

The Slaughter of the Innocent

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Region: [USA](#)

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The late December holidays in America used to be known as “the season to be jolly,” with our streets festooned with bright lights, groups caroling, shopping galore, gift-giving and cheer.

This year, there’s a pall over all the light heartedness because of the horrific violence that claimed the lives of 20 young school children and their teachers in a still unexplained shooting incident in Connecticut, the latest of a string of similar events involving widely available deadly weapons often in the hands of mentally ill people.

At the same time, there’s fear and trepidation among those who believe there may be truth in ancient Mayan prophecies that predict the world will end this month. Perhaps that’s why music critics are reminding us of a country classic by singer Merle Haggard, “If We Make It Through December.”

This fear has spread worldwide with 100 arrests in China for people promoting apocalyptic scenarios

Reports Xinhua, “Chinese authorities have arrested at least 101 people for spreading rumors about an [impending apocalypse](#), the state-run news agency [Xinhua reports](#).

The 101 people arrested (including 37 in Qinghai and 34 in Fujian province in the east of the country, [according to CNN](#)) all belong to the Christian “Almighty God” cult, and were spreading doomsday rumors door-to-door or at public venues.”

Worldcrunch reports that in Argentina, “an anonymous person on Facebook was inviting people to “a spiritual magical suicide on December 21 at 21:12 on Uritorco Mountain.” That is a key day on the Mayan calendar.

Of course, our media treats all of these stories and trends as separate and distinct from each other and offers little analysis about why some are not just becoming ready for the end of the world, but perhaps secretly believing or even hoping it will happen. It has been reported that the slain mother of Adam Lanza, the suspected shooter at that elementary School in Newtown Connecticut. was part of a group (or cult) called “The preppers,” people preparing for the end.

Back on earth, in what we think of as the real world, there’s been a tendency by President Obama and others to discuss the shooting that shocked Americans and people around the world in cosmic and spiritual terms.

“God has called them home,” Obama told grieving parents.

Most of the media treated Newtown as a tragedy that touched the hearts of millions. But, there was more to it, argues the WSWS website:

“The response of the American media and the political establishment to the latest shooting traces a well-worn path. There are the banal declarations of the incomprehensibility and senselessness of “evil.”

To the extent any broader response is offered, it is focused on the need for a “national conversation” on gun control and empty promises to do more to address mental health (made by politicians doing their best to slash health care programs to the bone).

The American ruling class has lost the capacity for self-examination. It knows that any serious analysis of the roots of this and other tragedies points back to itself and the society it dominates.

Meanwhile in a culture infested with violence, gun sales are surging, according to the Guardian.

“That’s a picture replicated across the US from [California](#) to [Louisiana](#), and even in Newtown where Robert Caselnova said his gun shop saw high demand for assault rifles in the days after the killings. The nationwide increase in sales was reflected in longer than usual delays for legally required background checks which in some cases took hours rather than minutes.

The surge in sales is not unusual. Following a mass killing at a Colorado cinema in July, applications to buy guns rose more than 40% in a week. ...The increase in weapons sales also comes in a year in which the FBI reported a record number of background checks for gun purchases, with nearly 17m applications.”

The weapon used in the Connecticut killings had been banned but the ban was allowed to lapse during George Bush’s Administration, as historian Juan Cole noted:

“The Federal ban on weapons such as the Bushmaster, in place 1994-2004, was allowed to lapse by the George W. Bush administration and his Republican Congress, all of whom received massive campaign donations from the gun lobby. (Reinstating this ban will be the Obama Administrations gun control “reform.”)

“There is a Connecticut ban, but the maker of the Bushmaster used a loophole in the poorly written state law to continue to sell the gun in the state.

The Bushmaster is manufactured by a subsidiary of the Wall Street hedge fund, Cerberus Capital Management, called the “Freedom Group”- which also owns Remington and DPMS Firearms. It is the largest single maker of semi-automatic rifles in the US, and they are expected to be a major growing profit center in the coming years. The Freedom Group was sued over the Washington, DC, sniper attacks, and paid \$500,000 without admitting culpability.” (Stung by bad publicity, and under pressure from its own investors, Cerberus announced it would sell its gun holdings.)

The Obama Administration is likely to push to reinstate the ban next year.

The very presence of the Wall Street owned gun industry and the powerful NRA gun lobby, endorsed as it is by Democrats and Republicans, suggests, it is not likely much will change,

even with a ban, in the aftermath of what happened in that school.

Its not even a "tragedy." argues Stephen Marche in Esquire Magazine/ "Calling the massacre a tragedy makes everybody feel better. It purges the emotions. It lets out the rage that this horror causes deep in our souls. But it solves nothing," he writes."

"Newtown wasn't a tragedy; Newtown was a policy decision. We can do nothing for the children who are dead; weeping for them like they're our own is partly ridiculous, and partly obscene. What's even more ridiculous and obscene is not preparing for the next one. What's needed now isn't warmhearted empathy; it's cold-blooded reason. America needs its leaders to look at the numbers of mass murders, look at the most effective policies for reducing mass murder, and apply those policies."

And, also we need to recognized that our own military interventions are killing children the world over who are as innocent as the kids in Connecticut. The violent culture we spawn has a way of "blowing back" and killing our own.

Remember that famous line from a song that reverberates in American history, "Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition."

Happy Holidays and Season Greetings.

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