

Letters on the Michigan murder trial of 13-year-old

9 November 1999

The WSWS has received a number of letters on the Nathaniel Abraham trial now taking place in Pontiac, Michigan. Abraham, who was 11 years old—and functioning at the mental level of a 6- to 8-year-old—at the time of the offense for which he is charged, is being prosecuted as an adult for first degree murder. If convicted he could face a sentence of life imprisonment. Below we reprint some of these letters.

I believe if the child has a mental disorder he should get professional help. Just because he said he was going to kill someone doesn't mean he's going to do it. People use that expression when they're upset with some one or thing. He didn't intentionally go and find someone to kill. He was merely shooting the rifle. I could understand it being murder if he was looking for someone to murder. I feel for the parents of the 18-year-old; they must really be hurting, I know I would, if it were one of mine.

Sincerely,

VS

29 October 1999

Hello, I do enjoy reading your articles and your points of view. But I'm not sure that the system itself [is] on trial here, as Kate Randall asks at the end of her article.... The young man discharged a firearm within the city limits. That in itself is a crime, at least in the city where I live, anyway, and he should be held responsible for this. He discharged many rounds from that gun, and he knew what he was doing when he pulled the trigger each time. He knows that a bullet can kill somebody. Very unfortunately, the bullet that was discharged hit another person, and this person died. This is a terrible set of circumstances, but it would seem that this is involuntary manslaughter, isn't it? Just trying to understand.

Thanks!

JB

29 October 1999

Regarding the article written by David Walsh and Barry Grey dated 7 May 1998 about Nathaniel Abraham who will stand trial for murder as the youngest person in US history:

It is true that society produces criminals and Nathaniel Abraham in all probabilities will live a life of crime if he is released, perhaps even kill again. If society is to blame for this emotionally damaged child then what is to be done with him? What is to be done with the thousands of men and women behind bars now? Do we give them all psychological treatment and those that we deem that are cured, give them an early release? Surely this is the humane thing to do but what will be the consequences of this act to society? Where, tell me, is that perfect society that you seem to profess?...

JA

30 October 1999

As I look at the photo image on my computer screen it makes me feel sad not only one youngster's life been taken away.... What pain must a 13-year-old be in to murder someone? Will we ever have an answer?

RT

Barnsley, England

30 October 1999

"Whose answer to every social problem is to call for more oppression"?

Please, for the sake of propaganda, identify this material as the personal opinion piece it is, not as a report....

This does not imply that I am in favour of prosecuting THIS child in THIS case for THIS murder. However, since I am from the South, that obviously lumps me in with all those gun-toting, law-and-order advocates whose EVERY answer to EVERY social problem is to call for MORE oppression....

KN

31 October 1999

This case is just terrible. What kind of people are these prosecutors? To put an 11-year-old in prison for life, give me a break. It clearly was an accident. I hope Nate is cleared of this and gets some other type of social help. He does not deserve to go to prison. This Lisa Halushka needs to resign after this, she just makes me sick.

LL

3 November 1999

I have long been concerned about the new laws in many states that allow the prosecution of a child as an adult. It sounds unconstitutional to me. In this country you are not considered a legal adult until you are 18. How can the state arbitrarily make adult legal charges against someone who is simply not an adult? The Michigan story is even more disturbing due to the way the State has acted in this situation. Our government seems to be at war with its citizens and now with its children. Immoral actions from an immoral government, and they wonder what is wrong with our youth?! If the government can kill innocent citizens without any punishment or even apology, why can't anybody else? Our kids are acting out what they see government doing, shooting and killing unarmed people in the street, and then trying to think up a good reason why it happened. There has been a lot of it lately, even in my small Central Valley town.

JJ

5 November 1999



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