



Isn't It Strange?

There is a letter titled "Isn't It Strange?" making the rounds in email boxes. It asks questions to which our fellow Americans should know the answers, save for those caught up in modernity.

It starts off asking, "Isn't it strange that after a bombing, everyone blames the bomber, his upbringing, his environment, his culture but ... after a shooting, the problem is the gun?" In other words, after a shooting, it is the gun, an inanimate object, that is the culprit, but after a bombing, it is not the bomb that receives the blame but the evil individual. In both cases it is the evil individual who is to blame.



Ronald Reagan had it right when he said, "We must reject the idea that every time a law's broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions."

Speaking of guns, the letter has a 1950s photo of high school girls at an indoor shooting range. The photo caption states: "Back in the 1950s and even later, many high schools had shooting ranges. Students even brought their own rifles to school." It asks, "What changed in society that we could trust such activities then, but not now?"

Youth involvement with guns has a long history. The 1911 second edition of the Boy Scout Handbook made qualification in NRA's junior marksmanship program a prerequisite for obtaining a BSA merit badge in marksmanship. In 1918, the Winchester Repeating Arms Co. established its own Winchester Junior Rifle Corps. The program grew to 135,000 members by 1925. In New York City, high school gun clubs were started at Boys, Curtis, Commercial, Manual Training and Stuyvesant high schools. I would like to ask America's anti-gun fanatics what accounts for today's mayhem: Have guns become more evil or have people become more evil?

The letter contains several photos under the caption, "These men support your right to bear arms." The photos are of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. Below it is the caption, "These men oppose it," with photos of Adolf Hitler, Fidel Castro, Josef Stalin, Idi Amin, Vladimir Lenin and Barack Obama. Then it asks, "Who do you trust?"

Later on in the letter, there is a statement asking us to rename government programs, saying, "Get it straight: Welfare, Food Stamps, WIC ... are not entitlements. They are taxpayer-funded handouts, and shouldn't be called entitlements. Social Security and Veterans Benefits are 'Entitlements' because the people receiving them are entitled to them. They were earned and paid for by the recipients."

Then there is a warning: "No society ever thrived because it had a large and growing class of parasites living off those who produced." If one listens to the current debate and rhetoric of most politicians, both Democrats or Republicans, it is about expanding the class of Americans who live at the expense of other



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Americans, whether they are promising “free” education and medical care or forcing Americans to purchase products such as ethanol in order to enrich others.

John Wayne put it best, particularly for my colleagues in academia. “I’d like to know why well-educated idiots keep apologizing for lazy and complaining people who think the world owes them a living.”

Toward the letter’s end there is a statement that rings so true and beyond debate: “I vote Democratic, because I’m pro-choice ... except on schools, guns, trade, health care, energy, smoking, union membership, light bulbs, plastic bags, Walmart, what kinds of food you can eat....”

Finally, there is a most important message from our 34th president, Dwight D. Eisenhower: “If all that Americans want is security, they can go to prison. They’ll have enough to eat, a bed and a roof over their heads. But if an American wants to preserve his dignity and his equality as a human being, he must not bow his neck to any dictatorial government.”

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