

# Readers comment on US school shootings

5 June 1998

To the WSWWS and David Walsh,

I just finished reading the article, "Alienation, adolescence and violence," and I'm very impressed with the analysis.

I am a high school social studies teacher in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and have presented similar analyses of society in a Human Relations class that I teach. Clearly the structure of our socio-economic system is what tears away at our sense of community and family. We are bombarded with the message that we must be successful, and success is measured in dollar amounts. Furthermore, we must succeed on our own. By default, the message to those who "fail" is that they have done so because of their own shortcomings.

In addition to the isolating nature of society, we also send a mixed message when it comes to dealing with problems. Openly, we tell kids that violence is not the way to solve a problem. We can repeat this message endlessly, but if our actions continue to contradict our message the words are meaningless.

Internationally how do we resolve disputes? Look at the Persian Gulf and Panama just to name two. Nationally, we sanction state-sponsored murder with the death penalty.

Congress spent more on the military this year than the Pentagon itself wanted (certainly not as much as the military-industrial complex wanted!). The federal government continues to fund "Star Wars" research in an attempt to protect us from some mythical attack. (No doubt, they will be able to argue an increase in spending on the program thanks to the "arms race" in South Asia. Never mind the fact that we helped them in building their weapons).

While we continue to spend more on our military than our 10 closest competitors combined, we can't get every child in daycare. We have 40+ million people un/underinsured. We have more people going to food shelves than in the 1980s.

Mr. Walsh, I am happy to see what I consider an

insightful analysis. As you can see my comments complement my pacifist ideals.

Sincerely,

RPM

3 June 1998

To the Editor:

This is a short note to applaud the editorial regarding the Springfield tragedy. As a lifetime resident of Oregon, I am deeply saddened by this tragedy. But, I am not surprised. My experience working with at-risk youth in Portland, Or. inner city confirms much of what was expressed in your piece.

Within Oregon's current political reign, children are not valued. Emphasis is being place onto beefing up restrictions, and reduction of positive services and opportunities for children.

The solutions will not be simple, nor will they occur overnight. But they must be sought and enacted as your editorial suggests. It is not the child to blame, but the adults who make up society.

THANK YOU, FOR YOUR HEARTFILLED WORDS!

LST

29 May 1998

To the Editor:

Your points are well taken and true. Still no matter how angry, deprived, frustrated, depressed, unloved and unappreciated a young lad [and they are usually male] felt.... if homes were not bristling with unsecured guns the massacres very likely would not occur. Punches, kicks and sticks and stones do minimal damage. Perhaps these massacres are the price that must be paid for the right to bear arms. Just a thought.

A thoughtful web surfer —

MZ

1 June 1998



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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