

Letters on the McVeigh execution

13 June 2001

The following is a selection of recent letters to the WSWWS on Timothy McVeigh.

I simply want to express my gratitude for your article re: McVeigh's execution (8 June 2001, "The McVeigh ruling—a travesty of justice"). On a day when I was feeling especially ashamed to be a part of this nation, it was refreshing to see a viewpoint much similar to my own.

Thank you very much for existing.

VR

10 June 2001

I believe he was not given a fair trial, and if they kill him, they may never know who the real bomber is ... unless it was him, which I doubt. I don't think either of the judges were fair by denying him a stay of execution. I agree 100 percent with your article.

I will be supporting him this weekend though.

Thanks for your time,

A

8 June 2001

McVeigh drove the truck. He selected the building. He built the bomb. He blew up 168 innocent people, including 19 children who by no possible stretch of the imagination can be connected to any of Tim's rage at the US government. He has admitted all these things. The FBI goofed, or intentionally hid information. In McVeigh's case, so what? Should the FBI be investigated? Yes. Should other conspirators be investigated if evidence is found? Yes. But Matsch is right. Questions about matters related to the FBI and the proceedings of the trial are irrelevant when Tim has already admitted doing all the things he did. He isn't guilty because a trial found him guilty, or because the jury said he was guilty. He's guilty because he killed people and has admitted that he did it. No cover-up or goof-up by the FBI or anyone else changes that simple and incredibly tragic fact. The death penalty ought to be the last resort, but in this case it is appropriate punishment. It is not Matsch's decision that stinks to

high hell, but your use of McVeigh's tragic waste of his life and so many others to promote a political agenda.

ER

8 June 2001

I could not agree more with your editorial. Why the rush to judgment if not to hide something?

Years later we are slowly uncovering the depth of the federal government's crimes at Ruby Ridge and Waco. More is sure to emerge, unless you shut up anyone and everyone connected to these crimes. A prosecutor was just sentenced to two years probation for actions surrounding Waco. Why only probation? We are talking about the murder of citizens by agents of the US government. That is damn scary. The US is NOT a police state. Government murders were once the domain of fascist or communist regimes. Russia has not had an execution since 1996 when Yeltsin pardoned hundreds of prisoners.

Something is really wrong. I have never heard from credible sources that an execution helped the victim. That last resurrection of a murder victim occurred 2000 years ago and His killers were not executed. Nor have I heard that an execution gave lasting peace to the families of the victims.

This is just more killing.

The one time federal officials act as leaders—they lead by killing. Then they will decry human rights abuses in other countries. They will rail against gang killings. They express shock at school shootings. They are giving everyone the message that in the US if you believe someone has wronged you it is okay to kill them. Nothing deters their insatiable need for blood. Not dozens of wrongly convicted men freed after years on death row in Florida and Illinois. Not evidence of falsification of evidence in capital cases in Oklahoma. Not public airing of the incompetence of police investigators and crime lab technicians in a major city in a televised trial.

We have serious problems in this country. We have

violence because we may be the most violent, advanced nation on earth. I almost said “most violent, educated nation” but I stopped. Educational standards are plummeting. Maybe there is a connection.

I have been in too many discussions over the last few weeks centering on the upcoming killing in Terre Haute. I mention basic facts like: (1) this is the first federal execution since 1963; (2) the US is alone among developed Western nations in carrying out executions; (3) that other countries won't extradite people to the US because the death penalty may apply; (4) that prisoners were freed in Illinois and Florida when evidence proved they were innocent (not just not guilty). They know none of this. It makes me think that most Americans have a sanitized view of the world—our world. Even Judge Matsch in Colorado—by all reports a respected jurist (although I must admit that may be an oxymoron)—expresses “rage” at FBI “errors”? Does anyone think these are merely errors? No more than the fact that the federal agents fired flammable canisters into the compound at Waco was withheld “innocently”.

We are seeing evidence of dramatic problems with the government we trust and pay handsomely to run our country and we are ignoring it.

TD

8 June 2001

Dear David Walsh,

Watching previews for *Pearl Harbor* I thought this is an infomercial for American participation in international wars. It was glamorous and glossy looking and it sold the notion of a “good war.” In conjunction with our new military government I thought clearly this is a propaganda piece to prepare young men of America for their role in a new heroism. I deeply appreciated your framing this movie as a fact in our present state of military affairs.

I write this as Tim McVeigh has just been executed. McVeigh brought war home. He was the repository and instrument of a methodology for resolving conflict. He was a product of our system and ethos of war. He was a decorated war hero. He killed for America—but he didn't necessarily learn blind devotion to America—he absorbed the American sensibility of retribution and violence but not necessarily its domestic policies.

The number of women and children lost in Iraq have never been fully reported to the Americans who cheered the returning heroes or who think Colin Powell

is a war hero. Tim McVeigh was simply the boomerang effect of America's war mentality. Oklahoma City felt the American war ethic through one of its victims. He used the vocabulary that when used to refer to foreign people was completely acceptable.

McVeigh said the loss of life was part of the nature of the beast. What beast was he talking about and where did he learn that nature? That beast took lives in other countries—Panama, Iraq, Vietnam, Korea—Tim McVeigh was a progeny of that beast and he brought the legacy home. Americans should pay attention because they are funding the very beast that claimed the lives in Oklahoma City—Tim McVeigh was a twisted instrument of a methodology. Sgt. McVeigh—a top gunner—who was awarded a bronze star was killed under the heading of a reasoned moral response. War has been waged as a reasoned moral response. McVeigh was a product of the American military—he was both patriotic and consequently disillusioned. He became a killer for the sake of a government he subsequently perceived to be criminal.

They all said he looked in the closed circuit camera—presenting himself as evidence perhaps—I'm your country's policies come home. He wasn't giving a sentimental apology. His crime was not a drug-induced moment. He was a student of this form of engagement. He is as wrong as the military that spawned him. He made a statement with the bombing. The government made a statement with his execution. The question is, are they the same statement?

BD

11 June 2001



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