derstood only when such Nintendo-game-style conditioning is situated within the utopian doctrine of Russell's relevant 1931 and 1951 writings on the required methods of population control to realize his own and H.G. Wells' oligarchical utopian ends.

3. A crucial feature of a clean inquiry, is to recognize the fraud implicit (or actually intended) in the use of any hysterical "gun-law reform" diversionary effort, to cover up for the crucial role of the popular mass-media, and firms such as Hasbro, in mass brainwashing of children to become, even as young children, programmed agents of blind-terrorist modes of mass-murder by means which do not depend in any characteristic fashion on firearms.

4. A most important feature of the inquiry, is to recognize the lessons to be learned from the role of "bread and circuses" in manipulating the population of ancient Rome into the pathological state of mind aimed at by the design of Nintendo-style games and related "New Age" tactics today.

Murder-Simulating Video Games Are a Grave Threat to Human Civilization

by Megan Dobrodt

On May 25, 2023 Megan Dobrodt was a guest *on the New York Symposium internet program with Diane Sare, the independent LaRouche candidate for U.S. Senate from New York State. Mrs. Dobrodt is the President of the Schiller Institute in the U.S., is a director of the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus, and worked closely with Lyndon LaRouche on scientific questions. The following is her reworking of the remarks she made on that program. Subheads and embedded links have been added.*

In the first five months of this 2023, there have been 242 mass shootings in the U.S[1]. That's one every 14-15 hours. Many, though not all of these have been carried out by juveniles or young adults.

It's also the case that since 9/11, young people in the U.S. military have been deployed as killers in wars in Southwest Asia, with a probably very conservative estimate of 937,000 people overall, 387,073 of them civilians, dying violent deaths as a direct result of combat operations in post-9/11 war zones. As of May 2023, an estimated 3.6-3.7 million people have died indirectly. The total death toll in these war

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

Body-camera video of police officers searching a casino in the Las Vegas Strip following a shooting that killed 58 people and injured more than 800. Oct 1, 2017.

zones could be at least 4.5-4.6 million and counting.[2]

What has become of us? What does it mean about our culture, our society, when our children have become

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1. A "mass shooting" is defined as one in which four or more people who are not the shooter are killed or injured.

2. Source: Costs of War project, Brown University.

mass murderers? And how do we turn this around?

In 2007, Lyndon LaRouche wrote a paper titled, "From Milken & Enron to Perugia: 'Extreme Events'!" In it, he discusses three interrelated recent events: 1. A terrible school massacre in Finland, 2. The gruesome murder of a British college student in Italy, and 3. Then Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson's reaction to the blowout of the financial system with a "bazooka" of bailout money. LaRouche makes the point that all three events, while shocking, were forecastable as manifestations of a culture of mass-insanity which has taken hold since approximately the assassination of JFK; a culture based, essentially, on a systemic dehumanization of the image of man.

In a paper he titled "Star Wars and Littleton," published in 1999 not long after the massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, LaRouche wrote:

> How does one corrupt innocent children into becoming psychotic-like killers? The quick answer to that question is: dehumanize the image of man. The details of the way this leads to the production of youthful "Nintendo" terrorists, are a more complicated matter. Nonetheless, it is no oversimplification to say, that once that first step, dehumanizing the image of man, is accomplished, the axiomatic basis has been established, to make war, and killing, merely a childish game played according to a childish mind's perception of the importance of obeying the rules.

In that same writing, LaRouche provocatively remarked that we have to face the fact that it's the epistemology, the fundamental beliefs about the nature of man, which we as a society have condoned, accepted, in everything from the actions of our political leaders who commit mass-murder with the stroke of a pen, to allowing the gutting of the U.S. economy in favor of get-rich schemes of Wall St., to our executive and military leaders' policy of perpetual—and even nuclear—war which may exterminate the human species.

Is it, then, such a surprise that our youth have turned into deranged mass-murderers?

In May 2000, LaRouche founded the Commission Against the New Violence. In an address to the founding meeting in New York City, he said:

> Let me begin by making a few observations on the question of what we may call the specificity of "New Violence." Now, by "New Violence," we mean, by first approximation, "Nintendo killers" in the military. We mean the replacement of qualified police officers by "Nintendo cops." We mean "Nintendo kids" in the schools, from the ages of 6 to 16. This is where the core of the
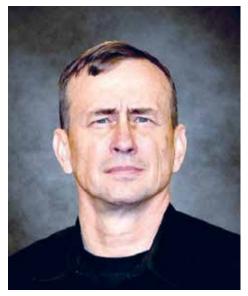

Rockstar Games

In the Grand Theft Auto franchise, you *play the criminal,* you *become the bad guy. The image is from a publicity trailer for the* Grand Theft Auto V *video game.*

New Violence is located. It is not in the bullet, it is not in the axe, it is not in the hammer, it is not in the fist. The violence is not located in the physical act performed upon the victim. The New Violence is located in the peculiarly perverted minds of the perpetrators. The perpetrators are typically military professionals, trained by the official military, or trained by programs designed originally for the military. These are Nintendo-style brainwashing techniques. This means Nintendo cops, police officers who are not police officers any more. They're merely Nintendo-cop killers. They have no sense of a human relationship and their act, on the one hand, and the effect on the victim, on the other hand.

