

More letters on the tragedy at Virginia Tech

24 April 2007

The following is a selection of recent letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site regarding our coverage of the shootings at Virginia Tech.

Finally! Someone has given us a proper, critical analysis of this horrible event and the environment which gave birth to it. Yes, Cho was an angry and disturbed young man, but “the resentments have a real basis” indeed. His actions were terrible, but, as noted, “that doesn’t mean there was no connection between social life and what he did.”

He had a poor and unhappy childhood, and it must be remembered that he is the product of parents who both worked “lower-level” working class jobs. To be constantly surrounded by the unbridled and uncaring elitist gluttony of a college town is an environmental factor which cannot be ignored.

Social inequity has always led to ferocious anger, and to explain it away with a label of genetic disorder or biological imbalance would be another glaring example of the institutionalized social ignorance of this capitalist circus. Having spent all of my life in a town which plays home to a very large state university, all of this rings clear as a bell in my ears. Perhaps not so for others. This is why your work, Mr. Walsh, is essential to opening the world’s eyes to that to which it has been blinded. Thank you.

RV

Athens, Georgia, USA

20 April 2007

I just wanted to congratulate you on a fantastic analysis of the shootings. I found that you touched upon nearly every thought that came to my mind, though I was not aware specifically of how the story was being treated by the capitalist press. As a sociology student and teacher, this is the type of material my students say they benefit from enormously.

RJ

Eugene, Oregon, USA

4/21

As a graduate mental health counseling student at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, I am particularly interested in the after-event analysis of what occurred at Virginia Tech.

We live in a society where in spite of recent progressive developments in the counseling field, many of these services are either not affordable or available to those most in need of them. This is, of course, a reflection of not only the kinds of class biases that presently hold sway, but also of the overall priorities of contemporary society.

The over-competitive nature of present-day college life coupled with a regime of political correctness where anything or anyone who attempts to challenge in any way the standard non-politicalization of campus life creates a social climate where meaningful relations amongst fellow students are sometimes difficult to establish and/or maintain for even the most mentally healthy.

The fact that social alienation exists is difficult to deny. In the case of Virginia Tech it seems to have had fatal consequences for 33 people. The fact that a normative approach to behavior still holds sway amongst the general public as opposed to the fact that there is a clear body of evidence that demonstrates conclusively that there are unique and distinct personality types is also maybe part and parcel of this social problem. A society whose major mouthpieces are forever giving lip-service to this concept of “diversity” is contradicted in real life by an overly rigid conformist view of the individual. Where affordable mental health services are not available for an at-risk individual to resolve these contradictions in his/her own mind, disaster is sure to follow!

CK

20 April 2007

As a junior in high school and part of that 9 percent who has attempted suicide, the media and government reaction to this tragedy felt like a direct insult to me. I

have not watched the video of Cho, but his last words were enough to make me cry. The incoherent cries, the belief that the world is out to get him, and not seeing anything positive. It is very likely he did have a good amount to live for, but it doesn't matter when your feeling this low.

I believe part of this comes from society's lack of understanding of the seriousness of mental illnesses, warnings of suicide often go ignored, but this is hardly an excuse on a college (or high school) campus. That he got As in his math class is completely unsurprising; a person's academic record has no reflection of his or her mental health. Cho is not just a "coward"—that is a weak explanation for a suicide, but it gives no explanation as to why he would go on to kill others first. By the government telling us to move on is enough to tell us that they are willing to see this again, this isn't tactical of them so much as it is just plain stupid. This will inevitably happen again, possibly even worse. How can we move on when we aren't finished? It's a time when I don't know whether I am more frustrated or sad.

MW

21 April 2007

On "An attack on the World Socialist Web Site in the Boston Globe: US media hides behind the Virginia Tech tragedy"

I couldn't agree more with your superb rebuttal of the Jacoby piece in the BG. I'm a clinically inactive pathologist with past experience in psychiatry, and anyone who disputes your analysis of causally related factors in the VTU tragedy, or in the epidemic of related violence in this country, is biased, ignorant, stupid, crazy—or all four. Keep up the good work. You are a ray of hope in a very dark, foreboding world, indeed.

Best wishes,

PC

Lewiston, Maine, USA

23 April 2007



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