice sees him as the victim of a blighted childhood. The second is similar – Gypsies take over an apartment building as squatters, terrifying, humiliating and repeatedly injuring a handicapped man who has no other home.

Then there is a litany of crime statistics for France. The upshot is that the crime rate is about 20 times what it was when they started keeping statistics the century or so ago. In particular, rapes are up significantly: 200 per day.

Politicians and the media relentlessly focus public attention elsewhere. Road deaths have been a constant point of concern. These of actually fallen, from 17,000 in 1971 to about 4000 today, despite the fact that automobile ownership and miles driven have gone up considerably. A number of factors are at work, among them better cars and better roads. The politicians can take credit for strict policies on alcohol use. They also use radar and other such technological devices in order to discourage dangerous driving and extort fines from the public. Obertone feels it is excessive, a misplaced use of resources. The authorities are able to posture as if they are doing something, while the real number of road deaths is not that vast and cannot be brought down very much further. It justifies employing large numbers of policemen and administrators, expanding the surveillance state.

Meanwhile, the crimes to which they ought to turn their attention are increasing rapidly, unreported by the media and uninteresting to politicians.

In France, as in the United States and most of the West, there is a constant drumbeat on the theme of violence against women. Its focus is on conjugal partners. But the fact is that while there are 300,000 cases per year of conjugal assaults, there are 1.2 million cases of sexual violence involving strangers. It appears that the priorities are misplaced. Domestic violence is a two-way street, but female violence against men goes underreported: it has a different character, being more verbal, and minor physical assault.

And that concludes the introduction. Obertone says that the media and politicians are vastly exaggerating driving accidents and domestic violence in order to distract the public's attention from the real problem. This is a long lead in to his major theme.

The next chapter is an endless litany of horrors – man's inhumanity to man, more often, unemployed youth's inhumanity to everybody. He draws from local newspapers, with the observation that the national press doesn't want to hear about it and certainly doesn't report it. In fact, the substance of the

book is in the anecdotes, mostly drawn from the local press. He has used his or her stories to stretch and 120 page thesis into a 360 page book.

He is quite circumspect about the national origins of the perpetrators. Although among the many instances of crimes which he cites Muslims and Africans figure somewhat disproportionately, he does not drive home the point, and he includes several stories in which these peoples are victims.

He draws an extended metaphor of hippopotamuses and rhinoceri, the former being the progressive liberals refuse to believe that there is a violent complement to human nature, and the latter being the under socialized misfits who are all too willing to take advantage of their laxity and willful blindness. He draws on the anthropologists such as Margaret Mead to say that there are certain basic human drives, among them the drive to power and the drive to procreation. Hippopotamuses succeed by adopting a pose of being more humane than their fellows; rhinoceroses succeed by simply taking what they want through robbery and rape, allowing the court-appointed hippopotamuses to make excuses that their brains could scarcely craft on their own. In most of the histories he cites the guilty do indeed get punished, but the punishment is laughably light in comparison with the gravity of the crime.

He examines the major institutions of society: the courts, the police, and the conditioning given in schools. In every case, he finds that there is a pervasive willingness to excuse undersocialization and terrible behavior on the part of the malefactors.

I observe that this is a part of the French character. 40 years ago the French attitude toward the police was more negative than in my native United States or in Germany. They were variously, contemptuously called bulls, vache, fric. Conversely, the soixante-huitards, who that time were regularly trashing Paris, were somehow glorified. There is a streak of anarchism in the French, which Obertone traces through the years starting in the 19th century.

Obertone confirms one of my observations. Almost everything important to read is written in English. Although this book is in French, almost all of the bibliographic references are in English. Curiously, although the references are done in absolutely correct American psychological Association format, the bibliography itself does not appear in the edition that I read. He cites (Insee, 2011) but we cannot find out who Insee is for the title of his book.

He makes a number of comparisons with American history and social conditions citing, for instance, the Watts riots of 1965. I was there as a soldier with the California Army National Guard.

France's experience with non-French citizens goes back at least to Algeria, and unsuccessful experiment in which France attempted to incorporate a north African population into France itself. The Algerian war was brutal and unsuccessful, and left France with a large number of refugees, the Pieds Noirs, repatriated white settlers and quite a few Algerians themselves. Obertone has a citation as early as 1948 about the high level of crime committed in the Algerian neighborhoods of Paris.

The United States is different from France in that its long-standing black minority it does not consist of voluntary immigrants, and the legal and police systems methods of dealing with crime among blacks long predates the civil rights movement. One has only to read HL Mencken writing on the black neighborhoods of Baltimore. As Obertone says, American police and jailers have remained somewhat more willing to recognize the reality of group differences. Although there are high levels of crime in the United States, they are tempered somewhat by a high levels of incarceration.

The chapter on justice in France stands out for two reasons. First, it appears that the perpetrators are identified and condemned at perhaps a higher rate than elsewhere. On the other hand, the punishment they receive is laughably light in comparison with the gravity of the crimes. A young man can rape and disfigure a woman and be free on the streets in a year or two.

Discrimination, racism, is given as an excuse for the failure of the under socialized to assimilate and to get jobs. Obertone asks the question of whether or not the immigrants are capable of participating fully in society. Although he has a chapter dealing with intelligence, his analysis is not nearly as profound as those which have been done by others. He would have done well to cite Englishman Richard Lynn and Finn Tatu Vanhanen in their comprehensive works on the global distribution of intelligence, [[ASIN:1593680244 IQ and Global Inequality]] and [[ASIN:59368021X Race Differences in Intelligence: An Evolutionary Analysis]]. Obertone contents himself to say that immigrants usually come from the less capable strata of society. This may be true, but if the average intelligence of the country from which they immigrate is only 70 or 80, as the above-named authors would claim for just about all of Africa and the Middle East, widespread immigration by any stratum would bring down the averages.

Obertone describes the way in which the accusation of racism is thrown around with abandon. It is uniquely impossible to defend oneself against. Though nobody will say so, it is also self confirming. If a crowd of black people is howling that one is a racist, it is quite possible that certain generalities about race will cross your mind. Of course, the hypocrisy that presumes nonwhites cannot be racist exists in France as well as the rest of Europe and the United States. A white person cannot afford to tell the truth. There are laws against it.

In the end, Obertone has done a good job of describing a bad situation. He does not propose a solution. It is doubtful at this point that there is one. My personal solution has been to immigrate to Eastern Europe, which remains ethnically homogeneous, and to tell my hosts that admittance to the European Union would be a bite from a poisoned apple. The West is indeed committing suicide. If the East can endure another five or 10 years of its presents modest standard of living, forsaking the Mercedes, Cuisinart and Club Med, and it will have an opportunity to witness the financial collapse of an overextended West and the degeneration of multiculturalism into real hostility. Through no virtue of its own, aside from its continued cultivation of financial and social backwardness, Eastern Europe will look pretty good.