

Letters from readers: "The Littleton school killers were bred in this society"

24 April 1999

To the editor,

I thought your summarization of the issues here in America were accurate. Please realize, though, that many of us Americans are very much against our foreign policy of interference and violence toward other nations. We deplore the actions of this President. Were it within our power our forces would not be overseas. But 'democracy' is not what it seems here in America. Money and our Media drive who gets elected to our political offices. In America, people like us are branded 'isolationists.'

We are also grieved at the moral decay that we see all around us. I, myself, am a Christian. Unfortunately, the only 'Christianity' that the world sees of our nation is that which dominates our television and radio airwaves. But there is another 'kind' of Christianity here. One which does not tote guns and is not ready to 'blow away' anyone who trespasses on our property; one that is not obsessed with our pocket books and 401Ks; one that is not trying to 'overtake' our government; one that does not condone violence at all. Rather, we seek to live out our lives in peace with those around us, help the needy, and be a good testimony to the faith that we hold.

GD

To the editor,

In "Society, politics and the school shooting in Littleton" [WSWS, 23 April 1999], David North writes:

"Your analysis ends where it really should begin. The repetition of these awful events in different parts of the country requires a social rather than purely individual explanation. Why do youth like Harris and Klebold turn up with increasing frequency in the high schools of the United States? What is it in the culture of this country that produces an audience among young people for the most depraved and anti-social conceptions? What is the source of the despair and alienation that leads American

teenagers to kill each other and themselves?"

On the evening of the Littleton 'massacre', I posted something somewhere that connected Littleton to Yugoslavia. Why I did this was because it became immediately clear to me that the United States -- as a culture -- has, in its past, revered and, as each new minute comes to pass as its present, reveres violence as an expedient solution to any and all woes, ills, and disputes. One merely has to look to the pulp fiction of the last century, the film industry from its earliest days, and U.S. history itself to see how violence as a means of conflict resolution has had a markedly colourful documentation. One need only to spend a day watching television--whether the 'talks' {Jerry Springer, Jenny Jones, et al}, the 'news' {CNN, Fox, et al}, movies, or the commercials {garden.com (in which the gardener lady assaults a male suitor for picking one of her flowers as a 'nice' gesture), World Wrestling Federation previews (during Larry King's analysis of the violence in Littleton and Yugoslavia)}, and others--one only need watch to see the glamourisation of gratuitous violence beamed into homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, endlessly.

The national leadership may point to guns as being THE problem which they are not: it is the person holding the gun that is the problem. Any mechanical device, whether a gun or an automobile, if improperly used can kill. The banning of automobiles, the drivers of which being responsible for thousands of deaths each year, is never spoken of except in an ecological context. The problem in almost all cases--accidents notwithstanding--is the person using the device, machine, or apparatus.

Ironically, I get almost a humourous sense from watching the President speaking about changing the culture--at the moment when he, a documented anti-war protester, is directing attacks against Yugoslavia.

Similarly, watching Geraldo Rivera, the pugilist talkshow hoster of racially contextual brawls, being beamed from Albania to the United States, moralising and commenting on Littleton without making declarations against ALL violence and its sources. On another programme, most likely Fox News, the moderator asking whether saturation coverage of tragedies such as Littleton or wars like the one in Yugoslavia was too intense; the networks never cease in their efforts to win their 'wars' over ratings' turf.

I can come to no other conclusion that society, as it has existed, exists, and will continue to exist--if unchanged--must accept the frontier mentality and expect surprise and random attacks from within. This is a fact of life, the pace of life demanding immediate gratification of one's needs, even if one needs to resolve a conflict. Unfortunately, the Die Hards and Lethal Weapons and Rambos and Home Alones only exist in the movie makers' production and special effects departments. There are those--young and old--who, nevertheless, seek to project the fantastic onto real life ... minus the happy endings and sequels.

Celebrity and celebration of violence has been with us for a long time; it is in us, the U.S. Perhaps a different focus for the fantasy lens should be socially cooperative nations ... but where is the brute force and power to come from by being social and cooperative?

AR

To the editor,

Once again your magazine has hit the nail right on the head. I've come to the same conclusion myself, that the Littleton school killers were bred in this society. A lot of the hatred they expressed was fed to them by politicians, society and the media. The fact that they wore swastikas and made their racist beliefs known and nothing was done about it tells you a lot about the school faculty. I assume that they thought since their hatred wasn't directed at them that they wouldn't have to worry about it. Obviously they were wrong. I see the same type of thinking as far as militia groups. When it appeared that some of these groups were only targeting blacks, Jews, etc. nobody stepped in. As a result, the Oklahoma bombing happened.

If I got your analysis wrong, please feel free to correct me. But what I just said is from my perspective.

KMF

To the editor,

You are the only American web site I know that talks some sense, so you are a relief to me. I am afraid that the American media don't inform citizens on what is really happening now in Kosovo, just as they are trying to distort the political (neo-nazi) side of the Littleton massacre. I've heard a lot of Christian, psychological bubble, that they were just "kids" (18 and 17 year olds are not kids!), that they were nuts, influenced by war game videos--all this crap and much more while there is a sizeable nazi organization right there in Littleton operating legally and criminally. The United States lives under the power of the National Rifle Association and I'm devastated to see this country plunge into hypocrisy (Clinton's speech was a fine specimen), and emerge as a mass killer in the world at large. Anyway, thank you for being there.

ST Athens, Greece



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