

Unabated US Criminal Carnage and Devastation -- 5m Murdered, 7m Displaced since Vietnam

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international / prose / post

America, know Your Name

The thought of an American president that boasts a personal, extra-judicial "kill list" would have been impossible only a few decades past, but, O, how the mighty have fallen!



American greed and criminality forces millions of human beings to live in appalling conditions

Today, not only the criminal leader of the world's leading civilian killing therefore terrorist nation is able to boast the unparalleled mass and continuous slaughter of innocents (now approaching 6 million since Vietnam (verify with MIT figures if you wish) but the entire American population is able to take credit for allowing THEIR nation to plummet to such low depths of injustice, hypocrisy and brazen criminality.

Regardless of all the new 'sweeping' totalitarian laws that have been passed over the past decade, Americans continue to be charged under their Constitution with the RESPONSIBILITY of removing any criminal government that threatens their hard won democratic rights, liberties and freedoms. Well, tell it to your toothless granny because very few are listening in criminal America.

Almost the entire nation has learnt to consciously accept financial/economic and military criminality as the new way forward and that dear reader is the tragedy of a once potentially great nation!

When most of the privately owned mass media ignores an issue you can be sure that issue is compromising, hot and relevant; a recently released Guardian report details that over 3 million Afghan civilians face displacement if Pakistan revokes their refugee status -- that number in addition to the already displaced millions in the NW tribal regions and throughout the nation and the picture is one of a US/NATO created humanitarian horror.

We could easily add those figures to the 5 million Iraqi civilians displaced during the American led invasion of Iraq - notwithstanding the one million murdered as a direct result of America's dirty little oil grab.

Should we also cite Libya and the tens of thousands that NATO and the US, "*we came, we saw, he died,*" flagrantly murdered for more illegal resource appropriations? No, not necessary, as most of the global population today is well aware of America's true criminal status.

So what of the future, is there any hope for morally bankrupt and hope-less America? Ask today's socially disconnected American, 'all about me,' soulless, hedonist, short term memory, gizmo generation for that answer!

Colorado Shooting Is About Moral Bankruptcy and Cultural Decline

by Henry A Giroux

The current reporting about the recent tragic shooting in Aurora, Colorado, is very discouraging. The media response to the alleged murderous rampage by James Holmes largely focuses on the guns he used, the easy availability of the ammunition he stockpiled, the booby trapping of his apartment and the ways in which he meticulously prepared for the carnage he allegedly produced. This is a similar script we saw unfold after the massacres at Columbine high school; Virginia Tech; Fort Hood; the supermarket in Tucson, Arizona; and the more recent gang shootings in Chicago. Immediately following such events, there is the expected call for gun control, new legislation to limit the sale of assault rifles and a justifiable critique of the pernicious policies of the National Rifle Association.

One consequence is that the American public is being inundated with figures about gun violence ranging from the fact that more than 84 people are killed daily with guns to the shocking statistic that there are more than 30,000 gun-related deaths annually. To bring home the deadly nature of firearms in America, Juan Cole has noted that in 2010 there were 8,775 murders by firearms in the US, while in Britain there were 638. These are startling figures, but they do not tell us enough about the cult and spectacle of violence in American society. Another emerging criticism is that neither President Obama nor Mitt Romney has spoken out about gun control in the aftermath of the Aurora shooting. Gun control matters, but it is only one factor in the culture of symbolic and institutional violence that has such a powerful grip on the everyday workings of American society. The issue of violence in America goes far beyond the issue of gun control, and in actuality, when removed from a broader narrative about violence in the United States, it can serve to deflect the most important questions that need to be raised.