These are children who play Nintendo and Nintendo-style games [who are] being brainwashed into becoming rage-controlled killers, who will kill as an adult, in an adult manner, but

with a childish mind which has no comprehension of the act which they're perpetrating. It's something which they are just compelled to do. Littleton is a paradigm of this problem.

Violent Video Games

I want to talk about these violent video games, and what they've done to the minds of our children. And to set the scene, let me give you a very, very broad strokes sense of one of the most popular games of all time, Grand Theft Auto V (GTA V), first released in September 2013, by Rockstar Games which, though rated "M" for mature (supposedly 18+), is being played widely by children of all ages:

In the Grand Theft Auto franchise, *you* play the criminal. You *become* the bad guy. You advance the plot, make money, get points, and "win," by killing cops, stealing cars, and running over pedestrians, murdering people, setting them on fire, selling drugs; you can restore your "health" by buying sex from a prostitute, and afterwards, you have the opportunity to beat her, take your money back, and set her on fire.

There's a scene in GTA V in which you, the criminal, are paid to torture a suspect by the FIB (a.k.a. FBI). Here's how this scene was described on Reddit by a devotee of the game:

> You see and hear Trevor [your character] beating, shocking and waterboarding a middle-eastern-looking man. He screams in pain and begs you to stop, while the FIB agent urges you to continue. The violence is brutal and shown unflinchingly, but avoids being gratuitous or leering.
>
> In the story, it is heavily implied that the torture is totally arbitrary, the victim knows nothing, and as the eventual assassination target, is just a guy who happened to fit the profile. Trevor is shown to be torturing because he *likes* it, not for the money. This serves to make the already disturbing imagery even more so, espe-

Lt. Col. David Grossman, U.S. Army (ret.), continues to do important work to expose the nature of killer video games.

cially considering how close to reality the situation is.

And here are two comments from people in response:

> I felt bad through the torture scene. It was really bothering that I had to torture someone and I didn't want to. Even though it is just a game, at that moment I was like "aw man, no, I don't wanna, no he doesn't know it dude, stop."

And then:

> Maybe I'm too desensitized by the real world, but I personally found the torture scene to be kind of over the top in an almost comical way. I read some posts about how brutal the torture mission was, then I finally get to the part and ended up thinking to myself, "Surely that's not the part everyone was so worked up about? That was nothing."

GTA V topped $1 billion in worldwide retail sales in its first three days, making it the fastest-selling video game in history, and making more money in 2013 than the entire global music industry.

In general, revenue from video games rose 32% between 2019 and 2021, during the COVID pandemic lockdowns, reaching a record $214.2 billion in 2021.

It is estimated (and the numbers are debated) that anywhere from 70% to more than 90% of American children play video games. That's anywhere from 50 to 65+ million children, some of whom spend more than 40 hours a week practicing violence, murder.

The Military Origin of Killer Video Gaming

Where did these video games come from, anyway?

Lt. Col. (ret.) David Grossman, who spoke at the May 20, 2000 event of the National Commission on the New Violence and has since continued to do very important work to expose the nature of killer video games, describes the fact that in World War II, only about 15% of soldiers were willing to fire their

weapons at another human being. Others would carry out acts of great bravery and put their lives on the line, but couldn't bring themselves to take a life. There is an innate reluctance to take human life, which the post–World War II military leadership saw as an obstacle to be overcome in order to up the kill ratio of its soldiers.

And so training programs were developed, based on studies of the human brain and operant conditioning, to train the soldier to raise his or her weapon and fire a kill-shot at another person as an automatic response to a stimulus. The training was successful! Since the time of the Korean War, 55% of soldiers fired their weapons with an intent to kill, and since the Vietnam War, that number is upwards of 95%.

These *murder simulators*, in which the trainee holds a simulated gun and fires at a human-shaped target, which falls back when hit, simulators which succeeded in increasing the soldier's firing rate to 95%, were then mass-marketed to our children as first person point and shoot video games. In fact, Doom, the favorite of the two killers in Littleton, Colorado, was designed by John Romero, who had previously programmed war-game simulators for the British Royal Air Force.

So they came from the military, and they're currently raking in billions of dollars for other arms of the military-industrial complex: Hollywood and Silicon Valley, which each year spend millions of dollars in lobbying money to maintain free access to consumers of all ages. [3]

Effects on the Brain and the Mind

And what do these games do to the brains, the bodies, the minds, of young people?

