

“GUN” CONTROL? REALLY?



by Samuel Hux

Military Culture (apparently foreign territory to the NRA, its members and enthusiasts) is very specific about the meaning of the word *gun*. Either a *machine-gun* (for battlefield or on an airplane) or a *handgun* (pistol or revolver). . . or a *cannon* (as in the field artillery or aboard a Naval vessel. . . or casually as in another and comic sense. I learned early in basic training at Fort Jackson many years ago never to call a *rifle* a gun. Platoon sergeant stood before recruits, holding a rifle in both hands, “This is your rifle,” and gesturing toward his penis, “This is your gun.” And, with proper gestures: “This is for business, and this other is for fun” (or some version of same according to Sarge’s style). And since the rifle he held was not Grandpa’s hunting rifle but the M1 Garand, it was clear that by “business” he meant “killing.” That’s what military rifles, whether the M1 or subsequent assault rifles, are for.

This lesson was learned long before I ended my army enlistment as a cadreman at The Infantry School at Fort Benning. *Cadremen?* That means I was one of the enlisted men who supported and trained candidates at "OCS": Officer Candidate School (Infantry). I mention this—maybe shamelessly—to establish my "credentials," so to speak.

Clearly, since those of us who want the NRA put in its place are not talking about machine-guns or handguns or cannons, for god's sake, we have in mind specifically the kind of military-style assault weapon—whether the AR-15 specifically or any other that "AR-15" has come to stand for in the public mind (!) related to the M16 or AK47—that is on the market for civilians and was used most dramatically and tragically in Uvalde, Texas, to slaughter grammar-school kids, even decapitating some, according to reports, and mutilating little bodies beyond recognition, so lethally powerful is the rifle. Good God almighty!

I mention all this because of a piece, [*If Abe Were Prez*](#), that I published a few scant days ago in *Iconoclast* and the amazing responses I got from NRA-types, whom I shudder to imagine armed with anything beyond a slingshot. I argued that assault weapons should be banned from sale on the open market, allowed in the hands of military and proper police units only, that merely raising the age limit to 21 merely insured that only full adults would be the future assailants, that Biden should display the guts that Abe Lincoln did when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation by *executive order*, and, alluding to my military experience, argued that in non-combat situations soldiers did not have the easy access to lethal weapons that a clever civilian psychopath does.

The negative reactions to my piece—when not merely viciously and stupidly insulting—amounted to misleading technical quibbles about weapon types, the lie that assault rifles are hunting rifles, and in the one response that suggested they could-should be used violently, when—defense against criminals

aside—it became necessary “in possible defense against a tyrannical government,” which sounds as paranoid as the 1/6/21 insurrectionists, and which really makes one wonder. . . !

One remark by the single responder who seemed at all intelligent may be the most disturbing of all. This “sportsman” does not own presently an AR-15, but wishes he did because he’d love to shoot it on the rifle range. (As if a Browning or Mauser hunting rifle were not good enough? Or perhaps Grandpa’s less accurate old rifle requires too much skill?) Let me explain something:

I made a big point of the fact that I am an infantry veteran, even though I enlisted too late to finish basic training in time to go into combat, missing that terrible experience by a matter of weeks. I have wondered, in print, if many “NRA fanatics” have done military service, and have guessed the answer is No, suggesting that most seem like draft-dodgers who like to play with fire-arms. That may sound insulting, but I do not care if it does. If the law continues to allow a sportsman to blast a rifle-range target with an assault rifle the law still allows “Uvalde” possibly to happen again. Is it too much of a sacrifice by the sportsman to give up that doubtfully humane pleasure in order to make the inhumane pleasure of a psychopathic coward less possible? To indulge a pleasure which, even though legal, endangers others—especially young innocents—is childish and irresponsible. And despicable.

If you are a military veteran, even one who has not made “the ultimate sacrifice” as the saying goes, you have made a sacrifice for the good of your country nonetheless. If you are incapable of sacrifice, hugging your selfish pleasures instead, and thereby contributing to the deaths of innocents—no matter how innocent you may continue to feel—you *should* suffer the just feeling of humiliation.