

Experts can't 'wish away' violence in America's schools

by Michele Steinberg

Look at the Littleton horror as an omen, as the hands of the clock of history, pointing to the time in which we are living at this moment.

You must change this nation, and perhaps yourself too, before this nation, soon otherwise dies. Take Littleton as that kind of warning. It is past time that you acted to change the set of definitions, axioms, and postulates which have been controlling your opinions and other behavior during recent decades.

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.,
“Star Wars and Littleton,” EIR, July 2, 1999

Top education and law enforcement officials of the United States gathered in Washington, D.C. on Aug. 10, to release a controversial annual report on the enforcement of a horrible, but “necessary” law enacted in 1994, called the Gun-Free Schools Act. Secretary of Education Richard Riley reported that “there has been a significant decrease in the number of young people expelled from school last year (1997-98 school year) for bringing a firearm to school, a drop of 31%.”

Riley’s press release stated, “How should we interpret this data? The sharp decline in the number of students bringing guns to schools tells us that we are starting to move in the right direction.”

What is this so-called good news? A total of 3,910 students were expelled from school last year (school year 1997-98)—a significant drop from the 5,724 of the previous year, but, still a dangerous level. Some 31% of these expulsions were for weapons such as “bombs and grenades” (over 1,100 incidents); 62% were for hand-guns; and 7% were for rifles or shotguns. Elementary school incidents accounted for 10% of the total! The majority of students who were expelled, 57%, were in high school, but another 33% were in junior high school.

Under repeated questions about Littleton and the other incidents of mass murder in schools, members of the panel admitted that they *don't* have answers to stopping the terrorist acts by children against their classmates, which have occurred with frightening regularity since early 1997. Edward Ray,

director of security for the Denver, Colorado Public Schools, laid the danger on the line. “I want to make it real clear,” said Ray, “I . . . can't *ever* guarantee that an incident such as Columbine, or Paducah or Springfield or Conyers, will never take place.” Hesitant under the weight of that statement, Ray continued, “those are events that are *beyond* predictability.”

Within one hour of the conclusion of that news conference, any illusions that things *are* “moving in the right direction,” away from Littleton, were shattered, when the news story broke that an adult gunman, now identified as Buford O’Neal Furrow, had opened fire on a Los Angeles day camp at the North Valley Jewish Community Center, injuring five people, including two six-year-old boys and one five-year-old boy, who was listed in critical condition. Ironically, Chief of Police Wesley Mitchell, chief for the Los Angeles Unified School District, had been on the panel in Washington, attempting to come up with solutions to the general problem of school violence, and specifically to the horror of the kind of school shootings that had occurred in Littleton, and Conyers, Georgia at the close of the school year of 1999. And now, a new danger loomed—adults shooting children.

Furrow’s shooting rampage in California was the fourth major incident of this type since July 4, 1999, and the second of the four incidents to involve a shooter who had a past history of affiliation with racist neo-Nazi groups. (see “British Commonwealth Secret Services Deploy Neo-Nazism,” EIR, Aug. 6, 1999).

Many Americans do not realize that, already in 1994, the magnitude of children killing, injuring, and threatening other children with firearms and explosives in schools had become so large, that Congress enacted a specific law to force the expulsion for at least one year of a student caught bringing in a firearm. Yet, even with this added gun law, the number of deadly incidents has risen, and the intensity of the violence has worsened. No number of new gun laws is going to stop the violence, unless, as Lyndon LaRouche wrote in “Star Wars and Littleton,” “relevant institutions get down to the business of addressing the actual causes for this pattern of incidents.”

The events are nothing less than signs of a new dark age of irrationality and fear. And the solutions proffered by well-meaning experts as they try to toe the line of “political correctness”—and where Satanism is, “by law,” a *bona fide* religion, according to the rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court, and where the methods of Satanic video games such as Dungeons and Dragons are integrated into classrooms—are part of the problem.

