

Letters on the assassination of Dr. George Tiller

6 June 2009

On "The assassination of Dr. George Tiller"

One of the more disturbing aspects of Tiller's murder is the fact that it could have been prevented.

Scott Roeder had twice attempted to superglue the locks to a Kansas City clinic, which is a federal offense in violation of the FACE Act, which prohibits obstructing access to clinics. The first instance was Memorial Day weekend, a week before Tiller's murder. The day before he allegedly shot Tiller, Roeder had been identified by clinic workers as attempting this act once again. The clinic workers reported both incidents to law enforcement, which provided innumerable excuses for not following up, despite both instances being caught on surveillance cameras. Had Roeder been apprehended for these acts, Tiller would still be alive today.

The unwillingness of law enforcement to pursue clearly illegal acts by anti-abortionists has been repeatedly mentioned by abortion providers, many of whom use aliases and appear off-camera during interviews. The fact that law-abiding physicians often feel the need to take such measures is a testament to the effectiveness of the terror campaign that has been waged against them for over 35 years.

As a 15-year resident of Kansas, I was not shocked when I heard the news of Tiller's murder, or the fact that it occurred in his church. Perversely, this act was the logical extension of the virulent rhetoric that had been deployed by anti-abortionists against Tiller, such as "Tiller the Baby Killer" and repeated comparisons between Tiller and the Nazis. The fact that Tiller, 67 years old and with the means to retire, chose to continue his work despite threats and political persecution speaks highly of his commitment to woman's rights.

Ramon T
Kansas, USA
3 June 2009

You write, "Like the Democratic Party as a whole, Obama is cowed by these forces. He is unwilling and unable to state the obvious: this noxious combination of political, religious and media organizations is incubating a home-grown fascist movement in America."

Regarding fascism: The current debate within the Republican Party shows signs that that party could well evolve in the direction of fascism, in the sense of a mass petty bourgeois movement whipped up by the crisis in the interests of the billionaires against all those who oppose the oligarchy—especially the working class

and its party.

When I look at Rush Limbaugh I see Benito Mussolini. Those liberals and commentators who complain that Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly and others make no sense miss the point. These elements in the Republican Party are whipping up their base with arguments no less berserk than the "Jewish bankers conspiracy" of the Nazis.

That these berserker Republicans appeal only to a minority of the electorate is beside the point for these fanatics. As far as winning over a majority of the voters, they seem to be operating on the basis of reducing the voters to only a right-wing fringe. In times of great social crisis, each major class—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—fights it out amongst themselves, more or less publicly, to determine their policies and leadership. And they define themselves as classes in opposition to all other classes. Hence the more or less open character of these debates within the Republican milieu. I don't think the reports we see and hear and read are the whole story. Not by a long shot. But the knives are coming out, so to speak.

One could see these berserker Republicans trying to turn back American bourgeois history to before the age of Martin Van Buren and Andrew Jackson—back to the days when only propertied white adult males voted. These Republican elements could work just fine as a smaller, more ideological party, putting their emphasis on recruiting the desperate and enraged petty bourgeoisie. They could build a party of stupid white men, as has been said, with the assistance of Dick Cheney, who provides a programmatic basis, and with the help of "moderate" Republicans who understand and sympathize with the ranters and support them in just about everything.

Tom M
Minnesota, USA
3 June 2009

Ms. Randall,

You write, "Like the Democratic Party as a whole, Obama is cowed by these forces. He is unwilling and unable to state the obvious: this noxious combination of political, religious and media organizations is incubating a home-grown fascist movement in America."

"These forces bear political and moral responsibility for fomenting violent acts that—outside of the 9/11 attacks—have produced the overwhelming majority of deaths and destruction caused by terrorism within the United States over the past 30 years. Yet they are treated with kid gloves by the political

establishment and the media.”

Great article, thank you. Do you think that it would be going too far to say that Obama’s role is that of good cop to the Republican far right’s bad cop? That we’re talking about the far right and the fake left being two sides of the same coin? That it’s not a matter of Obama being cowed by the right as much as going along according to plan? The plan being that when, for instance, the fascist thugs you speak of *do* attack and terrorize workers, Obama will feign indignation and issue a two-sentence statement condemning them but otherwise do nothing about it because it serves his ends. Also, at this point, don’t you think it’s safe to say that the 9/11 attackers and the forces responsible for this murder are one and the same?

All the best!

Robert C

New Jersey, USA

3 June 2009

Great article. It’s the only one I’ve read since the assassination that explains why third-trimester abortions are sometimes performed. Once again, the truth is in the details.

Maureen M

3 June 2009

It turns out Scott Roeder was caught on surveillance cameras gluing the locks to another clinic both the weekend and the day before he murdered Dr. Tiller. The clinic alerted the local and federal authorities, who did nothing, essentially emboldening this man to push the limits further until he ultimately murdered someone.

The clinic provided the FBI and police his first name and license plate. The authorities did nothing. Apparently the FACE Act specifically mentions gluing locks to facilities as a violation of federal law (restricting access). And this right on the heels of Napolitano apologizing for a DHS report indicating concern of violence due to “rightwing extremist activity” including “opponents to abortion or immigration.”

On *Democracy Now!* this morning, they interviewed a few colleagues of Dr. Tiller, who relayed that these “protestors” have a whole system of intimidation that violates local and federal ordinances. However, the response of enforcement is that they would rather be sued by Dr. Tiller than Operation Rescue.

Scott E

California, USA

3 June 2009

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Homeland Security and the ICE cannot be bothered with internal skirmishes. They are only interested in fanning the flames of fear and maintaining the myth that 19 guys with box-cutters brought the USA to its knees. They have no interest in controlling Americans such as these, as they have no bearing on our international wars on terror or Israel or our need to run a pipeline through Taliban-held areas of Afghanistan.

Should members of these anti-democratic organizations attempt to stop a Wal-Mart from being built or attend a speech of Dick Cheney’s and spout anti-imperialist slogans, then they would

quickly become visible on their radars and be punished to the fullest extent of the law or whatever it is that they say qualifies as the law.

There is nothing to see here. Move along.

PK

3 June 2009

On “Kansas doctor, target of anti-abortion fanatics, gunned down in Wichita”

This killing is a crime against our democratic rights. Anti-abortion terrorists like Dr. Tiller’s assassin have managed to restrict access to abortion services for millions of women by threatening and attacking doctors over the past decade and a half. Clinics have closed all over the country, the cost of abortion has soared, medical schools have not widely taught the skills required, and clinic workers and patients alike are made to fear for their personal safety by these religious extremists. All the so-called “pro-life” organizations are implicated in this crime, and I look forward to the day that leading members such as Randall Terry are hauled into court to be tried for hate crimes. No such justice will be pursued under Obama, Mr. “admirable conviction about the sacredness of life,” that’s for certain.

Naomi G

1 June 2009

The Obama administration set the stage for this atrocity when Obama made his speech at Notre Dame. These murderers are the kind of people whose “opinions” Obama claimed had equal validity to the “opinions” of those who supported a woman’s right to choose and the defense of that right in law!

The moral and intellectual vacuum created by this type of “thinking” creates an atmosphere in which anything may be sanctioned, even murder. This is because, according to Barack Obama, the anti-science, religious obscurantism of the so-called “pro-life” (was there ever such a travesty as calling these troglodytes “pro-life”?) movement has as much validity as sound science and the rule of law.

If ever there was a symptom of a society and culture in disintegration, this is it.

Carolyn

California, USA

1 June 2009



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