

# Graffiti for intellectuals



SIMON SAYS



JULY  
31  
2006



By Si Frumkin

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

**Everyone** knows that Harvard is difficult to get into. And everyone is right: in an average year over 20,000 hopeful young men and women apply, about 1800 are admitted and only about 1600 actually join the student body.

The other elite campuses are just as difficult as Harvard. In fact, anyone admitted to a university has every right to be proud.

There is, however, a national institution that is considerably more difficult to get into than Harvard, Yale or UCLA. Admission is not based on scholastic ability or affirmative action. It is based primarily on luck, requires no special skills and isn't a source of pride for most of the graduates.



The institution I have in mind is prison. Let me say it again: it is more difficult for a criminal to serve prison time than for a high school graduate to get into Harvard.

Wait a minute, you'll say, this doesn't make sense. Are you implying that all criminals - well, OK most criminals - don't serve time after they do the crime? That the candidates for district or state attorney offices who say that they have a 90% to 98% conviction rate are lying? That serving time is a matter of bad luck, rather than unavoidable punishment by a just and lawful society?

Yes, I do. And here are the facts from a non-political and totally credible expert, professor John J. Dilulio of Princeton, U. of Pennsylvania and other universities, a prominent scholar and distinguished author.



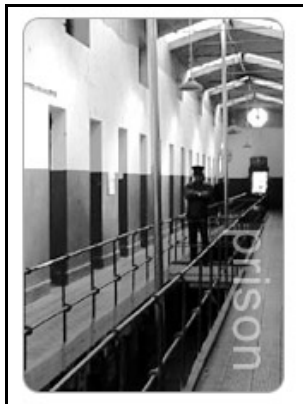
There are about 40 million crimes committed in the U.S. yearly. About 11 million of those are violent - robberies, murders, assaults, muggings, etc. These 11 million crimes result in 640,000 arrests - about 5% of the total. Of these about 180,000 go to trial and result in 165,000 convictions - and just like that you get the 90% - 95% conviction

rate claimed by the ambitious prosecutors trying to get elected.

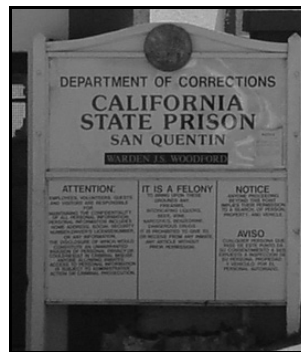
Only 100,000 or so of the convicted criminals go to prison and most serve less than half of the time they are sentenced to!

Just to make sure, here are the numbers again: 11,000,000 violent crimes = 640,000 arrests = 180,000 trials = 165,000 convictions = 100,000 thugs jailed. Put another way, a violent criminal has one chance in 110 to ever go to jail! Pretty good odds as compared to Harvard - there each applicant has one chance in 12 to get in.

Ninety percent of all convictions result from agreements between prosecution and defense in which 3 or 4 crimes are plea bargained down to just one crime, usually the least serious one. This often results in probation or a sentence to time already served. But even if they have to serve time, criminals are often out after serving less than half of their sentences.



An especially egregious example of this is the current scandal in Los Angeles County where the recently re-elected sheriff, Lee Baca, has over a period of 4 years released over 140,000 prisoners after serving as little as 10% of their sentence; L.A. prisons did not have enough room to hold them in conditions mandated by the courts.



A typical criminal will commit a dozen or so violent crimes during the year before being caught and 60% or so of criminals serving time have a previous criminal record and

will commit crimes after being released. In 1950, the average time actually served for a serious crime was 50 days. By 1990 it was down to just 10 days - I have no statistics for what it is now.

About 20 years ago I was running a textile business in downtown L.A. Two guys broke through a door of our warehouse and were helping themselves to the merchandise. I confronted them, gun in hand, cuffed them to the wall and called the police. The cop was reluctant to arrest them.



"Did they take anything?" he asked.

"No," I said, "they didn't have a chance".

"Well, then they were just trespassing - I can take them away but the sergeant will let them go," he said.

He explained that the sergeant had to determine if this was a crime that would stand up in court and that, in most cases, he would release the detainees. If he kept them, the cases would be transmitted to the D.A.'s office where the lawyers would determine if there was a chance at a conviction - if all the legalities were observed, if all witnesses would show up, if the crime was serious enough - and most would be let go. The remainder went to trial and after this weeding out the 90+% conviction rate was pretty much assured.

I talked the cop into taking the two guys to the station. About 15 minutes later I saw them go by our door. They stopped, looked in, smiled, waved and walked

away.