Violence saturates our culture both domestically and in our approach to foreign policy. Domestically, violence weaves through the culture like a highly charged electric current burning everything in its path. Popular culture, extending from Hollywood films and sports thuggery to video games, embraces the spectacle of violence as the primary medium of entrainment. Brutal masculine authority and the celebration of violence it embraces have become the new norm in America. Representations of violence dominate the media and often parade before viewers less as an object of critique than as a for-profit spectacle, just as the language of violence now shapes our political discourse. The registers of violence now shape school zero-tolerance policies, a bulging prison-industrial complex and a growing militarization of local police forces. State violence wages its ghastly influence through a concept of permanent war, targeted assassinations, an assault on civil liberties and the use of drone technologies that justifies the killing of innocent civilians as collateral damage.

Just as body counts increase in the United States, so do acts of violent barbarism take place abroad.

Increasingly, we are inundated with stories about American soldiers committing horrendous acts of violence against civilians in Afghanistan, with the most recent being the murders committed by the self-named "kill team" and the slaughter of men, women and children allegedly by Staff Sgt. Robert Bales. The United States has become addicted to war and a war economy just as we increasingly have become addicted to building prisons and incarcerating minorities marginalized by class and race. And, moreover, we have become immune to the fact of such violence.

Violence in the United States is a commodity mined for profit, a practice that has become normalized and a spectacle that extends the limits of the pleasure quotient in ways that should be labeled as both pathological and dangerous. We are not just voyeurs to such horrors; we have become complicit and reliant on violence as a mediating force that increasingly shapes our daily experiences. The culture of violence makes it increasingly difficult to imagine pleasure in any other terms except through the relentless spectacle of gratuitous violence and cruelty, even as we mourn its tragic effects in everyday life when it emerges in horrifying ways such as the senseless killing in Colorado. Increasingly, institutions are organized for the production of violence such as schools, prisons, detention centers and our major economic institutions. Rather than promote democratic values, a respect for others and embrace social responsibility, they often function largely to humiliate, punish and demonize any vestige of social responsibility.

Our political system is now run by a financial oligarchy that is comparable to what Alain Badiou calls a "regime of gangsters." And as he rightly argues, the message we get from the apostles of casino capitalism carries with it another form of social violence: "Privatize everything. Abolish help for the weak, the solitary, the sick and the unemployed. Abolish all aid for everyone except the banks. Don't look after the poor; let the elderly die. Reduce the wages of the poor, but reduce the taxes on the rich. Make everyone work until they are ninety. Only teach mathematics to traders, reading to big property-owners and history to on-duty ideologues. And the execution of these commands will in fact ruin the life of millions of people."⁽¹⁾ It is precisely this culture of cruelty that has spread throughout America that makes the larger public not merely susceptible to violence, but also luxuriates in its alleged pleasures.

We are a country gripped in a survival of the fittest ethic and one consequence is not merely a form of hyper masculinity and a new-found indulgence in the pleasure of violence, but the toxic emergence of a formative culture in which matters of ethics, justice and social responsibility are absent from what it means to create the conditions for a citizenry able to hold power accountable, produce citizens capable of caring for others and offer the conditions for young and old alike to be able to think critically and act compassionately. Justice in the United States has taken a bad hit and its absence can be measured not only in the vast inequalities that characterize all facets of everyday life from the workings of the justice system to the limited access poor and middle-class people now have to decent health care, schools and social protections, but also in a government that separates economics from social costs while selling its power and resources to the highest bidder.

America needs to talk more about how and why violence is so central to its national identity, what it might mean to address this educationally and tackle the necessity of understanding this collective pathology of violence not just through psychological and isolated personal narratives, but through the wider ideological and structural forces that both produce such violence and are sustained by it.⁽²⁾ But, of course, the American public needs to do more than talk, it needs to organize educators, students, workers, and anyone else interested in democracy in order to create social movements capable of changing the power relations that create the conditions for symbolic and systemic violence in American society.

1. Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 13.

2. I also wish to thank Brad Evans for his advice regarding the importance of emphasizing 'structural' violence.

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<http://truth-out.org/news/item/10469-colorado-shooting-is-about-more-than-gun-culture>



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