

Unanswered questions in Norway terror attack

Susan Garth
28 July 2011

It is now almost a week since the fascist atrocity in Norway—the blowing up of government offices in central Oslo, killing eight people, and the cold-blooded murder of 68 young people on the nearby island of Otøya.

This terrorist attack, the most deadly in post-war Norwegian history, has been consistently reported as the work of a crazed gunman who acted alone. The media and politicians are working assiduously to obscure the political motives of the killer, his connections to far-right and fascist organizations, and the political and moral responsibility borne by establishment parties and politicians in Europe and the US who have sought to appropriate the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim program of the extreme right wing.

This is not an easy task, since the killer, Anders Behring Breivik, announced to the world that he was setting out to destroy the Norwegian Labour Party and kill as many of its officials and members as possible because he associated the party with “Marxist multiculturalism.” In a 1,500-page manifesto posted on the Internet only hours before the attack, Breivik, the son of a former Norwegian diplomat, proclaimed his bloody act to be part of a campaign to purge Muslim influence from Norway and defend “Western civilization.”

His action, he explained, should signal the start of a European civil war and serve as a rallying point for anti-Muslim fanatics. His lawyer, Geir Lippestad said on Tuesday, “He believes this is the start of a war that will go on for 60 years.”

In the rush by the media and political establishment to derail any serious discussion or examination of the facts of the attack and its political implications, a number of glaring anomalies and troubling questions are being passed over in silence.

There is the fact that it took the police 90 minutes to arrive on Otøya, 25 miles from Oslo, after they began receiving desperate telephone calls from Labour Party youth reporting that scores of people were being executed by a gunman. The official story is that no helicopters were available.

If that is true, it only demonstrates the fraud of the so-

called “war on terrorism.” Norway has sent troops to Afghanistan and is supporting the US-NATO air war against Libya supposedly because such interventions are necessary to protect the people of Norway and Europe as a whole from the ever-present threat of terrorist attack. But an actual terrorist attack on Norwegian soil—not by an Islamic extremist but by a native-born middle-class Norwegian—immediately exposes the fact that no preparations have been made to protect the population.

Why? Because the Norwegian ruling class and all of its parties—social democratic as well as conservative—understand that the so-called “war on terror” is an elaborate pretext for military aggression abroad on behalf of the imperialist economic and geo-political interests of the financial elite, and an assault on democratic rights at home to prepare for state repression against working class opposition to austerity measures. It has nothing to do with defending the people against external attack.

Far from offering a serious explanation for the delayed police response, which gave Breivik all the time he needed to murder one youth after another without hindrance, Justice Minister Knut Storberget on Tuesday praised the “fantastic work” of the police.

“I would like to emphasize that the police have done a magnificent job and I do not think it is appropriate to criticise the police,” he said when journalists questioned him about the 90 minute delay. “It is important for me to congratulate all policewomen and policemen working on the streets, as well as all senior police officials,” Storberget insisted.

Nor was the performance of Norway’s Delta Force, presumably the first line of defence against terrorist attacks, any better. The head of the force, Anders Snorthemoen, said this week that it arrived at the same time as the local police.

According to his lawyer, Breivik himself was surprised that he was able to carry out the massacre on Otøya after exploding the bomb in Oslo. He expected to be killed immediately after the Oslo bombing. The ease and speed

with which Breivik reached the island and put his terrorist plan into operation stands in marked contrast to time it took the police to make the same journey to apprehend him.

The delay in the police response is only one of many troubling unanswered questions. It is widely reported that Breivik was wearing as police uniform. How did he obtain it?

Early reports said that six people were arrested in Breivik's apartment. They were later said to have been released because they had no connection with the case. But why were six people at the home of a man who has been described as a loner?

Breivik initially claimed to be working alone, but he later said there were two other terrorist cells in Norway, as well as others abroad. Norwegian police have been quick to deny that Breivik had any accomplices.

Janne Kristiansen, head of domestic intelligence, said it was "highly unlikely" that other cells existed, despite the fact that other security agencies worldwide are searching for links to Breivik. On what facts or evidence is Kristiansen's conclusion based? The mainstream media do not bother to even ask.

Evidence of Breivik's links to right-wing organisations is mounting. The English Defence League (EDL), which initially denied any connection with him, has now backtracked and is examining the possibility, after the UK-based *Searchlight* magazine, which investigates right-wing groups, published material indicating that contacts existed between the EDL and Breivik.

If Breivik operated alone, it is difficult to explain how he assembled the chemicals and weapons he needed for his attack. Norwegian police blew up explosives at a farm rented by Breivik. They refused to say what quantity of explosives was involved. Some reports have suggested that he had a total of 6 tonnes of explosives sourced from different companies, some of them outside Norway.

His purchases brought him to the attention of Norwegian customs, who reported him to the security services. His name was on an Interpol and a Norwegian watch list. How, then, was he able to proceed with impunity in carrying out his murderous plan?

The attempt to separate the terrorist attack in Norway from the increasing integration of fascistic tendencies into mainstream European bourgeois politics pervades the media coverage and official commentary. Every effort is being made to portray this politically motivated crime as an isolated event that has no wider political significance.

Writing in the *Guardian*, British journalist Simon Jenkins declared: "The Norwegian tragedy is just that, a tragedy. It does not signify anything and should not be forced to do so. A man so insane he can see nothing wrong in shooting dead

68 young people in cold blood is so exceptional as to be of interest to criminology and brain science, but not to politics."

Meanwhile, some spokesmen for right-wing parties that share government power are defending the political outlook of Breivik. Interviewed on a popular radio show, Francesco Speroni, a leading member of the Northern League, the junior partner in Silvio Berlusconi's conservative coalition, said, "Breivik's ideas are in defence of Western civilization."

Another Northern League politician, member of the European parliament Mario Borghezio, told radio Il Sole-24 Ore that he sympathised with Breivik's ideas. "Some of the ideas he expressed are good, barring the violence. Some of them are great," Borghezio said.

Breivik is a former member of the Norwegian Progress Party, which calls for tighter curbs on immigration. In 2009, Siv Jensen, leader of the party, identified what she called "a kind of sneak-Islamisation of this society," for which she blamed the Labour Party. "We are going to have to stop this," she said.

Breivik reportedly left the Progress Party because he deemed it insufficiently right-wing.

What has taken place in Norway is a fascist terror attack. Its immediate target was the Norwegian Labour Party, but there should be no mistake that the objective of the forces to which Breivik belongs is a war on the working class.

The Norwegian Labour Party, like every other social democratic party, has adapted its policies to the extreme right. The effect of last Friday's attack will be to drive it even further to the right, and other parties, social democratic and otherwise, will follow suit.

The Norway terror attack is the outcome of a process in which fascistic elements have been nurtured over many years and are now being brought into official political life. The massacre exposes the putrefaction of the entire political system in Europe and beyond.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact