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On Utøya

anders breivik
right terror
racism &
europe

ON UTØYA

Anders Breivik, right terror, racism and Europe

Edited by Elizabeth Humphrys, Guy Rundle and Tad Tietze

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First published by Elguta Press, 2011

Open Access PDF published by Elguta Press, 2014

www.onutoya.com

Dedicated to two other activists lost to us this year

Krysti Guest (1965–2011)

Simone Morrissey (1986–2011)

– passionate fighters for justice –

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Introduction: On Utøya

Elizabeth Humphrys and Guy Rundle

When news of a bombing and of a massacre in Norway raced around the world in late July, millions around the world held their breath. The unfolding events sounded atrocious, and thousands of commentators and bloggers were quick to jump to one conclusion – that the perpetrators were violent Islamists, and that the event marked a renewal of large-scale terror attacks in Europe. They were still building elaborate theories about why Norway had been targeted by 'jihadists', when further news reports made it clear that something else had been going on. The killer had been captured alive on the island of Utøya, his name was Anders Breivik, and he had slaughtered dozens of young members of the Norwegian Left for their support of multiculturalism and religious diversity. They were his real target – the bomb in central Oslo that had convinced armchair defenders of civilisation of an Islamist attack was no more than a lure to confuse emergency services, playing on the very prejudices that early commenters would demonstrate so flawlessly. Still reeling from the shock, many at least thought that this time, there would be a more realistic reflection on the nature of terror in the contemporary world. It was not to be. Bizarrely, the massacre at Utøya would be figured as, of all things, a distraction from the real threat, and Islam, and Islamophobia, would once again take centre stage.

Since the events on 22 July 2011, the significance of Utøya has been demoted, obscured and ignored. A shocking act executed in the name of the West, against those too 'tolerant' of Islam, an unambiguous attack on the Left, was removed from wider political context. Yet Utøya and Breivik only find full meaning when considered together with the rise of Islamophobia and the far Right in Europe, and the demonisation and strategy of tension against the Left since the events on 9/11. The cheerleaders of this project against Muslims and the Left – whether in politics, the media or the blogosphere – have engaged in little wringing of their collective hands, despite the instruction of Breivik that he acted as part of a wider war in defence of 'civilisation' and of which he sees them as a part.

It is to these issues that the authors in this collection turn their minds, examining the events on that day and the wider political context in which they occurred.

Breivik's atrocious act marked a historical moment for several reasons: it was a new type of political massacre, drawing together the traditions of political assassination, mass terrorism, and having some superficial similarities, in method and style, with non-political mass killings of the 'Columbine' type. And though it had not been organised by a far-Right group, it marked the transition of a section of the current European far Right to lethal violence against political enemies, characteristic of the fascist era. Finally, after it had occurred and the politics and background of Breivik established, it became the occasion for a novel strategy by the international network of hard Right commentators, who had worked hard to create the sense of civilisational crisis that Breivik had acted on – a bizarre process by which they effectively argued that anyone who took their ideas so seriously as to decide that extreme acts were necessitated could only be regarded as crazy, and outside of any political framework, rather than as ruthless and evil. Such a definition was a desperate form of triage – in order to disavow any form of connection between themselves and Breivik, they had to affirm what

many had said about their talk of European civilisation being 'abolished' by Muslim immigration, and a 'political class' perversely dedicated to aiding that destruction – that no rational person could take it as a true description of the real world. Similarly ruthless acts by radical Islamists could be taken as a perfectly consistent expression of their philosophy, and indeed of Islam itself – even such individually extreme acts as suicide bombing were pure political expressions of an apocalyptic creed. But any connection between radical Right statements and violent action were denied, in a way that suggested that a connection between their ideas and any form of action was in error.

Deep down, it suggested, the 'European crisis' Right appeared to be arguing that their ideas were no sort of philosophy of action at all – they were a lament, a threnody, and a means of attacking the mainstream Left, who could no longer be attacked as being soft on Communism, or via the attractions of laissez-faire economics. Paradoxically, in order to do this, the Right had to abandon all the notions that they purported to uphold – free will, the autonomy of the individual, the power of ideas, and the possibility of evil. Instead they marshalled every systemic and ideological argument that they criticised the Left for dabbling in – broadly-defined madness as absolution from guilt, structural and social explanations as a diversion from personal autonomy and responsibility, the undermining of moral absolutes through relativistic concepts. In the days and weeks following the massacre, an enormous amount of energy was put into this process by the hard Right – a group whose energy for prodigious publication was assisted by unlimited access to large-scale media. Given that large sections of the media were dominated by hard-Right ideologues, and an uncommitted centre lacking ideas and beliefs, it was inevitable that the former would dominate the latter – the hard-Right argument of 'madness, not western civilisation' as the motive for Breivik's acts became the official story. Bizarrely, the literal and explicit truth of Breivik's acts – a rationally planned and coolly executed political atrocity – became the 'ideological' explanation. Meanwhile, those explanations that marshalled a hodge-podge of received arguments about madness, psychopaths, violence, narcissism, etc became the 'obvious' explanation for his acts.

For the most part this was merely ridiculous; there was something paradoxical about a political movement that celebrated the glory and power of 'Western civilisation' but was also so eager to portray it as a weak and fragile thing, at the risk of a small number of poor and powerless immigrants. But it also had a more sinister edge; at its most extreme, the failure to deny any manifestation of politically motivated evil in Breivik's actions was to deny that it was a killing of the innocent. The attempt was made to not only separate Breivik from the political groupings and writers he was so eager to claim affiliation with, but to give him something of an equal moral status with his victims – they were all victims in this version of it, Breivik driven mad by the contradictions of 21st-century multicultural Europe. The most extreme version of this required the demonisation of the victims – for Pat Buchanan, Ronald Reagan's former speechwriter, they were 'children of Norway's cultural elite', and for the Right's one-man insane clown posse Glenn Beck, they were 'some sort of Hitler youth group'. This was too much for even many on the Right, who criticised Beck – while also knowing that his noxious arguments formed a useful outer limit to hard-Right arguments about Utøya, an ultra-extreme that the extreme could repudiate, and thereby position themselves in the rational centre.

Coming ten years after 9/11, after a decade of a 'war on terror' – which largely served as a means of closing down open society in the West, and replacing it with a surveillance and national security state – disastrous old-skool wars generating phenomenal casualties, and a

headlong rush to chaos in economic matters, the massacre at Utøya offered a moment for the collective assertion of human values, and a reflection on the responsibility of writers and activists to cleave to truth, rather than propaganda. On the Right, it was a moment missed; for the ideologues of the 'European crisis', Breivik's actions were a prompt for refraction not reflection, for the desperate denial that a better politics, a fidelity to truth, might be aimed for. For the Left, it was a moment to respond to, as well, but in a different way – it was a moment to avoid prevarication, and to name the names. What had happened on Utøya was an attack on humanity, an attack on the safety and security of tens of millions of people in Europe and across the world, immigrant and non-immigrant alike. But first and foremost it was an attack on the Left, and on young members of it. Quite aside from honouring the dead, the failure to challenge it in a fundamental manner would have been a failure to confront what amounted to a sanctioned intimidation of people who wanted to define themselves as part of a peaceful, global progressive movement. The dead of Utøya were from the youth section of the Norwegian Labour Party, one of the Scandinavian social democratic parties that has dominated politics in that region for three-quarters of a century.

From the Left, there is much to criticise about Scandinavian social democracy, but there is no question that it is not only part of the global Left, but that its liberal democracy has dared to try and build what others had only imagined: a prosperous, relatively less unequal and collectively-minded society. Despite attempts to wind back this project in the neo-liberal era, it was precisely its attempt that became a standing challenge to the Right, a challenge that increased as the consequences of ultra-individualist Anglo-American capitalism began to assert themselves after 2008. Such social democratic parties, now laced into the political structure of Scandinavia, had become the home of people who wanted gradual, peaceful improvement of their own society. Some of the victims may well have been children of a political elite – though it was difficult to see why that was pertinent in discussing their violent murder – but on the whole they came from the very broad 'middle' that Scandinavian social democracy had created. Their demonstrable belief in consensual and peaceful change was what Anders Breivik constructed as the real outrage; his massacre was based on the perception that the success of parties such as this offered proof that Europe would accept a modernised, secularised multicultural society. As Breivik has never ceased to assert – something that those who share his apocalyptic view of Europe refuse to accept – the Utøya massacre was never a passionate outburst of hatred or desperation; it was always a calculated strategy of outrage, perpetrated by a man who dosed himself with steroids, and plugged rock music into his ears to turn himself into the automaton capable of carrying out the event. Breivik, a bookish and mild-mannered chap, had found very postmodern means to live up to Himmler's famous reassurance to SS troops: 'we can say that despite all the terrible things we have had to do, we have never lost our essential decency'. Doing his work in our atomised era, Breivik had no visceral crowd or squad into which he could dissolve his ego, gaining both collective being and a respite from guilt; drugs and shaped noise were the only things that could blunt the inhibitions against mass killing in the service of a cause. Once that was in place, anything was possible. His automatism in carrying out the massacre was matched by the profound disassociation performed by the Right when they disowned him. Breivik, one presumes, would not be dismayed by this – indeed it was part of his strategy, as it is of any terrorist attack, to commit atrocities on behalf of those who share the terrorists' aims, but must disavow connection in order for such a strategy to be effective. The Right's strategy of disavowal, emphasising the idea of Breivik as mad, had a degree of frank desperation about it, but it was of the same order.

Automatism, disassociation – these are the motifs that the writers in this collection are determined to challenge. For anyone on the Left, reading the increasingly hysterical stream of comment from the Right over the last decade, the occurrence of something like Utøya had always seemed highly possible, even likely, whether by individual or group, and there is no reason to believe that it will necessarily be the last.

The voices in this collection

Now that it has happened, there is a multiple imperative: on the one hand, to challenge the systematic production of hatred and lies that fuels such politics, and to hold the Right to account, as, faced with the failure of their free-world, free-market utopias, they slip further into malign fantasy. But it is also to honour the dead of Utøya, and to ensure that their deaths are not subsumed or negated by a Right that has lost any sense of common humanity. It is important to note that this is not a book about the general condition of Muslims in Europe, nor even of the vast and complex phenomenon of Islamophobia; that would require a much bigger, mutli-sourced and, no doubt, multi-volume book. This is instead a response by the Left to the mass killing of those on the Left, for reason of their politics. The teenagers who gathered at Utøya that day could not imagine that they would be enrolled in the ranks of those murdered by the Right – the teachers and trade unionists of Latin America, the workers of interbellum Germany, the civil rights activists of the US deep South, anti-apartheid fighters, and countless others, across the globe. The attempt to dissolve these deaths into psychology, into the true crime genre, into anything but politics, is an insult to their memory, a true nihilism.

In Part One, Guy Rundle and Richard Seymour orient us on the events at Utøya and Breivik's actions. They underline that denied by much of the media and by the Right-wing blogosphere: a clear purpose, ideology and political strategy that the massacre is part of. Rundle finds Breivik's place not only in an individual undertaking a horrendous act, but as 'a group of one' with an intimate connection to both the organised far Right and the beginning of a new fascism. As Seymour argues in his analysis of Breivik's *2083* manifesto, it is not fascist 'because it apes the language of *führers* and *duces* past, but because it has absorbed the elements of contemporary reactionary discourse and articulated them in an agenda of mass Rightist insurrection'. Breivik is not mad, or with no place to call home, but a product of the rise of the new Right and the clash of civilisations thesis pursued intently by such groups and the political commentators they look to.

The writers in Part Two explore the wider context in detail. Rundle and Jeff Sparrow overview Americo-European Islamophobia and note its new face. As Sparrow points out, it is found 'not in terms of skin colour or biological essence but rather in the politically correct vocabulary of contemporary liberalism'. Rundle weaves a more specific historical account through the details of Right-wing terror, while Anindya Bhattacharyya asks questions about today's fascists and their agenda. Aside this, Lizzie O'Shea and Antony Loewenstein look at two other faultlines. O'Shea analyses the strategy of tension against the Green and political Left since the 9/11 terror attacks, where the Left project has been elided with terrorism and couched as opposition to Western 'freedom'. And Antony Loewenstein considers the disturbing circumstance of 'yesterday's anti-Semites', and their growing affection for Israel. Loewenstein notes that Islamophobic fascists have been able to reform 'themselves as today's crusading heroes', attracted by the racial domination and mono-ethnic state argued by extreme Zionists.

For Tad Tietze and Elizabeth Humphrys in Part Three, the aftermath of Utøya has been dominated by arguments Breivik was alternatively or simultaneously insane, a lone wolf and a distraction from what is truly important. Tietze considers how to understand claims Breivik is mad, and explores the problem of medicalising fascist violence. He argues such psychologising misses how social contexts and practices shape the boundaries of what acts people are willing to engage in. Humphrys looks at some of the cleavages in the media and blogosphere analysis of Utøya. She argues that the claim Breivik is our (mad) lone wolf, with distinctiveness from your (Muslim) terrorists, simply allows the West to both own and disown Utøya in the same moment. Humphrys also considers the manner in which commentators have relegated and depoliticised the massacre, as they attempt to refocus attention on what is really important – the problem of Muslims. Sparrow considers the role of the blogosphere in cohering an identity for the far Right, and asks what the Left needs to do in this context. He urges acknowledgement that the far Right needs to be confronted rather than ignored, whether it is the English Defence League marching through areas of London intimidating the Muslim community, or bloggers whipping up racism and fervour through their clash of civilisations thesis.

In Conclusion, Tietze and Rundle examine the question of language. If there is indeed a connection between acts such as Breivik's and the hate speech of the right, what place is there for free speech, debate and dialogue? How can a right to free speech be defended when 'discussion' is often shrouded in counterfeited catastrophe, and deployed for bigoted propagandistic ends? Both argue that it is these questions on which the Left must engage.

Part One

The Event

2

July 22, 2011: Anders Breivik as a group of one

Guy Rundle

The penultimate weekend of July 2011 was a warm one in Norway, with clear blue skies. For Norwegians, as for all Scandinavians, it was the beginning of the last week of the month-long summer holiday. The whole country shuts down for July – city-dwellers return to coastal family villages, or go to lakeside holiday homes. Belying the external image of Scandinavians as buttoned-up, punctilious people, the whole place gets pretty slack – offices are understaffed, paperwork isn't processed, things don't get done. On Friday afternoon, the 22nd, Oslo was as quiet as it would be all year.

But at 3.25pm the slow calm was shattered by a huge blast in Regjeringskvartalet, the area of government offices in the capital. A street-level explosion occurred outside the office of the prime minister, Jens Stoltenberg. Eight people were killed instantly, and 11 seriously injured. The blast filled the streets with glass and debris, throwing the entire city centre into disruption.

Though the Oslo bombing had a small body count by global standards, it was the first really large terrorist act to occur in Scandinavia in modern times. Aside from the apolitical gun massacres in Finland in 2007 and 2008, the only other recent event had been a suicide bombing in 2010 when a violent Islamist had blown himself up in Stockholm, injuring two others. Thus, even as the car alarms were still echoing through the Oslo streets, and the wounded being loaded into ambulances, both citizens and government officials began to wonder – had Islamist terror come to Norway?

However, just as such speculations were beginning, and starting to circulate globally, it became clear that something else was happening. Soon after 5pm police began getting frantic reports, from Utøya, a small island in Tyrifjorden lake about 40km from Oslo. Calls and texts were saying that a gunman was on the rampage on the island, where a youth camp of the Norwegian social-democratic Labour party was taking place. Parents were also ringing police to say that they were receiving texts from their children, saying that they might be about to be killed.

Initially, callers were told to stay off the emergency services line due to the bombing emergency in Oslo. When Norway's small SAS police force did respond they were hampered by both lack of resources and the country's summer torpor – no helicopter was available for anything except surveillance, and the crew to fly it were on vacation. Then, when police arrived by car at the lake it took them some time to find a boat to use – one which nearly sank en route. It was 6.30pm before the police reached Utøya in force, and the scene was one of devastation and slaughter. Dozens of young people, most of them teenagers, lay dead or dying. Many had horrific head wounds from hollow-point 'dum-dum' bullets, which blow gaping holes in a human body. Others had dived into the water and swum away; some to be shot dead, their blood forming a slick in the water.

Standing at the centre of the chaos was a young blonde man, Anders Breivik. Dressed in the uniform of a police officer, and armed with several weapons and a carry-bag of ammunition,

he was apprehended unharmed. He later said that he had fully expected to be killed by police in the process of his act, but when ordered to put down his weapons he complied.

In the three hours between the initial explosion and Breivik's surrender, and as the killings were still going on, the news had raced around the world along with abundant speculation. Initially, the Oslo explosion had been the major story and the nature of that event had led many to believe that the incident was a violent Islamist terror strike – even though the apparent targeting of a political institution (the government offices) did not fit the profile of Al Qaeda—style Islamist terror, which usually aims at random civilians. Two hours from the bombing (initial reports were based on teenagers' messages – sometimes final ones – to parents and family), news of the continuing massacre on Utøya complicated the picture – neither gun massacres, nor 'mixed' atrocities fit the profile of Al-Qaeda style actions in Europe. By now it should have been obvious that a complex and novel event was underway; nevertheless for several hours the global professional commentariat continued to work on the assumption that violent Islamists were responsible for the events, and built interpretations on that assumption. Over the next few hours (as detailed by Elizabeth Humphrys in Chapter 12), while people lay dying on the island and in the water, commentators in the UK, Australia and the US debated the implications for multiculturalism, Europe and elsewhere.

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By evening, Breivik was in custody in Oslo, and had given a preliminary account to police. He was responsible for both the bombing and massacre, he said, but denied that the acts were criminal. The bombing, far from being the main event, had been a violent diversion to occupy police resources – and also apparently to confuse authorities as to the nature of the threat. Further details from survivors of the Utøya massacre were now being added to the picture – by their harrowing account Breivik had arrived on the island in a police uniform, and used the Oslo bombing as a pretext to gather the 600 or so attendees together and speak about security issues. He had then removed a weapon from his bag and started shooting, yelling 'you're all going to die'. For the next 90 minutes Breivik stalked the heavily wooded island, seeking people out of their hiding places. The young people ran for their lives, adopting a variety of strategies to try and survive. Some hid in cabins, others dived into the sea; some faked death beneath the bodies of the already dead. Some tried to talk Breivik out of continuing with his atrocity. Those who survived would later say that throughout the incident he was calm and methodical, rather than crazed. Some idiosyncratic decisions he made during the event gave further confirmation that he was no enraged automaton – he did not kill an 11-year-old boy, because the boy said that Breivik had already killed his father and he was too young to die. A 22-year-old man also escaped by pleading for his life. Others were not spared. Some were shot point blank, execution style, after they became trapped in a shallow inlet of the island. The youngest victim was 14.

Soon it would become clear exactly how cool and methodical Breivik had been. That morning, as he prepared, he had sent a large file to over a thousand people – a manifesto entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*. A long multi-part excursus of several hundred thousand words – many of them excerpted or plagiarised – *2083* set out a clear and comprehensive rationale for extreme action. Europe, the heart of Christian and western civilisation, was being extinguished, according to this document. The culprits were the post-war centre-Left – socialists, social democrats, liberals, multiculturalists – who had permitted and encouraged mass immigration, and the re-engineering of European civilisation based on a 'cultural relativist' belief that all cultures were equal and capable of reciprocal

tolerance. This, according to *2083*, was a fatal error where Muslims were concerned – a religion whose followers en masse, not merely the most extreme elements, saw themselves as bearers of the one true faith, had a horror of intermarriage, and were indifferent to the values of their western host nations. Faced with a decadent West, its culture sold out by traitors, they would triumph through their higher birth rate. Europe would be Islamised, unless drastic measures were taken to rouse the native population.

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Back in Oslo and showing no sign of physical or mental collapse or trauma, Anders Breivik was placed in solitary confinement as publicly available photographs of him began circulating around the world. One showed him to be an impossibly stereotypical Nordic type – a blonde, slightly heavyset man in his early 30s, in a casual suit; another, stranger, image showed him posing with a gun in a wetsuit, a badge on the sleeve reading 'Marxist hunter'. A shot taken of him in the back of a police car showed him in a pink sweater, plumpish and unshaven, looking as inoffensive as a perpetual graduate student. Comments he made to the police leaked out almost immediately, and their lucidity made it clear that, however he could be described, he was by no means psychotic or divorced from reality. He told police such an extreme event was necessary to alert his country and Europe to what was happening. But rather than a massacre carried out with no sense of the human toll involved, he stated he was a person who felt empathy and had therefore injected himself full of steroids and played music into earphones so he could carry out the act. By now, media across the world had combed Breivik's public and internet record, and found that he was a hard-Right political activist and ideologue of many years standing, with a network of connections to hard-Right bloggers across Europe. Breivik's manifesto revealed that he was a member of both the Freemasons and the Knights Templar, both organisations that appealed to his sense of a traditionalist European order. More pertinently, he had been a member of Norway's anti-immigrant Right-wing Progress Party, but had left dismayed by their lack of militancy. Most recently he had been in contact with members of the English Defence League (EDL), a new-style far-Right organisation that eschewed many of the trappings of old hard-Right parties, blending obsessive anti-Islamic policies with a networked culture borrowed from football hooliganism.

Breivik, it became clear, was a lone operator, but he was no solitary crank or recluse (although much would come to be made of his fairly chaotic childhood and family background). He had friends, social networks, and a history. Furthermore, he had maintained connections of various types, while painstakingly working in solitude on preparations for his 'exemplary event' – indeed, his attempts to purchase large amounts of chemicals in Poland had thrown up warning flags to security services at an earlier stage. He also purchased a farm, to cover up his purchase of chemicals and conceal his intentions. Breivik's solitary status, it became clear, was not primarily due to psychological isolation – it was a strategic move, designed to minimise the possibility that his plan would be detected by security services if he shared it with others.

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Though he was solitary in practice, Breivik was far from alone in theory, or in his conception of a threatened Europe brought to the edge of cultural and racial extinction by traitors. *2083* – as overviewed by Richard Seymour in detail in Chapter 3 – quoted a vast array of commentators who had written at length on their own fears that Europe was 'abolishing

itself' through a variety of multicultural, secular and 'religion-neutral' immigration policies. People who argued that it was almost too late to save western civilisation in Europe: in Mark Steyn's words it was 'America alone', as Europe sank beneath the waves. Breivik's manifesto quoted hundreds of authors, and many were simply classical political authorities. Others were non-polemical historians and social commentators – though most of a conservative hue, allowing him to build up a picture of Europe plunged into nightmare, with no countervailing processes. Yet much of the most lurid detail of *2083* was buttressed by quotes from the most apocalyptic of the 'clash of civilisation' authors – Steyn, Daniel Pipes, Bat Ye'or and others. Breivik saw himself, and his actions, as in the spirit of their sense of urgency as to the threat regarding white Christian Europe and its survival. But he also appeared to argue that many such commentators and groups lacked the courage to act on their convictions and conclusions. Such a conclusion was part and parcel of Breivik's stated understanding of his own act – he had done it not because, in the manner of a psychopath, he could not understand its abhorrence – but precisely because he understand exactly how evil it was, and the rupture it would make in the allegedly polite European discussion of cultural issues.

Breivik's motives, philosophy and sanity could not be clearer. Yet in the week following the event, and after several embarrassing and usually graceless retractions of accusations of Islamist involvement, a network of global conservative opinion-makers swung into action. Despite his stated opinions, his cool demeanour and his purposeful actions, Breivik could in no way be considered a political actor – he was purely and simply insane. No meaning, purpose, intent or affiliation could be deduced from his actions – by this account they had as much sense as a deeply disturbed man stabbing someone in the street, while in the grip of a violent psychosis, convinced aliens were tracking him.

Both the nature of Breivik's actions, and the Right's previous aversion to psychological excuses for individual behaviour made this position close to absurd, but it was one they stuck to with extraordinary tenacity. Perhaps this was because Breivik's actions were merely the most extreme end of a continuum of fear, hate and violence that the Right has been fomenting in Europe for some years. In the UK, the EDL had been running intimidating rallies in the centre of British cities with significant Muslim populations, presenting them as 'defence' rallies, and then disowning the mob violence that frequently followed. In Germany, social debate remained focused around Thilo Sarrazin's book *Germany Abolishes Itself*, which speculated that Turkish people may have 'inferior genes' of intelligence and that intermarriage was lowering the quality of the native German population. In the US, where much of the 'European apocalypse' discourse originated, seven medical workers (doctors and staff) providing abortions had been murdered by 'lone wolves' in the past two decades – most recently Dr George Tiller, one of literally a handful of doctors in the whole country willing to provide late-term abortions.

Breivik's act was a chilling and extraordinary escalation of Right-wing violence. They were political enemies, and Breivik's act was one of mass political assassination – but it was also a symbolic slaughter of the most junior members of the group Breivik despised, a slaughter of the innocents. It was perhaps inevitable that the Right's attempt to separate themselves from any association with the event would reach its apogee in the US with Glenn Beck, the deranged clown-prince, late of Fox News, who described the victims as 'Hitler Youth'.

In Norway, the holiday season ended as the first funerals began. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg spoke of 'more democracy, more openness and greater political participation'.

And on 25 July 2011 more than 150,000 people came out on the streets for the Rose March, drawing on the region's tradition of humanist and solidaristic politics.

Breivik's lawyer, keeping all options open, claimed that his client was 'probably insane'. The world waited to hear what Breivik would say in his several court appearances to come.

And in Hungary, vigilante groups associated with the Right-wing Jobbik party began surrounding Roma villages…

3

2083: Breivik's 21st-century fascist manifesto

Richard Seymour

2083: A European Declaration of Independence is the product of intense disillusionment. Its author, the son of professional parents, a loser on the stock market and a failed businessman, resembles nothing so much as the 'exasperated petty bourgeois' identified by Leon Trotsky as the seed of Hitlerism.

Whence the exasperation of Anders Breivik? By his account, it arises from the moral and social decline of European nation states in the post-war era. A family from the 1950s that was able to visit a European city in the 2000s, he maintains, would encounter a landscape of crime, homosexuality and pornography. 'Were they able, our 1950s family would head back to the 1950s as fast as they could, with a gripping horror story to tell'. (p. 21; pagination may differ somewhat depending on the PDF version referenced) The continent has somehow lost its 'cultural self-confidence' (p. 13), leading to an accommodation with Muslim immigrants who will have 'demographically overwhelmed' Europe within 'a few decades' if 'a sufficient level of resistance is not developed'. (p. 17)

Breivik's brief, as he sees it, is to anatomise the causes of Europe's decline and vulnerability to Muslim takeover, and provide 'patriots' with the information necessary to organise both political and military resistance. *2083* is a patchwork of polemic, autobiography, plagiarised materials, weapons instructions, military strategy, and historical excursions, most of it only loosely fitting together. The resulting text is a manifesto for a peculiarly 21st-century form of fascism. In saying this, I mean not merely that Breivik is advocating a violent Rightist putsch, though he is. What is distinctive here is the particular set of ideological articulations that make this fascism far more adequate to 21st-century circumstances than the tenets of extant neo-Nazi groups. Fascism in the 2000s will not simply be a Third Reich re-enactment.

Islamophobia: Muslims as the 'Other' of the nation

'Islam is NOT a race,' Breivik insists, so 'patriots' should not 'make this war about race or ethnicity.' But his argument about racist language is strategic, rather than moral. 'You have to keep in mind,' he says, 'that most people in Western Europe have been systematically indoctrinated for the last 4-5 decades. … internal filters against these words ['race war', 'ZOG' and 'kill all the Jews'] are all hardcoded into the base thought patterns of a majority of Europeans through decades of multiculturalist indoctrination'. (pp. 679-80) Thus, the focus on Islam as the major enemy of the nation brings with it the convenience of allowing one to avoid politically toxic 'race' language.

