

The political establishment and the Oslo massacre

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The establishment political parties and media have been busy covering their tracks following the massacre in Oslo last Friday.

While it is still not clear whether the 32-year-old killer Anders Behring Breivik acted alone, one thing is certain: there is a definite link between the campaign of incitement against Muslims, which has been supported by all of the parties of the US and European bourgeois establishment and by the media, and the political motives of the fascist who murdered 76 people.

At his first court hearing on Monday, Breivik declared that he wanted to inflict maximum damage on Norway's social democratic Labour Party because, he claimed, it had polluted Norwegian culture by allowing large numbers of Muslims to enter the country. From his anti-Islamic blogs and 1,500-page manifesto, it is clear that Breivik sought with his bloody act to strike a blow against Muslim immigrants and everything he regarded as Marxist, left, multicultural and "politically correct." He chose to target the Norwegian Labour Party because he, erroneously, considered it to be Marxist and pro-immigrant.

Despite—or, more accurately, because of—Breivik's explicitly fascist agenda and his known ultra-right associations, the media is at great pains to obscure the political issues raised by his atrocity and portray him as nothing more than a lone psychopath. His ideas, however, are not simply the creations of the diseased brain of one individual, but rather the products of a diseased social system.

Breivik largely copied the fascistic nostrums in his Internet postings not only from anti-Muslim blogs and the ravings of the American Tea Party movement and right-wing populist parties in Europe, but also from the propaganda of the major bourgeois parties and bourgeois governments, public authorities and media

editorial offices.

It was only a matter of time before the incessant promotion of racial hatred, national and anti-immigrant chauvinism and militarism engendered an act like that which occurred in Oslo.

Parties which made anti-Islamic agitation the central axis of their program have been, or currently are, in government in Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark and Hungary. In France, the fascist National Front has been built up, as the major parties echoed its racist and anti-immigrant policies, to the point where it is a serious contender for the presidency. In Norway, the anti-Islamist Progress Party, of which Breivik was a member for almost ten years, has been integrated into the political establishment and emerged as the country's second party.

In his fight against a multicultural society, Breivik draws sustenance from the heads of government of leading European states. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy have all publicly stated that "multiculturalism"—that is, the peaceful coexistence of people from different cultures—"has failed."

The bourgeois "left" has joined in the incitement against Muslims. In France and Belgium, the social democrats—backed by so-called "far left" groups—have supported discriminatory bans of Muslim headscarves and burqas. In the German Social Democratic Party, the anti-Muslim rants of one of its prominent members, Thilo Sarrazin, are regarded as a legitimate point of view.

In the immediate aftermath of Friday's massacre, many of the anti-Muslim bloggers, right-wing populist parties and champions of a "national culture" are seeking to distance themselves from Breivik by

condemning his actions. This is merely a tactical maneuver. According to a blog in a forum posted by the German PI (“Politically Incorrect”) web site, Breivik’s manifesto was excellent but his assault was counterproductive.

The German journalist Henryk M. Broder, who is quoted in the Breivik manifesto denouncing the submission of Europe to Islam, denies any connection between his own anti-Muslim tirades and the Oslo massacre. In the mainstream German newspaper *Die Welt*, he accuses his opponents of trying “to gain a moral advantage by imputing responsibility for the mass murder to those who criticise Islam.” Amongst these “critics of Islam” Broder includes himself along with Sarrazin and the Dutch right-wing populist Geert Wilders.

For years, Broder has filled the pages of *Der Spiegel* and *Die Welt* as well as various blogs and books with warnings against the “surrender” of Europeans to Islam. When asked by one newspaper whether he regretted remarks that were quoted by Breivik, Broder replied: “I would say the same again today.”

A short time later Broder published on his blog “The Axis of Good” long excerpts from Breivik’s manifesto in which he is quoted. The quotes are originally from another blogger, Fjordman, who features on web sites such as the ultra-right Brussels Journal, Gates of Vienna and islam-watch. Fjordman was the main source used by Breivik to draw up his manifesto.

If any proof were necessary of the links between ultra-right, anti-Muslim forces and “serious” media such as *Die Welt* and *Der Spiegel*, Broder has provided it.

The growth of far-right anti-Islamic movements and their encouragement by established bourgeois circles reflect the crisis and decay of capitalist society. After some initial hesitation, the ruling class in Germany supported Hitler in the 1930s, regarding the National Socialists as the most effective instrument for crushing the workers’ movement and waging a new war which they hoped would free the country from its economic impasse. Today, the putrefaction of bourgeois society once again finds the capitalist class promoting fascistic forces.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, anti-Islamic agitation has become a key means of mobilizing support for imperialist wars—first in Afghanistan, then in Iraq and now in Libya. When US President George

W. Bush referred to the Iraq war as a “crusade” he was not far removed from Breivik, who regards himself as a modern reincarnation of the Crusaders.

At the same time, the incitement against Muslim immigrants is used to divide the working class and direct anger over welfare cuts, unemployment and growing social inequality into right-wing channels. All right-wing populist parties work this way. They combine social demagogic with nationalism and xenophobia.

The main danger to the working class is not the immediate strength of fascistic forces. They presently enjoy little popular support. It is rather the continued political subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie and its parties—the official “left” as well as the right-wing parties—which paralyzes the working class and enables the far-right agencies of the bourgeoisie to exploit the confusion and demoralization of middle class layers and sections of workers and youth.

The key role in blocking the emergence of an independent movement of the working class against capitalism is played by the trade unions and their allies in the middle class ex-left organizations. The horrific attack in Oslo is a warning of the ultimate outcome of the suppression of the independent strength of the working class.

Breivik sees himself as a martyr and a role model for a new, militant far-right movement. To defeat the danger represented by such forces, workers must break with social democracy and the trade unions and take up an independent fight against social cuts, unemployment and wage-cutting on the basis of a socialist program. New organizations of struggle must be forged to mobilize and unite the working class, and a new revolutionary leadership must be built.

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