My only consolation was that while they wouldn't go to prison, chances are that they wouldn't go to Harvard either. Ω

# What if 'The Protocols' were true?

Gershon Gale, The Jerusalem Post, Jun. 14, 2006

In recent months much has been made of papers written by supposed Western intellectuals that were deemed so rabidly anti-Semitic as to earn comparison to the infamous Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion - a poor Russian forgery purporting to expose a Jewish plot to take over the world

Am I the only one who watches what's happening around me and wishes *halevai* - would it were so?

After all, what's so very wrong about trying to rule the world? The ancient Greeks and Persians did it, and after them the Romans. In the past century, the British did it. So did the Germans and the Japanese and the Russians, and now the



Americans and the Chinese are doing it.

Nations have tried to take over the world for as long as there have been nations, and that's considered "business as usual." But let even one poorly forged tract claim that the Jewish

nation has similar ambitions and oy va voy.

Why? Everyone else has tried to take over the world. Why not the Jews?

And consider the methods used and the goals pursued. Does anyone really believe, as the Protocols charge, that 13 million Jews can force any nation that wants peace into war? Can anyone really imagine a Jewish army bent on world domination? Or a despotic Jewish tyranny out to squelch freedom of thought or individual ambition?

"Big Bubby is watching you!" The very idea is ridiculous.

But for argument's sake, let's say the Jews are indeed destined to govern the globe. What then? What kind of government would be put in place?

IF THE best of all possible leaders is a person who doesn't hunger to lead, what of a civil administration that doesn't pant to govern?

Hundreds of thousands of Jews today

have spent their entire lives in the non-materialistic meritocracy of Talmud study - learning how to balance the multitude of personal, social, ethical, economic, political, ecological and spiritual considerations that must occupy any worthy global civil service. If that light were allowed to shine, it could draw disillusioned citizens from around the world.

And what of "the evil Jewish agenda"? Poppycock! Judaism, unlike other world religions, is not out to remake the world in its own image. It's not out to make the world Jewish, but to make the world just. It stakes no exclusive claim to heaven; membership is open to sincere converts.

Indeed, though Jews are themselves bound by 613 commandments, their mission - the reason for which they were "chosen" - is to bring the world into alignment with the Seven Noachide Laws that are binding on all humanity (Sanhedrin 58b, Maimonides' Code, Kings 8:10):

1. Do not murder.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not worship false gods.
4. Do not be licentious.
5. Do not eat a limb removed from a live animal.
6. Do not curse God.
7. Set up courts and bring offenders to justice.

Anyone who does his or her best to live by these laws, says Judaism, is assured a place in paradise. Further, in the course of

pursuing their mission to usher in an era of world peace and plenty - a mission constantly interrupted by the need to deal with the mindless pogrom of the moment - the Jews have pioneered the very concept of universal human rights, estab-

lished the innate value of every human life, enshrined the sanctity of both freedom and rest, and actually practised compassion for the weak.

Are the Jews perfect? Far from it. But unlike most, they seek perfection.

From the way some people talk, you'd think a Jewish attempt to positively influence the world were a form of plague. Yet what is the Jewish disease? What is the Jews' real crime?

Perhaps Adolf Hitler named it when he wrote in *Mein Kampf*: "The Jews have inflicted two wounds on humanity: circumcision on the [Jewish] body, and conscience on the soul."

And make no mistake - being the conscience of the world is a thankless task. No one likes to be reminded that there is a Right and a Wrong, and that they have lost their way.

Yet we have lost our way, time and time again. Humanity has tried, fought over and swiftly discarded just about every "ism" it can think of. Why not give Judaism a chance? Unlike other ideologies, it has stood the tests of both time and opportunity.

While other nations struggled to spread their influence horizontally over space, the Jewish nation has been building its "empire" vertically through time, in the process providing countless examples of altruistic leadership and dedication to the common good. It has met with, outshone and outlived opposition of every kind.

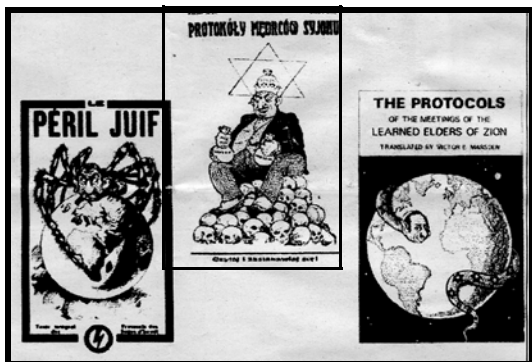
Jews have taken the message about loving your neighbor as yourself and made it a day-to-day response to violent hatred. Israel, for example, cares more about the physical well-being of those who see all Jews as mortal enemies than those people care about themselves.

The Jews have talked the talk, and walked the walk, for 3,500 long years.