Yet, he does allow that a religious faith can be the basis for a cultural bloc, or civilisation. For example: 'Myself and many more like me do not necessarily have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God. We do however believe in Christianity as a cultural, social, identity and moral platform. This makes us Christian.' It is for this reason that he seeks the preservation and strengthening of 'the Church and European Christendom in general' by 'awarding it more political influence'. (p. 1309) Christianity is in this reading a potentially resistant cultural bloc underpinning European civilization; Islam is its Other. Such

civilisational, culturalist discourses have been validated by the 'War on Terror', during which the ideas of Samuel Huntington and Robert Kaplan (both cited in Breivik's text) enjoyed a spike in popularity.

And if Islam is 'not a race', Breivik attributes to it essential characteristics which make it, in his words, 'more than a religion'. Citing the Serbian-American Rightist, Serge Trifkovic, he argues that 'Since its early beginning in Muhammad's lifetime it has also been a geo political project and a system of government and a political ideology.' Citing Robert Spencer, the founder of Jihad Watch, he finds that Islam is a 'political and social system'. And citing Walid Shoebat, a fraudulent 'expert' on Islam whose dubious finances and false claims to be a former PLO militant have been exposed on CNN, he discovers Islam to be a 'form of government first, THEN a personal application', an 'imperialist system' that completely controls the lives of believers. In the context of the War on Terror, such thinking has gained a mass audience, and its logic ultimately leads to Geert Wilder's assertion that Islam is a 'cult' rather than a religion: a worldly, materialist social doctrine in devotional get-up. Thus, Breivik asserts that it is 'a historical fact' that Islam has always been 'an overtly militant and aggressive cult'. (pp. 109-10 & 151)

Not only does Islam seek to achieve complete control over its believers in this view, but it also seeks to kill and enslave the non-believers. Thus, again quoting Robert Spencer, *2083* warns: 'we have very clear instructions from Muhammad that it is the responsibility of every Muslim to meet the unbelievers on the battlefield to invite them either to accept Islam or to accept second class Dhimmi status in the Islamic state.' (p. 113) Indeed, this is not just the view of right-wing hate-mongers, but also of liberal atheist writers such as Sam Harris, who maintains: 'the basic thrust of the doctrine is undeniable: convert, subjugate, or kill unbelievers; kill apostates; and conquer the world'. It follows from this that it would be impossible to live alongside very many Muslims, without oneself suffering subjugation or death. 'As soon as Islam reaches a few percent [of the population],' Breivik asserts, 'it begins to show signs of chauvinism which is the essence of any fascist, racist and imperialistic ideology.' (p. 1404) In this reading, Breivik would be the 'anti-fascist'.

Unsurprisingly, the mere physical presence of Muslims is considered a state of war. Breivik alerts readers to the 'demographic' situation, which has been 'falsified by multiculturalists'. 'Europe is under siege by Islam. It is under demographical siege,' he explains. By 2070, the age at which he expects his right-wing revolution to mature and begin to bear fruit, the Muslim population of the UK will have reached 38%. In Norway, the figure will be identical. In Germany, it will be 50%, and in France it will be 70%. Russia, with a 72% Muslim population, will be the most 'Islamified'. (pp. 575-6) The resulting situation for those living in these countries will be one of '*dhimmitude*', which Breivik translates as 'slavery'. In a passage excerpted from the blogger 'Fjordman', *2083* explains: 'all non-Muslims will live with a constant, internalised fear of saying or doing anything that could insult Muslims, which would immediately set off physical attacks against them and their children. This state of constant fear is called dhimmitude.'

Breivik is not innovating here. His culturalist racism has been the dominant form of racist reaction since at least the time of Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech. And his representation of Islam draws on a network of counter-jihadist websites and writers, from the Israeli website MEMRI to Jihad Watch, Little Green Footballs, Frontpagemag, and various right-wing pundits such as Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer (both co-founders of Stop the Islamization of America), Daniel Pipes, Bat Ye'or, Bernard Lewis, Samuel Huntington and

Martin Kramer. Indeed, as with previous segments of the manifesto, some of these passages consist of material simply copied wholesale from *The Weekly Standard*, Frontpagemag and various Islamophobic blogs. But also striking is just how much he depends upon perfectly mainstream news outlets – not just Fox News but the BBC, for example. His ruminations about the demographics of Islam in Europe are redolent not of Nazi pamphlets but of mainstream conservative writers such as Mark Steyn and Christopher Caldwell.

Capitalist globalism and 'Eurabia'

The predominant theme of Breivik's manifesto, as with most fascist texts, is the over-riding importance of the nation state. This does not mean support for the existing state authorities. As he puts it: 'we CANNOT and should not trust that our police forces and military act in our interest now or in the future. Both our police forces and military are lead [sic] by the multiculturalist traitors we wish to defeat.' (p. 1240) Thus, an extra-parliamentary movement is needed to recapture the state apparatus, and restore the nation state's standing. But what has so enfeebled the European national state?

If the immediate danger for Breivik is the presence of Muslims, this is merely a symptom of a much larger problem internal to European societies. Two major enemies combine in Breivik's purview. The first is the capitalist globaliser, driven by greed, and the second is the 'cultural Marxist', driven by hate. We shall deal with an example of the first here. Like most on the European hard Right, Breivik is an opponent of the EU. He draws on the analysis of the British 'Eurosceptics', Christopher Booker and Richard North, to argue that it is at root a project aimed at creating a tyrannical multinational state, inspired by the USSR (hence, 'the EUSSR totalitarian system', p. 1384) and driven by France. The idea is that France, in pursuit of continental dominance and in great power rivalry with the Anglo-American axis has sought to suppress national sovereignty in the interests of a Greater France. (pp. 294-5)

Worse, however, is that this is bound up with the aim of pursuing a pro-Arab foreign policy. And this is where 'Eurabia' comes in. Bat Ye'or, one of Breivik's muses, and the author of the 'Eurabia' thesis, is credited with explaining how 'French President Charles de Gaulle, disappointed by the loss of the French colonies in Africa and the Middle East as well as with France's waning influence in the international arena, decided in the 1960's [sic] to create a strategic alliance with the Arab and Muslim world to compete with the dominance of the United States and the Soviet Union.' The result was Eurabia, a political-cultural entity bound by markets and migration, turning the Mediterranean into 'a Euro-Arab inland sea by favouring Muslim immigration and promoting multiculturalism with a strong Islamic presence in Europe.' (p. 289)

Breivik goes further. Citing newspapers such as the British *Daily Express* (the most right-wing of UK tabloids), he asserts that the EU has decided that 'the Union should be enlarged to include the Muslim Middle East and North Africa … has accepted that tens of millions of immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries in northern Africa should be allowed to settle in Europe in the years ahead … is planning to implement Sharia law for the millions of Muslims it is inviting to settle in Europe … [T]he EU is formally surrendering an entire continent to Islam while destroying established national cultures … This constitutes the greatest organised betrayal in Western history, perhaps in human history'. (p. 318)

Like fascists past and present, Breivik has no objection to the profit system. He is himself someone who has invested in the stock market, and set up two private businesses. What he

objects to is an effect of capitalism, which is its tendency to break out of the bounds of the national state and to transport cultural, religious and political trends with it. What he wants is the impossible: a 'national' capitalism, subordinate to the imputed cultural, spiritual and material needs of 'the nation'.

Anti-communism: against the Marxist Tyranny

The *2083* manifesto pivots on anti-communism, in an era where actual communism is thin on the ground. Most of Breivik's reflections on communism are unremarkable, if fanciful. For example, he calls upon the liberal political economist Friedrich Hayek and the conservative tobacco salesman Roger Scruton to explain the appeal and thematics of socialist ideology. (pp. 63-4) It is rather when he explains the role of communists in the betrayal of the nation that things become interesting. For, as Markha Valenta has put it, Breivik 'hates the Left even more than he fears Islam'. The text of *2083* begins not with Muslims, the EU, or weapons advice, but rather with an extended soliloquy (lifted, word for word, from William S. Lind) on the influence of 'cultural Marxists' in upholding 'multiculturalism' and 'Political Correctness'. The burden of the argument is as follows:

Multiculturalism is what results when the doctrine of Marxism is transposed from economic class struggle to culture. As a result of the failure of socialist revolutions to spread through Europe in the post-WWI situation, Marxist theorists such as Antonio Gramsci and Georg Lukacs attempted to locate the source of the obstacle in the failure of Marxists to win cultural battles. For Gramsci, the winning of such battles meant creating a new 'communist man' who would be the ideal subject for a socialist state. But to win the culture wars meant 'a long march through the society's institutions, including the government, the judiciary, the military, the schools and the media'. In short, it meant taking hold of the levers of power.

Later, this mode of analysis was combined with Freud, in the Frankfurt school, and then linguistic theory, to become 'deconstruction'. 'Deconstruction' exists to prove that any and all texts discriminate against minorities, and has had a powerful effect on educational theory, helping produce the doctrine of 'Political Correctness'. This in turn works to control language, and thus thought. Cultural Marxists, wherever they obtain power, expropriate white European males just as much as communist regimes expropriated the bourgeoisie, both on behalf of defined victims – whether peasants and workers, or Muslims and minorities. (pp. 21-3) In this way, cultural Marxists have quietly formed a treasonous power bloc within the state that is: 'anti-God, anti-Christian, anti-family, anti-nationalist, anti-patriot, anti-conservative, anti-hereditarian, anti-ethnocentric, anti-masculine, anti-tradition, and anti-morality'. (p. 38)

It is not just on questions of race and culture that the white European male is persecuted. Modern feminism is also, owing to its Marxist roots, 'totalitarian'. As a result, it is producing a 'feminisation' of society and of men. Breivik regards Adorno's theory of the 'authoritarian personality' as the key weapon in the feminist arsenal, devised for 'psychological warfare against the European male', making him unwilling to defend his traditional gender role. (p. 37)

An important upshot of this is that 'Political Correctness' stifles the unpalatable truth about important subjects. Breivik cannot call Islam 'an evil, retarded and supremacist death-cult that refuses to afford women and unbelievers respect and the most basic of human rights' without being 'smeared as an ‒Islamophobe‖.' Nor can he say 'Whites are generally more

intelligent and creative than blacks and have, throughout human history, solved the problems presented to the human race by Mother Nature far more effectively than blacks have' without being 'vilified as a racist'. No dissent from 'the childish Liberal fantasy of equality' is possible. In so altering people's consciousness, the cultural Marxists have inflicted a 'mental illness', and one that only affects 'the people of the white race as other races and cultures know full well the entirely natural order of inequality.' (pp. 400-1)

The white European male, then, is a pitiable figure, not only expropriated, oppressed and feminised, but prevented from speaking of it by the Marxist dictatorship: 'we, the cultural conservatives of Europe, have become slaves under an oppressive, tyrannical, extreme left-wing system with absolutely no hope of reversing the damage they have caused. At least not democratically'. (p. 799)

It is not necessary to ponder the absurdities, fictions and paranoia of this analysis, taken from a Free Congress Foundation pamphlet. It is sufficient to note what it means to believe such things. The idea of the communist as conspirator and traitor to the nation has been a mainstay of fascist polemic since its inception. For Mussolini, international socialism of the kind advocated by the anti-war Zimmerwald Left during WWI was a 'German weapon' of war, a 'German invention'. And for Hitler, communist treason was Jewish treason, placing the German masses 'exclusively at the service of international Marxism in the Jewish and Stock Exchange parties'. Their answer was to use terror against the Left. Breivik's answer was to bomb government buildings in Oslo, then descend on a Labour Party youth camp on the island of Utøya and gun down 69 unarmed youth.

Fascism: organising the counter-revolution

> We, the free indigenous peoples of Europe, hereby declare a pre-emptive war on all cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites of Western Europe. (p. 812)

Anders Breivik is not a Nazi. His manifesto makes it clear that he would be 'offended' to be called a Nazi, and that he 'hates' Adolf Hitler. This is because he considers Hitler 'a traitor to the Germanic and all European tribes', whose 'crazed effort for world domination' was 'reckless'. The Nazis 'knew perfectly well what the consequences would be for their tribes if they lost, yet they went ahead and completed the job … And people like myself, and other cultural conservative leaders of today, are still suffering under this propaganda campaign because of that one man.' (pp. 1166-7) Breivik hates the Nazis, then, primarily because the Nazis made things difficult for people like him. His objection would dissolve were it possible for the Nazis to have won.

Perhaps it would not be pressing the point too far to say that, on balance, Breivik has more in common with the Nazis than separates him from them. Indeed, he is sympathetic to present-day Nazis, believing that they are 'fellow patriots' and that '90% of the individuals who uses [sic] Neonazi/fascist symbols are not real national socialists. They are only extremely frustrated individuals who have been demonised and ridiculed for too long by the establishment.' (p. 1239) That said, the fascist agenda he has outlined does differ in several respects from that of historical fascism. This is because the context, especially the geopolitical context, is radically different. Fascism initially arose amid a crisis of liberal capitalism, a wave of revolutionary socialist insurrection, economic turmoil, and the first signs of the decline of European empires and the ascent of the United States. In a colonial world, characterised by inter-imperialist rivalries, it was still possible to envision solving the

nation's productive problems through territorial expansion – be it the 'proletarian nation' grabbing its fair share of the colonies, or the Third Reich reaching for Lebensraum. In a post-colonial era, far-Right activism has centred on a defensive white nationalism. So it is with Breivik.

Not that Breivik is opposed to imperialism. His appraisal of colonialism is largely positive, and his objection to the War on Terror is strategic. It is impossible to bring democracy to Muslim countries such as Iraq, so 'we should shift from a pro-democracy offensive to an anti-sharia defensive.' We should 'talk straight about who the enemy is'. The real war coming is not this politically correct War on Terror, but 'World War IV'. (pp. 524 & 572) Still, having purified the nation, he wants to batten down its hatches rather than risk any potentially compromising encounters with nefarious aliens: 'the best way to deal with the Islamic world is to have as little to do with it as possible.' (p. 338)

Similarly, interwar fascists had a steady stream of recruits among young, idealistic men socialised in institutions that moralised violence (such as the army). They filled up paramilitary units such as the *squadristi* and *freikorps*, where non-fascist recruits could be hardened into fascist cadres, through comradeship and 'knocking heads together'. Since WWII, mass recruitment for such activities has been an endemic problem for the far Right. This has left fascists with two options. The first is to seek respectability through parliamentary campaigns, shedding explicit references to fascist or white supremacist language and demonstrating their fitness to govern. This is problematic for fascists, for whom control of the streets is more important than control of the council chamber. The alternative is to find substitutes in existing gangs with a culture of violence and nationalism. Today's English Defence League (EDL), in which organised fascists lead mobs of racist football hooligans in targeted street campaigns, is an instance of this. In practice, many fascist organisations have tried to maintain both strategies concurrently.

Breivik attempts a hybrid of these strategies. While declaring that democratic struggle is otiose, he is embryonically aware of the need to engage in hegemonic battles, shedding the stigma of the Third Reich. As he puts it: 'Copy your enemies, learn from the professionals'. Thus, while 'cultural Marxists' exert dominance through front organisations supporting human rights, feminism or environmentalism, so 'cultural conservatives' should embrace front tactics based on alliances 'against Muslim extremism', 'against Jihad', 'for free speech', and for human and civil rights. (pp. 1241-2)

Breivik credits the 'British EDL' for being 'the first youth organisation that has finally understood this. Sure, in the beginning it was the occasional eggheads who shouted racist slogans and did Nazi salutes but these individuals were kicked out. An organisation such as the EDL has the moral high ground and can easily justify their political standpoints as they publicly oppose racism and authoritarianism.' He goes on to urge 'conservative intellectuals' to support the EDL and 'help them on the right ideological path. And to ensure that they continue to reject criminal, racist and totalitarian doctrines.' (pp. 1242-3) We do not need to take Breivik's descriptions of the EDL at face value. But it is two features of the EDL that he particularly values: what he perceives as their ability to gain favourable media coverage, and polarise opinion; and their loose model of street organisation, which 'is the only way to avoid paralysing scrutiny and persecution'. (pp. 1243 & 1255)

Anatomy of counter-revolution

The key to Breivik's argument, however, is that 'patriots' must begin preparing for an armed insurgency. The moral and political argument for armed struggle is that multiculturalism, 'like drugs', has already destroyed 'the heart and fabric' of the nation, such that its subjects 'possess no potential for resistance'. As such, it is not 'remotely possible' that a 'conservative, monocultural party will ever gain substantial political influence'. 'the cultural Marxists have institutionalised multiculturalism and have no intention of ever allowing us to exercise any political influence of significance. … It is … lethal to waste another five decades on meaningless dialogue while we are continuously losing our demographical advantage' (pp. 802-3) As such, 'armed struggle is the only rational approach'. (p. 812)

This insurgency must attack the 'category A and B traitors' (Marxists, 'suicidal humanists', 'capitalist globalists', etc), first and foremost, rather than Muslims whose presence Breivik deems to be a symptom rather than the source of the problem. 'We will focus on the Muslims AFTER we have seized political and military control. At that point, we will start deportation campaigns.' (pp. 1255-6) This is not to say that Muslims cannot be singled out. But the priority is to assault 'cultural Marxists' and what he regards as the centre-left establishment. A key section on weapons of mass destruction is headed: 'Obtaining and using WMD's against the cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites'. It proceeds to outline ways of obtaining or cultivating anthrax, procuring deadly pathogens, and gaining access to chemical agents. *2083* does not envision 'cultural conservatives' getting hold of small nuclear devices until the later days of the insurrection, between 2030 and 2070 – but this is no reason not to think ahead, and the manifesto describes scenarios for their acquisition and use. (pp. 960-73)

Breivik envisions a three-staged civil war in Europe, characterised at first by clandestine cells using 'military shock attacks', followed by a phase of more advanced resistance movements and preparations for 'pan-European coup d'états', and finally a period of coups, repression, the defeat of 'Cultural Communism', and the deportation of Muslims. By 2083, 400 years after the 'Battle of Vienna' between the Holy Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire, the revolution is to be victorious. (p. 813) Once the revolution is successful, there is to be a transitional phase of dictatorship in which a 'patriotic tribunal' will ensure that nationalist-minded individuals are placed in prominent positions in the security forces, and the media, all public offices, publishing outfits, and schools. It will choose a new 'birth policy', and social structures will go from being 'matriarchies to once again becoming patriarchies'. It will organise the execution of 'all category A and B traitors who continue to oppose us'. This will be followed by a shift away from 'mass democracy' to 'administered democracy'. 'Mass democracy does not work', Breivik asserts, 'as has been proven'. It must be replaced by constitutional monarchies and republics. The tribunal will continue to act as a guardian council to ensure that the nation is inoculated against renewed Marxist infiltration, that the fertility rate is kept to an acceptable level, and that 'the suicidal humanists and capitalist globalists do not misuse their influence'. (pp. 795-801 & 1325)

Conclusion

Breivik's *2083* is a fascist manifesto not because it apes the language of *führers* and *duces*past, but because it has absorbed the elements of contemporary reactionary discourse and articulated them in an agenda of mass Rightist insurrection. He has eschewed many of the obsessions and talking points of much white supremacist discourse, which has been concerned with reviving the prospects of fascism by restoring the reputation of the Nazi

regime. He does not need Holocaust denial to articulate his agenda, any more than he needs the hard biological racism of the colonial period to express his supremacism. His

vituperations about 'cultural Marxism' have, by placing crypto-communists in senior positions of authority, provided the conspiracy that he needs to explain the nation's parlous circumstances. The nefarious 'Jew' of anti-Semitic discourse is not rejected, but is qualified, allied to a Zionist posture, and is at any rate secondary to his wider schema.

There are other respects in which Breivik's manifesto is very different from classical fascist discourse. For example, there is nothing about trade unions, very little about traditional revolutionary socialism, and also nothing on the global economic crisis, in *2083*. It is hard to imagine a *Mein Kampf* without some reference to the trade unions, to winning the German workers from the Reds, and so on. To put it another way, there is very little that is specifically addressed to the problems of the working class, or even the insecure petty bourgeoisie. Unlike most fascist parties and intellectuals in Europe, Breivik has no orientation toward winning over the masses. In politics, he worked as part of a milieu, but ultimately sets out to make his most significant contribution to the fascist struggle on his own. However, this is because he believes the struggle has not yet reached the stage where mass mobilisation is possible. Breivik aspires to eventually trigger a mass movement, even if he does not attempt to offer plausible solutions to popular problems. And in defining a 'revolutionary' Rightist creed that is more informed by this conjuncture than the interwar period, *2083* outlines some of the contours of what we can expect from fascist movements of the future.

Part Two

European Prelude

4

The Panic in Europe: Islamophobia and the Right

Jeff Sparrow

Imagine if, in a yellowing newspaper from the 1920s, you found an article about the violent Semitic menace spreading across Europe, warning that the continent would soon either be Judaicised or descend into civil war. You would not hesitate to peg the author as (at best) an apologist for racism – and, quite possibly, as a fascist. Consider, then, the following propositions.

Muslims will not integrate. Muslims are more fertile than Christians and are outbreeding them. Europe is becoming a province, a colony, of Islam. Europe will either be Islamicised or there will be a civil war. Most likely, Muslims will resort to terrorism as part of their takeover. They are already spoiling for violence. That is an unvarnished summary of a speech by the American 'scholar' of Islam Daniel Pipes at a *Quadrant* dinner in 2008. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported Pipes's speech under the respectful headline 'Scholar Fears for Europe's Future'. *The Australian* reprinted highlights.

Daniel Pipes cannot be dismissed as a marginal figure. Not only is he widely published and cited, but similar arguments can be found in writings by Christopher Caldwell (whose book *Reflections On The Revolution In Europe* has been respectfully reviewed all around the world), Robert Spencer, the late Oriana Fallaci, as well as a variety of lesser tub thumpers at home and abroad, not to mention on the hugely popular 'counter-jihadi' websites.

In Britain, in the *Sunday Times*, weeks after 9/11, the national columnist Melanie Phillips declares that 'thousands of alienated young Muslims, most of them born and bred here but who regard themselves as an army within, are waiting for an opportunity to help to destroy the society that sustains them.' Mark Steyn makes a similar argument, warning in his bestseller *America Alone* of the demographic threat posed by Muslims in Europe. 'You can't buck demography – except through civil war', he writes, and then continues, chillingly:

> The Serbs figured that out – as other Continentals will in the years ahead: If you can't outbreed the enemy, cull 'em. The problem that Europe faces is that Bosnia's demographic profile is now the model for the entire continent.

In the US, radio personality Michael Savage reaches 8.25 million listeners per week. 'When I see a woman walking around with a burqa,' he explained on air, 'I see a Nazi … a hateful Nazi who would like to cut your throat and kill your children.'

This is the milieu that produced Anders Breivik, as he acknowledged in his sprawling manifesto. The arguments are structurally identical to 20th-century anti-Semitism. Yet they are also frighteningly mainstream. Savage might be a ranting shock-jock but compare the sentiment of the acclaimed literary novelist Martin Amis, who told an interviewer (he would later say that he was 'thinking aloud'):

> There's a definite urge – don't you have it? – to say, 'the Muslim community will have to suffer until it gets its house in order.' What sort of suffering? Not letting them travel. Deportation – further down the road. Curtailing of freedoms. Strip-searching people who look like they're from the Middle East or from Pakistan … Discriminatory stuff, until it hurts the whole community and they start getting tough with their children … They hate us for letting our children have sex and take drugs – well, they've got to stop

their children killing people.

Today, the public sphere tolerates a level of anti-Muslim bigotry comparable to the bigotry directed against Jews in English-speaking countries during the 1930s. No, not analogous to that fostered by Hitler in Germany – there's no Muslim Holocaust looming – but akin to what was accepted in countries like Britain and Australia. The traditional slurs about Jews – they wore strange clothes, they ate peculiar foods; they kept together, plotting against the rest of society, in evil schemes mandated by their strange religion – seemed to have been banished from polite society. Now, however, it is not considered at all controversial for a newspaper columnist to rehearse exactly those slanders, albeit directed at Muslims.

Roots of the new Islamophobia

Where has the new Islamophobia come from? It is often claimed that anti-Muslim bigotry grew in the wake of 9/11. That is true but not necessarily in the way that might be first thought. The rise of Islamophobia derives much less from the terrorist attacks than from the response to them: it derives, in other words, not from anything Muslims might be said to have done than from what has been done to them. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, at a time when you might have expected anti-Muslim sentiment to be at its peak, George Bush visited an Islamic centre, specifically to absolve Muslims of collective responsible for the atrocity and to declare Islam a religion of peace.

Today, that entirely bland statement – delivered, mind you, while the rubble from the towers still smouldered – would be considered electoral poison by senior Republicans. In 2011, Republican candidate Hermain Cain openly declares that he would refuse to appoint Muslims to his cabinet – an overt statement of bigotry that would be unthinkable if directed against any other minority. Not only do politicians eschew photo opportunities in mosques but many – Tim Pawlenty, Newt Gingrich and others – openly warn about the 'Islamicisation' of America and the need to fight against creeping Sharia law.

What happened over the last decade to shift the bounds of political acceptability? Basically, the War on Terror happened. In a remarkably short space of time, we saw the occupation of Afghanistan, a Muslim country; normalisation of torture against Muslim detainees; the construction of Guantanamo to house Muslim prisoners indefinitely without charges or trial; the launch of a pre-emptive invasion of Iraq, another Muslim nation; the routinisation of assassinations and other extrajudicial killings of Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen; and the persistent refusal to hold anyone accountable for any of these actions.

Nor has the change of administration made any difference. Under President Obama, the United States is fighting no less than three wars against Muslim populations, as well as massively increased program of drone killings elsewhere.

Racism, weaponised

A few years ago, I interviewed Camilo Mejia, a US military veteran turned peace activist. 'the moment we got there,' he said of his deployment in Iraq, 'we realised they were calling them ‒hajis‖ … and they used it to dehumanise everything. Haji applied to everything, not just the people. It was haji food, haji women, haji kids, haji music – everything was haji, worthless.'

The racism, he said, was tacitly condoned.

> They don't prepare you for a different culture, and they don't want you to understand it, because understanding Iraqi culture means you humanise Iraqis. … It's not in their interest that you have those conversations; it's not in their interests that you view the people as people.

The racism that military occupation required from serving soldiers was mirrored in sentiment fostered back home as the extreme bloodiness of the Iraq war became clear, and the indiscriminate nature of drone killings became a major issue. Such processes demanded dehumanisation. In a discussion of the slaves of his time, Montesquieu famously concluded that 'it is impossible for us to assume that these people are men because if we assumed they were men one would begin to believe that we ourselves were not Christians.' Something similar might be said today. It is not difficult to understand how recent history establishes throughout the industrialised world certain ideas about Muslims and their place, certain notions about how they might be legitimately treated.

This is a crucial point: one reason anti-Muslim sentiment has been mainstreamed so successfully and so quickly is that it has been pushed from the top down. Islamophobia might not be official doctrine in quite the way that anti-communism was during the Cold War but certain parallels can still be drawn nonetheless. Daniel Pipes, the speaker at that *Quadrant* dinner, is, of course, the son of Richard Pipes, the leading theorist of Soviet totalitarianism, and the generational progression from hysterical warnings about Russian expansionism to hysterical warnings about Muslim expansionism provides a neat illustration of how rhetoric about Islamic terrorism has filled an ideological void left by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Even if the Obama administration eschews the more extreme manifestations of Islamophobia, the rhetorical re-orientation of US foreign policy around combating Al-Qaeda legitimises and reinforces the most hardcore anti-Muslim elements. At the same time, most Islamophobic ideologues are careful to separate the ancient tropes of bigotry from old-style blood-and-soil racialism, presenting their case not as traditional racism but as a legitimate critique of culture and religion. Indeed, anti-racist campaigners are often disorientated because some of the most vocal anti-Islam bigots argue their case, not in terms of skin colour or biological essence, but rather in politically correct vocabulary of contemporary liberalism. The Dutch politician Geert Wilders, for instance, says that Mohammed, were he alive today, would be hunted down as a terrorist. But Wilders insists that his organisation is fundamentally tolerant. 'Whatever colour or sexual preference,' he explained to an interviewer, 'whatever people have, it doesn't matter as they're all welcome in our party and we don't discriminate in any way'.

