

# After the Erfurt Massacre: Time To Ban Violent Videos

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

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In the wake of the gruesome massacre committed by 19-year-old Robert Steinhäuser, responsible citizens can only have one reaction: Germany must call upon the United Nations to establish a protocol for a worldwide ban on the production and sale of films, computer games, and videos glorifying violence. This is necessary, because this “New Violence,” as manifested in the massacre in Erfurt, is by no means a “sociological accident” or a “freak incident.” Rather, it is a worldwide phenomenon, one which represents as grave a threat to human civilization, as does the outbreak of a new life-threatening epidemic disease.

It is certainly true that here in Germany, public discussion of the background of this incident has been conducted in a more honest and competent manner than occurred, for example, in the United States, following the massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton. A good number of psychologists and educators here have pointed out the direct connection to violence-glorifying videos and computer games, and many of them have been rightly calling for the outlawing of such products. Nevertheless, that alone is not enough, because only once we have truly understood the nature of this “New Violence,” will we be able to protect our children effectively against it.

## Making Soldiers Killing Machines

For example, take the case of those who argue that these sorts of horror film and killer computer games only lead to the commission of violent acts in cases where the children and youths involved are already at risk, whereas the majority of “normal” young people can consume these media products without undue harm. Such people are, in the best of cases, simply deceiving themselves. Because in fact—and we will have more to report on this later on—these computer games were originally developed in the United States for use by the military, for the purpose of breaking down the inhibitions which new recruits would experience when ordered to kill



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*Helga Zepp-LaRouche, urging her proposed strategy to ban killer video and computer games internationally, at a campaign event of the BüSo (Civil Rights Solidarity Movement) in Düsseldorf.*

enemy troops. Namely, it had been recognized that during World War II and the Korean War, only about 15% of all soldiers had been willing to shoot at the enemy with the intent to kill. But by using computer games involving repeated shooting at virtual enemy troops, the act of killing could be turned into a routine, mechanical activity, unhindered by any burdensome moral scruples.

So, if this de-sensitization works with military and police personnel (and we should recall here the infamous Diallo case in New York, when police fired 41 bullets into an unarmed African man), why wouldn't these games have the same effect on children and teenagers, who, after all, are even more impressionable than are adults? The ugly reality is, that even if the sale of such satanic computer games were banned tomorrow, this would not repair the damage that has already been done. We must therefore ask ourselves: What has brought a considerable part of our society to the point of tolerating ever more perverse forms of violence in such “action movies” as “Terminator” (Robert Steinhäuser's favorite movie), and in

such games as “Doom,” “Quake,” and so forth? What is wrong with the axioms in the minds of many adults in our society, who notice only now (if they notice anything at all) that these products are bestial, and that they aim at producing a bestial outcome?

The idea of molding soldiers into blind obeyers of orders and eager killing machines, comes out of the utopian military doctrine of such people as Samuel Huntington, as he set this forth in his book, *The Soldier and the State*. It runs directly contrary to the tradition of Lazare Carnot and Scharnhorst, who developed the concept of the citizen-soldier, whereby the officer in particular should be of exemplary character, with an especially refined sense of the General Welfare, one who should be able to think for himself, and be able to creatively carry out the assigned objective. Huntington, on the other hand, promotes the idea of the soldier who never permits himself to think, who never involves himself in political affairs, and who is thus part of a military hermetically sealed off from the “chaos” of civilian life. Huntington’s concept is, in fact, nothing new: It is merely the old form of the Roman imperial legions, whose role was to secure the Empire’s borders; Huntington also explicitly mentions, in this regard, the international Waffen SS.

Already back in 1972, the U.S. Surgeon General warned that there could be no doubt about the connection between violence in the media, and violent acts committed by children and young people. Shortly thereafter, the American Medical Association warned that violence in the media was the greatest health-care emergency in the U.S.A. And that was 30 years ago! Has anyone in the meantime been restricting Hollywood and the producers of these computer games? Thanks to this failure, the only way one can enter an American school building today, is by walking through a metal detector, not to mention the armed policemen patrolling the hallways. In American cities such as Washington, murders are committed every day, with most of the victims being young people killed by “random shootings”—i.e., shootings in which the killer and the victim do not even know each other.

### **To Stop ‘The New Violence’**

If one takes stock of the past three decades’ history in the United States, it becomes quite evident that the responsibility for this phenomenon of youth violence must be placed at the feet of those military and elected officials who, despite overwhelming evidence presented by medical and psychological experts, *and* despite the empirical experience of a widespread de-sensitization among youths, did nothing to halt this process of degeneration. Indeed, one cannot help but get the impression that this process was intentionally *encouraged*. After all, how could global military operations be carried out, if it weren’t for a steady supply of emotionally immature, trigger-happy young recruits?

With the massacre in Erfurt, American conditions have now come to Germany. Only six days afterward, “unpolitical”

youths went rioting in Berlin, including 13-year-old girls who were hurling stones at policemen. And if Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit thinks he can get away with claiming that with “only” 180 police injured, this was a “successful strategy,” then perhaps he should go out there himself the next time! There is simply no doubt that the phenomenon of the “New Violence”—i.e., of a violence whose cause does not lie exclusively in the criminal energies of individual perpetrators, but rather in the cultivation of socially tolerated media violence—is a massive problem here in Germany, too.

This plague of violence-glorifying horror films and com-

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puter games has now spread around the globe. The fact is likewise inescapable, that this has led to a dangerous state of spiritual desolation and demoralization among a large percentage of those who consume these media products. And whoever attempts to deny that fact, is acting like the drug addict who claims that his drug consumption has no negative effect on his capacity to think: How could he, after all, have any memory of the brain cells which he’s already lost?

A ban on violent videos, and cooperation with responsible representatives of the media, are correct and necessary measures. But these alone will not be sufficient to block access via the Internet or across national borders, nor will it succeed in reversing the effect of those products which are already circulating among our young people, and generally in the population. Once it is understood that this is not a one-time freak incident—albeit the most horrible incident to date—but that, on the contrary, this New Violence is just as much a threat to human civilization, as a global outbreak of cannibalism—only then does it become clear that we must react in a far more fundamental way.

Therefore, Germany should propose that the United Nations establish an international protocol for the banning of these violence-glorifying videos.

And, secondly, we will only be able to heal the damage that has already been done in our country, by returning immediately to an educational policy based on the Christian-humanist image of man, in the tradition of Wilhelm von Humboldt. That is the only way we will be able to give our children and young people the spiritual strength to reject these bestial conceptions on their own.