It's been shown that the brains of children who have been exposed to violent media, and especially playing violent video games, don't function like the brains of healthy children. The fight-or-flight center of their brains, the animal part, takes over. Usually, our bodies go into a fight-or-flight mode in response to an immediate threat, but that state is limited. It's usually over quickly. For the gamer, this state is triggered almost continuously, for hours. The logical, thinking, decision-making part of the brain is suppressed, inaccessible. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) brain scans have shown this, and terrible crimes in which a child killed his or her caretaker or parent and later couldn't believe what he did, is a brutal testament to this altered state.

Adrenaline and cortisol are released in the body in large quantities during gameplay. The body behaves as if responding to an actual threat—this is physiologically real for the player. This leads to sleep deprivation and associated suicidal ideation. And, importantly for the addictive nature of these games, a massive amount of dopamine, the brain's chemical "reward," is released. Your child is rewarded points in these games for committing violent acts, rape, and even murder, and their brain's response gives them pleasure for it. Some studies have shown that the most violent games elicit a dopamine spike which is 300% over baseline: more than what a drug addict gets from doing cocaine. This can't be sustained. The body adjusts its baseline, and more and more extreme violence is needed, sought out, to produce the same pleasurable effect.

A couple of other studied effects of these games are (1) "Mean world syndrome," where a child is so immersed in the concentrated violence of these games and other media that they come to believe the world is essentially cruel, mean, and violent and that one must also be cruel, mean, and violent to survive; and (2) the fallacy that justice is "getting what's coming to you." Inflicting violence on other people, as in the plotlines of these games, is a just act because they deserved it. Rejected by a woman? Run her over with a car. Petty criminal stealing a purse? Shoot him and set him on fire. And we see both of these effects prominently in the manifestos and/or profiles of almost all of these mass murderers, these young shooters.

One final characteristic of the mass shooters who have carried out public massacres at schools and otherwise: Every one of them has been a gamer, a fact that is almost always suppressed in the news reporting. Every one of them trained for hours and hours and hours on mass-murder simulators.
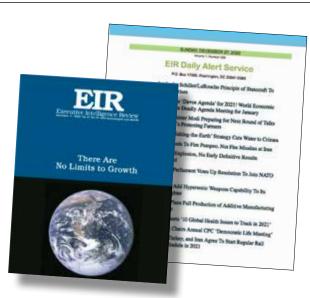
Are video games the only things which cause

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3. While developed within military training programs, and currently deployed through the entertainment "industry," the role of the post–World War II (post–Franklin Roosevelt) trans-Atlantic intelligence agencies—the same ones that ran and still run a global international assassination bureau—must be investigated as primary in the fostering and deployment of such murderous elements of popular "entertainment." See The LaRouche Organization's pamphlet, *Stop NATO's World War: Dismantle the International Assassination Bureau*, published in February 2023.

children to carry out violent acts? No! Bullying, child abuse, poverty, social media and internet addiction, drugs, and many other things contribute—a set of factors which are all signs of a sick and diseased culture.

However, given one or two of these other conditions, add in a murder-simulation training program, immerse children in it for hours a day, and you create a generation which is dissociated from the real world, which is addicted to murder for pleasure, and has the weaponry skills of trained soldiers.

What Is To Be Done?

So, what do we do? A couple of decades ago, Helga Zepp-LaRouche called for banning violent video games. She said that this "new violence" is a "worldwide phenomenon … which represents as grave a threat to human civilization as does the outbreak of a new life-threatening epidemic disease." She said that "the United Nations should establish an international protocol for the banning of these violence-glorifying videos." I completely agree.

But as she, and Lyndon LaRouche, have made the point, merely banning video games is not enough. As Lyndon LaRouche wrote in 1999, it "won't put this horror back in the box from whence it came."[4]

At the same time, we as a society must choose a different culture. We need a renaissance: a conscious cultural shift back to one which doesn't dehumanize mankind, but gives people access to and celebrates the creative potential which makes us human rather than beasts.

There is an inherent goodness in people, in children, especially. In her recent document, "Ten Principles of a New International Security and Development Architecture," Helga LaRouche's tenth principle, and I would say the most controversial one, is this:

> The basic assumption for the new paradigm is, that man is fundamentally good and capable to infinitely perfect the creativity of his mind and the beauty of his soul, and being the most advanced geological force in the universe, which proves that the lawfulness of the mind and that of the physical universe are in correspondence and cohesion, and that all evil is the result of a lack of development, and therefore can be overcome.

The goodness of human beings is rooted in the joy of creative discovery: in experiencing it, seeing it in others, and applying it to change the universe and improve the current and future conditions of society.

One of the most joyful and efficient ways to experience that is with music: If we could replace those hours spent consumed in dehumanization and ugliness with time spent singing in Classical choruses, I'm convinced we could have a chance to turn the corner.

I also think that we need a student movement: a young persons' movement which says, "Enough! We don't want to be mass murderers! We don't want to be scared of our classmates, we don't want to be sent to war, or to die in a nuclear war, we don't want to be fed this ugly, banal, addictive social media. We want to be creative!" I think a movement of youth who are saying that, and who are actively demonstrating the alternative, would be very powerful.

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4. *Op. cit.*