The liberal anti-Islam ideologues might be feminist (Ayaan Hirsi Ali), atheist (Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins) or even openly gay, such as Pim Fortuyn, but their formulations invariably contrast secular modernity – multicultural, tolerant of women's rights, etc. – against Islamic backwardness and totalitarianism. It is an approach that even demagogic populist groups can embrace. Stop the Islamisation of Europe uses as its slogan: 'racism is the lowest form of human stupidity, but Islamophobia is the height of common sense.' Even Breivik made the same point, expressly criticising Nazi racism, in favour of an opposition to Islam largely expressed in terms of cultural differences.

How does this work? It's useful to return to Australia where Islamophobia, though rising, is less well developed than in Europe of the US, and its manifestations are rawer and thus more

easily analysed. The sporadic agitation against burqa wearing in this country seems, on one level, almost literally insane, resting upon hallucinatory panics about purdah-wearing bank robbers and the like. More importantly, much of it has come from self-proclaimed feminists (Sushi Das, the late Pamela Bone, Elizabeth Farrelly and Virginia Haussegger, and others). How to explain the peculiarity of a movement that historically campaigned for women's right to dress howsoever they liked metastasising into a push for female dress codes? What does this evolution tell us about Islamophobia?

In his essay *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill, the great theorist of liberalism, famously explained that restrictions on individual freedom were only legitimate when those liberties harmed others. Since no one can seriously claim that a handful (a few hundred? a thousand?) of Afghan and African immigrants choosing to wear face veils imperils anyone else in the slightest, you would think that a ban on the burqa self-evidently fails the test. But Mills also makes certain qualifications. 'It is, he explains, 'perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. … Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one.'

Once again, then, we can see the connection between war abroad and Islamophobia at home. The 'progressive' ideologues of Islamophobia are, as they repeatedly ensure us, impeccable liberals – doughty defenders of progress and enlightenment and rights for all. They are, however, liberals who have concluded that 'free and equal discussion' doesn't apply to Muslims, the 'barbarians' of our contemporary age. Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with such people, and the same immaturity of Islamic faculties that legitimises military occupation overseas also mandates coercion at home. But what about the inevitable response that Islamophobia cannot be racism, because Islam is not a race?

Racism has, historically, taken different forms. As early as the 1980s, the philosopher Martin Barker argued that racism in the West was scarcely ever based on crude eugenics anymore (for Nazism had rather tarnished that particular idea). Instead, it focused on the cultures of particular minorities, which were said to be somehow deficient or incompatible with the mainstream. Indeed, outside the ranks of the Ku Klux Klan, no one much these days presents a racism based on the genetic inferiority of blacks compared to whites. Instead, contemporary racists focus on lifestyle or education or other supposed cultural traits, which are then treated as if they were just as innate and determinative as skin colour was for the biological racist.

Islamophobia works in exactly the same way, essentialising some aspect of the religion to tell you everything you need to know about all Muslims, all the time. In 2006, an Australian study revealed that more than half of Victorian schoolchildren viewed Muslims as terrorists, while two out of five agreed that Muslims were 'unclean' and just over 50 per cent believed Muslims behaved 'strangely'. Crucially, more than half said they had learned 'a little' about Muslims and Islam at school, and more than a third said they had learned nothing on these subjects. Yet, when asked if schools should teach more about Islam, 29 per cent of the teenagers said no, and 34 per cent said they did not care. In other words, the schoolchildren's conviction that Islamic people are 'unclean' and 'terrorists' and 'behave strangely' (all, as it happens, traditional slurs aimed by anti-Semites against the Jews) coincides with neither

knowing anything about the billions of Muslims in the world nor wanting to know anything but rather a gut feeling as to what they are all really like. Furthermore, they refer interchangeably to 'Muslims' and 'Arabs', indicating that they see religious and national identity as one and the same. They know nothing about Islam – but they know a Muslim when they see one.

One does not, of course, require a complex historical understanding of the evolution of racial theory to understand the core content of Islamophobia. Most people hear Herman Cain and know – as, indeed, they are meant to – straight away what he is doing, simply because the rhetoric is so familiar from earlier forms of discrimination. When, a few years ago, a mob of white youths gathered on Cronulla Beach in Sydney to drive out Lebanese kids, you didn't need to be familiar with Barker's writing to recognize that for them 'Islam' was not a theological term but a racial one. Indeed, though the liberal Islamophobes are important, they essentially act as useful idiots for a broader and much less sophisticated anti-Muslim populism. That is, while Islamophobia is driven from the top down, it also has a plebeian aspect: essentially serving as a new rallying cry for a very traditional right-wing populism that, in places, merges with overt fascism.

The last three decades of free-market reforms throughout the industrialised world have created a sizeable constituency for a populism that contrasts the uncertainty and social disintegration of the present with the (often mythological) security and order of the past. Such movements generally base themselves on the traditional and the new middle class, and the most demoralised sections of the industrial working class. They typically reflect the self- perception of their membership as under assault from both above and below: railing against immigrants, gays, ethnic minorities and so on, but also assailing the banks and the big corporations.

Old whines, new bottle?

Indeed, in Australia, the most obvious example is One Nation, which peaked during the late 1990s. Pauline Hanson, the One Nation leader, was a shopkeeper from a regional centre, a background that largely reflected the character of her followers. Hanson established herself by attacking the supposed 'special treatment' received by Aboriginal Australians but her movement also grew by denouncing the banks for foreclosing on rural properties and the government for allowing country Australia to stagnate. An opposition to multiculturalism was particularly important to One Nation, since it provided a target against which the members' rage could be channelled. Multiculturalism allowed the Hansonites to concretise their amorphous sense of betrayal and anger: it meant a government whose enthusiasm for neoliberalism had driven them off their farm; it simultaneously meant the Vietnamese family down the street, who challenged their sense of what Australia should like.

In that pre-9/11 context, One Nation barely mentioned Islam. Today, however, similar organisations throughout the world have recognised the opportunity that Islamophobia presents. Nick Griffin, the leader of the British National Party, explains the shift of his organisation away from its traditional anti-Semitism as follows:

> We bang on about Islam. Why? Because to the ordinary public out there it's the thing they can understand. It's the thing the newspaper editors sell newspapers with. If we were to attack some other ethnic group – some people say we should attack the Jews …; But … we've got to get to power.

Similar reorientations have been taking place all across Europe, with even organisations directly descended from pro-Nazi antecedents replacing or supplementing their anti-Semitism with Islamophobia. Again, though, an opposition to multiculturalism remains key, since it gives racial populist and fascists organisation a plebeian appeal. In his manifesto, Breivik explains that European political elites have aligned themselves with the Muslim hordes, betraying their own people to facilitate the Islamisation of Europe. The argument appears over and over again in the Islamophobic milieu. Consider, for instance, the new book by the American blogger Pamela Geller. The publisher's description explains:

> Islamic supranationalism is seeping into every aspect of American life. Islamic jihad groups aren't solely concentrating on terror attacks (although another one of those could come at any moment), but on the creeping encroachment to introduce Islamic law into this country, step-by-step and bit-by-bit, until finally America wakes up to a country transformed into an Islamic state. … Stop Islamization of America is a much-needed wake-up call about a sinister, subversive agenda that could do nothing less than destroy the United States – with unique instructions about how we can, and must, fight back now to defend our nation and our civilization.

These hallucinogenic fantasies are almost identical to those of Anders Breivik (who, indeed, deeply admired Geller). The identification of the local political class as the main enemy allows Islamophobes to offer an explanation to the victims of neoliberal reform centred not on invisible market forces but on a nefarious conspiracy.

The focus on those allegedly 'betraying' the West, rather than on an actual race or cultural group, both in Breivik's writings and elsewhere, is the final mark of their 'reasonable violence' – a hatred nurtured not in the passions of a pre-modern tribalism, but from the heart of enlightenment 'reason'. Central to that argument – in the writings of Pipes, of Steyn and innumerable others – is that the proposition that these are exceptional circumstances, that we are in the midst of an emergency, and that the threat to European civilisation is an 'existential' one. This entirely imaginary, and wanton, reconstruction of a set of modern social conflicts and contestations as something apocalyptic has created a context in which those disposed to violent solutions can see themselves as soldiers on a mission – and like all good soldiers, understanding the principle of total deniability. Future 'soldiers' looking to make their mark will not want for ammunition.

5

Anders Breivik and the History of Right-Wing Terror

Guy Rundle

Had he not brought death and horror to a nation, a city and a political community, it would be easy to laugh at Anders Breivik – soldier of the Knights Templar, in his tan suits, his official tie and cufflinks, his Action Man wetsuit. In an era dominated by the pulp mysticism of *The Da Vinci Code*, Breivik's rationality could be negated by the general category of madness, and his ideology treated similarly by the focus on its separate parts, its excerpting and eccentricity. His delving back into European and Islamic history, and ancient grievances made him the armed wing of young fogeyism, vicious nostalgia, and served to emphasise his alleged singularity.

Yet his ideas, his lethal actions, have a history, easily known. How was it that they could be so easily re-absorbed, in the public mind, into a general background of violence without meaning, without content?

Neither brute media control, nor a Propaganda Model, is sufficient to explain the ease of this process. In exploring how it occurs, and reminding ourselves of its history, it is worth going as far back or further than Breivik himself – to consider the way in which terror is part of violence in general, and a strategy detachable from it. To think above all, about the way in which such violence demonstrates the asymmetry of politics, and the immense power of legitimacy to own, exile and attribute normality and pathology as required. Thinking clearly about Breivik's act means disturbing some graves and disinterring a few assumptions.

Terror and the City

Terror and assassination … two strategies whose use stretches back to the beginnings of recorded warfare and political conflict. The chronicles of China, of ancient Mesopotamia, recount in horrifying detail massacres of whole city-states intended not merely to wipe out an enemy in its entirety, but as a warning to others. Assassination – of a single figure, of a court and entourage, of an entire rival legion or army – becomes the accompanying method of struggles within a state, for control of it. Terror comes from state, assassination from the elites vying for power within it. Resistance – by rival and equal states, by pre-state communities – returns this warfare in kind. Those who resisted 'civilisation' using its own methods are then slated as 'barbarians', and the division is taught and transmitted down the ages.

Thus, Julius Caesar's histories of his own campaigns coolly record the mass slaughter of Gallic tribes – but it is the Gallic and British resistance to colonisation, Boudicca with her scything chariot, that is presented as savagery. Athens is presented to schoolchildren as the foundation of our philosophy and ethics – even as the Athenians drew on their notion of a higher form of being to justify the same massacres as perpetrated by unenlightened Sparta.

States go against states, nation against nation. Rules of war come and go, and are applied partially – usually extended only to those rivals of a close ethnicity. As first Greece and then Rome consolidate as unified empires, the idea of the 'other' to whom terror and annihilating

death must be applied turns East – towards the Persian empire – and South, to black Africans (of the pre-Arab period). Against the former, all methods are justified because of the organised threat they pose; against the latter, all methods are justified because their tribal and pre-state societies mark them off as inferior sub-humans. Thus codified, state terror is then applied to organised resistance groups within the empire – the unified British tribes, the resistant Jewish nation, the communistic Essene cult, and its successor cult, the Christians. In these latter encounters, terror becomes an increasingly precise instrument of the state – calibrated as an alternative to annihilation, in the service of running an empire. When Christianity becomes first tolerated, and then the official religion of the empire, the official Church apparatus enthusiastically deploys the same methods of terror and assassination against dissident sects within it.

Terror, torture and the boundary of Christendom

After the fall of Rome, those terroristic methods it will retain with a near-monopoly in the West, during the half-millennium when no clear new state forms emerge. The disdain towards peoples of the East and the South will re-emerge with the Crusades, but the application of specific state terror will find its most sustained expression with the Spanish Inquisition – a body specifically established to deal with the spread of 'heresy' arising from centuries of relatively peaceful co-existence of Muslims, Jews and Christians in Muslim Andalusia. The Inquisition will become a centuries long laboratory of terror-effects – the effective compulsion of action on a mass population, by violence towards a selected few.

Such techniques will be adopted by the recognisably modern states that form in the later Middle Ages – Henry VIII's England, Louis XIV's France. Absolutist national state apparatuses come to replace local feudal authority. Systematic authority demands systematic sanction; organised armies, navies, spy services and revenue agencies require organised methods of extending power. Criminal law, capital punishment, torture and imprisonment are codified over the same period. These transformations combine with financially burdensome imperial conflict in Europe and the potential colonies of the New World. Both in terms of control over everyday life, and the exacting of a relentless tax burden, the modern struggle by a state against its population begins to emerge – as does resistance to it.

Initially resistance takes the form of Protestant sects. By the 18th century, these have started to become civil associations, clubs, proto-unions and the like. Terror and violence become not only microcalibrated – how many turns on the thumbscrews? – but macrocalibrated, as control of new urban populations becomes an essential state function. In France this is visible in the manner by which an arsenal of torture, imprisonment, exile and death is elaborated to maintain control without outraging sufficient of the population to cause unrest. In England, the extension of the death penalty to a vast array of crimes serves as a form of state terror against a whole class defined as a social enemy, so as to control a population caught up in the changes of early capitalism. Routinely applied by a court and then commuted, it relies overwhelmingly on caprice to instil fear in the populace.

States, absolute and revolutionary: Their terrors and ours

As the absolute state extends itself, so too do notions of humanity, society and rights that lie outside of it. The 1789 French Revolution marks the point at which terror divides into three distinct processes – state terror, increasingly applied to colonial populations (of which the calibrated punitive raids against Aborigines in early New South Wales serve as an example);

revolutionary state terror, as emerged in the Jacobin stage of the French Revolution; and the systemic invention of non-state terror as a political tactic, most particularly with Gracchus Baboeuf and the 'conspiracy of equals'.

Faced with political failure, and the resurgence of reaction, Baboeuf's advocacy of terror is a crucial step, because it suggests that the 'general will of the people', as elaborated by Rousseau and instanced by the storming of the Bastille, can be extracted, abstracted and carried out by a numerically small group, who fully represent and embody that will. The generality and truth of that will, contrasted with the small size and powerlessness of the conspiracy, thus license the most extreme actions. Regicide and violence against armed forces have always been legitimate. But now Baboeuf and others argue that methods of revolutionary state terror – against social enemies (including whole classes) – should be employed by revolutionary groups.

In the century to come, the vast majority of human suffering from these three terrors will come from the first – state terror from Hudson's Bay to the Pampas, through Africa to Gippsland, and countless other places. It will take tens of millions of lives. When its punitive and exemplary role fails it will become, as in Tasmania and the Congo, genocidal and annihilatory, and destroy whole cultures in plain view of their last generation, casting a nihilistic pall across the world. Colonial wars of independence in America will participate in this, using the language of revolutionary state terror – manifest destiny, the overturning of old orders – to license a greater annihilation of native populations. Eurocentric history will marvel at a century of relative peace between Waterloo and World War One, yet it will occur in a world awash with blood.

Indeed, so comprehensive will this terror be, that it will even lose the appearance of such. The question of terror will become bound up with the question of state legitimacy, and acts of violence subject to a wholly irrational calculus of differing morality. Terror thus becomes identified with non-state actors, and overwhelmingly with the Left, a framework that will persist through the next two centuries, until the rise of Al-Qaeda (and to a degree beyond it).

From terror to terrorism

That organised non-state terror came from the Left throughout the 19th century was unquestioned – though it had, by and large, retreated from the more indiscriminate *Baboeuvist* class terror of the 1790s. The period following the defeat of the 1830 revolution in France was one in which elements of the Left did much to encourage the belief that they were an intersecting set of conspiratorial societies ready to enact the will of the people through assassinations. Though alternative mass organisations were developing, violent conspiracy as a tool against ever more powerful states gained in popularity as another wave of revolutions in 1848 mostly failed to overturn existing powers. This was especially so in Russia, the most monolithic state of all, where all non-conspiratorial routes to change were blocked, and conspiratorial societies became steadily more focused on violent confrontation, culminating in the creation of a self-described Terrorist Party in the 1870s.

More than any period before our own, the 1860s and 1870s, shows the basic disjuncture in our understanding of terror, created in part (but only in part) by the Left's propagandistic use of it. By this time, the idealistic youth of the *Narodnya* – who had spent a summer 'going to the peasants' and been killed and imprisoned en masse by the state for doing so – had hardened themselves into focused assassination squads, aimed at rendering Tsarist rule

impossible to continue. By modern standards they observed reasonable rules of war – though squarely aimed at killing the Tsar with explosives, they were willing to kill small numbers of surrounding civilians in the process. Such methods were dubbed 'terroristic' by those committing them, though the term also had a nihilistic connotation for the middle and upper classes, who saw no legitimacy in its demands.

It is from this period and these agents that the modern idea of the 'terrorist' solidified – the bomb-thrower in the long overcoat slipping through the crowds of the city. But by virtue of that process, acts of violence whose intent was terror were excluded from that description. Parallel with the violent turn of anarchist groups had been the rise and spread of pogroms throughout Tsarist Russia and beyond – the systematic terrorisation of Jewish populations with the intent of compelling them to flee, and so render the nation *Judenfrei*.

In the US, the end of the Civil War and the Reconstruction period had committed the federal government to enforcing racial equality in terms of voting rights, and black politicians were being elected for the first time. White reaction to this saw the creation of the Ku Klux Klan, a group that employed distinctive masks and night rides as a means of terrifying black people into not participating in mainstream society. The first Klan died out in 1874 only because they were successful – by that time Reconstruction had been defeated by a resurgence of Southern white racism that would usher in the 'Jim Crow' era. This strange dualism in the assessment of political violence would continue into the next century – the more amorphous and less theorised, and usually more lethal, terrorism of the Right would not be known by that name, while the more focused and politicised acts of the Left would gain the aura of 'ultimate evil'. For the 19th-century mainstream, pogroms, night rides, and other massacres of the Right could be taken as immoral but, to a degree, understandable expressions of national and civilisational defence – against Jewish conspiracy, black 'savages' and the like. Since they were a response to rising progressive and liberal demands and victories, it was these latter, mass-based forces that were blamed for provoking simple and honest men to murder.

A visit from the goon squad

Right-wing state and non-state terror would meet in 1871, with the suppression of the Paris Commune, the radical insurrection that had taken popular control of the city for three months at the end of the Franco-Prussian war. Overrun by French (and Prussian) forces, the Communards were treated with unprecedented brutality by the resurgent armies, executing more than 20,000 of them, in vast batches. The suppression and massacre of the Commune, though state-directed, also saw the beginnings of what would become the '*Freikorps*' model – squads of soldiers acting autonomously against Leftist civilians – and eventually forming one stream that would flow into fascism. In Italy, in Germany, in Colombia, in a hundred other places, the *Freikorps* would appear again and again – usually in response to non-violent Left-wing political activity. State and non-state terror would commingle and complement each other.

In European fascism, terrorist groups would simply become the nucleus of military special forces once power had been won. In the post-WWII US war against progressive forces in Latin America, sub-contracting, from the CIA to local juntas to death squads, would become a stabilised system lasting for decades. The Left, as first Marxism and then Leninism became dominant, eschewed non-state terror as a political tool (while relying on state terror to consolidate control in the USSR). However, Left and Right terror were far from symmetrical – for the Left's use of violence in the service of an abstract and future ideal could be

construed as uniquely a-human; Right-wing terror, though deplored, could be presented as an understandable reaction to threat of loss – loss of land, loss of identity and heritage, etc.

The disjuncture instituted in this period survives today. Lethal violence by small Left groups is instantly labelled as 'terrorism' and becomes renowned – in the form of groups such as the RAF/Baader-Meinhof, and the Red Brigades, whose deeds echo down the decades – while symmetrical Right-wing terror disappears into the background. Thus, in the Irish 'troubles' of 1969-1998, the image of an Irish terrorist became the 'soldier' of the Provisional IRA, an anti-imperialist nationalist group influenced by various forms of Marxism. The lethal violence of the various Loyalist/Protestant groups rarely gained the label of 'terrorism'. This was particularly illuminating, since many IRA attacks were often more accurately described as 'urban guerrilla' warfare – either attacks directed at armed services, or urban bombings with warnings phoned in. A typical Loyalist attack was indiscriminate – shooting up patrons in a Catholic pub, for example – but this clearly more terrifying attack would rarely gain that name. Labelled instead 'sectarian violence', it could be seen as simply a product of the violent context, rather than a strategy as organised (though less theorised) as that of the IRA.

In Italy, during the 'years of lead' of the late 1960s and the 1970s, this double standard was even more pronounced. From the first mass violent attack – the 1969 Milan Piazza Fontana bombing – to the final act – the 1980 Bologna Train Station bombing – the culprit in most cases of mass, indiscriminate death, was one of the 'black fascist' groups that had first split from the allegedly 'post-fascist' Movemente Sociale d'Italia (MSI) in the 1950s. Neo-fascist group Ordine Nuovo had most likely committed the Fontana bombing (though anarchists were initially accused of it, and framed for it). The similar Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari had bombed Bologna. Once again the attacks – indiscriminate civilian slaughter designed to cultivate a 'strategy of tension' – were far more terroristic than the operations of the Red Brigades, but have been lost to the historical imagination (at least outside Italy).

Elsewhere this process of imagining terror could be fluid as alliances changed. Thus as the Palestinian liberation movement turned to spectacular and increasingly lethal terror attacks, the most obvious link and influence – that of the Zionist Irgun and Lehi, who had perfected small-group terror in the 1940s – had to be played down, in order to present the Palestinians as non-Western 'savages'. As their former leaders became prime ministers of Israel, the Zionist terrorists were subtly reframed as 'freedom fighters' and their earlier acts – especially those against Arabs – were forgotten.

Non-state terror that conforms to dominant political and cultural power will always merge into the political background, almost as soon as it occurs. Neither its clear and explicit politics nor its conscious evil can be fully acknowledged, for that would serve to make clear more static structures of violence that surround it.

History on steroids?

Thus, Anders Breivik's terror/assassination attack on the Norwegian Labour Party, far from having no history, no continuity with politics, is in fact overstocked with it. Like a one-man *Freikorps*, a solo death squad, pumped up on steroids and heavy metal, he saw himself as the armed wing of a larger European struggle, combining the targeted assassination of enemies with propaganda of the deed. Yet in the mainstream discourse his act could not be recognised as a political terror attack, one that had continuity with a history of Right-wing terror. Mainstream commentators and politicians missed the distinctive move that Right-wing terror

employs; its deployment of the same rhetorical justification for terror that emerged in the wake of 1789 – the notion that it is the weapon of the weak and the just against the powerful and oppressive.

When such a justification is mobilised by the Right, it can only occur through an imaginary and fantastic inversion of real power relations. In Northern Ireland, Italy, in England where the English Defence League stage their thuggish and intimidating rallies, a fantasy of defeat and resistance must be maintained – fascisti, loyalists and lone-wolf Knights Templar are insurgents in a world that has been conquered by their enemies. Such 'conquest' is marked not by the domination of their enemies but by their very existence – the presence of difference and dissent, of alternative viewpoints and other races disturbs the idea of totality, and this, by its nature, marks defeat, and licences violent insurgency.

In thus licensing himself, Breivik made continuity with recent Right-wing terror, but he also drew on the oldest traditions of establishment violence and terror – of the Crusades, of the Inquisition, of the embattled City besieged by barbarians, and threatened by traitors within.

6

What is Fascism, Now?

Anindya Bhattacharyya

The reporting of Anders Breivik's massacre on 22 July 2011 proceeded in two distinct phases. Initially the bombing of government buildings in Oslo and the shooting spree on Utøya were assumed to be the work of Islamists. The airwaves were full of terrorism 'experts' pontificating on why Jihadis had chosen to target Norway. But once it became clear that the perpetrator was a Norwegian with far-Right sympathies, the narrative quickly changed. Discussion of the political drive behind the atrocities became muddled, if not muted altogether.

Breivik was typically presented as a lone madman whose inner working could not be rationally fathomed. Some even argued that to ascribe a political motivation to his actions was tantamount to disrespect for the dead. Others made fitful attempts to preserve the trope of religious fanaticism: true, Breivik was no Muslim, but perhaps he was a 'Christian fundamentalist'. Yet Breivik's 'manifesto' explicitly repudiated that label, insisting that his was primarily a 'cultural Christianity' that did not depend upon any specific religious commitment.

Above all, we saw a systematic obfuscation of Breivik's fascism. While Breivik's affinities with far-Right ideology could scarcely be denied, the emphasis fell upon apparent divergences between his position and those traditionally held by fascists. The effect of this was to yet again cut Breivik off from any familiar political reference points and present him as an unfathomable enigma.

Fascism as ideology

What is going on here? Why is there this reluctance to discuss Breivik's politics, either in general terms or as specifically fascist? One reason is undoubtedly a certain ideological embarrassment. David Cameron, Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel may condemn Breivik, but all three have drawn from the same well as he. To bring attention to Breivik's politics thus risks bringing attention to the fact that his position merely intensifies common themes of today's mainstream discourse: that multiculturalism is dysfunctional, and that Europe's Muslims are an alien intrusion into Christendom.

The same coyness over the question of fascism characterises the mainstream media's approach to a whole series of far-Right phenomena. Take the English Defence League (EDL), for example – an organisation much praised by Breivik. Their emergence has prompted a great deal of breast-beating from politicians. We are told the EDL is a product of 'white working class alienation' and a lamentable 'loss of national identity'. The EDL's racism is more or less ignored, as are its documented links to a long British tradition of fascist street thuggery.

But there is more going on here than liberal ideology simply not wanting to recognise Breivik's fascism, or that of the EDL. There is also a deeper sense in which liberal ideology

cannot recognise fascism even if it wanted to. For it starts off from assumptions that prevent it from ever constructing an effective answer to the question: what is fascism?

The basic flaw of liberal approaches to specifying fascism is the notion that one can find an answer to this question on the plane of ideology alone. The liberal political taxonomy is based upon 'schools of thought'. A political current can be more or less identified with what its proponents say, with their 'views'. It follows that political struggle is in essence the exchange of these views. This exchange can be civil or fractious, more or less regulated, but the fundamental model of politics as a rational discussion, a debate between competing views, remains fixed.

The problems with this approach become evident the moment one tries to apply it to fascism. To start with, fascist ideology – if such a thing can be said to coherently exist – is wildly contradictory and unstable, held together in the last instance by mysticism rather than rationality.

Moreover, the notion that politics can be boiled down to a debate between rival proponents espousing their positions assumes that the statement of position is an honest one. But what if the proponent is lying? This is not merely an abstract possibility: fascism elevates opportunism to a principle and makes a point of misrepresenting itself in the public sphere. The notion that you say one thing to the general public while reserving an esoteric truth to a party hardcore is part of the basic strategy of organisations such as the British National Party (BNP) or France's Front National. The liberal model of more or less honest debate is unable to cope with this kind of systematic deception.

Finally, the net effect of trying to situate fascism ideologically is to find it everywhere and nowhere. Everywhere, in the sense that no firm dividing line can be drawn between the declarations of fascists and everyday reactionary sloganeering. Nowhere, in the sense that central tranches of classical fascism – eugenic race science, the corporate state – were once commonplace features across the political spectrum but are now almost universally discredited.

This 'everywhere and nowhere' effect appears in debates around the popular usage of the terms 'fascist' or 'Nazi'. On the one hand, conservative pedants insist the terms can only be used to refer to historical political phenomena associated with Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, respectively. This consigns fascism to the historical past and makes the notion of a contemporary fascism a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, we see a hyperbolic inflation of the term fascism to encompass anything anyone might find remotely authoritarian or unpleasant. Thus Islamism, socialism, anarchism, the struggles of the Palestinians or the people of Latin America – all of this becomes 'fascist'.

Frequently the two positions are combined in a kind of absurd synthesis whereby fascism is omnipresent across the political spectrum with the exception of the politics that actually exhibits a demonstrable filiation to the tradition of Hitler and Mussolini. Needless to say, this line of argument is particularly popular among fascists themselves, who are keen to displace accusations of fascism onto their accusers.

Beyond the liberal critique: Fascism as political movement

So what happens once we move beyond this liberal approach to political taxonomy and start thinking of political currents in terms of what they do, not just what they say – as forces in a material struggle rather than as stances in an idealised debate?