So now they are moving to take over the world?

The world could do worse.

The writer, a veteran Post staffer, is editor of the paper's Christian edition.



# DEMOCRACY'S LONG HAUL by David Brooks, N.Y. Times, 7/13/06

In 1848 a democratic revolution swept across Europe, and then promptly collapsed. Thousands of protesters were killed in the streets. Authoritarian regimes were re-established. Some called 1848 "the turning point when Europe failed to turn."

*Please, please read this! It is a brilliant scholarly exposition that we should keep in mind in these difficult times. Si. f.*

And yet that wasn't true. Antidemocratic regimes did regain power, but within decades they had enacted most of the reforms the revolutionaries of 1848 had asked for. Constitutions were written. Suffrage was expanded. Welfare systems were created.



Otto von Bismarck  
Germany's  
"Iron Chancellor, 1871"

Conservative authoritarians enacted these reforms reluctantly, and with cynical motivations. But they knew they had to keep up with the times to retain their grip on power and to forestall more radical change. Democracy didn't move forward in

a burst of glory, but in a long slog of gradual concessions made by reluctant conservative reformers.

I wonder if, when we look back at the world of today from some future vantage point, we will see an echo of that pattern.

We'll see a burst of democratic change that swept the world between 1980 and 2005. Authoritarian regimes collapsed, sometimes under their own weight (the Soviet Union), sometimes amid outside pressure (the Philippines) and sometimes by force (Iraq). In places where the fabric of society was thick, nations maintained their equilibrium, and democratic dreams were

realized. But in nations where totalitarianism had been strongest, and civil society most brutally pulverized, liberation begat chaos.

In these places, the old political order was the only source of social authority, and once that was removed everything was permissible. The worst people in the nation were given free rein to prey upon the best. In Iraq, that meant brutal violence, rampant crime and a sectarian power struggle that produced unimaginable horror.

In Russia, the chaos produced a culture of plunder and gangsterism that rewarded the dishonest. A large share of the population was set free to drink itself to death, with the average lifespan of the Russian man declining by seven years.



derstand the desire for order. They understood the people's desire to live in an environment in which it was possible to lead a dignified life. They shared the feeling of national shame that had come amid the chaos and the longing to restore national prestige. In short, they had a deeper understanding of human nature than the technocrats who came to modernize them.



Map of Europe in revolt—1848

The autocrats created nations that were not totalitarian but not free. On the one hand they sought to stifle liberty in order to secure their grip on power. Democracy activists were arrested and TV stations suborned. On the other hand, as in 1848, the democratic forces did not go away. The people, especially the growing middle classes, longed for freedom. New technologies threatened centralized power. The conservative autocrats would find that if they did not buy off the public with gradual reforms, they would either have to rule by terror, which is unstable, or more radical reforms would be imposed upon them.

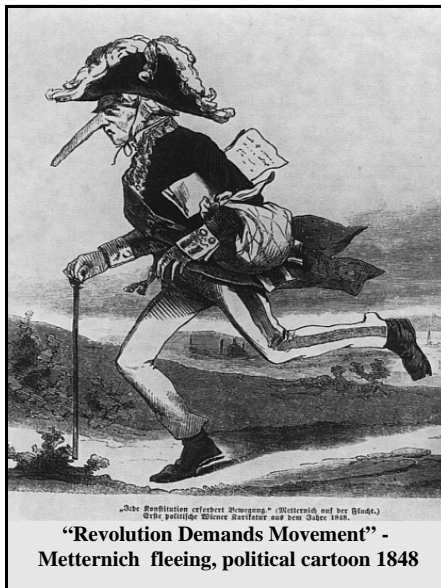
Moreover, the Western liberators were complicit in and discredited by the chaos. In Russia, the West sent in economists and technocrats. Coming from places that had always been stable, they took for granted the moral foundations that undergird stability. They didn't see that Russia lacked these foundations, and that any institutions they built on top would simply be perverted.

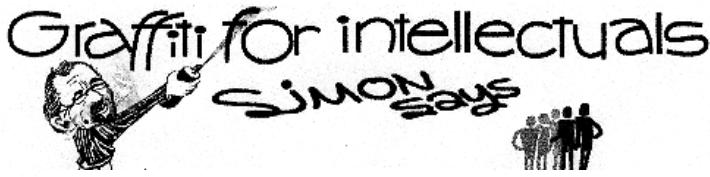
In Iraq, the American liberators didn't understand what would happen if brutalized Iraqis were left in a state of nature, and didn't or couldn't impose a humane order.