No answers

The fallacy of composition haunting the Secretary of Education’s “panel of experts” news conference, is the lie that incidents like Littleton are “aberrations.” General school violence can be stopped, the panel said, with more community involvement, with early warning referrals of troubled children to counseling, and by a strong wishing to “work together.” In point of fact, these “safety nets” had failed: Some of the most violent of the teenage killers of the last year were known to their families and communities as troubled children. They had been referred to counseling; they had been arrested, put through probation and parole; and at least three of them—Eric Harris, who took his own life in Littleton, after killing 13 others; Kipland Kinkel, who shot his parents to death, and then shot 22 classmates, killing two of them in Springfield, Oregon; and T.J. Solomon, who shot six classmates and was talked out of killing himself in Conyers, Georgia—were taking prescription drugs for their diagnosed emotional problems.

It is exactly this thorny thicket of problems—what happens when the solutions fail?—that LaRouche and co-authors Chaitkin and Steinberg addressed in the July 2 *EIR Feature*. In fact, it is the so-called New Age solutions themselves which are the problem. LaRouche warned that “if what is popularly known as ‘Hollywood’ continues with the genre of so-called popular entertainment typified by the *Star Wars* series, there will be an increasing frequency of similar incidents of lunatic outbreaks, as bad as, or worse than Littleton.”

Members of the blue-ribbon panel deliberately evaded discussion of two of the most documented factors in the school shootings: the role of the psychotropic drugs, and the shooters’ involvement with violent, Satanic, Nintendo-style video games.

One panelist, Bill Modzeleski, director of the Federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, told *EIR* that the lawsuit filed by survivors of the shooting rampage in Paducah, Kentucky against the makers of the violent video games such as id Software’s “Doom” and Hollywood’s movie “Basketball Diaries,” is “wrongly focussed,” because one “can’t attribute” the school violence to “just one thing,” he said. Other panelists claimed ignorance on the questions of drug abuse, the use of Ritalin, and the fact that several of the individuals accused and arrested in the growing list of school killings, were reportedly involved in Satanic group activities.

Reopening the Ritalin file

The fact that Thomas J. Solomon, the 15-year-old now on trial for shooting his classmates in Conyers, Georgia, was taking the prescription stimulant Ritalin (for depression, according to some news reports), and the fact that Oregon’s Kip Kinkel and Colorado’s Eric Harris had been prescribed anti-depressants, has provoked a new furor about the drugging of America’s children to treat so-called behavioral problems and mental illness. The issue should become even more heated, since Solomon will be tried as an adult, and faces more than 300 years in prison, instead of the maximum of ten years he would get as a juvenile, according to a court decision on Aug. 11.

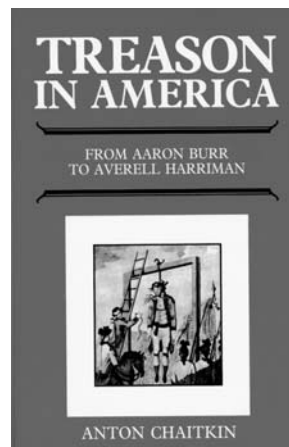
There is no question that “popular” teenage culture and mind-altering drugs, is a deadly mix.

According to figures provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, more than 6 million children under the age of 18 are currently being administered mind-altering drugs. More than half of these children are taking Ritalin, the trade name for methylphenidate (MPH), a highly addictive stimulant, that is most commonly prescribed for a disputed condition known as ADHD (formerly ADD), or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

In October 1995, the Drug Enforcement Administration

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(DEA) clearly identified Ritalin as a dangerous, addictive drug. In a report entitled "Summary of Preliminary Findings on Petition to Reschedule Methylphenidate," the DEA took the unusual step of countering arguments of the pharmaceutical lobby and other groups to "reschedule" Ritalin so as to make it easier to obtain by prescription, and easier to refill without a doctor's visit.

The report said that "DEA's review of both the scientific and medical literature [shows] that MPH shares the same abuse liability and hazards as other Schedule II substances. . . . In clinical studies, humans will choose to take MPH, which produces rewarding and euphoric effects including increasing feelings of 'high,' drug-liking, and other psychomotor stimulant effects similar to d-amphetamine." The DEA found clinical studies that adults who had taken MPH as children when diagnosed for ADHD, had higher levels of drug dependence, compared to others who had not been medicated for ADHD or control subjects.

The effects described are frightening. The Drug Enforcement Administration report also states that "MPH's patterns of abuse are similar to that of other Schedule II stimulants. Like amphetamine and cocaine, abuse of MPH can lead to marked tolerance and psychic dependence. Typical of other central nervous system stimulants, high doses of MPH often produce agitation, tremors, euphoria, tachycardia, palpitations, and hypertension. *Psychotic episodes, paranoid delusions, hallucinations, and bizarre behavior characteristic of amphetamine-like psychomotor toxicity have all been associated with MPH abuse.*"

The DEA report attacked other "myths" about the alleged harmlessness of Ritalin. "MPH produces the same type of dependence profile as other Schedule II stimulants" (e.g., methamphetamines, known as "speed"), stated the DEA report. Moreover, children and adolescents are widely diverting and abusing the medication intended for treatment of ADHD. Ritalin was specifically reported as a very popular stimulant in drug abuse.

But one of the most critical factors, is that the pills are given out without safeguards or follow-up. "Data show that once diagnosed with ADHD, 80 to 90% of these children are placed on *stimulant therapy as the sole treatment approach*. Very few children are actually provided with other medical services . . . and many children are staying on the medication through adolescence and young adulthood despite the lack of studies that examine the long-term effects."

As ominous as this report is, even less is known about the effects of drugs such as Prozac and Zoloft, anti-depressants that have been approved for use by children and adolescents much more recently.

Too little, too late

On Aug. 13, 1997, President Bill Clinton took action in implementing a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation that would force drug manufacturers to conduct much

more thorough testing of drugs used for children.

An FDA fact sheet issued when Clinton made the announcement, revealed that "even though many drugs affect children differently than adults, most drugs have not been tested on pediatric populations.

"According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, only a small fraction of drugs and biological products marketed in the United States have had clinical trials performed on pediatric patients. Despite evidence that drugs affect children differently than adults, 80% of all drugs marketed in the United States have not been labeled for use by infants, children, and adolescents. . . . Many drugs commonly given to children under the age of six, including Prozac, Zoloft, Ritalin, and drugs for asthma, . . . *are inadequately tested* and labeled for use by children. These drugs, taken together, are given to over 5 million children each year."

The effects of the FDA regulation are not known, but clearly, it is too little, too late. At a Nov. 16-18, 1998 conference on ADHD organized by the National Institutes of Health, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, the DEA's representative Gretchen Feussner, reported that Ritalin sales in the United States had increased fivefold since 1990, and that the increase is attributed to use of Ritalin for ADHD, 90% of those prescriptions going to children.

The conference provided some of the most damning evidence against Ritalin and the entire question of ADHD. The Consensus Statement issued by the conference reports:

- "An independent diagnostic test of ADHD does not exist, [but] there is evidence supporting the validity of the disorder."
- There is a "lack of consistent improvement beyond the core symptoms," and "conclusive recommendations concerning treatment for the long term cannot be made."
- There are "wide variations" in the use of psychostimulants for ADHD, and "no consensus" exists among physicians and experts about which patients should receive these drugs.
- "Knowledge about the cause or causes of ADHD remains largely speculative," and the experts have "no documented strategy for prevention of ADHD."

On such flimsy grounds, more than 3 million of America's children are being drugged with Ritalin—an addictive, abused substance whose known side-effects can include hallucinations and psychosis. And still more drugs are being added to the list of those used on children, including introducing amphetamine prescriptions to treat the so-called ADHD.

Without accepting the wise advice given by Lyndon LaRouche in "Star Wars and Littleton"—namely, that the last 30 years of New Age counterculture must be overturned, if we have any hope in stopping the blind terrorism hitting the schools and workplaces—Americans can kiss their loved ones goodbye.