This approach is taken by the historian Robert O Paxton in his illuminating 2004 work *The Anatomy of Fascism*. Paxton analyses fascism first and foremost as a political movement, with a programme and trajectory, rather than as a mode of government or a set of ideological beliefs. He also specifies the historical context for the emergence of fascism: it was a reaction to the revolutionary wave that swept Europe in the early 20th century. Traditional means of repression were of limited use in the face of these mass uprisings. The police force was too small and the army too prone to mutiny. What was needed was a reactionary political movement with a mass base, and fascism arose to fulfil that need.

Paxton's approach to fascism is a great improvement over the usual historical vagaries. In particular, he grasps how nationalist movements with superficially different ideological preoccupations can nevertheless share a common programme and method, and it is these commonalities that characterise their fascist nature.

But Paxton is weak on the question of class. He rightly rejects the Stalinist definition of fascism as simply the most reactionary form of capitalist domination. But he doesn't consider alternative Marxist analyses of fascism, notably those of Leon Trotsky, despite independently arriving at many of the same conclusions. Trotsky's analysis of fascism, developed in the 1920s and 1930s, takes pains to distinguish it from earlier and less sophisticated forms of reaction. He singles out three key features of fascist movements that characterise them and set them apart from superficially similar political strains.

First, fascism has dual character. It acts as both a mass street movement and an 'official' political organisation, claiming to abide by the norms of democratic politics while simultaneously organising terror gangs on the ground against the Left and minorities. We see this pattern today with the EDL's disingenuous insistence that it is 'peacefully protesting against militant Islam', or in the BNP's specious claims to have cast aside its previous racism in a bid for electoral respectability.

Second, fascism's mass base is rooted in the petty bourgeoisie. It appeals not to the very poorest in society, but to those in the middle, who have been typically lifted up during economic booms but face the prospect of crashing back down to earth in an economic crisis. These are people whose lives are structured by competition rather than traditions of solidarity found in the workplace. Hence the appeal of racist theories that blame economic woes on foreigners gobbling up resources – and hence the importance of radical nationalism to weld them together. Again we see this pattern in the EDL and BNP today. Contrary to the fashionable notion that these groups represent the 'white working class', the empirical evidence suggests they are disproportionately middle income and self-employed.

Third, fascism's aim is to seize state power by crushing the Left on the streets and by undermining democratic rights and institutions from within. Hitler and Mussolini both posed as democratic politicians only to destroy all democratic and progressive rights once they seized state power. Persecuting ethnic minorities is a means to this end, rather than an end

itself. And the total character of fascism's counter-revolution means it is a threat to social democrats and liberals, not just to the far Left. Breivik's targeting of Norway's social

democrats is in line with this general fascist paranoia that sees 'cultural Marxism' across the progressive political spectrum.

An instrumental approach to the prevailing ideological landscape

With this characterisation in mind we can revisit and clarify the question of Breivik's fascism. To start with, the milieu he operated in – his network of contacts on Facebook and other internet channels – is clearly dominated by fascist organisations, the EDL being the most prominent of them. Breivik – who is himself stereotypically petty bourgeois, with a string of failed businesses and moneymaking schemes to his name – is the product of fascist movements. He identifies politically as a 'nationalist' – the preferred term used by fascists to describe themselves. And much of his 'manifesto' is spent pondering and considering the different strains of nationalist ideology currently prevalent on the fascist scene.

Far from representing a serious choice between rival political currents, Breivik is clear that the choice of ideology is at bottom a tactical question. He rejects Hitler-style overt anti- semitism, not out of any principled objection to Jew hatred, but because it is more effective to target Muslims and feign support for Jews against Muslims. Indeed, at points Breivik baldly states that Britain and France still have a 'Jewish problem'. These are not the words of a 'post-fascist', but of a fascist taking a thoroughly instrumental attitude to the contemporary ideological landscape, and adapting his preoccupations to fit.

We also see the dual character of his pronouncement, on the one hand paying lip service to 'secular democracy' (conceived as a European tradition under threat from Muslim immigrants) and sexual liberalism (ditto), while on the other hand personally professing thoroughly reactionary attitudes on these and other issues. In particular we can see how Breivik's 'Christianity' is again little more than an ideological shell, a series of tropes and themes marshalled together for the purposes of justifying his hatred of Muslims, multiculturalism and 'cultural Marxists'.

Finally we can see the warning and challenge that Breivik poses to all forms of democratic and progressive politics in the West. His massacre should have prompted widespread contrition among politicians who have fuelled the pan-European anti-Muslim agenda. Or if not contrition, at least a pause for thought. Instead the BBC saw fit to invite the EDL's repulsive leader Tommy Robinson onto its flagship *Newsnight* programme, where Robinson proceeded to threaten many more Breiviks if his band of Islamophobic thugs were not appeased and allowed to hold their 'peaceful protests'.

We have been here before. In the 1920s it was a commonplace among German politicians that while Hitler's 'extreme' anti-semitism should be decried, he was responding to genuine concerns and that a 'moderate anti-semitism' should be practised to prevent the Nazis from growing. History records that this policy had the opposite effect. Similarly attempts by mainstream politicians today to throw sops to the racists by attacking Muslims, immigrants, multiculturalism, etc., will only fuel the rise of groups like the EDL. And if they continue to rise we will face not just one or two more Breiviks, but dozens.

The lessons from the bloody history of fascism are clear. The question is: who is willing to listen and act?

7

Traitors in our Midst: targeting the green/Left in the 'war on terror'

Lizzie O'Shea

Francis Fukuyama declared in the closing decade of last century that the fall of the Berlin Wall had signalled 'the end of history'. This statement confirmed the views of those such as Margaret Thatcher who asserted that 'there is no alternative'. Yet barely a decade had passed before this supposed consensus on the supremacy of market capitalism began to fall apart. Activist movements sprang up across the globe, challenging neo-liberalism and its self-declared credentials as a source of human progress. Such movements captured the world's attention first in Seattle, and found their way to the Crown Casino in Melbourne.

No sooner had these movements survived their first birth pangs than an extremist fragment of political Islam took such dramatic action that their message about American hegemony would become a defining point for a generation. Ten years on, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon appear as the beginning of a new era. Fukuyama was even more wildly wrong than first imagined; indeed, it seems impossible to think about politics today without serious consideration of the role and reaction to terrorism.

The War on Terror put Western nations on a war footing with a diffuse and obscure enemy. As a general rule, the last decade has seen the phrase 'War on Terror' characterised in a persistently vague and '[elastic](#)' fashion. Recently, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano [outlined the proposition in the following terms](#):

> [I]n addition to the direct threats we continue to face from al-Qaeda, we also face growing threats from other foreign-based terrorist groups that are inspired by al-Qaeda ideology but have few operational connections to the core al-Qaeda group. And, perhaps most crucially, we face a threat environment where violent extremism is not defined or contained by international borders. Today, we must address threats that are homegrown as well as those that originate abroad.

It is difficult to conjure a more sweeping and diverse enemy to fear. Such a nebulous idea has, unsurprisingly, turned into a blank cheque for neo-conservatives to carry out their agenda. This has resulted in military adventures abroad to enforce political and economic dominance of the US.

As such, the domestic political situation in the US, Europe and Australia has been characterised by a wartime mentality. 'Every nation in every region now has a decision to make', declared George Bush in 2001. 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists'. An example of political snookering, Bush did not use the phrase 'with us or against us', which is how his words are often (incorrectly) paraphrased. He was deliberately careful to avoid offering the possibility of supporting neither Washington nor the terrorists.

In this context, it was not just terrorists, foreign enemy combatants or Islam that were the problem. Very quickly the eyes of politicians, state bureaucrats and conservatives were trained on finding traitors in our midst, the fifth column that weakened their righteous struggle against the scourge of terrorism. In the West at least, the wartime mentality has involved a domestic campaign of censorship, surveillance and aggressive marginalisation of

alternative political and social movements. This was not some sideshow to the main imperative of defeating Al Qaeda, but was tied up with the very logic of the new global political dynamic ushered in by 9/11: that of the 'War on Terror'.

Political trends post 9/11: plurality and neutrality

The War on Terror has been an attack on the liberal notion of political plurality. With the necessity that everyone get behind hating the enemy, compromise is not an option. Criticism of the war effort is treacherous and against the nation. Conservative thinker Ann Coulter explains the logic of the Right's position :

> Whether they are defending the Soviet Union or bleating for Saddam Hussein, liberals are always against America. They are either traitors or idiots, and on the matter of America's self-preservation, the difference is irrelevant.

Such accusations of disloyalty have often taken a threatening tone. In 2005, the City of San Francisco passed a motion urging public high schools and colleges to prohibit on-campus military recruiting. Fox News host Bill O'Reilly's response was to suggest that San Francisco didn't deserve to be defended from Al-Qaeda:

> [I]f Al Qaeda comes in here and blows you up, we're not going to do anything about it. We're going to say, look, every other place in America is off limits to you, except San Francisco. You want to blow up the Coit Tower? Go ahead.

The wartime mentality 'allows the suspension of certain bothersome restrictions', which permits such morally objectionable and plainly hypocritical arguments to be made. Sarah Palin rendered legitimate the use of rifle cross hairs as political imagery and it was not until Jared Lee Loughner went on a shooting spree, gravely wounding one of her targets, that such tendencies were properly criticised.

A section of liberal thinkers who supported the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan also took up such ideas, and in no less inflammatory a manner. This 'liberal hawk' position was articulated by Christopher Hitchens early on in his post-9/11 conversion to neoconservative critic of radical Islam. In response to the idea that the West had some role in creating the conditions for which 9/11 could occur, he declared:

> I have no hesitation in describing this mentality, carefully and without heat, as soft on crime and soft on fascism. No political coalition is possible with such people and, I'm thankful to say, no political coalition with them is now necessary. It no longer matters what they think.

In other words, those who do not subscribe to the neoconservative viewpoint are ideologically mistaken and, in a flourish of Hitchens' trademark hubris, politically irrelevant. No alternative to the proposal of war is possible: to subscribe to one is to align with fascists and criminals.

Paradoxically, the idea of the importance of 'balance' in the political media has simultaneously taken root, which has resulted in the airing of the most extreme pro-war ideologies. The political debate has been characterised by a necrotic obsession with neutrality, particularly within the mainstream media. But it is a strange kind of neutral stance. Under the guise of appearing objective, the media has given voice to increasingly extreme conservative views, which have shifted the terrain of discussion Rightwards. Suddenly voices

from of the outer limits of reactionary politics have had a right to be heard, even if outlandish, clearly incendiary or openly discriminatory. Consider that during the recent spate of Right-wing activists burning the Koran, sections of the political media were quick to defend the right to freedom of speech, deliberately obscuring the racist overtones of such an action. One such commentator expressed it neatly in condemning the riots that followed Terry Jones' 'Burn a Koran Day':

> [I]t betrays a really serious and powerful lack of moral perspective to condemn Terry Jones for burning a book rather than Afghanis for beheading foreign workers over the burning (or even to condemn them equally).

In opening the floodgates to such ultra-Right rhetoric, all perspective on the possibility that it can produce horrific results in the real world is lost. The debate remains a purely abstract one and the commitment to 'balance' precludes condemnation of any idea, no matter how offensive.

Similarly when the plans to construct a mosque in downtown New York were debated, the oppositional voices were brazen in their attempts to link the supporters of the mosque to the extremism of those responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

> So what is the real positive excuse for a mosque at Ground Zero? … [Perhaps it is] to show that we have nothing against the culture from which they came. And nothing against the societies across all Islam which cheered the news of the three thousand dead…
>
> In fact, the presence of an Islamic place of prayer at the sight of the human catastrophe of 9/11 will be an insult to the dead, our dead.

These voices were regularly left unchallenged and such hysteria was only rarely called to account. The 'storm of partisan bloviation' unleashed over the issue reflected a shift to the Right that was troubling on several levels:

> It reflects our tendency to exaggerate the real threat posed by Islamic extremism and what the U.S. should do about it. And nine years after 9/11, the fight over the mosque near Ground Zero shows how obsessed we remain with an enemy that may no longer exist.

Such rhetorical gangsterism has also involved alarmist Right-wing voices presenting themselves as mere truth tellers. Hence Daniel Pipes, for example, has declared himself as 'waging a war' on militant Islam, but describes his objective thus: 'I approach the religion of Islam in a neutral fashion, neither praising it nor attacking it but in a spirit of inquiry'. This kind of lofty language is not easily reconciled with Pipes' campaign of intellectual thuggery towards those that disagree with his worldview, utilising systematic demonisation and accusations of racism.

The rise of the 'new atheism' politics has provided new opportunities to give a liberal spin to anti-Muslim racism. The death rattle of identity politics was seized upon by neoconservatives as a moment to crush political correctness and openly, unashamedly, point fingers and guns at the true enemies. The French government was an opponent of the war on Iraq, but it has also since banned the burqa. Belgium has followed suit and the Netherlands and Italy may not be far behind. Switzerland recently voted to ban the construction of minarets. The propaganda for the campaign involved drawing a link between Islamic practices and violence via imagery of 'black minarets shooting up out of it like missiles'. Such campaigns and initiatives are justified on the basis that radical Islam, with its ancient and women-hating ways, is to be

feared and contained. Any opposition to such initiatives is invariably painted as condoning the inherent sexism and backward mysticism of Islam.

At each point in these political debates, extremist Right-wing views were given a platform that might otherwise have been denied to them. The Swiss government, for example, was not supportive of the ban on minarets, but was required to put it to a vote (which was ultimately successful) thanks to a campaign organised by a Right-wing party. While traditional social democrats have generally not supported a ban on the burqa, they also give ground by accepting it as 'a real dilemma', and are quick to acknowledge that people may be 'understandably nervous' about extremists. In the pursuit of balance increasingly Right-wing opinions have gained legitimacy and been accommodated to a far greater extent than ever before.

'traitors' and the hysteria that creates them

Central to the strategy of putting society on a war footing has been the demonisation of any criticism of Western governments or policies. Bush's 'for or against' ultimatum has been put into practice via a sustained assault on a whole host of dissenting thinkers, activists, and movements. Such dissidents are not only weakening Western resolve with their criticism, the argument goes, their ideas are totalitarian and even pro-fascist in their logic, explicitly designed to undermine democracy.

Ann Coulter's rhetoric has escalated markedly over time, particularly as the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan began to sour amongst the public. In her 2011 book *Demonic*, she applied the adjective of the title to 'liberals' – who include a cast of thousands: the KKK, environmentalists, unions, advocates of health care reform and anti-war protesters. Tracing her theory from the French Revolution to today, she casts Left-wing thinking as responsible for mob violence that undermines 'peaceable order'. In short, peaceful Left-wing dissent and political activity is inherently traitorous and anyone who is not a Republican is a threat to democracy.

Jonah Goldberg has gone further in coining the phrase 'liberal fascism': the notion that modern progressive thinking and fascism have fundamental ideological commonalities. It is a concept designed to demonise any idea that the government should provide services for its citizens via the redistribution of wealth. According to Goldberg, the market should reign supreme and any attempt to modify its excesses represents a reversion to fascist thinking. Such intellectual extremism and conceptual simplicity leaves little room for interpretation.

Left ideas have thus been increasingly demonised; to the extent that commentators explicit draw links between social democratic activism and terrorism. Right-wing Australian columnist Miranda Devine brazenly argued only a few months after 9/11 that there were 'disturbing similarities between the anti-globalisation/anti-capitalism forces and Osama bin Laden's terrorists' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 2001).

In Australia, this philosophy has also shown contempt for mainstream Left social democrats. Right wing columnist Andrew Bolt blithely referred to the Greens as 'greenshirts' in an unsubtle attempt to tarnish them with the ideological brush of fascism. Senior Liberal Senator George Brandis went further, explicitly comparing the methods and values of the Greens to the Nazis. Not content with seeing Left activists as being aligned with terrorism, some hard

Right commentators have now used the recent UK riots to try to draw links between Left-wing ideas and street violence.

Dissent from the Left has therefore been labelled as inherently suspect and impliedly traitorous activity. This has been matched by state activity intended to monitor, control and undermine dissident individuals and organisations. Peace Fresno, a Californian anti-war group, was infiltrated by an undercover officer from the Sheriff Department's Anti-Terrorism unit. This was carried out with minimal fuss and a stunning lack of political controversy. Such infiltration has also occurred in the United Kingdom, with police officers working undercover in a number of Left-wing and alternative groups. According to civil rights groups, the number of police Special Branch officers, including undercover agents, has more than doubled in the past 25 years.

Such state activities have become more audacious over time. For example, prior to George W Bush's visit to Sydney in 2007, police and the government took pre-emptive action in dividing the city into zones and releasing a list of persons who were not allowed to enter certain zones of the city on the basis that they may engage in actions that were illegal or disruptive. These individuals, largely students and Left-wing activists, were singled out on the basis of what they might do, not what they had done, an approach that was in line with legal frameworks established under new anti-terrorism laws.

Such actions inevitably create links between the rhetorical hysteria around terrorism and the tactics of Left-wing activism. Nearly 10 years later, Greg Sheridan demonstrated the persistence of such tactics, in his condemnation of Noam Chomsky as the recipient of the Sydney Peace Prize.

> Chomsky is an especially interesting choice for a peace prize in the 10th anniversary year of the World Trade Centre attacks – as an apologist for Osama Bin Laden.

Right-wing pundits like Sheridan provide the theoretical underpinnings for throwing doubt on the Left's fitness to be part of the patriotic mainstream. The surveillance and criminalisation by state authorities have been the practical arm of the effort.

The middle ground moves Right

The effect of all this is that what is considered the 'middle ground' has shifted dramatically to the Right. Extremist views are seen as increasingly more acceptable and democratic alternatives as irrelevant to the political debate or, worse, explicitly evil. Once lost, the political terrain formerly open to the Left's influence has proven difficult to regain.

The attacks on political neutrality and an obsession with objectivity are in fact two sides of the same coin. It is a tendency that has once again emerged in the response to the Norway massacre. Very quickly, the massacre was raised by some on the Left as an opportunity to call for calm, for a return to civilised political debate. That is, Breivik's actions represented the need to turn away from violence and incendiary rhetoric in equal terms by both Right and Left.

The result was that the political centre remained unmoved. Current political and social trends have meant that Breivik's motivations are 'now mainstream issues' and his actions represent a 'wake-up call for security services'. The baseline assumptions of the War on Terror – the

need for a surveillance state; the importance of military campaigns in eradicating terrorism; the idea of multiculturalism (and Islam in particular) as socially problematic – all remain untouched. These political doctrines are now so well accepted they go practically <u>unnoticed</u>.

In the current climate, such trends may seem so powerfully entrenched that they could be characterised as something of a political inevitability. But it is worth noting that this was not the thinking of activists at the time of the terrorist attacks. In the days following 9/11, Noam Chomsky was asked about the effect of the terrorist attacks on the 'Seattle Movement'. His response was that the attacks would most likely be used to accelerate programs of militarisation and the winding back of social democratic programs, amongst other things. But he also noted that this strategy 'will not happen without resistance, and I doubt that it will succeed, except in the short term' (Chomsky, *9/11*, 2001).

Sadly, his predictions have turned out to be incorrect. The ideological and practical program of the neoconservatives has proven to be more successful than perhaps first imagined.

Part of the problem is that the Left has felt the need to justify itself repeatedly or, worse, capitulate to the conservative agenda. This has taken the form of consent to the assault on democratic norms and concessions to crude patriotic hysteria. It has been exacerbated by the long march of the mainstream Left into accepting the essence of Thatcher and Fukuyama's propositions that market capitalism represents the pinnacle of social progress. Reduced to seeing their mission as softening the excesses of the system and bargaining away rights, rather than a principled politics, they have too often been frightened into surrendering to the Right's hysterics.

Yet cracks in this situation have started to appear. The Arab Spring has undermined the Islamophobic interpretation of geopolitics that laid the basis for the Right's confidence. These grassroots movements have shaken the commonly accepted version of progress, which has traditionally been framed around the liberalisation of markets. Key media outlets that have propagated the demonisation of dissent, most especially the global empire of Rupert Murdoch, have fallen into crisis. In a few short months, it has become clear that the concepts at the heart of the War on Terror are actually quite fragile and things can change at a pace that was previously considered unimaginable. Breivik's sickening campaign of terror has thrown light on the danger of a far Right unbridled. To take advantage of the new circumstances the Left will need to reassert its place in the mainstream debate not by adapting to it but by pointing the finger at the real threat that walks among us.

8

Strange Bedfellows: The new nexus between Israel and the far Right

Antony Loewenstein

A Russian neo-Nazi delegation travelled to Israel in July 2011 after an invitation by far Right Israeli politicians and an editor of a pro-settler news service. The Holocaust deniers visited Israel's Holocaust centre, Yad Vashem, despite being photographed previously giving Nazi salutes and publishing songs celebrating Adolf Hitler on their website.

The pair was interviewed on Israeli TV. One said that the idea of the Jewish state 'excites me' because it involves 'an ancient people who took upon itself a pioneer project to revive a modern state and nation'. The TV journalist then asked how a neo-Nazi could now embrace Zionism. The other Russian quickly responded by explaining the common enemy they both faced: 'We're talking about radical Islam which is the enemy of humanity, enemy of democracy, enemy of progress and of any sane society'.

The growing appeal of Israel to the world's Right-wing community should come as no surprise. In December 2010 a much larger delegation of European far-Right politicians, including a Belgian politician with clear ties to SS veterans and a Swedish politician with connections to the country's fascist past, also paid their respects at Yad Vashem. They were welcomed by some members of the Israeli Knesset and agreed to sign a 'Jerusalem Declaration', guaranteeing Israel's right to defend itself against terror. 'We stand at the vanguard in the fight for the Western, democratic community' against the 'totalitarian threat' of 'fundamentalist Islam', read the document.

The signatories were some of Europe's most successful anti-immigration politicians who long ago realised that backing Israel was a clever way to guarantee respectability for a cause that risked being framed as extremist or racist. One Israeli politician who met the delegation, Nissim Zeev, a member of ultra-Orthodox, Right-wing party Shas, embraced the group: 'At the end of the day, what's important is their attitude, the fact they really love Israel'.

Kent Ekeroth, international secretary for the Sweden Democrats, a populist anti-immigration party, told *Newsweek* in February 2011 that his position was sensible considering the situation in Europe. 'It's all about Islam', he said. 'You can't be against the Islamisation of Europe, and, at the same time, support the Arabs in the Israel-Palestinian conflict'. Ekeroth is Jewish, runs 'the anti-Islam activities' of his party and believes that 'Jews who fight us instead of their real enemy are digging their own graves'.

These increasingly mainstream attitudes have marinated across Europe for at least a decade and were deeply reflected in the writings of the Norway killer Anders Breivik. His manifesto contains positive references to Israel, a love for the only ethnocentric nation on earth. In this worldview, hardline Zionism is bravely fighting the invading Muslim hordes. Jewish, American journalist Max Blumenthal wrote after the Norway massacres that Breivik and his ilk saw themselves on the frontline of a new battle for the soul of Europe.

> Thus they turn for inspiration to Israel … a country that substantially bases its policies towards the Palestinians on what its leaders call 'demographic considerations'. This is why Israeli flags invariably fly above black- masked English Defence League mobs, and why Geert Wilders, the most prominent Islamophobic politician in the world, routinely travels to Israel to demand the forced transfer of Palestinians.

Yesterday's anti-Semites have reformed themselves as today's crusading heroes against an unstoppable Muslim birth-rate on a continent that now sees Islam as an intolerant and ghettoised religion. This has become a mainstream position that generates electoral success. The Left has stumbled to adequately respond. An African-American President, seen as weak, too liberal and desperate to ingratiate himself with the Arab world, leaves Israel to emerge as the ideal candidate for favoured nation in an insecure, post 9/11 world.

Barack Obama can't compete with Israel's brazen anti-democratic attacks on democratic norms against its Arab neighbours, internal critics and Palestinian citizens. Ironically, despite the rhetoric amongst the global Zionist community that Washington has become overly harsh towards the Israeli government, Israel has never had a better friend in the White House. Defence Minister Ehud Barak told Fox News in August 2011 that 'I can hardly remember a better period of support, American support and cooperation and similar strategic understanding'. America remains Israel's indispensable enabler, a fact Breivik wilfully ignores in his manifesto.

Breivik's interest in Israel wasn't an accidental quirk of his Google search terms. It was reflective of years of indoctrination from that fateful September day in 2001 onwards. None of Breivik's Right-wing heroes openly praised his killings – politically speaking, half-hearted condemnations were the order of the day – because their vision of open war with Islam was arguably even more clinical. They cheered as America and Israel used the vast power of the state to attack, bomb, drone, kidnap, torture and murder literally countless Muslim victims in the last decade in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, Somalia and beyond.

This clash of civilisations wasn't carried out by a lone wolf such as Breivik but instead an arsenal of unlimited firepower. Preventing the seemingly inevitable imposition of Sharia law in the West, including Israel, would require tough measures and there wasn't just one way to crack the Muslim egg; Breivik took it upon himself to take up arms and defend his depraved way of life. As Susan Sontag famously wrote shortly after 9/11, 'In the matter of courage (a morally neutral virtue): whatever may be said of the perpetrators of Tuesday's slaughter, they were not cowards'.

Breivik's actions were undeniably barbaric but how are we to compare him with the cheerleaders of the 'War on Terror' who cheer from the sidelines as state terror is unleashed on the trembling innocents of Gaza, Baghdad or Kandahar? Israel and America have largely obliterated the legal and moral distinction between civilians and enemy combatants, therefore allowing the protection of Israeli and American troops at the expense of anybody in their way. Colonial logic displayed by America and Israel dictates that war crimes are never committed by leaders, only underlings, and accountability is a responsibility of lesser states desperate for diplomatic, financial or military largesse. Suckling on the moneyed tit of Western power never seemed so transparently amoral.

Breivik admired this Israeli can-do attitude but equally dismissed Left-wing Jews who supported Palestinian rights. 'Jews that support multiculturalism today are as much of a threat to Israel and Zionism as they are to us', he wrote. For him, Arabs, whether Palestinian, Egyptian or Saudi Arabian, were a Muslim threat that had to be countered (not that he

seemed to appreciate the small but significant number of Christians in the Arab world who share most, if not all, of the opposition to American and Israeli designs on the region, by Arab Muslims).

Breivik mirrored the familiar separation of 'good Jews' and 'bad Jews' that appear in Western dialogue over the Israel/Palestine conflict. The nationalistic, Arab-hating Jew who believes in the never-ending occupation of Palestinian land is praise-worthy but the questioning, anti-Zionist Jew is a threat that must be eliminated. The commentators, journalists and politicians who receive mainstream acceptance and appear regularly in our media such as Daniel Pipes, who calls for the bombing of Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran, are welcomed into the club of popular Islamophobes because they speak the language of domination and violence reflected in our media and political discourse on a daily basis. Demanding death be visited upon Muslims, Leftists and perceived enemies of Western civilisation was alright because unlike Breivik they were savvy enough to back what many in the general population openly cheered; bloodless crimes, what journalists rarely witness, are easy to support because they have neither human face nor inhumane scream.

My enemy's enemy is my friend

The Norway massacre forced hardline supporters of Israel and haters of Islam into an uncomfortable position. One of the more notorious, American blogger Pamela Geller, condemned the killings as 'horrific' but not so subtly in the same post reminded readers that the young students who attended summer camp at Utøya were actually witnessing an 'anti-Semitic indoctrination training centre'. How? Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre had visited the camp and called for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, apparently making him an anti-Semite by definition. Regular Jerusalem Post columnist Barry Rubin simply called the youth camp, 'a pro-terrorist program'.

Geller was further incensed that he even called 'Palestinians' Palestinian, because for her and her fellow travellers the Palestinians aren't a real people deserving rights or a homeland. 'Utøya camp was not Islamist', Geller assures us, 'but it was something not much more wholesome'. Thus Islamophobia seamlessly morphed into blind and racist Zionism.