So if the first stage of the democratic era in these places was liberation and the second stage was chaos, the third stage was conservative restoration. Unlike the Western democrats, the conservatives - Putin in Russia, the theocrats and strongmen who came to dominate Iraq - did un-

If this pattern is true, and future historians do look back on our period this way, then a crucial task for U.S. foreign policy in the years ahead will be to cajole semi-autocratic regimes - in places ranging from Russia, the Middle East and even China - into making gradual democratic reforms. At the moment we do this badly, alternating between bold speeches that call for revolution and craven diplomatic gestures that suggest capitulation.

We're out of the period of mass rallies and toppling regimes and orange revolutions. We're coming into a period of, at best, a gradualist conservative reform. It's time to come up with a strategy for helping today's unimaginative autocrats to become new and improved Bismarcks. ♠





Southern California Council for Soviet Jews publication  
(affiliate member of Union of Councils for Soviet Jews)  
P.O.Box 1542, Studio City, CA 91614

JULY  
31  
2006

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
STUDIO CITY CA  
PERMIT NO.62

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Fax: 818-766-4321  
email: esfrumkin@adelphia.net  
Phone: 818-769-8862

# BUSH HAS SOME EXPLAINING TO DO

By Victor Davis Hanson, senior fellow and historian at the Hoover Inst., Stanford U. 7/15/06

The Bush administration should stop repeating that it is fighting the war on terror for truth, justice and the American way. Instead, President Bush and his staff should be blunt and explain that, since Sept. 11, 2001, it has had to choose between options that are bad or far worse.

By all means, the administration should invite critics to suggest constructive alternatives to the way it has handled this war. But it should also point out that those who have homed in on flaws in current U.S. anti-terror policies have so far been bereft of other workable ideas.

Take the uniform-less and stateless terrorists being held at Guantanamo Bay. To be sure, there are alternatives to the current U.S. policy, but are they any better?

**Isn't it time to politely suggest to our European "allies" that our half-century-old military bases have outlived their usefulness?**

Should we try hundreds of them in American courts like Zacarias Moussaoui or in international tribunals as the Europeans attempted with Slobodan Milosevic? Or send them home to face torture in autocracies like Egypt or Saudi Arabia? Or do we ship the terrorists back to countries that would simply declare them heroes and let them go?

And can the critics offer better ways to track terrorists than through wiretapping and surveillance? How, otherwise, would one have learned in time about those in Miami who plotted to take down the Sears Tower, or the Lebanese cadre who planned to blow up the Holland Tunnel in New York

The Bush administration can also use history to show that, despite what detractors say, its techniques aren't so unreasonable. It's worth reminding the American public that Abe Lincoln suspended habeas corpus and shut down newspapers; that Woodrow Wilson im-

prisoned prominent dissenters like Eugene Debs; and that Franklin Roosevelt ordered the internment of Japanese-American citizens and secret military tribunals for German saboteurs (six of whom were executed) and allowed the cover-up of military catastrophes (such as the hundreds killed during training

exercises for the Normandy landings). In other words, there's an advantage to providing historical per-

spective by engaging one's critics and answering their charges. The public, for example, should be informed that the accusation that the U.S. went into Iraq for oil ("no blood for oil," as the slogan goes) is not merely inaccurate, but crazy. For starters, gas prices skyrocketed once we induced risky change in the Middle East. How does that benefit the American people? Meanwhile, because of the fall of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's energy sector has been purged of corruption (such as the UN's scandal-plagued oil-for-food program).

In Europe, a poll recently showed that people there view the U.S. as a greater threat than Iran. If this is the case, is it not time to politely suggest to our "allies" that many of our half-century-old military bases in prosperous Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain have outlived their usefulness?

The Arab world's perennial grievances

against the United States don't hold up either, given that America has saved Muslims in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Kuwait and Somalia, and provided billions in aid to Egyptians, Jordanians and Palestinians.

The Bush administration would also be in the right to wonder aloud whether its domestic critics wish to go back to bombing away without consulting the U.S. Congress or the UN as we did in the Balkans. And when Americans are butchered, are we to skedaddle, as both Presidents Reagan and Clinton did, from Lebanon and Somalia respectively?

Ultimately, the Bush administration needs to do a better job of presenting this current war in a far larger context. Jihadists of the Arab world for decades have been at war not with George W. Bush alone, but with modernity itself. The radical Middle East street may be fascinated by the Internet, satellite TV, automated teller machines and cell phones--but not by the foreign anathema of democracies, religious tolerance, free markets and gender equality that ultimately account for such goodies.

So there are many fronts in our struggle against Islamic terrorists from the 7th Century. The American people must be reminded of our challenges constantly in lieu of platitudes about the inevitable triumph of freedom and democracy. In short, our government should provide much more explanation of this complex war and far fewer simple declarations about it. ☹