



Response to the Impoverished at the Southern Poverty Law Center

By way of an assault on The John Birch Society, the Southern Poverty Law Center has taken a shot at yours truly. Upon reading Don Terry's "Bringing Back Birch," it became painfully obvious to me that the Center's reputation for lousy marksmanship is richly deserved.

Equally obvious is that it is the ease with which it smears those who reject its far left ideology that accounts for why, despite its name, it has done virtually nothing to help the poor. After all, before the SPLC can hope to ameliorate the poverty of others, it must first address its own intellectual and moral poverty.

Regardless of what Don Terry suggests, I am not now, nor have I ever been, a member of the John Birch Society. Not unlike that of Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams, and others, my work appears in the JBS-affiliated publication *The New American* when it largely coincides with the magazine's conservative and libertarian thrusts. Had Terry done his due diligence, he would have discovered that I write for various publications.

This, though, is neither here nor there. What matters most is Terry's treatment of my article "'Root Causes' and Mass Murderer Adam Lanza," that appeared in *The New American* (and elsewhere) in the days following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Connecticut.

According to Terry, in this essay I "bemoaned the fact that the absence of meaningful gun control was widely discussed in the aftermath of the mass shootings [sic?]" while "the 'root causes' of too many abortions and too few executions in the United States" wasn't discussed at all. This is bad enough, Terry thinks, but just when it didn't seem that things could get any worse, "Kerwick turned to Lanza's race and gender."

Terry quotes the following lines from my article: "From 'affirmative action' to massive Third World immigration, from media depictions of white men as either ignoramuses or crazed 'racists' to the incessant barrage of giddy proclamations of an ever-diminishing white America, the assault on white men is comprehensive."

He then continues quoting me: "Is it impossible to believe that a young white man such as Lanza, who





Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on March 7, 2013

has been exposed to this systematic abuse his entire life, may not have been consumed with both self-hatred and rage? For that matter, may not his cultural animus toward whites have figured in Lanza's choice to leave a trail (judging from news photos) of mostly white bodies?"

Terry contends that if the JBS continues to publish pieces like mine, it will once "again be nudged towards the basement" — i.e., irrelevancy. And even though he admits that near the end of the article "Kerwick swears he's being facetious," he dismisses this as "a lame attempt" on my part "that sounds painfully like the old John Birch Society."

There's pain here alright, but it stems from the spectacle of Terry's cognitive and ethical limitations conspiring to render insurmountable to him the task of following a simple train of thought ranging over a meager 800 words or so.

For starters, anyone who looks at just *the headline* of my article for more than 10 seconds should suspect that I am not really interested in identifying "the root causes" of Lanza's killing spree (or anything else for that matter). Not only do I place "root causes" in quotation marks, but by referring to Lanza as a "mass murderer," I call him out for the agent of evil that he was. And these specifics of the title set the tone for what follows.

The application of the concept of "root causes" to any *moral phenomenon* arises from a confusion of categories. *Causes* act upon matter — inert, mindless matter. Scientists study causes. Moral agents, in contrast, act on reasons. There are no causes when life is considered under the aspect of morality. Because a mass shooting is a morally significant act, it is wholly inappropriate, and offensive, really, to analyze it in terms of "root causes." To exploit for it political gain by linking it to a "root cause" — like the alleged lack of "gun control" — that isn't remotely connected with it is unconscionable.

I *never* "bemoaned" the fact that the "root cause" of the "absence of meaningful gun control was widely discussed" while "the root causes" of "too many abortions and too few executions" were not, as Terry says. If I can be said to have bemoaned anything, it is that there was talk — incessant talk — in the aftermath of Sandy Hook about "root causes" at all.

Yet it is true that I also wanted to expose the sheer hypocrisy of the Left.

By now it should be a foregone conclusion to anyone who knows the Leftist that on any given issue, his search for "root causes" always ends up exactly where he begins: the only "root causes" that exist are those determined by his ideological prejudices. It is *only* for the sake of establishing this point that I mentioned "the root causes" of "too many abortions," "too few executions," and the race and gender oppression that I mockingly insinuated accounts for Adam Lanza's murderous rampage.

Not to give Terry more credit than he deserves, but it is hard to believe that he doesn't know that *I really was* being facetious. That it is more dishonesty than density of the intellect of which he is guilty is borne out by Terry's omission of a paragraph in my piece in which I identify Lanza's Italian ethnicity as a possible "root cause" of his actions. I write:

"Then there is the matter of Lanza's *ethnicity*. 'Lanza' is an Italian surname, and Italians and Italian-Americans are routinely portrayed as Mafioso and other violent thugs in the popular media.

"Maybe Lanza incorporated this image into his own self-understanding. Maybe this is why he chose to go on a shooting spree."

No one — including Don Terry — believes that an Italian-American brought up reading Mario Puzo novels and watching Martin Scorsese gangster films is going to be prompted to shoot down a bunch of



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young innocent kids. This stuff happens neither in real life *nor* in the gangster genre.

Incidentally, I also mention the rise of *atheism* as a potential “root cause.” I suppose it is because this doesn’t fit in too nicely with Terry’s spin that he omits this as well.

Let me close here with the final paragraphs from the essay that has Terry waxing indignant. There is a reason that it wasn’t included in the SPLC’s brief against the Birchers: Had Terry quoted it his case against me would’ve collapsed:

Now for the punchline: I don’t for a moment believe that any of the foregoing “root causes” are in the least relevant to Adam Lanza’s decision to gun down 20 little kids and six adults. Yet they have at least as much to do with it as does the lack of “gun control” on which scores of leftists rushed to hang this abomination.

Lanza was an evil man responsible for perpetrating an evil deed. As long as there are evil people in the world, evil will be with us.

Maybe it is the “root causes” of why our generation fails to come to terms with this timeless fact to which we need to turn our attention.

And maybe Terry and everyone else at the Southern Poverty Law Center should delve into the root causes of why they can’t seem to grasp any of this.



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