Israel love is ubiquitous on the far Right, a group that traditionally would have loathed Jews for being weak and non-Christian. For example, the blogger Lionheart – who soon after the Norwegian massacre was linked to Breivik as an apparent inspiration – wrote in 2007 that Israel was battling the very forces he most vehemently opposed:

> The people of Israel, Jewish and the Christian Israeli Arab's are no different from those of us living in the West; they are innocent, non-violent, free democratic people seeking to enjoy life. In contrast the Palestinians are murderous monsters who teach their children that there is nothing greater in life than killing Jews and drinking their blood. You may think that is an over exaggeration, believe me it is not, do a little research, and it is what our friends in Israel face on a daily basis.

Within Israel itself the Breivik massacre was dissected in revealing ways. The comments section on many mainstream Israeli newspaper websites wondered if the Norwegian victims even deserved sympathy because of the country's pro-Palestinian stance. Although it was initially presumed the killer was a Muslim extremist, the reality of Breivik's background seemed to illicit even more vicious thoughts. The victims had it coming was the general tone, such has become the hatred of multiculturalism and liberalism within Israel. One comment summed up the sentiment:

> The Norwegians and Europe generally are super anti-Semitic. So 100 people were killed, there are 7 billion more people in the world. I don't pity them, they're my enemies, they hate Israel so they have it coming.

Columns in the Israeli mainstream press took a more measured tone but the attitude was exactly the same; anti-Semitism is the aged old disease that now takes a different, equally insidious form, namely anti-Zionism or opposition to the illegal colonies.

Take Manfred Gerstenfeld, an Israeli writer with a Right-wing pedigree, who accused Norway of 'promoting terror' by funding NGOs that challenge the Israeli government narrative on Gaza and the apartheid wall that runs inside the West Bank. Another piece accused Norway of 'hate-mongering' and being soft on Islamic terror, providing an ideological justification for Breivik's act.

Yet another op-ed claimed that the Norwegian Jewish community were suffering under a wave of anti-Semitic 'hate' in schools and the media. One of the supposed crimes was a newspaper featuring artwork that 'carried a picture of a bloodstained Israeli flag with the Star of David, faceless soldiers and suffering Palestinian victims'. In reality, this wasn't anti-Semitism but legitimate criticism of a supposed democracy. Breivik would not tolerate such openness and neither did many Zionist commentators.

In Australia, the Israel lobby skirted around this uncomfortable reality, both publicly repulsed by the murders but remaining on the record as arguing for boundaries on Middle East debate. Others simply denied that Breivik's sympathies for Right-wing Zionism were relevant to understanding his crimes.

Of course this was absurd. Exaggerating a clash of civilisations has become the bread and butter of countless keyboard warriors in the last decade, with ever-more brutal Israel placed at the forefront of this struggle. Demonising Muslims and calling for their death on a regular basis has consequences. Muslims replacing Jews as the supposed enemy aiming for world domination will come with a price.

Israeli politicians dancing with Europe's far Right allows hate speech to be mainstreamed and encouraged. As Ayoob Kara, a deputy Israeli minister for development who is actively promoting these contacts, told the Israeli daily *Maariv* in June:

> I am looking for ways to lessen the Islamic influence in the world. I believe that is the true Nazism in this world. I am the partner of everyone who believes in the existence of this war.

More disturbingly, Eliezer Cohen, former member of the Knesset with Yisrael Beiteinu, the party of Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, in a recent interview with *Spiegel Online*, argued:

> Right-wing politicians in Europe are more sensitive to the dangers facing Israel. They are talking exactly the same language as Likud and others on the Israeli Right.

This is the crux of the ideology peddled by Breivik and his more publicly acceptable faced heroes. The rhetoric of far-Right bloggers, the Israeli government and Breivik are largely interchangeable on the question of apartheid Israel. Therefore, it comes as no shock that such views are also taught at the highest levels of US law enforcement. A document from 2009, obtained through the American Freedom of Information Act, clearly showed the FBI using a

PowerPoint presentation on 'Islam 101', which presents as fact that Islam 'transforms a country's culture into 7th century Arabian ways'.

The FBI claims to no longer use the slides but the connection is clear. Islamophobia isn't just praised; it's taught as a way of life. A neo-conservative worldview, which places Israel as the country that must be blindly supported if 'rational' values are to be saved, is carefully integrated into protecting America and Europe from the dual threats of Islamic extremism and Muslims in general. The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and against Palestine are central to this struggle. It isn't a giant leap to see where Breivik received his ideological training.

I agree with the co-writer of *The Israel Lobby*, Stephen Walt, who wrote after the Norway massacres that we must be careful not to throw around guilt by association but that Islam haters 'apparently helped convince him [Breivik] that radical violence was necessary in part because there was a looming danger to ‒the West‖'.

Israeli writer Uri Avnery commented that the kind of rhetoric spewed by anti-Islam bloggers is little different to the anti-Arab bigotry expressed by many of the settlers in the West Bank and major figures of the Netanyahu government.

Israelophilia in the service of Islamophobia

Tragically, some of the leading Islamophobes today receive mainstream acceptance because of their position on Israel. Take Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). He argued in the *Washington Post* after the Norway massacres that 'hate crimes' must be condemned, including 'violence motivated by anti-Islamic sentiments'. Furthermore, 'we must always be wary of those whose love for the Jewish people is born out of hatred of Muslims or Arabs'.

They were fine words but the public record since 9/11 shows Foxman and other leaders of the American Zionist lobby fuelling anti-Arab feeling for the sake of uncritical love towards Israel. Foxman himself has embraced Christian fundamentalists such as John Hagee who loathe Palestinians. The lobby has attempted to deflect attention from crimes in Palestine by forming alliances with some of America's most blatant bigots against the Muslim world. Being 'pro-Israel' was seemingly enough to receive the ADL stamp of approval.

The message emanating from the Zionist crowd was at times conflicted yet clear; Breivik could be forgiven for thinking that Israel was striving for racial perfection. *The Jerusalem Post* provided clarification after the attack in a startling editorial. It claimed multiculturalism had failed in Europe, Muslims were a threat to societal harmony and clearly implied that an ethnocracy, such as Israel, was the ideal global model:

> While there is absolutely no justification for the sort of heinous act perpetrated this weekend in Norway, discontent with multiculturalism's failure must not be delegitimatised or mistakenly portrayed as an opinion held by only the most extremist elements of the Right.

The *Post* seemed to defend the mindset, if not the actions, expressed by Breivik, as a common and understandable attitude of simply wanting to 'protect unique European culture and values'. These values did not include Islam or being proud of a racially diverse land.

A week later, the paper issued an apology editorial after a massive backlash against its position. Unlike the first editorial, the editor acknowledged that Breivik's hatred towards Muslims was in danger of being seen as support for Israel and could be welcomed by those who vehemently opposed racial integration:

> This is certainly not the kind of support Israel needs. It is the type of Islamophobia that is all too reminiscent of the Nazis' attitude toward the Jews. Jews, Muslims and Christians in Israel and around the world should be standing together against such hate crimes.

It was a revealing episode that all too clearly explained the 21st-century fusion of colonial Zionism and rejection of immigration from races and religions that may challenge Israel. Adherents to this ideology, such as Breivik, saw no contradiction in wanting an ethnically pure Europe with embracing a people, the Jews, who only relatively recently were treated on the same continent as vermin that must be eliminated.

The Norway killings shone a welcome light on the blind followers of extreme Zionism that have spent the better part of the last decade building a network of Islamophobic shock-troops ready to battle the forces of moderation and reason. Israel, the US Congress and large swathes of the American mainstream press have successfully enveloped this message.

Breivik's real motivations may never be fully understood but his love for Israel didn't appear out of the blue. It was because Zionism and its closest followers have cultivated an image of a country that can only survive without integration, peace with its Arab neighbours or an end to the occupation. Racial domination is the dream. Breivik took this call to a devastating conclusion and his manifesto makes clear that his support for Israel is couched in the language of survival against an unforgiving, intolerant and high Muslim birth-rate world.

You can hear these views on any day of the week in the Israeli Knesset.

9

A Note on Breivik's Anti-Semitism: the national versus the international Jew

Richard Seymour

A common trope in anti-Semitic ideology plays the 'good Jew' off against the 'bad Jew'. So it is with Breivik who re-states in his own language a distinction notoriously made by Winston Churchill, between the 'National Jew' and the 'International Jew'. In a 1920 article, 'Zionism vs Bolshevism: A struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People', Churchill had explained the difference between 'Good and Bad Jews'. The good Jews were those 'National Jews' who, while practising their faith, exhibited undivided loyalty to their nation of habitat. In contrast, the 'International Jew' who showed no such fidelity, or was disloyal, or revolutionary, was a bad Jew. For Churchill, Zionism was to be endorsed, as the creation of a 'Jewish homeland' in British Mandate Palestine would serve the interests of both Jews and the British Empire, and siphon Jewish energies away from revolutionary projects.

So it is for Breivik, who distinguishes between 'loyal' and 'disloyal' Jews. The former are Zionists, and thus nationalists, the latter anti-Zionists and cultural Marxists. In this respect, he poses in his Manifesto the question of whether Hitler's anti-Semitism was rational:

> Were the majority of the German and European Jews disloyal? Yes, at least the so called liberal Jews, similar to the liberal Jews today that opposes nationalism/Zionism and supports multiculturalism. Jews that support multiculturalism today are as much of a threat to Israel and Zionism (Israeli nationalism) as they are to us. So let us fight together with Israel, with our Zionist brothers against all anti-Zionists, against all cultural Marxists/multiculturalists. Conservative Jews were loyal to Europe and should have been rewarded. Instead, [Hitler] just targeted them all. (p 1167)

Breivik's objection to Hitler, then, is that he was indiscriminate in his punishment of Jewish disloyalty, when only 'the majority' were disloyal. The implication is that only the latter should have been 'targeted'. This is not so much Holocaust denial, as Holocaust affirmation. And in Breivik's treatment, even loyal Jews are better disposed of in some far-away land:

> [Hitler] could have easily worked out an agreement with the UK and France to liberate the ancient Jewish Christian lands with the purpose of giving the Jews back their ancestral lands … The UK and France would perhaps even contribute to such a campaign in an effort to support European reconciliation. The deportation of the Jews from Germany wouldn't be popular but eventually, the Jewish people would regard Hitler as a hero because he returned the Holy land to them. (p 1167)

The second principle objection to Hitler, then, is that he did not simply ethnically cleanse the Jews from Germany in the cause of Zionism. For Breivik is fanatically pro-Zionist, seeing in them the 'good Jews' that nationalists can work with. While most, approximately 75% of European and American Jews are 'disloyal' today – being 'multiculturalist (nation-wrecking) Jews' – only 50% of Israeli Jews are 'disloyal'. This 'shows very clearly that we must embrace the remaining loyal Jews as brothers rather than repeating the mistake of the NSDAP'. This is a vital strategic point for Breivik, who maintains that in Western Europe, only the UK and France have a 'Jewish problem' – in contrast to the US which, due to its relatively high Jewish population, 'actually has a very considerable Jewish problem' (p 1167). Breivik's embrace of Zionism puts him at odds with many fascists and neo-Nazis, but he is not out on a limb among his fraternity. For several years now, far-Right groups in

Europe have been gravitating toward a pro-Israel position. Geert Wilders, though not a fascist, represents a strain of radical Right opinion that is pro-Israel. Marine Le Pen, daughter of Jean Marie Le Pen and leader of the fascist Front National (FN) in France, argues that the FN has always been 'Zionistic'. The British National Party (BNP)'s legal officer, Lee Barnes, gave full-throated support to Israel's 2006 invasion of Lebanon: 'I support Israel 100% in their dispute with Hezbollah … I hope they wipe Hezbollah off the Lebanese map and bomb them until they leave large greasy craters in the cities where their Islamic extremist cantons of terror once stood'. The BNP declared itself 'prudently' on Israel's side, for reasons of 'national interest': Israel was part of a 'Western, if not European' civilization whose opponents were 'trying to conquer the world and subject it to their religion'. An article on the BNP's website explained that the party had cast off 'the leg-irons of conspiracy theories and the thinly veiled anti-Semitism which has held this party back for two decades'. This realignment reflects a geopolitical reality in which the 'war on terror' has revived colonial discourses and designated Islam as the eternal Other of the 'West'. In this situation, Israel is seen as an ally against the Muslim peril. Thus, it is quite logical that anti-Semitism should take the form of embracing the 'good Jew', and Zionism.[1] Yet history, and the thrust of Breivik's argument, suggests that even the 'good Jew' would not be safe from a reconstituted European fascism.

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1 There are also historical precedents. Mussolini, though personally anti-Semitic, was not averse to the claims of Zionism, particularly its Revisionist Right-wing. After 1925, he offered to put the Fascist state at the service of Zionist colonization, calculating that it would weaken the British. Hitler was much more hostile to the Zionist project. While he gleefully pointed out that Zionism was an admission that the Jews were 'a foreign people', he maintained that Jews were incapable of state-building, and at any rate were only interested in Palestine so that they could create a centre for criminal conspiracy, outwith 'the seizure of others'. Nonetheless, the Third Reich was quite willing to make population transfer and trading agreements with the Zionist leadership. See Lenni Brenner, Zionism in the Age of the Dictators, 1983, reproduced at the Marxists Internet Archive: http://www.marxists.de/middleast/brenner; Francis R Nicosia, The Third Reich and the Palestine Question, Transaction Books, 2000

Part Three

Global Aftermath

10

Depoliticising Utøya: Anders Breivik as 'Madman'

Tad Tietze

As hard facts emerged from the carnage in Oslo and Utøya, of the mass murderer being a white native Norwegian with a history of Right-wing political activity and proselytising, the mainstream media found itself caught without a ready-made narrative into which the horrific events could be shoehorned. For almost exactly 10 years, the response to such events conformed to a well-trodden path – of making a hard political case against Islamism, and usually Islam more generally. Even when the actions of terrorists were classified as 'mad' or understandable only with reference to the twisted individual psychologies of the perpetrators, this mental disturbance was the result of hate-filled, anti-Enlightenment doctrines learned in *Madrassas*, where contempt for Western values and rabid fundamentalist explications of the Koran whipped them into a frenzied, murderous state.

If, as Clausewitz observed, war is the continuation of politics by other means, then the War on Terror was not a war against individual Jihadists but the whole socio-cultural context from which they emerged. The distinctions between being Muslim, political Islamism and terrorism were often collapsed, and all Muslims were expected to share blame for the actions of a few. The British author Martin Amis made this logic of collective responsibility clear when he argued,

> What can we do to raise the price of them doing this? There's a definite urge – don't you have it? – to say, 'the Muslim community will have to suffer until it gets its house in order'. What sort of suffering? Not letting them travel. Deportation – further down the road. Curtailing of freedoms. Strip-searching people who look like they're from the Middle East or from Pakistan … Discriminatory stuff, until it hurts the whole community and they start getting tough with their children.

After July 22, as editors and opinion-writers scrambled to change tack when initial 'expert' analysis from 'intelligence' sources claiming it was a Jihadist attack was repudiated, there was a brief moment when Anders Breivik was integrated into the narrative of the rise of the Islamophobic Right in Europe, understood in terms of the subcultural tropes of quasi-fascist blogs and organisations, and his ideology dissected in terms of the wider milieu in which it developed. There was a groping for political understanding of his actions, with newspapers soberly outlining his beliefs after pointing out he was a 'quiet and modest man'.

Yet almost as quickly the optic shifted to one of Breivik as a lone madman, because a deranged, self-obsessed and isolated individual was, of course, the only kind of person capable of such cruel and barbaric acts. Unless he had been an Islamist, that is. The media line was bolstered when Breivik's lawyer declared that to have acted the way he had the killer must be insane, and told reporters he had demanded that Breivik undergo psychological testing. Explaining his reasoning, the social democratic lawyer said that the terrorist had 'a view on reality that is very, very difficult to explain'.

Suddenly we were being encouraged to see the massacre as something completely discontinuous with the increasing size and confidence of the anti-multicultural Right. The emergence of someone willing to put the Right's civilisational war into action on the

battlefield of Norwegian society, we were told, was not a symptom of their program but an aberration caused by faulty neurocircuitry and/or a malignant personality.

Pundits and commentators from a wide range of political viewpoints came to bury Breivik's act in the realm of psychopathology, to see only the monstrous form and deny rationality (however unpalatable) to its content. Typical of such efforts was that of the liberal political editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Peter Hartcher, when he sought to dismiss conflation of 'the incident with the rise of far-right parties in Europe'. He argued, 'If there is any consolation in this massacre, it is that deranged people like Anders Behring Breivik can't think straight. He had enough mental clarity to organise logistics but so little connection with the larger reality of humanity that he failed to understand his butchery would have the opposite effect'.

The Right-wing Australian commentator Andrew Bolt was initially caught out claiming the attacks could have been the work of Islamists. Forced to issue corrections, within two days he was complaining of 'gloating attempts to blame the horrific murder of 93 Norwegians [on] any interest group or cause that murderer Anders Behring Breivik touched', including his Christianity. Instead of these, he claimed, we had to 'look not at his creed but his wounds', and to understand that 'some people are simple wired evilly, and some are left deeply wounded and enraged by a sense of powerlessness and rejection'. To make his case he pointed to a news report about Breivik's childhood.

> Jens Breivik, who divorced Anders Behring Breivik's mother in 1980, said he lost contact with his son in 1995, when he was about 16 years old. 'We never lived together but we had some contact during his childhood', he said. 'When he was younger, he was an ordinary boy but not very communicative. He was not interested in politics at the time'.

The evidence for it was practically non-existent, but already the psychological-psychiatric narrative was taking shape.

Psychosis, narcissism and the murderous mind

Nevertheless it is important to grasp the social meaning of psychiatric explanations of violent and murderous acts, if only to point out that in other circumstances they play a specific role. In many legal systems there are specific defences by reason of insanity, incapacity or mental impairment, which recognise that while a person may have committed a criminal act they did so in a state that made it impossible for them to understand the meaning of the act, whether in terms of its socially sanctioned immorality, its illegality, or its consequences. In addition, some people suffering psychosis can utilise this defence when they are so disconnected from reality that even though they understand the act is wrong and hurtful they believe other factors make it unavoidable (e.g. a mother with a psychotic depression drowns her children because she believes they are suffering because of her inability to parent them, and that the only way to relieve their torment is by going to heaven). While some pundits are making the claim that Breivik must have been psychotic to have carried out the murders, such a case is difficult to sustain in view of the absence of evidence that he was suffering from hallucinations, delusions, or significant thought disorder. However 'mad' we may think Breivik's actions were, in the technical-legal sense they are very unlikely to be considered psychotic, and so we are dealing with a different kind of entity.

This brings us to the second kind of mental disorder that can be invoked to explain aberrant acts of violence: The category of 'personality disorders'. These are a historically much more

recent psychiatric construct, rising to prominence with the 1980 third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III), widely recognised as the 'bible' of modern psychiatric diagnosis. Yet, as the DSM's authors are at pains to point out, there is no coherent theoretical framework behind these diagnostic categories, based as they are on clusters of maladaptive and socially unacceptable behaviours (rather than causative mechanisms). Research into these diagnoses has been plagued with questions over the arbitrary criteria that determine whether certain personality styles and problems of living get to be called 'disorders', as well as evidence that there is massive overlap between the categories that robs them of specificity.

Diagnoses like Narcissistic, Antisocial, Paranoid and Schizoid Personality Disorder also bear the marks of their social construction. One person's successful, driven, confident political leader is another's misanthropic, self-obsessed, destructive narcissist. One only needs think of how Australian political journalists lauded Kevin Rudd's ruthless and single-minded capture of the Parliamentary Labor Party for his own agenda, but then retailed stories about his unsuitable personality when his prime ministership started to come under pressure politically. Yet no serious commentator would suggest that Rudd's trajectory can only be understood in total separation from the Labor Party's. Such an idea comes mainly from apologists for the party who want to lay the blame for the failure of its *collective* project on a wayward individual.

Significantly, personality disorders do not represent a complete break from reality. They do not normally represent a defence in the sense of 'not guilty, mentally ill'. They are not, in our society, considered to excuse people of their culpability in criminal acts. Moreover, people who meet the criteria for such disorders hold widely divergent social and political views: from the banal mainstream to the extremes of Left and Right. There is no straight line from personality disorder to violent political mass murderer, any more than there is from personality disorder to ruthless entrepreneur.

But, of course, when an apparently singular and unthinkable horror occurs, that won't stop attempts to reduce it to such categories, however crudely. The function, as we shall see, is the depoliticisation of fundamentally political logics and behaviours.

Pop psychopathology 101

It was not just journalists and pundits who rushed in to declare Breivik's psychopathology. With the victims' bodies still being recovered, self-proclaimed psychological experts were analysing the killer's motivations with barely a shred of substantiation to work from.

Lumping Breivik in with previous 'spree' killers, Cambridge University psychologist and researcher Kevin Dutton told readers of his blog at Psychology Today that,

> What happened on Utøya Island wasn't about immigration. Or so-called Eurabia. Or the Eurocrats' plot against the people. In fact, it wasn't really about ideology or religion at all. That's just the window dressing. It was all about *him*. Breivic [sic]. And his deep-seated feelings of inadequacy in relation to the opposite sex.

Another psychologist blogging at the same site took a similar tack but from a different political origin and drew on the controversial argument put by Harvard psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint that extreme racism was a form of psychosis known as Delusional Disorder.

Meanwhile, forensic psychologist Dr Michael Nuccitelli extended the spree killer analogy to declare that Breivik probably suffered from Narcissistic Personality Disorder because he 'planned and premeditated his expected infamy' – a tenuous link to a complex and frequently disputed diagnosis.

Just three days after the massacre, the BBC reported comments by Jeremy Coid, professor of forensic psychiatry at Queen Mary College, University of London, saying there was likely to be a 'deep level of mental disturbance' underlying Breivik's ideology. 'the bottom line is that we don't at this moment know enough about his motives to diagnose his mental state. However', he continued without letting that deter him, 'while there are all sorts of cross-cutting with right-wing ideology, I believe he is likely to be suffering from a mental disorder'. Coid added, again with no serious data to back his case, 'this is someone who clearly has an enormous rage – and the source of that rage will need to be uncovered', arguing that the final diagnosis would be either a paranoid psychosis (most likely Delusional Disorder), Narcissistic Personality Disorder or Schizoid Personality Disorder.

Even London mayor Boris Johnson weighed in, calling Breivik 'patently mad' and predicting that 'we can expect exhaustive psychoanalysis of this dreary and supercilious 32-year-old sicko', before launching into just that by proclaiming that like 'young Muslim terrorists … [t]he fundamental reasons for their callous behaviour lie deep in their own sense of rejection and alienation. It is the ideology that gives them the ostensible cause, that potentiates the poison in their bloodstream, that gives them an excuse to dramatise the resentment that they feel in the most powerful way – and to kill'.

One presumes that Johnson's destructive and antisocial behaviour during his years in the Bullingdon Club was in fact driven by his 'own sense of rejection and alienation' rather than being the product of his lifelong membership of an Etonian elite. Yet the narcissism of the ruling class – its naked self-interest, supreme sense of entitlement and disregard for the interests of those it sees as its inferior – is always at worst a bit of harmless fun, rather than a visible role model for others in their Darwinian struggle for survival.

Islamophobes construct a new kind of insanity defence

The discovery that Breivik's *2083* was easily downloadable from the internet shifted the focus away from the crudest generalisations, chiefly because of the document's generally coherent structure and arguments. Much of it was lifted directly from Right-wing websites and articles, many of them well known. Unlike Jared Lee Loughner, who shot an Arizona Democratic congresswoman in January 2011 while obsessed with government conspiracies as part of a psychotic illness, Breivik's 'madness' could not be parcelled off in the same way. Simply put, serious mental illness makes the kind of compiling and editing that Breivik did very difficult in the absence of effective treatment.

But the fact he praised and quoted verbatim the work of leading figures of the conservative Right in the United States led many of them to develop an 'insanity defence' of their own. Pamela Geller, whose blog Atlas Shrugs is mentioned in the manifesto and which has been a focal point of opposition to the proposed Islamic centre in lower Manhattan, quickly denied culpability: 'this guy was nuts … He co-opted the work, he stole the narrative, to substantiate his insane, violent plans'.

Author Robert Spencer, creator of Jihad Watch and co-founder of the group Stop The Islamization of America, repudiated any responsibility for Breivik's actions in part by arguing, 'this kind of thing is going to happen. You can't account for psychopaths, and so I'm not going to be deterred'. He added, 'Because [Breivik's Manifesto is] nuts, there's no way that anybody could reasonably say that any of our work has anything to do with it'.

Siv Jensen, the leader of Norway's Progress Party, of which Breivik was once a member, sought to disassociate his party's Right-wing, anti-immigrant policies from analogous ideas in *2083* in a similar way:

> 'He has obviously developed some very, very strange, sick ideas over the years', Jensen told The Associated Press. 'His manifesto is perversely unique and cannot be linked to any organization or legal political party of Norway'.

And the UK *Daily Mail*'s notorious Melanie Phillips was incandescent that anyone would associate the massacre with 'decent people who are boiling with rage at being disenfranchised by an entire political class which seems determined to destroy their civilisation'. Breivik was not like them, because:

> The man is either in the grip of a psychosis or he is a psychopath – in other words, a grossly abnormal personality incapable of human feelings of empathy (my money is on the latter). What he himself says about his own opinions or state of mind therefore does not bear examination. Yet throughout the west, apparently intelligent people have been not only ascribing to him rational thought processes but have been poring over his own words to extract clues about what made him do this. Repeat after me very slowly: Breivik did not murder dozens of teenagers because he was ideologically opposed to cultural Marxism; he mowed them down because he was grossly mentally abnormal.

Pat Buchanan biographer Tim Stanley weighed in to defend Tea Partiers from guilt by association, 'Certainly, Anders Breivik subscribed to the theory of Cultural Marxism popular in the Tea Party movement', but lest anyone think that meant anything, 'what has been released of Breivik's writings suggest that this vainglorious, steroid addicted madman didn't understand the conservative sources he quoted'. Helpfully, Stanley confirmed that, 'the kind of person who can systematically shoot and kill that many people is mentally ill or possessed by demons'.

Some, it seems, were willing to go one step better than exculpating the Right from association with Breivik's crimes by reference to modern psychiatric concepts, however contested those might be. Now they were reviving the pre-scientific logic of the Middle Ages, when drownings and burnings at the stake were the preferred form of treatment for deviancy.

The denial of meaning

From the standpoint of the libertarian Right, the events in Oslo and Utøya raised the spectre of new waves of state meddling in civil liberties, of political interference where none was warranted.

The Guardian's Simon Jenkins argued that Breivik was 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'.

> No, Anders Breivik does not tell us anything about Norway. No, he does not tell us anything about 'the state of modern society'. He tells us nothing about terrorism or gun control or policing or political holiday camps. His

avowal of fascism could as well have been of communism or Islamism or anarchism. The desperate, perhaps understandable, search to find meaning in such acts is dangerous. Breivik does not even measure up to the ideological coherence of the nazism he admired. He is plainly very sick.

Despite these certainties about Breivik's motivations, Jenkins warned against attempts at 'textual analysis' of *2083*. No need to address the terrorist strategy its author propounds, we can just rely on knowing that it's not really terrorism, which is now narrowly defined as 'a specific and rational political form: the use of violence to achieve a multiplier of fear through a civilian population to a particular end'.

Jenkins' abhorrence of the UK's creeping security state leads him to deny the possibility that extra-state actors on the far Right may actually pose an ongoing threat.

Sam Leith in the *Evening Standard* made a point of underlining the killings' meaninglessness even more stridently:

> It's understandable that, faced with horrific events, we reach for explanations in political ideology and solutions in state action. The need to find meaning in the world, or project meaning onto it, is one of the profoundest human drives. But what happened in Norway was simply nuts.
>
> Horrible, evil, monstrous, unspeakable, shocking, yes. But above all, nuts. Sometimes you just have to accept meaninglessness as meaningless.

In claiming this kind of meaninglessness for Breivik's actions, libertarians are not just making a case about the killer's state of mind. They are seeking to turn politics into something hyper-rational and unemotional, where the free interplay of ideas can never lead to unspeakable acts (all the better when their more extreme ideas are taken to logical ends). It is a kind of naïve Enlightenment view of reason, as if modernity can come up smelling roses if we just quarantine the parts we find hard to stomach.

