

Letters on the WSWS coverage of Timothy McVeigh's execution

21 June 2001

Dear WSWS:

Good article—I am no fan of yours but this piece [“Execution Day in America”] is right on.

ET

14 June 2001

Dear Editor:

Barry Grey’s “Execution Day in America” was an excellent analysis of America’s attitude towards its Timothy McVeighs. In the US, apparently, a terrorist has no history; s/he is a monster. But obviously, the “monster” did one good deed on the day of his death—he provided the American media with yards of delicious newsprint interspersed with and vindicated by syrupy sympathy for the victims of the bombing.

I come from a conflict-ridden country like India where terrorist activities are hardly uncommon. I am thankful that there are many intellectuals and activists there, who while not supporting acts of violence, seek to seriously engage with the social and political dimensions of unrest. These voices are few but they are heard. On the day of McVeigh’s execution, I happened to be on US soil and I really missed the voice of sanity.

Thank you,

DS

16 June 2001

Dear Editor:

Although hardly an habitué of this site or one even sympathetic to socialism, I’d still like to thank you for your recent articles on the subject of the McVeigh execution—in particular for the most recent [“Execution Day in America”]. Although unnecessary cant was attached, I think, by and large, you got it right. McVeigh received his lethal dose, but so did the American Public which—quite obviously as anticipated, perhaps premeditated—will quickly “move on” to its accustomed pleasures again without remembering any “extraneous” social-political considerations.

Nonetheless here’s one left to consider: McVeigh’s head forever engraved on the backside of “Killer” Kerrey’s medallion for heroism.

TM

15 June 2001

Dear WSWS:

I thought David Walsh’s reply to the letter from ER [An exchange of letters on Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh—June 16, 2001] was quite adequate, but I have a couple of comments to express. In the first place, it’s quite remarkable that the greatest act of terrorism on American soil was perpetrated by one of its own and was not foreign (i.e., Middle East) sponsored. Also, I can’t recall the last time I’ve heard of a “socialist” terrorist. I think you’ll find that by and large, acts of terrorism come from the reactionary, backward, far-right of the political spectrum; be it on the McVeigh scale or the bombing of churches or even on an individual basis (such as the man in Texas who was dragged to death behind a truck). Ultimately, terrorism is an act of desperation and cowardice committed by misanthropes.

ER talks of “ultra-left and ultra-right ... hatred.” Well, I consider myself a Marxist socialist and the WSWS would seem to represent my views almost to the letter. But I can honestly say that while I don’t exactly “love” everybody, I can’t think of anyone I actually hate and I certainly have no desire to kill anyone. Besides, hatred is not productive anyway. I don’t “hate” (if that’s the word you wish to use) the capitalists because they are wealthy, privileged, or whatever; I “hate” capitalism because, in my opinion, it is a backward economic system and I feel that mankind is capable of so much better. The reason the ultra-right is characterized by racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and all sorts of apocalyptic hysteria is that, ultimately, they see humanity as nothing but a rat race. And, as the WSWS

has pointed out, the powers-that-be are moving closer to a social-Darwinist and authoritarian ideology.

If ER is interested, I will explain why socialism became my worldview. I was born into a rather backward Bible-belt environment. As a child (the '60's), I was taught by school and church that everything from the civil rights movement to rock and roll was somehow connected to communism. The media sold me the myth that America stood for all that's "right" in the world and the "communist", "evil empire," USSR, China, Cuba, etc., were the enemies of everything good and decent. Later in life, I began to question my beliefs. I actually read the infamous *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and other leftist literature. It changed the way I viewed everything! I began to lose so much fear from the cold war environment of my past.

And ER thinks the left is breeding terrorists? He doesn't seem to know his "right" from his "left". All his (or her) rambling about the "ultra-left" and "ultra-right" and the "best of capitalism ... and infusing the culture with the best of socialist ideas" suggests that, in ER's opinion, the truth is "somewhere in the middle." But the truth is that there really is a class struggle and that capitalism and socialism are at odds with one another. The political climate in this country has shifted to the right to such a degree that being a New Deal or Great Society-type liberal is almost tantamount to being a communist during the McCarthy era. ER's letter can be summed up by "why can't we all just be friends!" that's about as mindless as the media's response to the presidential election crisis, which could be summed up by "is this a great country or what!"

DL

16 June 2001



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