Rehabilitating the unacceptable

The Norwegian mass killings created a serious problem for the Right in both its mainstream and less acceptable forms. Here was a situation where its more or less open incitements to civilisational clashes were being turned into deeds in a cold, clinical, premeditated manner by an enthusiastic supporter. Desperate to hang on to their ideological positions, to be able to draw an improbable dividing line between ideas and actions, they resorted to a psychological rather than political argument.

The psychologisation of Breivik's atrocities serves a function in settling fears, in isolating 'extremists' as 'lone gunmen' divorced from wider political developments, to paint a picture of a healthy political current whose only internal threats are aberrations. In this way it is a clear case of depoliticisation.

But it is also the reinstatement and intensification of the Right's preferred political strategy for keeping the nation united by identifying the causes of social polarisation and instability in external threats; threats to nation, to culture, to resources, to cohesion. In such a configuration a mass political assassination can occur, yet within days the old threats from outside are re-emphasised because our internal problems are mere aberrations and outliers, of no greater meaning. Even if they shy from accepting Breivik's most extreme conclusions, by calling him insane they get to continue the same project by other means.

11

Madness and Western Civilisation

Tad Tietze

When an event is as horrific as the mass murder carried out by Anders Breivik on 22 July 2011, the search for explanatory models cannot help but rely on past modes of analysis and clarification. Previous dominant narratives will be redeployed to construct understanding of analogous actions in the present. As the last chapter detailed, the resort to psychopathological explanations of Breivik's actions has been central to attempts to depoliticise them and to draw a sharp line of demarcation between his atrocity and that of the rising tide of febrile Islamophobia being retailed by the far Right as well as many 'respectable' politicians and pundits.

But the reason for such analyses goes beyond immediate political logics to more general ideological frameworks about deviant behaviour that are deeply rooted in modern social practices and discourses. At one level there is a certain comfort in seeing headlines proclaiming mass killing as the actions of a 'lunatic' or 'madman', allowing us to keep a safe distance from unspeakable crimes by defining them as essentially non-understandable or at the very least socially aberrant and meaningless. If there is any pathology to be diagnosed, it resides in a lone gunman, an isolated sick mind, a disruption in normal human brain wiring that could neither be predicted nor prevented, except perhaps by chance.

Even some voices critical of media demonisation of Muslims in relation to terrorism came out with such a position in the days after Utøya. For example, two Muslim activists who exposed the false allegations of Jihadist terror in Norway on Twitter argued, '[T]his incident is a stark reminder of that there are nuts in all religions. Police in Norway have called the alleged mastermind, a 'Christian fundamentalist'. But does this guy really represent Christianity? Does he really speak for Christians? Does he really follow Christian traditions? And I believe for all sane people, the answer is a resounding NO. As Muslims, we know it. We don't need to be reminded of it. We have enough common sense to make a distinction between nuts and mainstream practitioners…'.

A prominent British Marxist website responded defensively to the initial descriptions of Breivik as mad by arguing, 'While anyone who commits such acts must be classified as mentally ill, these actions also need to be put within a political context'.

But at another level there is an array of ideologies centred around the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry (and lay variations of them) that claim scientific rigour in classifying and passing judgement on the range of human behaviours, including behaviours that are disturbing outliers.

Such approaches are laced with a dangerous logic in these circumstances. For, once an action is the product of a mental illness, its fundamental causes must lie within certain bounds and not others. In particular, in modern Western societies the medicalisation of social and political problems has risen at the same time as neoliberalism has driven the atomisation of social actors, reducing them to nothing more than rational, self-interested economic agents, the methodological individuals of neoclassical economics.

The psychology of mass murder

Even before 9/11 forensic psychiatrists and psychologists had a history of trying to explain mass killings, including those with a stated political motivation, in terms of the psychology of the perpetrators. In part this can be an attempt to categorise an extreme form of socially deviancy in terms that are more palatable than the possibility that the deviancy is itself a product of the society in which it is transgressive.

This was the case with Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, who was diagnosed with 'paranoid schizophrenia' by the court -appointed psychiatrist on the basis of two 'delusions' he was said to hold. The first was that he believed he was 'being controlled by modern technology' and that he 'subsequently developed another strong-belief that his dysfunction in life, particularly his inability to establish a relationship with a female, was directly the result of extreme psychological verbal abuse by his parents'.

Writing in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Alston Chase concluded that the expert testimony was centred on refusal to accept Kaczynski's anti -technology views as anything other than mad:

'Most claims of mental illness rested on the diagnoses of experts whose judgments, therefore, derived largely from their opinions of Kaczynski's philosophy and his personal habits – he was a recluse, a wild man in appearance, a slob of a housekeeper, a celibate – and from his refusal to admit he was ill'.

Psychologist and author Gary Greenberg, who maintained a lengthy correspondence with Kaczynski after his arrest, wrote, 'Certainly, a killer may be insane. But a person who is sane, sober, and rational, may do terrible things. As in the case, I think, of the Unabomber'. The problem was that once mental health professionals got involved politics and morality became subordinated to notions of mental illness: 'Not because my colleagues and I are scoundrels … but because the mental health industry will reduce the political to the personal every time. It is our business to do so' (In the Kingdom of the Unabomber, p. 46).

The focus on individual pathology is a key element of such explanatory models applied more widely to politically motivated violence. In one such account, by New York professor of psychiatry Carl Goldberg, there is a focus on the psychology of those who commit 'fanatic violence', including 'White Supremacists … [and] cadres of Neo-Nazi, Skinhead, and Ku Klux Klan members involved in brutal beatings and murders of Afro-Americans, Asian Americans, Jews, and Gays'. For example, while recognising that Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh had accomplices, Goldberg claims:

> The media and the FBI seem to believe that massively destructive acts are almost always carried out by well- organized groups. In fact, almost all mass murders in the United States have been committed by one or a couple of 'lone wolves'. These lone figures do not interact easily with other people. They are usually regarded, even by other types of destructive individuals, as odd 'mental cases'.

For Goldberg there is little distinction between different kinds of 'fanatics'; instead, he simply seeks to explain not those 'perpetrators who seek political and social reform [but] those terrorists who have no definitive social policy'. Yet despite this distinction he deliberately 'eschew[s] an examination of the belief systems and ideology of the racist mentality of fanatic hatred', concluding:

> Stated in another way: fanatic hatred is an act of madness – whether it is rageful, or cool and calculated. This madness is predicated upon the desperate reasoning that holds that those who are denied their humanity by the social order can only heal their injured humanity and gain full presence in the world by forceful assertion.

Explaining the effects of social processes through a reductive individualistic framework reflects the rise of individualism as a central organising ideology under modern capitalism. Modern psychology and psychiatry are based in the dominant notion of society as an aggregation of individual beliefs and actions, what has been referred to as 'methodological individualism', one mirroring the atomisation of individual economic actors in the marketplace.

This kind of approach also marked the early attempts to develop a psychological profile of suicide terrorists as the phenomenon became more widespread in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, Ariel Merari concluded that Palestinian suicide terrorists were engaging in 'an individual act rather than a group phenomenon'. Jerrold Post, a professor of psychiatry at George Washington University, argued the terrorist was deeply paranoid, 'under attack by the internal persecutor, guilt-ridden, and vulnerable to depression … If he does commit suicide, it is to escape his projected internal persecutor, his hidden executioner'.

Yet such views were contradicted by growing evidence as to the mental state and functioning of people who go on to commit suicide attacks. As the University of East London's Professor Andrew Silke, a criminologist with a forensic psychology background, explained,

> Generally, to be a good terrorist, you need to be able to handle pressure and you need to be able to think rationally, and you need to be able to work very effectively as a member of a small group. And these are all qualities that are absent in psychopaths and these are people who have serious mental problems. So they are sane but they're highly committed extremists and I think one of the things that that research showed was that you can be a highly committed extremist and still be, have essentially a very ordinary psychology.

Drawing on his authoritative database of suicide terrorism around the world, the University of Chicago's Robert Pape explains that 'to a striking degree, the most deadly suicide terrorists have been almost ordinary people' (*Dying To Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, p. 220). Cutting through popular mythology, he argues that their demographic profile 'resemble[s] the kind of politically conscious individuals who might join a grassroots movement than they do wayward adolescents or religious fanatics' (p. 216). Riaz Hassan has drawn on a similar database at Flinders University to argue:

> The meaning and nature of suicide in a suicide bombing are strikingly different from ordinary suicide. … The causes of suicide bombings lie not in individual psychopathology but in broader social conditions. Understanding and knowledge of these conditions is vital for developing appropriate public policies and responses to protect the public.

Merari and Post have subsequently shifted their positions to highlight group dynamics, but even these can tend to be disconnected from wider social factors.

More sophisticated psychiatric accounts of mass killers highlight the importance of differentiating acts carried out as part of a collective political project – grounded in a specific set of social circumstances – and those perpetrated by relatively isolated individuals with amorphous resentments against society. Melbourne-based forensic psychiatrist Paul Mullen, who assessed Martin Bryant, the perpetrator of the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania where 35 people were shot, has developed a typology of mass murder that starts with the proposition 'that the relationship between the killers' intentions and the victims is critical'.

He considers events like those at Port Arthur and Dunblane (where at a primary school in Scotland 17 people were killed), quite different from killings 'carried out by groups of people as part of wars, civil unrest, political policy, or religious and racist enthusiasms. … The origins of such massacres are to be sought in the social and cultural realities operating on the killers. Their actions, however awful, are, at some level, those of socially coherent groups and generated by shared beliefs and ideologies'.

But the terrorists-as-madmen meme has more often been abandoned because it undermines the demonisation of the enemy during a War on Terror – that of a whole society, religion or political grouping. The 'insanity defence' has re-emerged in the case of Breivik because such demonisation would be unthinkable if turned on the social context from which he emerged – the modern West.

The banality of evil

The problem with medicalising or psychologising fascist violence is that it misses how social contexts and practices shape the boundaries of what acts people are willing to engage in. The classic attempt to do this was in the years after WWII, when there were theories that Nazism had been a form of psychopathology, especially among the fascist leadership. How else to explain the single greatest act of barbarity in human history, the Holocaust?

Yet in her account of the Eichmann trial, Hannah Arendt writes of the SS leader:

> [H]e remembered perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not done what he had been ordered to – to ship millions of men, women, and children to their death with great zeal and the most meticulous care. This, admittedly, was hard to take. Half a dozen psychiatrists had certified him as 'normal' – 'More normal, at any rate, than I am after having examined him', one of them was said to have exclaimed, while another had found that his whole psychological outlook, his attitude toward his wife and children, mother and father, brothers, sisters, and friends, was 'not only normal but most desirable' – and finally the minister who had paid regular visits to him in prison after the Supreme Court had finished hearing his appeal reassured everybody by declaring Eichmann to be 'a man with very positive ideas'.

Fascism was not simply the result of the minds of a few individuals, but a social phenomenon that won millions of supporters. It can only be understood by locating it in the specific conjuncture of the inter-war years, and by understanding how far-reaching processes created the possibility for small groups of committed ultra-nationalists to build mass movements, and in several countries colonise powerful state machines. This is not to discount the mindsets and personalities of fascist leaders – Hitler biographer Ian Kershaw makes a convincing case that the Nazi leader would be considered a Narcissist in today's terminology, for instance – but it is to critique reductive approaches that seek explanatory power primarily in individual psychology. Indeed, it is an understanding of [fascism's mass psychological appeal to a specific social base](#) – in Leon Trotsky's formulation, a petty bourgeoisie 'driven mad' by capitalist crisis – which is much more important than retrospective, unfalsifiable personality diagnoses.

During most of the 1920s the Nazis were considered to be a marginal annoyance by the political mainstream. At the time of the failed 'Beer Hall Putsch' in 1923, they could garner only 3% of the vote, and even less in 1928. Yet only two years later the economic crisis triggered by the Wall St Crash had torn German society asunder, shattering the livelihoods of millions of people and dramatically undermining the authority of the ruling class and state. As one government after another failed to address the fundamental problems facing ordinary

people, the Nazis offered a program of radical authoritarian national reconstruction that could weld together a movement intent on what Trotsky called 'mass plebeian counter-revolution'.

Trotsky's analysis serves as an important counterpoint to several later attempts to develop Left-wing theories of fascist psychology, such as in Wilhelm Reich's *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Erich Fromm's *Fear of Freedom* and Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. Each of these made a general case about a (usually transhistorical) human propensity to look to authoritarianism. The conceptual apparatus is well summed up by Michel Foucault in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*:

> Last but not least, the major enemy, the strategic adversary is fascism … And not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini – which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively – but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.

Whatever their strengths, such accounts both explain everything and explain nothing. In this they echo mainstream accounts of fascism as just another form of authoritarian government. They rob fascism of its historical and social specificity. They fail to elucidate how and why fascism emerged when it did – and not in other times and places – and they tend to ascribe it to universal human attributes, thereby glossing over its emergence from within the middle class and its much lesser penetration into the working class. Indeed, the hostility of fascism to the workers' movement and Marxism means that attempts to locate it as chiefly attracting workers make little sense historically.

The specificity of Breivik's crimes

Breivik's massacre similarly did not occur in a vacuum but in the very specific context of the mainstreaming of extremist Right-wing ideas, and of the growth in electoral success and activity by the European far Right, as well as the rise of significant extra-parliamentary movements such as the English Defence League, of which Breivik is a critical admirer. In the United States there has also been a rise in White Supremacist and neo-Nazi organising, just as the government has slashed resources devoted to keeping track of it. These developments take place after a period of social polarisation widely known as 'neoliberalism', culminating in the deepest economic crisis since the 1930s.

One of the key features of fascist strategy is the maintenance of a dynamic equilibrium between a political work centred on official politics and the building of a movement outside the state capable of waging violence against opponents. Breivik's manifesto shows his actions were aimed at radicalising a far-Right milieu he saw as too conservative to meet the challenges facing it. Fascism is generally attracted to military ideologies, and the Norwegian portrays himself as an advance soldier for a coming war. In line with this he also utilised methods common to many modern militaries:

> A terrorism expert at the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs, Helge Luras, says Breivik's internet manifesto suggests he pumped himself full of steroids to heighten his aggression, and listened to music through earphones so he would not be moved by the pleas of his victims.

> 'So he's not a psychopath or lacking in emotion or empathy. In the manifesto he talks about how it will be difficult to kill these people in this manner because he has empathy. Psychopaths don't struggle with that', he says.

How different is such cool to that expected of SAS members in combat zones? How different is the use of drugs by Breivik to the amphetamines used to enhance the performance of US air force pilots?

Some experts have tried to shoehorn Breivik into the typical description of 'spree killing' – what Mullen calls the 'autogenic (self-generated) massacre'. Yet Breivik stands apart from such killers in not seeking retribution for being personally wronged, in being financially well off, in having clear links to a like-minded Islamophobic subculture, and because his own death was not an *intended* part of his plan (although he stated he *expected* to die as a result of police attendance at Utøya). His statements before and after the massacre indicate he wants to use the atrocity as a springboard for recruiting others to his war.

It is here that a socially and historically situated analysis is vital, not only to understand where Breivik comes from, but the potential consequences of his actions. In a period of worsening crisis and a growing far Right, to treat Breivik merely as a madman or spree killer is to underestimate the need for a political response to the massacre. Depoliticisation of Breivik risks a return to complacency about the far Right, something specifically encouraged by commentators from the liberal mainstream to the murkier recesses of the Right. Their implicit message is that we should all move on without interrogating the threat of extreme Right subcultures because recourse to the normal forensic and penitentiary systems of the state can contain the problem.

Yet the economic and political crisis creates a fertile seedbed in which more Breiviks can grow. Breivik may carry a particularly virulent form of the far Right illness, but the circumstances are propitious for the contagion to spread more rapidly than they have been in many years. Thus the task is not one of isolating the lone gunman's individual pathology but recognising that he is the bearer of a social pathology. That means dropping naïve calls for 'more civility' in politics and confronting head on the monstrosity of Right-wing politics. But it also means articulating a radical progressive politics that can truly address the social misery produced by the crisis of capitalism.

12

Your 'terrorists', Our 'Lone Wolves': Utøya in the shadow of 9/11

Elizabeth Humphrys

As news outlets prepared to run tribute specials for the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks, they faced the challenge of dealing with another, and more recent act of terror, that of Anders Breivik's massacre on Utøya. It was a challenge that most failed. Despite the clear parallels with a decade ago, many commentators and sections of the media have set aside the political views of Anders Breivik and relegated the political context in which the Oslo bombing and Utøya massacre occurred. Commentators firstly contend that while Breivik is not an external threat but *our* lone wolf, he acts only as a mad and isolated individual outside the norms of civilised society. Therefore he originated from within us, but he is not one of us. On the other side, they argue, sit those who act in the name of Islam: *your* terrorists who arise from a religion that has violence and terror at its heart and are the logical conclusion of its proselytising. As a second step, they demote Norway while reasserting the view that it is really something, or someone, else we should be concerned about. And they reassert in particular *our* 9/11. It is worth reflecting on these two narratives and to look at how they emerged from within the initial media reporting of the events in Norway, and the wider clash of civilizations thesis (which has been reconstituted with a slightly new gloss).

The individual out of context

A dichotomy of 'your terrorists and our lone wolves' quickly established itself after the 22 July 2011 events, argued both in the mainstream media and on various high-profile conservative blogs. The dichotomy effectively enforced the notion that with acts of mass murder, some can be ascribed to a wider social context while others cannot.

This narrative sought to, in the case of Breivik, emphasise the *individual* in the action, pathologising and setting him apart from his personal political commitments. In this way commentators could separate Breivik's actions and political views from his 'cultural' racism and Christianity, simultaneously setting him outside growing racism and Islamophobia in parts of Europe. His attacks were therefore no more than the work of an errant and crazed individual, and are disentangled from the vicious verbal calls to arms of numerous Right-wing commentators talking of a global civil war between the West and Muslims. In the wake of Norway, Melanie Phillips, one of the Right-wing ideologues quoted by Breivik, has claimed that she is 'always careful … to draw distinctions between individuals and causes … and [has] always stressed the distinction between peaceful Muslims and Islamic extremism'. At the three-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks in London [she argued]{.underline}:

> [I]t is alarming beyond measure to record that Britain is even now sleepwalking into Islamisation. Some people will think this is mere hyperbole. However, that's the problem. Britain still doesn't grasp that it is facing a pincer attack from both terrorism and cultural infiltration and usurpation. … They fail to realise that the attempt to take over our culture is even more deadly to this society than terrorism. They are simply blind to the ruthless way in which the Islamists are exploiting our chronic muddle of well-meaning tolerance and political correctness (backed up by the threat of more violence) to put Islam on a special – indeed, unique – footing within Britain.

Yet such arguments are strikingly similar to Breivik's, and despite Phillips'protestations show little if any distinction between followers of the Islamic faith and terrorists acting in its name. The *our* lone wolf/*your* terrorists narrative, argued by Phillips and many others, reasserts the connection between the violence and regression of Islam on the one hand, and the civilizing nature of the (Christian) West on the other.

Your terrorists

The narrative in part finds its roots in the initial media reporting after the attacks in Norway: the set-piece response of blaming the 'Muslims'. Like commentators in the US after the bombing in Oklahoma City, some don't wait for the details to emerge and simply assign responsibility to 'Muslims'. In contrast to reality, where of the '294 failed, foiled, or successfully executed attacks' in Europe in 2009 (as reported by the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report) only one was at the hands of a Muslim, it is to Muslims that the media and Right-wing commentariat turn.

In the starkest example, only hours after the atrocities, UK-based *The Sun*'s front page declared: 'Al-Qaeda Massacre: Norway's 9/11'. It seemed Rupert Murdoch's staff were determined to create further issues of credibility for the paper's owner, and reported the attacks with the subtlety of a sledgehammer. The killings were reported as a Jihadist effort designed for those who live in the 'friendly and civilised' streets of Norway. As media monitoring blog Tabloid Watch details, the paper's editorial in the print version included whole sections assigning blame to that 'ramadan observing' 'scourge of the West'; statements later removed in the online edition once it emerged that the killer was in fact a blonde headed Norwegian nationalist and 'cultural' racist. Tabloid Watch highlight the edited material on their blog (with the removed content in bold):

> Terrorism, **the scourge of the West,** brought slaughter yesterday to the friendly and civilised streets of one of Europe's most peaceful nations. *The Sun* and its readers grieve today with the people of Norway, stunned by the assault on their capital Oslo and the island of Utøya. How well we remember, from London's 7/7, the shock and misery when an ordinary summer's day turns into a nightmare of smoke, flames and bodies in the street. Just as on 9/11 in New York and in Madrid in 2004, horror came when everyone least expected it.
>
> **Why Norway? The answer is simple. Because it is brave. It is a loyal member of NATO and plays its part in Afghanistan and Libya. It has courageously stood up to Muslim fanatics trying to stir up hatred in Norway, where Islam is the second largest religion. Recently it refused a grant to an Islamic leader demanding that those who did not observe Ramadan should be decapitated. By daring to oppose terrorism, Norway has become a victim of it.**
>
> … **The lessons for us are clear. Osama Bin Laden may be dead. But the tentacles of al-Qaeda, and groups linked to it, spread deep into the heart of Western nations. That is why our security cannot be relaxed, especially with the London Olympics only a year away. The Government must keep its promise to change the law so our judges can no longer free terror suspects on human rights grounds. Muslim hate preachers must be arrested, as the law allows. We need the decent Muslim majority to help stop their impressionable young men being recruited as bombers. We must find every penny our security services need. We must ask ourselves whether – like Norway – we offer too cushy a life to bogus asylum seekers. And we must recognise that quitting Afghanistan with the job only half-finished will put Britain in peril.**

In the logic of this editorial, a massacre of which little was known is connected directly to 'bogus asylum seekers' and moderate 'decent Muslims'. It is, after all, those moderate Muslims who (still) fail to do enough to keep 'their impressionable young men' in check when the octopus like hands of al-Qaeda are everywhere.

The Sun was not the only newspaper in Murdoch's dishevelled empire that blamed 'Muslims'. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialised – in a section now removed from an article – that Norway was a target for being true to Western norms:

> … in jihadist eyes, [Norway] will always remain guilty of being what it is: a liberal nation committed to freedom of speech and conscience, equality between the sexes, representative democracy, and every other freedom that defines the West. For being true to those ideals, Norwegians have now been asked to pay a terrible price.

As Think Progress points out, 'as more information came out about the attacks and the attacker, the Wall Street Journal rewrote the online version of the editorial, albeit by removing any trace of the above paragraph. Instead, it mentioned that it had falsely attributed the attacks to jihadists and called the attacker an al Qaeda 'copycat'. By this logic, even when it is not Muslims who bomb, kill and maim, it is still the Muslims who are bear responsibility as it is they who are the initiators of such violence.

Outside of the News Corp empire, *The Washington Post* ran an article that argued that the events in Norway demonstrated why the US should not cut its defence budget given the ongoing need 'to defend the United States and [its] allies in a very dangerous world' where al-Qaeda lurks at every corner. Locally in Australia, it was Andrew Bolt's high-profile blog at the *Herald Sun* that led the way in assigning blame to Muslims: 'Once the identity of the attackers becomes known, the consequences for Norway's immigration policies could be profound'. It was edited in retrospect, including this justification:

> UPDATE: i've removed here an excerpt from the first report I linked to spelling out the earlier Islamic threats and attacks that led many, including the Guardian and New York Times, to initially suspect an Islamic attack. I had left it up so as to explain the context of my original reaction, and so not to seem I was trying to cover up my original suspicions. Now I find that leaving it up is being interpreted as my insisting on a gratuitous point instead.

What, Andrew Bolt 'gratuitous'? Well, I never.

As US-based Christian blogger By Their Strange Fruit points out, 'rhetoric for such tragedies changes drastically based on the skin colour, religion, and/or country of origin of the perpetrator'. She and another blogger, City Athena at Side Hustle Stories, note that similar events are reported in radically different ways. With similar events labelled a terrorist attack or suicide attempt, or a terrorist attack and assassination attempt, depending on who is flying the plane or holding the gun.

Once the jihadist terror linked to Al-Qaeda was identified as poor guesswork, a reshaping of the event as something other than 'terrorism' began in earnest. Narratives were formed that Breivik was lone assailant or gunman. Additionally, anyone raising his professed Christianity was sharply criticised by both the mainstream media and conservative and religious bloggers as politically motivated and/or disingenuous. And again, Andrew Bolt took the issue up with gusto. In a similar vein, Fox News' Bill O'Reilly declared there was no possibility that a Christian committed the acts as '[n]o one believing in Jesus commits mass murder'. It is unreasonable we are told, to condemn a religion for the actions of one man. Of course similar proclamations in the wake of 9/11 by members of the Muslim faith, arguing there is no connection between Islam and mass killing, were roundly ignored.

***Our* lone wolf**

With the religion and ideology of Breivik clarified, the narrative concerning the bombing and massacre was reshaped. As Glenn Greenwald writes in *Salon*:

> What it says is what we've seen repeatedly: that Terrorism has no objective meaning and, at least in American political discourse, has come functionally to mean: *violence committed by Muslims whom the West dislikes*, no matter the cause or the target. Indeed, in many (though not all) media circles, discussion of the Oslo attack quickly morphed from *this is Terrorism* (when it was believed Muslims did it) to *no, this isn't Terrorism, just extremism* (once it became likely that Muslims didn't).

There was, in particular, a revision of Breivik's actions being politically motivated and part of a wider grievance of some with society, and recast as the meaningless act of an individual. Breivik, clearly mad, was acting as a lone wolf. Importantly though, in a narrative where Breivik is *our* lone wolf, those speaking for the 'civilised West' are able to both own and disown him in the same moment.

Suiting the wider purpose of situating the event of the massacre outside the sphere of the civilised, such a narrative has in some quarters also offered an olive branch of understanding to some of his grievances. Insidiously, some coverage has expressed partial agreement with the motivations that drove Breivik to his crimes. The *New York Times*, in a detailed dissection of the rise of far-Right sentiment across Europe just days after the atrocity, wrote: 'A combination of increased migration from abroad and largely unrestricted movement of people within an enlarged European Union, such as the persecuted Roma minority, helped lay the groundwork for a nationalist, at times starkly chauvinist, revival'.

Such an analysis could easily have come from Breivik's own mouth. It is the ultimate in sympathy with the oppressor, justifying anti-immigrant racism on the basis of the immigrants themselves. Recall the hysteria when people pointed to the grievances that drove Islamist terrorists – Western military occupation of Muslim countries, support for brutal dictatorships, the endless horror in Palestine – progressive voices were told that this was outrageous and that it was all about 'them' hating 'us' for our way of life. Yet those grievances had a basis in reality, rather than febrile racist ideology (even if the terrorists' methods were a disaster for the struggle against oppression).

The real problem with Breivik

A complementary vein of analysis has attempted to demote the significance of the massacre and brand deeper consideration of it as a distraction from the real concerns of this age. It is, they argue, the war against civilisation – and the rise of 'Islamofascism' in particular – that we should be concerned about. Yet while this is implicit in the dichotomy of *our* lone wolf/*your* terrorists, it has been more explicitly argued by a number of commentators on the Right.

Daniel Pipes argued that Breivik should be considered, alongside the Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, the Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, and the Hebron mass killer Baruch, as one of the four outstanding exceptions to the dominant rule of Islamist mass murder. He goes on to quote various statistics about terror attacks linked to Islam, raising a figure of 25,000 events since 1994. In contradiction with the mainstream evidence base on

terror attacks, such as the report form the European Union mentioned above, or Robert Pape's well-regarded book on backgrounds of suicide bombers, *Dying to Win*, Pipes quotes from a website that engages in the same 'cultural' racism as Breivik himself. His 'source' argues it is non-religious and 'generally support the rights of atheists, Christians, Hindus, Jews,

homosexuals, women, Muslims', but that 'Islam is dreadfully unique … rigid political and cultural system with a mandate to conquer and govern the lives of others via necessary … violence … sanctioned by the Quran'.

Pipes' concern is not so much with the massacred Norwegians, or with the rise generally of a new far Right arguing for violence against Muslims in Europe, but that '… Breivik [has] damaged conservatism, the counterjihad, and (in particular) those authors he cited in his writings, including himself. Breivik's mass murder is, in the end, nothing more than a distraction from the real war against Islam and the necessary 'counterjihad' Pipes himself is leading.

Similarly, only days after the events in Norway, Pamela Geller was arguing the failures of the American media:

> Just days before a barbarian … murdered over seventy people in Norway, the city of Mumbai was attacked in a brutal jihad by Muslim extremists, again. Hear about that? Not so much. But one cold-blooded killer who has been planning a slaughter in Norway (setting his plan in motion since before 9/11) has become the rallying cry of the dhimmedia in service to the most radical and extreme ideology on the face of the earth.

The 'crime, ladies and gentlemen' (she argues) is not the deaths and maiming at Breivik's hands but that no one 'is reporting about [Islamic] acts of war on the West'.

On the website *Spiked* we get the even curiouser world of editor Brendan O'Neill, who in a number of articles regarding Breivik says little clarifying his understanding of the events in Norway. His statements that 'Breivik, for all his anti-multicultural pretensions, is not that different [to those he criticises and] … [that] his so-called critique of multiculturalism seems bound by the parameters of multiculturalism itself' argues that all ills in Europe arise from a general malaise as Enlightenment values die, and as such the implication is that Oslo and Utøya are acts without meaning. He argues that progressive and conservative commentators alike need to set aside Norway as a specific, and assess the 'real' root of problems in contemporary Europe in a more general disquiet:

> The key problem with the arguments made by [Thilo Sarrazin], Steyn, Phillips and others, all of whom say in a roundabout way that once Enlightened Europe is now capitulating to the demands of seriously separatist Muslim immigrants and their representatives, is that it presents an internal crisis of European culture as an external assault on the European citadel by the beard-and-burqa lobby. Their narrow critique of multiculturalism fails to understand that the origins of Europe's profound crisis of identity lie in an inner moral malaise, in a loss of faith in Enlightenment values in London, Paris and Berlin, rather than in the antics of any external army of foreigners. … The loss of faith in the 'Western way of life' in Western capitals themselves both makes elites incapable of confidently integrating outsiders (integrate them into what, exactly?) and also sends a powerful signal to immigrant communities that their cultural habits are the equal of, if not better than, what we used to call Western culture.

More specifically than this, O'Neill has little to add, save general protestations that left critiques of conservative commentators who prosecute Islamophobic ideas are arguing '… longstanding liberal principles [of freedom of speech] be chucked on the shitheap of history as soon as an opportunity to accuse [a conservative columnist] of being an accessory to mass murder presents itself'.

As Pamela Geller (yes, her again) and Robert Spencer argue in the *American Thinker*:

> Ever since the heinous murders in Norway, we have been subjected to an unrelenting campaign of vilification. … The New York Times, NBC, the BBC, CNN, the Washington Post, many European publications, and a host of others have claimed that we are responsible for creating a climate of "hate" in which a Breivik was inevitable. This is not only false, but such charges against us challenge fundamental principles of the freedom of speech. We submitted this present article defending ourselves to the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, the New York Post, National Review, the American Spectator, the London Spectator, the Guardian, and the Wall Street Journal … The mainstream media was ready and eager to demonize us, but not so willing to give us a fair hearing and a chance to rebut their false charges.

So Geller is not only reporting the true acts of horror, but also doing it in an environment where the mainstream media are hostile to truth. No wonder Breivik felt he had not other option but to act in the way he did.

For Christopher Hitchens, the question is why numerous experts on terrorism could blame Muslims for Utøya. Nevertheless, he sets aside what he sees as the politically motivated finger pointing in the wake of Oklahoma and the Madrid bombings, and puts the explanation down to 'more intellectual chaos than the anti-Islamic witch hunt'. For Hitchens, he sees Norway as an opportunity to revive his pet topic of the similarities between Islamic jihadists and the likes of Breivik:

> Do the extreme jihadists and their most virulent opponents really have a symbiotic relationship? In tapes and sermons from mosques in London and Hamburg, you may find whole manifestos about the need to keep women as chattel, to eradicate the disease of homosexuality, to thwart the Jewish design over international finance, and other fantasies of the Third Reich mentality. Pushed to its logical or pathological conclusion, this would involve something that Europeans and Americans have never seen before: a conflict between different forms of fascism in order to see which assault on multi-ethnic democracy was the most effective.

It is an old hobbyhorse, but one Hitchens is deeply committed to prosecuting. But as the far from progressive security expert Daniel Benjamin at the Center for Strategic and International Studies states: 'there is no sense in which jihadists embrace fascist ideology as it was developed by Mussolini or anyone else who was associated with the term … [it] is an epithet, a way of arousing strong emotion and tarnishing one's opponent, but it doesn't tell us anything about the content of their beliefs'. For that reason, Hitchens' argument does little to elucidate the social origins of his competing fascisms and elides the real roots of actions symbolised by Breivik on the one hand and the 9/11 attackers on the other.

A sober approach to political violence?

One response to the media's astounding ability to jump to conclusions and whip up prejudice has been an understandable desire to see this is a chance to more soberly assess and reflect on what has happened, to understand political violence rather than engage with a left-wing mirror image of the Right's hysteria. While there is perhaps an element of truth in this view, the problem progressive voices now face is precisely the cold, measured approach the media and political establishment are taking to the issue of far-Right extremism. Because, in its own way, that is just as seductive a narrative as the exaggerations, lies and racialist paranoia driven around Islamist terrorism. Its function is to settle fears, to isolate 'extremists' as 'lone gunmen' divorced from wider political developments, to paint a picture of a healthy society whose only internal threats are aberrations.

It is vital for the media, the political class and the state to create a particular narrative because

a real attempt to shine the spotlight on liberal democratic societies that could produce such reactions would be a bridge too far. Yet if one thing has been true of modern societies it is that when profound social polarisation occurs, so the fringe voices of the extreme Right can gain a hearing. We should fear that it might not be long before mainstream politicians seek to

assuage the 'rising tide' of racism in Europe by pandering to it, talking of 'understandable' grievances and the need to 'manage' multiculturalism more closely. The far Right is a small but very serious danger in a Europe increasingly racked by economic turmoil, and where the official discourse is frequently peppered with [pronouncements about the 'failure' of multiculturalism](). What's more, states have the power (which [they frequently exercise]()) to actually repress, control and expel migrants.

If his writings are to be believed, Breivik seized upon a common point of anger expressed by Right-wing extremists: The failure of governments to act against 'Islamicisation' and multiculturalism. This is a signal feature of fascism, the need to act outside the state when it won't go far enough in the national interest. Indeed, in language similar to Nazism's rantings against the ever-present menace of 'Bolshevism', Breivik railed against the 'cultural Marxism' of the very mainstream Norwegian Labour Party. That the language is not so different to repeated accusations by leading Australian Right-wingers of Julia Gillard's 'socialism' or the Greens' 'environmental Marxism' should give pause for thought about the forces they may be legitimating.

A return to 9/11

At a time when residents of the West are required to express their ongoing empathy for those killed in and impacted on by the 9/11 attacks, we are also expected to demote and reduce in rank Utøya. In both circumstances nonetheless, we are expected to set aside the global political context in which such actions occur. The space to consider in detail the social origins to the rise of the far Right and social polarization is limited. As limited and trivial as the space given to consider why the 9/11 attackers took the action they did.

Sloganeering and superficial analysis hinders placing these actions in context: whether it is '*your* terrorists hate our way of life' or they are new form of fascism, or alternatively '*our* Breivik was mad and an outsider' or his actions are only symptomatic of a general malaise.

It is also important to not accept that the media's softly-softly approach as a sign of a new maturity in the wake of incorrectly labelling the events in Norway as 'Muslim' terrorist attacks. It is precisely because the media is so deeply implicated in the last decade of state-sanctioned Islamophobia and diminution of civil liberties, that it is rushing to frame a story that perpetuates a lack of comprehension about the links between the extreme Right and how governments have managed social polarisation with the media's collusion. Indeed, they will do so alongside a continuation of the very anti-immigrant tropes that fostered the current climate.

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Repoliticising Utøya

Jeff Sparrow

Soon after Anders Breivik concluded his massacre and was apprehended by police, there commenced earnest analysis of the *2083* manifesto he had released several hours earlier. Given both the means by which he did it – a mass email to a thousand or so commentators, bloggers and the like – and the cut-and-paste form of the document, it was inevitable that attention would focus on the Islamophobic blogosphere in which he had participated for some years. It was inevitable too, that the form in which he distributed the message would gain more attention than the content. The Utøya massacre thus became another event attributed to the talismanic power of the internet, as per all those screeds about how Twitter spurred the Arab Spring or the UK riots were all about BlackBerry messaging. Such arguments usually amount to a cynical evasion or appetite for novelty. It's much easier and less confronting, particularly for mainstream commentators, to discuss communications technology, rather than the deep complexities of politics.

Yet moving beyond the faddism, it's important to recognise that the major transformations of the media sphere over the last fifteen years have had real consequences. In particular, the subculture of far-Right blogs do more than simply disseminate hatred – with the rise of the blogosphere, the demagogues of anti-Muslim bigotry have stumbled upon an organisational form that resolves some of the traditional problems besetting racial populism. Historically, the racist Right builds from those we might call the social etceteras, that strata sitting uncomfortably between the main classes of industrial society. Classical fascism, for instance, was based upon individuals simultaneously resentful of big capital and fearful of losing their hard-won shreds of respectability. Shopkeepers, professionals, small-business owners, bureaucrats, retirees, the unemployed: people conscious of being screwed by the banks, but also fretting about immigrants flooding their suburbs. The characteristic 'two-facedness' of racial populism (shrill denunciations of Wall Street alongside exposes of 'cultural Marxism') reflects its supporters' sense that they are squeezed from above and below, with no evident solution at hand.

That means that the supporters of the racial right are often the most atomised elements of society. There's no innate ties of solidarity between two small businessmen – indeed, they're in competition with each other – and there's even less of a bond between a small businessman and a declassed factory worker. How, then, do you organize this aggregation of flotsam and jetsam, people without any particular collectivity other than a shared sense of not fitting in? The traditional answer is via a political activity that in and of itself contrasts with the hopeless isolation of everyday existence. Hitler famously wrote of how his mass marches served to 'burn[…] into the small, wretched individual the proud conviction that, paltry worm as he was, he was nevertheless a part of a great dragon'. For classical fascism, meetings, rallies and street violence served not simply to advertise the movement but to excite supporters, to give them a collective sense of participating in a grand adventure.

That's still the case for today's crop of neo-fascists and racist populists. Witness, for instance, the importance that the English Defence League (EDL) attributes to its provocative anti-Islam marches. If the EDL's misfits and thugs can successfully parade through a multicultural

town, the experience serves to bind them together, giving them a shared identity and a feeling of group achievement. Nonetheless, precisely because populism grows, as Marx put it, 'by the simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes', keeping organisations together has always proved difficult for the far Right. That's why racial populist groupings typically form around a charismatic, authoritarian leader, a single figure who can keep followers in line via force of will. Even so, they tend to grow very quickly – and then spectacularly implode, as various followers decide that they, too, would rather like to be führer.

That's why the blogosphere matters. Blogs allow supporters to feel an ownership of a political project without giving them any actual control. They are, to put it another way, simultaneously participatory but undemocratic. That's why the major Islamophobic blogs should be understood not simply as providing ideas for their followers (though they do that as well) but as offering them an experience. It is, after all, far easier to become politically active online than in a real world. There's no limit to how much you can post in the comments thread of a 'counter-jihadi' website: if you choose, you can spend all day holding forth about the forgeries on Obama's birth certificate without ever leaving your La-Z-Boy recliner. Very quickly, you find yourself part of a community, recognising and being recognised by other members. Through that participation, you can forge a new identity, one that's exciting and meaningful.

In real life, you might be a retired dentist, aggrieved at your vermicular existence; on Michelle Malkin's site, you're 'Mightydragon55', Hammer of Islam and agent of counter-jihad. The major sites periodically launch blog-wars and other online campaigns, and these serve to cadreise their followers. Where the far Right of the past blooded its recruits via street battles with the Left, today, you can prove your mettle and bond with your comrades by joining a snarky pile-on against some progressive site. Yet, while blogs enable involvement, they don't require democracy. As soon as you launch a real-life political organisation – even one on the far Right – the question of decision-making (elections, congresses, etc) comes to the fore. Which, inevitably, raises the vexed issue of who gets to play Hitler and who has to be Germany.

In the blogosphere, it's different. The most popular sites are built around a single magnetic figure, whose accepted role is to lay down on a daily basis the political line that everyone else follows. A Right-wing blog community can thus be much more stable than a Right-wing organisation, simply because, online, top-down leadership goes without saying. Furthermore, the anonymity of the blogosphere encourages a rhetorical escalation that's very useful for the far Right. If you attend a political meeting, you might think twice about shouting out your desire to herd immigrants into camps, for fear you'll have to explain yourself to your neighbours. But as 'Nordicwarrior' you need feel no such constraints, and can express yourself, as TS Eliot once put it, with 'the braggadocio of the mild-mannered man safely entrenched behind his typewriter'.

Which means, of course, there's a certain unreality to online politics, with the commenter writing all-cap screeds as 'Wrath of Thor' just as likely to be an aggrieved granddad as a skinhead or stormtrooper. That being said, Utøya showed the folly of taking comfort from the extremity of online Islamophobia. If you visit, say, Atlas Shrugs, proprietor Pamela Geller often seems to be hallucinating on demand. Hers is a world in which Obama's not only a Muslim: he's both the secret son of Malcolm X and a drug-addicted Kenyan jihadi, engaged in extramarital dalliances with crack whores. Yet Breivik hailed Geller as a savant, an

authority whom he quoted extensively throughout his manifesto. The organisations of the far Right, while growing, are still comparatively small. But the Islamophobic blogosphere stretches across the globe, providing a network that allows every angry shopkeeper to marinate in extravagant fantasies of racial war and creeping Sharia – not just reading about the stuff but, crucially, participating in a community in which such views are accepted without question. Given the combination of all-encroaching paranoia and rhetorical violence, it's not so very surprising if the online world occasionally leaks bloodily into reality.

So what follows? Real world organisations are still more important than online forums. Supporters of a racist group that holds marches and meetings and other events are, almost by definition, more committed than those who simply nod along to an Islamophobic blog from the privacy of their bedroom. The far Right is much more dangerous in, say, Hungary, where Jobbik – anti-Semitic, anti-Roma, homophobic, and given to fascist salutes – is now the third largest political party, than in countries where would-be Nazis remain entirely online. That's why the traditional Left preoccupation with confronting far-Right groupings whenever they rally remains crucial. If a successful fascist march allows participants to strut like stormtroopers, a mobilisation in which they are driven off the streets by those they despise is correspondingly demoralising, and can help foster splits and fragmentations.

But the Left cannot afford to ignore the Islamophobic blogosphere either. Breivik is not the only example of crossover between online and real world bigotry: Pamela Geller was central to the protests against the so-called 'Ground Zero' mosque, just as the EDL was spurred by the blogger 'Lionheart'. The racist blogs allow the Islamophobic leaders of the future to prove their spurs; they bring isolated bigots together; they function as shadow organisations from which real word groups can emerge. In the weeks following the Utøya massacre, the Right seized on the fact that Anders Breivik had only vestigial and fleeting contacts or membership of 'real-world' organisations to argue that he was could be classified as either purely criminal or insane, or both. This hard and fast distinction, from an earlier era, will come to be the essence of the mainstream Right's strategy in relation to its growing band of extremists in years to come. Their networks of hate allow for all the organisational benefits of collective action, without the burden – historical and otherwise – of herding together a movement of the atomised and obsessive. It is an alibi that will have more life, and perhaps death, beyond the events on one island in Norway.

Conclusion

14

Language, Violence, Politics

Tad Tietze

If there is one theme that the authors of the essays in this collection concur on, it is that Anders Breivik's murderous rampage cannot be understood abstracted from the social and political conjuncture in which it emerged. The rise in far Right, racist and Islamophobic commentary, websites and organisations provide an essential context in which Brevik's ideas developed and his actions were planned.

But, just as importantly, the increasing insertion of such themes into conventional media and political debates has – along with government policies centred around the War on Terror, national security, border control, and the policing of minority ethnic and religious communities – led to the mainstreaming of hard Right-wing ideologies centred on the use of coercive strategies to achieve political outcomes.

This set of circumstances poses a series of difficulties for the modern Left. On the one hand, progressives have been understandably repelled by the authoritarian and violent logic of fascist and Islamophobic politics. Similarly, many have seen state-led coercion – whether as an instrument of foreign policy or as part of suppressing internal dissent – as being instrumental to the legitimation of more extreme political ideas and movements outside the sphere of official politics. Yet on the other hand, there is the question of how to deal with the rise of extremism, of the politics of hate, without falling into the trap of a new kind of authoritarianism. Won't the Left, in taking on the hard Right, simply prove itself similarly censorious, repressive and intolerant?

In order to ground an effective political strategy for the Left, it is important to deconstruct the arguments being mustered by voices in the mainstream as to how to respond to the context in which Breivik acted. Below I will look at three such approaches that have repeatedly emerged in the media and among the political class in response to violence associated with political language. By developing a critique of the theoretical suppositions behind them it will be possible to construct a clear alternative – based in treating both Breivik and the mainstreamed Right *politically*.

Violence as pathology, not politics

As outlined in chapter 10, sections of the mainstream Right – as well as some liberal commentators – have sought to characterise Breivik as insane or disturbed, and therefore acting because of pathology rather than genuine political conviction. Because this has no basis in any publicly available knowledge about the man, his ideas or his actions, it may simply be seen as shallow excuse.

But there is a deeper thread to the proposition, that the world of written and verbal politics – of debates that contain open discussion of 'wars' with defined 'allies' and 'enemies', of the need to use 'force' to protect against 'existential threats' posed by multiculturalism, Muslim immigration, and the loss of national and ethnic sovereignty – should and must naturally remain within the realm of ideas. For individuals or groups to take such violent intentions

into their own hands would be a sign of psychological disturbance, of *incapacity* to participate in the kinds of political projects the Right advocates.

Although the Right's rhetoric is directed against the failure of government to defend against these threats, of its infiltration by the enemy, it is still considered insane to arm yourself and carry out its project. Even when Islamophobes organise protests to prevent the construction of a Mosque near Ground Zero, to mobilise baying crowds as part of the 'Stop The Islamization of America' campaign, this is thought to be of a qualitatively different character to the actions of a disordered gunman bent on delivering analogous outcomes by other means.

Behind this lies the idea that politics is inherently a zone of rationality where, however inflammatory the discourse, the actions that such ideas engender will remain safely within acceptable limits, set by the interlocutors who spout them. Those who step outside those limits have clearly stepped outside the bounds of reason, and must be disowned accordingly.

One is tempted to say, then, that their argument is paradoxical. Because if the hard Right of the mainstream has proposed a militant, life and death struggle against the three 'M's – Muslims, multiculturalists and Marxists – then when someone like Breivik takes their words literally they dismiss him by claiming, 'Look how mad this man is, he actually took us seriously! How could we possibly be blamed for *that*?'

Voltaire's epigones: Libertarian nonsense

One unfortunate result of the retreat of the Left in the past three decades has been the emergence of a faux radicalism around crude versions of Enlightenment themes. In his 2007 book, *The Threat to Reason: How the Enlightenment Was Hijacked and How We Can Reclaim It*, the British writer Dan Hind has called this pseudo-movement the 'Folk Enlightenment'. It is marked by hysterical attacks on religious belief, new-age mysticism and postmodern relativism. Its progenitors tend to disparage anyone who doesn't accede to their rabid commitment to narrowly defined standards of rational inquiry, carried out on the assumption that the status quo of technologically-centred market capitalism is the height of human achievement and that its liberating effects are merely being held back by backward superstitions.

One strand of such thinking is the UK-based website *Spiked*, which arose from the ashes of *LM* (formerly *Living Marxism*) after the latter lost a lengthy and public libel case over the veracity of ITN reporting on Serb war crimes. *Spiked* sees the collapse of old binaries of Left and Right – and the lack of moral certainty that has emerged in its wake – as driving the turn to reactionary tropes of the pre-Enlightenment era. Thus, rather than retain a Marxist focus on material power relations and socioeconomic injustices, former editor Mick Hume and current editor Brendan O'Neill have chosen to specialise in denunciations of ideas that they believe hold back 'liberty' (their definition of human progress).

Thus it is no surprise to see O'Neill and co focusing heavily on demands for absolute rights of free speech, and arguing that even instances of 'incitement' are not enough reason to limit those rights. The greatest threat to freedom is even the smallest incursion on open discussion, and to *Spiked* that threat is invariably hidden in loose talk about other rights, which are (incorrectly) alleged to be infringed upon by unrestrained opinions.

To sustain such an extreme view, it must be underpinned by a complete separation between the worlds of ideas and actions:

> So long as we don't physically attack someone or something, we should be free to hate it as much as we like and to tell people that we hate it. Hatred might not always be big and clever … but it's a thing that lies in the realm of thought and speech, and the authorities have no business there.

In some ways this is simply the exact opposite of the 'social effects' school of analysis, which claims to find causal links between media representations of violence and the incidence of violent offences. The libertarian view espoused by Spiked simply rejects any link between open espousal of violence in ideas and their implementation in practice.

Thus they have been obsessed with making the case that the rise in Islamophobic ideas coming out of politicians' and pundits' mouths has not led to any rise in actual incidence of Islamophobic discrimination or violence. To do this they have used selective UK police and court statistics to 'prove' the lack of Islamophobia-in-practice, as if these even begin to describe the changing experiences of British Muslims since 9/11. While giving a nod to the irrationality of fear of Muslims, they have been far more concerned about growing pressure on authorities and individuals to toe a needlessly gentle line so as not to upset Muslim communities or incite violence against them.

The contortions required to explain the origins of Breivik's atrocity were therefore worthy of a gold medal. Reducing the massacre to another of 'today's various terror tantrums' O'Neill dismissed links between the fascist killer's ideology and the growing noise of Right-wing extremist discourse and instead claimed that 'his outlook, like that of the 7/7 attackers, seems to have been moulded by the estrangement-inducing politics of multiculturalism':

> Breivik's alleged hatred of multiculturalism actually seems to be driven by a belief that it does not sufficiently respect his cultural identity; his violent act can be seen as a crazy, barbaric attempt to expand the remit of the politics of multiculturalism.

And just in case we might get the wrong idea from all this, O'Neill parenthetically added, 'this is not to argue, by the way, that the EDL or anti-immigration thinkers bear any responsibility for Breivik's violence. They do not'. *Spiked*'s logic is not only incoherent, it is stupidly self-contradictory: Words don't lead to actions, except that the discourse of multiculturalism leads to fanatical struggles for identity on all sides, except that it doesn't.

The limits of liberal 'civility'

But does the incoherence of the libertarian Right's various arguments mean that there is a case for somehow limiting 'hate speech' because of its potential for violence? Such questions have come to the fore in response to the rapid rise in more extreme Right-wing rhetoric in the political mainstream in the last few years.

They were posed dramatically after the shooting of Arizona's Democrat congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords by Jared Lee Loughner in early 2011. Loughner, although probably seriously mentally ill, had apparently been influenced by inflammatory Right-wing rhetoric against Giffords, and the finger was soon pointed at provocative 'attack' advertisements being run by Sarah Palin, targeting Democrats (including Giffords) in cartoon crosshairs. In response to the shooting, President Barack Obama argued:

And if, as has been discussed in recent days, their death helps usher in more civility in our public discourse, let us remember it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy – it did not – but rather because only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to the challenges of our nation in a way that would make them proud.

Obama's approach was to be replayed in Norway just six months later. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg told his people that he would not be pushed into fighting fire with fire when it came to the anti-multicultural Right:

The Norwegian response to violence is more democracy, more openness and greater political participation. … We have to be very clear to distinguish between extreme views, opinions that it's completely legal, legitimate to have. What is not legitimate is to try to implement those extreme views by using violence.

A similar call for greater civility came from figures in Australia's centre-Left government after rising temperatures at right-wing Tea Party style protests against its carbon price policy in 2011. At one, placards referring to the female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and the Greens leader Bob Brown, said, 'JuLIAR: Bob Brown's bitch' and 'Ditch the witch!'.

Green, the official members' magazine of Brown's party, subsequently devoted an issue to 'language and politics'. The lead article, by former Greenpeace campaigner Dan Cass, promised to '[unveil] the truth behind hate speech and its relationship to violence'. Cass' definition of hate speech is quite wide: 'For our purposes here, hate speech is any public communication that incites or justifies violence against a social group', although he helpfully excludes the acts of 'deranged' individuals and 'the legitimate argumentation of Parliamentary question time' (on the latter point contradicting Brown's media advisor Marion Rae in the same issue, who singles out hateful language in Parliament):

Hate speech seems to pose three serious threats to the green movement. Firstly, it may lead to acts of political violence directed against politicians, leaders or activists. Secondly, hate speech undermines the constructive political discourse we need in order to deal with climate change. Thirdly, hate speech is the leading edge of a novel species of fascism that is emerging in the USA.

Cass goes on to argue:

The point is that the culture of hate erodes the social taboo against political violence and reinforces the 'intuitive' worldview of the mob. Professor Rod Tiffen of the University of Sydney says that the political parties and the Murdoch media work in tandem to drive populism. He writes, 'together they form an outrage industry that absents proportion, reason and reasonableness, and where it is difficult – soon, perhaps, near impossible – to have a measured debate of policy options'.

Yet it is unclear what can be done about these developments except to decry them and call for greater civility? The responses of far Right ideologues in the wake of Utøya suggests that they are deaf to such calls. Writing in *Newsweek*, Asne Seierstad asked the founder of a far-Right Norwegian website what he thought of such a request:

[Hans] Rustad, for his part, is dismayed by official Norway's reaction to the attacks. 'Meeting terror with roses and love …' he says, bitingly. 'Crown Prince Haakon announced that the streets of Oslo were filled with love. What is this? Woodstock? Flower Power? Feel my pain! We go through the same pile of victims' stories over and over again. How many memorial ceremonies can we handle?' He knocks his glass of water onto the table, when I mention the debate over what has been described as covert Islamization. 'It is not even covert! There are demands for prayer calls, no pork in kindergartens, nurses in veils, halal meals in prisons, and Muslims in elderly homes demanding to be ritually washed five times a day. It's all in the open!'.

In the face of such intransigence, should the Left go further and demand some kind of state action against the extremist Right? With his invocation of 'the mob', Cass seems worried about the ability of ordinary people to manage their own debates without some kind of intervention.

The rise in hard Right populism in Australia comes at the same time as the Murdoch press has [campaigned hysterically against the Greens](), with its flagship broadsheet, *The Australian*, declaring it wants the party 'destroyed at the ballot box' and running opinion pieces marked by suggestions that it represents an agenda akin to fascism or Stalinism. Fighting back, Bob Brown has also spearheaded calls for tougher media regulation, presumably in part to curb such rhetorical excesses and partisan bias.

However, one doesn't have to be a *Spiked*-style libertarian to see how such calls can play into a culture of greater state regulation that could easily be turned against the Left and social movements. There is always a danger of calling for state action against the extreme Right ending in state action against all speech and activity deemed impermissible in the narrow world of official politics.

Such a problem emerged in the northern-hemisphere autumn of 2011 when some anti-racist campaigners called for a government ban on the English Defence League (EDL) provocatively marching through the multiethnic borough of Tower Hamlets in London. Not only did they get a ban but the minister also banned *all* street marches for a period of 30 days, including the planned anti-fascist counter protest – this just weeks after riots had torn through the capital and protests opposed to the government's austerity program were becoming a frequent occurrence. Luckily anti-racists were able to mobilise a significant protest in contravention of the ban, despite the arguments of some that the campaign had achieved its aims and so protesters should stay at home.

Clearly the near-unanimous desire to prevent the EDL's strategy of violent intimidation was a healthy one, and yet how this was to be achieved led some to (inadvertently) invite restrictions on freedom of expression and action for the Left also. The state imposition of 'civility' rapidly turned into the wide-ranging imposition of 'order' on the streets.

Developing counterstrategies: Context and politics matter

If we can reject the simplistic libertarian notion that there is no substantive link between Right-wing ideology and violent actions like Breivik's, neither is it true that there is a simple and direct causal chain connecting them. The fact that Breivik was impressed by the policies and statements of former Australian conservative prime minister John Howard doesn't mean that Howard was directly responsible for the massacres in Oslo and Utøya.

To understand what connections there may be between the two, it is first worth returning to the 'media effects' debate. In the introduction to the second edition of their authoritative account of the controversy, *Ill Effects: The Media/Violence Debate*, Martin Barker and Julian Petley argue that studies purporting to show an measurable link between media representations of violence and violent offending invariably start with the wrong question. By focusing on the chosen commonality between the two – the presence of 'violence' (usually imprecisely defined) – they reduce both sides of the problem to a single factor. This doesn't represent scientific inquiry but presumes what it seeks to answer.

It is in the complexities of context and meaning, of how consumers of media actively interpret its form and content, and of how particular circumstances (personal and historical) come together to shape this dynamic process that any understanding of the links can start to be teased out.

The same is true of what is called 'hate speech', and of the militant ideologies disseminated by the anti-multicultural Right. Not everyone who hears or reads their words will interpret them identically, and not everyone will be moved to taking action as a result. The coded anti-Muslim words and actions of mainstream politicians may provide legitimacy for more extreme ideas, but they are not the same as far Right calls for eliminationist policies or fascist arguments to organise street violence. Each has to be understood concretely in its connection with social circumstances. By studying Breivik's own motivations and the personal and historical context in which he developed his own ideology, we can understand how febrile propaganda – especially if whitewashed as part of the mainstream – can play a role in providing the backcloth to a strategy of Right-wing terror.

The development of a counterstrategy requires understanding not just the historical specificity and social context of a Breivik, but of the radical Right more generally. The ability of such ideas to outgrow their fringe position is more likely in circumstances of economic and political crisis when 'normal' institutional supports start to hollow out and fragment, and sections of the middle class and ruling elite develop worldviews around reinstating national unity on the basis of exclusion and elimination of contaminants, whether they be ethnic, religious or political. Simply put, the failure of the social order to maintain stability and integrity creates space for solutions that seek the restoration of order through force. That many of these ideological stances can appear irrational to the liberal mindset shouldn't stop us from having a rational explanation of why they play such a crucial role in cohering the Right.

To imagine, as do the libertarians, that it is merely a matter of debating such ideas to prove the superiority of reason, is to ignore their material social roots. The hard Right is not just engaging in a polite back and forth but seeking to build its own strength through a mixture of cohering the confidence of its supporters and intimidating opponents via invective and extreme assertions. Such tactics are the natural complement of the physical force used by groups like EDL, intended to terrorise ethnic minorities.

This is also why talk of greater civility is such an ineffectual weapon. Engagement in seriously intended debate with the far Right by organisations and individuals of the Left helps give such ideas greater respectability. If they are worth discussing then they must have some value. This is not to say that engagement in debate with anyone who holds racist or nationalist ideas is futile, but that the hardened ideologues of the Right have no interest in settling matters in the manner of some ideal set of Enlightenment values. The task for the Left is not to have a gentle dialogue but to ruthlessly expose the true nature of the Right and its authoritarian project. The far Right must be confronted and isolated, robbed of its respectability and legitimacy, its confidence and coherence broken.

For some liberals and libertarians such an approach might seem anti-democratic, but the opposite is true. The far Right and fascists have a project explicitly aimed at constraining and destroying the democratic rights of the social groups they target. The defence of democracy relies on the marginalisation of reactionary forces that seek to bully their opponents into

submission. Opposing the far Right in systematic and political manner must be at the heart of any strategy for the Left.

The risk is that if the Left feels sufficiently weak it will look to the state to carry out this task for it. Such a move, as we have seen, is laden with danger in practice. This is not simply a case of the state being an ineffectual or haphazard enforcer of preferred norms, but because it is the ensemble of relations of domination of the existing social order. Whatever their criticisms of existing governmental structures and ruling elites, the far Right want to strengthen the coercive power of national states as part of their radical authoritarian project.

For any Left worthy of the name, standing up to real social power relations and structures means confronting the role of the state in perpetuating hierarchies, inequalities, injustices and discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality, among others. The problem of the far Right is not that it is too 'extreme' in its outlook – as if some notional middle ground was always the best place to be – but that it is interested in exacerbating already existing oppressions. Thus it is dangerous for the Left to seek an alliance with forces responsible for those oppressions. It is the state that turns asylum seekers away at its borders, the state that carpet bombs Muslim countries and the state that restricts ordinary people's legal and political freedoms. Thus states and governments are at best unreliable allies and at worst inimical to struggles against oppression.

To refuse the far Right or fascists a platform for their propaganda thus requires a radically different agency, one that seeks to unite ordinary people in robbing the reactionaries of the space to organise. It is a policy that must be enacted by people themselves, as real democracy depends on ordinary people putting their minds and bodies on the line. At times that will expose the Left to claims from mainstream opinion makers that it is being 'extreme' or that the Left are just as bad as the fascists. At times the police, as they have done so many times in the past, will intervene to defend Right-wing thugs' democratic 'rights', in stark contrast to their treatment of Left-wing protests.

But the central point of any serious strategy to deal with the far Right must be based on breaking the nexus between their theory and practice, of isolating their words to the margins and making it impossible for them to be organised into violent actions. The social crisis creates the space in which such links can be encouraged. Only through a strategy of refusing to appease the Right, exposing it for its reactionary, anti-democratic nature, and mobilising ordinary people to confront it can those links be effectively broken. Recognising the nature of our opponents is the first step to robbing them of an effective voice.

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Commonwealth of Fear: The Right and the manufacture of hate in Australia

Guy Rundle

'Monday morning September 11 was a clear and bright day …' the official US Government report into the 9/11 attacks began, in unusually evocative fashion for a dry official document (it was rumoured that John Grisham had been brought in to give it a polish). Hokey as it was, the opening captured a feeling that would take hold throughout the years that followed – that 9/11 had been a classic loss of innocence, a Fall from the heavens, bringing with it a 'low dishonest decade', in which the state vastly extended not merely its power over the citizens under it, but also the legitimacy of such measures, through fear, panic and xenophobia – amid stories of WMDs 45 minutes from use, Londonistan, terror plots foiled in the 'preliminary pre-planning' stage and the like.

The West's purported heritage of the Enlightenment, with its products of freedom and democracy were such a precious and unique gift to humanity that they would have to be suspended in order to guard against their destruction by their enemies. Such was the urgency of this civilisational task that those who questioned would have to be considered not merely as political opponents, but as enemies of society – to baulk at this designation would be nothing other than cowardice in the face of existential threat. The 1990s, in this story, had been a decade dominated by neoliberalism, and its pious hopes that a post-national global order could be ushered in on the basis of economic globalisation. Western projection of power – in the Balkans, Somalia etc – was, compared to earlier eras, piecemeal and tentative, requiring endless stoking with WWII comparisons. The slightest push-back – as in the Clinton administration's absurd adventure in Somalia – prompted a hasty retreat.

Within Western societies, the simultaneous end of the Cold War and the apparent boom (really a bubble) that began in the early 90s created a sense of comfortable *post-histoire*. It was the era of GATT and Internet 1.0, *Seinfeld* and the WTO – an era which appeared to generalise the notion of postmodernity, that all grand narratives were over. We were all just here, eating tapas and going to Blockbuster, watching the Chinese make their many-decades long ascent to economic parity. The rise of the global anti-capitalist movement was a powerful challenge, but there was also a debate within the movement as to whether neoliberalism was the carrier of a new post nation state future, or a co-option of it. The decade put the world on the global path, and 9/11 put an end to that, collapsing power back into states, conspiracies, nations, defined not by their representation of humanity, but in opposition to selected groups of other humans.

This is all a myth of course, the Coke ad version of recent history.

The globalisation process was managed by supranational bodies able to project state power, such as the WTO and EU. This had the effect of lifting key economic decisions out of electoral reach. The freeing up of movement of capital and goods inaugurated by GATT necessitated an immediate and more explicit separation of goods and labour flows than had previously existed. The key role of nation states became the sequestration of labour, and the calibrated control of its international flows. Commonwealth access to the UK, Mexico-US

cross-border flows and Asian arrivals in Australia became issues where states took action. Mandatory detention dates from this time, as does US anxiety over 'multiculturalism', at that time focused on Hispanic-US culture.

Together with people, information flow became a key concern, as the initial formulation of the digital revolution: Al Gore's 'information superhighway' – a statist and rigidified conception – was rapidly superseded by the vast expansion of the web. Governments across the West began drafting laws that denied new forms of communication any of the inherited protections that had built up around printed or broadcast speech – a new frontier, which could be closed before it was opened.

Western state power was also re-shaped in response to new forms of potential violence, in particular autonomous, non-state terror. The collapse of the USSR and the disintegration of Yugoslavia created uncertainty across a whole region, from Eastern Europe to the Indian border, and beyond. Client states of the US prospered and consolidated – not least of them Wahhabist Saudi Arabia. Former Soviet client states wobbled both within and without, and in that vacuum new groups coalesced, from Al-Qaeda to the KLA, the PKK, Nepalese Maoists, and then some. The frozen and potential violence of the Cold War became actual. The new challenges to the West – they were not yet constructed as 'existential threats' – legitimated new measures of repression of dissent at home and abroad. As Al-Qaeda began its African bombing campaign and the Taliban swept to power, the non-state financial base of non-state terror – global narcotics flows, sovereign wealth, online fundraising and propaganda – became as much a pretext for crackdown as the terror groups themselves. Furthermore, they were occurring in an era when neoliberal globalisation was faced with a powerful countervailing force – a right-wing populism drawing on dissatisfaction generated by the de-industrialisation of the West and the remorseless marginalisation of sections of the working and lower-middle class.

All these currents were present in the 1990s. 9/11 became the event by which they could be fused together as one, and the dominant spirit of the era reversed in a flash. Neoconservatism became the dominant visible expression of Western power, neoliberalism ostensibly subordinated to it. Global flows and international interconnection ceased to be the motif, and a highly specific notion of 'the West' was applied – as both a white Christian civilisation, and the bearer – via liberal modernity – of the possible path for future human development. It was simultaneously humanity itself, and yet a specific ethnos, at one and the same time triumphant over all history, yet threatened at its very core by small conspiratorial networks. Political debate was reconfigured in this form – in the US a version of anti-humanist republicanism took over, in which all those not citizens (and some who were) lost all status as humans with rights; the impossibility of torturing or sequestring Americans licensed its unlimited application to non-Americans. In Europe, hard-Right parties began to prosper, having refashioned their message from one of naïve racialism to one of the maintenance of Western values (particularised as 'Danish values', 'Dutch values', etc.), drenched in hysteria about imminent 'extinction' or 'self-abolition'.

Hate travels Down Under

There was a similar process occurring in Australia. The election of the conservative Howard government in 1996 had been, in part, on the back of Howard's campaign against the 'political correctness' of the Keating government; its pursuit of cultural nationalism at the same time as it promoted neoliberal restructuring of the economy. Independent MP Pauline

Hanson, who had been deselected by the Liberals for her racist outbursts before the election, buttressed Howard's strategic talk of a 'comfortable and relaxed' Australia with explicit Anglo-Celtic suprematism, directed at both Aborigines and non-Anglo migrants.

The rise of such figures was accompanied by shifts within the media and popular culture. The Fairfax press, once carrying a range of crusading left-liberal voices, became bland lifestyle progressivist papers, oriented to advertising. Rupert Murdoch's News Limited papers, no longer needing to curry favour with a Labor government, moved decisively to the centre-right. Commercial radio was developing a new generation of shockjocks, and they occupied an ever-larger slice of the schedule. Meanwhile state broadcasters, the ABC and SBS, surrendered notions of producing challenging material to a postmodern refusal of judgement between popular and critical culture. Though substantial resources of Left political energy remained – as evidenced by the waterfront dispute of 1998 – by the turn of the millennium official politics was being reorganised around fear and threat, represented above all by the dilemmas posed by boat-borne refugees and the deep-seated hostility that could be stirred up towards them.

Desert-based detention camps for such arrivals, created by the Keating Government, had hitherto been given as low a profile as possible by both governments, convinced that it would prompt a substantial backlash of liberal-minded protest. When the practice became a central image of refugee and immigration policy, all sides of the political class discovered that it was widely celebrated as a symbol of resoluteness and national defence. The major parties all adapted rapidly to incorporate this in a new populism, with few differences. The new shockjocks, and a new style of Right-wing columnist – typified by the rise of Andrew Bolt in the *Herald Sun* – began to channel the political style of US 'culture war' politics, in which the Left were constructed as civilisational wreckers, and immigration and multiculturalism held as policies of national destruction.

The 9/11 attacks coincided with the Tampa incident, in which a container ship carrying refugees it had plucked from a sinking vessel was refused entry to an Australian port. The stand-off – military, political, legal, occupied the fortnight before 9/11, which by happenstance occurred as Prime Minister John Howard was visiting Washington DC. For conservatives this was not so much conjuncture but trifecta, paying out a fortune. Radical Islamism, immigration, refugees and the US-Australian alliance were fused by events and rhetoric into one compelling picture. More dramatically than anywhere else, perhaps even the US, the centre of official politics shifted radically to the Right. Mealy-mouthed discussion of the tensions created by multiculturalism, or about the wearing away of Christian traditions by cosmopolitanism, were no longer required. Western society could be spoken of as under threat, Islam could be treated as a pathological phenomenon, and any dissenting voices treated as pure enemies.

Central to this process was an emerging conservative political-media axis. At the top were *The Australian*, the right-wing current affairs magazine *Quadrant*, the Centre for Independent [sic] Studies think-tank, and the Prime Minister's core political staff. The PM's staff would alternately take up or seed material in think-tanks and *Quadrant*, which would then be reported by *The Australian* as a news story.

These campaigns – on refugees, Aborigines, war, terror, national security – would be down-streamed to News Limited's city-based tabloids whose sales dwarfed that of *The Australian*. The matters would be taken up by Right-wing shockjocks as material 'in the news' that the

public therefore 'must be talking about' – and would then be cross-fertilised by the growing roster of Right-wing columnists at Fairfax – thereby speaking to large sections of the lower-middle class. The final destination was the commercial current affairs shows, *A Current Affair* and *Today Tonight*. Although their populism occasionally had a Leftish touch (bastard bosses, banks ripping us off) for the most part it ran on a refined mix of consumer individualism ('are car insurers ripping you off?') and generalised xenophobic fear – the former supplying the sense of an atomised contemporary life on which the latter thrived.

Though stretched across competing media groups, the system was one – without the TV current affairs shows, such ideas would not be propagated to the majority of Australians who read no newspapers; without the small circulation 'political workshop' at the top, the large-viewer/circulation outlets would have to do actual political coverage. The power of such a system was confirmed by the absence of any countervailing arrangement, as Fairfax and the ABC depoliticised themselves. In a country where a way of life with some collective aspects to it was being atomised, where inequality was growing apace and the middle class being hollowed out, the potential for the conservative political-media axis to propagate fear, hate and a sense of aggrieved identity, became ever greater.

A country whose bumpy road from monoculture to multi-origin population has had much structural racism but relatively little hysteria quickly became dominated by notions that Muslims represented a monolithic body who would neither assimilate nor even consent to the basic rules governing the land (East Asians, the previous object of fear, were now held up as an example of good assimilators). Islam was the unique 'other' to a world that, from Shanghai to Santiago, had agreed upon a single form of global modernisation.

Into the Bolthole

Crucial to the construction of this notion was a phalanx of columnists – Andrew Bolt, Tim Blair, Janet Albrechtsen, Piers Akerman and Alan Howe at News Limited, Paul Sheehan at Fairfax – and Alan Jones and literally dozens of others on radio. Of these, one stands out as setting a political agenda in the mainstream.

Andrew Bolt had been a jobbing Melbourne-based journalist and low-level spin-doctor for much of the 1980s and 1990s, and gained a column in 1999, as the *Herald Sun* ratcheted up its operations as a Right-wing propaganda vehicle. Dutch-born, he was raised in the neo-Calvinist tradition, and he brought to bear much of that political/religious movement's obsession with national decline and 'purity' to bear on Australian politics. Bolt's routine, sustained in up to three columns a week and, from 2006, a relentless blog, was to develop a legion of enemies of the average Anglo-Celtic North European Australian – boat-borne refugees, Muslim 'extremists', Aboriginal 'tribalism', Somalis, the 'underclass', and the Greens among others. Contrary to the secular, 'economic rationalist' tone of many Right-wing commentators in the 1990s, Bolt placed the notion of Christian civilisation firmly at the centre of his arguments – and saw the above and other enemies not merely as freeloaders, or Communists, but as an unholy alliance of relativist atheists and neo-pagan decadents with radical Muslims. More careful to speak of 'Islamists' rather than attack the entire religion, as did many US culture warriors, he was nevertheless relaxed and comfortable with the notion that the Muslim community was a 'problem':

ISLAMIC groups and our usual Australia-haters claim last week's ASIO raids prove that this racist country is persecuting Muslims.

The imam of Preston mosque was so cross that he warned 'some amongst our people … become so angry about this sort of thing, and might do some act which we won't be happy about'. Let me translate: We're peaceful, and take cover if you dare doubt us.

But have we really been persecuting Muslims? The truth is that this nuttily multicultural nation has done precisely the dangerous opposite.

So eager have our multicultural commissars been to placate Muslims that they've given our most militant Islamic outfit – one that has promoted some of the world's worst terrorists – three separate grants of taxpayers' money.

Yes, the Islamic Youth Movement, which has been subjected to several ASIO raids in the past 13 months, has had its Lakemba office converted into a nice drop-in centre, thanks to a work-for-the-dole grant from the Howard Government.

So much more convenient for recruiting new members to its extremist cause …

Bolt wrote in November 2002, as the US war in Afghanistan continued, and the global Right began organising a clash of civilisations. Over the years hundreds of similar items appeared in both column and blog. Here he is seven years later, having fused Islamophobia with the fear of Somali refugees in Melbourne, who had been (erroneously) accused of having a higher crime rate:

Many good people will rightly argue it would be unfair to treat all Muslims, or all Somalis, as potential terrorists.

All we dare do, they'd argue, is screen Muslim or Somali refugees much better. Let's just weed out the few that will give the rest an extremist name. Anything more would be racist.

If only it were that easy.

In fact, many studies show it's often the second generation of migrant diasporas that is the most radical – not the first generation that you screened.

Indeed, three of the four Islamist bombers who in 2005 killed 52 people in London were actually born in Britain, to Pakistani parents. One of the two men who launched the 2007 bomb attack on Glasgow airport was a Muslim doctor born in Britain to Iraqi parents.

Or take this latest alleged plot in Melbourne. The uncle of Yacqub Khayre is undoubtedly a moderate, peace- loving man – but the toddler he brought here has since embraced a militant brand of Islam. (Again, he's been proved guilty of nothing.)

So here's the dilemma.

We do not want to be racist. We do not want to generalise.

But it's also true that we do not want to import individuals in this country who are likely to turn into terrorists or breed them – and there is no way of predicting precisely which one will.

All we know is that one faith today seems to inspire a small minority of its followers – especially those from Arab and African countries – to reject their new Western homes and even to kill. (August 7, 2009)

(The approach was graded to a country which prided itself, accurately or otherwise, on its welcoming attitude to 'legitimate' migrants, and less comfortable with the creation of social enemies than the US or Europe.

Responding to a (rather wacky) academic argument about the attractions of Islam to some Aboriginal people, in 2007 Bolt argued that:

I'd suggest Islam offers an underclass something more primitive and dangerous – a revelling in an us-against- the-world victimology, and a legitimising of anger and force. No wonder that so many Aboriginal converts are convicted criminals and boxers …

Indeed, unlike US 'declinists', Bolt was willing to attack sections of society on class grounds, as degenerates, all grouped together as the 'underclass'. This 'seething' underclass were everywhere. A police report of a driver doing burnouts with his kids in the car was headed 'scenes from the underclass', with Bolt noting that:

> I sometimes feel much like I imagine a Roman in the fourth century or German in the 1930s did, watching in despair as civilisation slowly crumbles.

For Bolt the 'underclass' was not a general condition, but tended to have a universal make-up – as demonstrated in a remark on a news story of a violent dispute between two families in 2007:

> Sometimes it takes a death – Daniel Valerio, the Snowtown killings – to expose an extraordinary underclass of
> whose existence and moral code we suspected little …

Both families, as the report explicitly noted, were Romany-Australians. And in a piece on the UK riots in August 2011:

> BRITAIN'S riots show what happens when we underestimate the underclass. Or when we even more stupidly import one.
>
> Three days of arson, looting and violence started, not surprisingly, in Tottenham, coyly described as 'very diverse'. That means it has a large population of people of African and Caribbean descent, and is poor, crime- riddled and sullen.

These themes were joined to a voluminous assault on the Australian Greens, the party most analogous to Norway's Labour Party. Using the 'Left fascist' argument later popularised by Jonah Goldberg, with its founding false syllogism ('the Nazis liked forests, the Greens liked forests, therefore the Greens are Nazis'), Bolt baited the Greens as 'greenshirts'.

'Few realise Hitler was an early champion of green philosophies' Bolt wrote in a 2003 piece titled 'Hitler: green guru' in 2003, and went on in peek-a-boo style: 'And while today's eco-activists aren't about to become Nazis, we should be mindful of history's lesson…' In 2007 he noted that:

> Green totalitarians really do think they have a right to force you to go to black:
>
> *Fifteen Greenpeace activists have seized and shut down a coal-fired power plant on the State's central coast this morning, protesting federal climate change policies.*
>
> Not the first time, of course, and consider how unlikely is the opposite – conservatives storming Greenpeace headquarters and switching off all their computers in a protest against climate change hypocrites. Deduce which side of politics now attracts the budding fascist.

While in a 2008 comment on the group 'Media With A Conscience', he remarked 'that tramping sound I hear: it's the Greenshirts, isn't it?'.

By 2010, even his audience were getting jaded, and he noted in a blog post:

> In a post below, I wonder again: what is it with the Left and violence? P. Gosselin says the indoctrination of the young greenshirt suggests the violence is no accident ... Oh, how eagerly does the eco-warrior fall

for the old fascist lure, a communal goal so glitteringly noble that puny individuals who oppose it may be treated as evil and deserving of their fate.

The post in question featured a clip from the musical *Cabaret* in which the Hitler Youth sing 'tomorrow Belongs To Me'.

Beyond Bolt, the same message spreads

Much of Bolt's rhetorical effectiveness came from drawing on a European religious-political heritage – neo-Calvinism in his case – in which notions of decline, sin, apostasy and purity could be spoken of in a historical context, a command which gave Bolt an influence far beyond his Melbourne parish. His fellow tabloid hacks were less impressive and varied, but had no hesitation in advancing a similar line – that Muslims represented a fifth column in Australian life, and Leftists demanding they be treated with equality, were betraying Western civilisation. Thus Piers Akerman in the *Daily Telegraph* noted in 2005: 'tolerance they despise, hate they learn at home' of Islamists embedded within Muslim communities, that the Greens were 'foolish fanatical fellow travellers' (2006) of Islamists, and that lawyers criticising police singling out of Muslims were part of the 'al-fools brigade'.

Such assiduous manufacture of fear and hatred had not been seen for some time in Australia. The attack on Muslims recalled the hysterical fear of Chinese and East Asians that had pullulated in the country a century earlier, as well as the growth of anti-Semitism as respectable opinion in the decade before WWII. The attack on the Greens recalled the attacks on the Communist Party from the latter part of the 1940s, and into the 1950s. It was no coincidence that the Greens' support base was substantially, though not wholly, among the urban cultural/knowledge producers that the Right (though members of the group themselves) misdescribed as 'the elites'. Indeed, 'the elites' had been an object of obsessive attack by such columnists – until the Greens had gained sufficient political power to have real clout in the future direction of Australia. At that point, the manufactured hatred was simply switched over holus-bolus, the Greens supplying a more concentrated target.

Nor was such manufacture confined to the large-circulation press. In *The Australian*, columnist Janet Albrechtsen notoriously mangled a quote about rape cultures among young men to suggest that Muslims were over-represented in such – the exact opposite of the original author's intent. And in parliament Senator George Brandis, sometimes seen as a more liberal member of the Right, used privilege as cover for a long speech comparing the Greens to the Nazis. These efforts were the platform for literally hundreds of articles, editorials and posts across the News Limited media for years on end.

This constituted the most sustained libel of a democratic, parliamentary political party in the recent history of the West. Bizarrely, it was in some ways more vociferous than many of the attacks on Communists in the 1950s (when news editors were mindful of the support Communist union leaders enjoyed among their working-class readers), despite the fact that the Communists had openly stood apart from mainstream political processes, and declared themselves for violent revolution. The Greens were subject to a calumny that bore no relation to their politics or their processes.

In part this was opportunistic – the ramping up of the culture wars in Australia had made it

possible for knowledge/cultural workers to be seen as 'the enemy' of manual workers, sundering a political coalition that Labor had sustained for a generation. But it was also provoked by the very fact that the Greens were part of the political mainstream, and that their presence had been a force drawing Australian politics to the Left (or at least slowing the drag to the Right), and that their continued electoral participation gave an extra dimension to

mainstream political possibility. The effect of this campaign on the Greens' core vote was practically nil – in the 2010 election they grew to having nine Senators. But that was not the campaign's main object, which was to alarm socially conservative Labor voters in marginal suburban seats about the Green threat, and thus place the ALP in an impossible bind.

The irrationalism at the heart of reactionary discourse

Yet far more important than all this was the side effect, the poisoning of political debate in Australia, a country that had enjoyed a public discourse with at least a superficially rational character from the 1960s into the 1990s. With the rise of hard-Right ideologues in the upper echelons of politics and the media, their abusiveness, contempt and lies contributed to a context in which the resort to violence – whether casual or as a planned atrocity *à la* Utøya – could emerge.

It is important to be clear what the critique of this descent into extremist rhetoric and irrationalism embodied in this book claims and what it does not. We have no interest in seeking the state censorship of what we think are 'unacceptable' ideas and opinions. We are all too aware that relying on governments and courts to limit such opinions in the public sphere can be readily turned against the Left. The hard Right may make claims about specific social groups – such as Muslims or the Left – which paint them as pernicious, destructive and socially negative. Yet we reserve the right for progressives to attack the rich, the powerful and the reactionary Right in exactly those terms. Abstract calls for 'civility' or 'cooling off' have the effect of *depoliticising* the Right's rhetorical fireworks, thereby excusing their socially reactionary content.

It is vital for the Left to maintain its opposition to state censorship even when the Right makes overheated claims that specific social groups will cause 'civilisational collapse' or that it is necessary to go to 'war' against them. To call for such legal restrictions not only exposes the Left to the vagaries of the state's behaviour, rarely friendly to the Left or the oppressed; it also effectively limits the right of progressives to argue for radical mobilisations from below, outside the narrow sphere of electoral politics. For example, it is conceivable that if governments fail to take on vested interests over climate change, a radical mass movement based on civil disobedience and disruption of 'business as usual' may need to be built. In such a situation progressive arguments about imminent social collapse and the need for democratic mass struggle would be the least that could be expected from a serious Left.

Similarly, we recognise that a key problem in the claims made by the hysterical Right is their inability to be factually verified in any meaningful sense. It is important for progressives to not just call them for their bombastic exaggeration and reactionary positioning but also their mendacity. It is this blatant lack of concern for the truth, driven by the pursuit of ideological goals, which also sets the modern hard Right discourse apart from its immediate forebears. If truth is the first casualty of war, it should not be surprising that the Right's lies can provide a context for violent and murderous actions, even if they do not specifically and directly incite such behaviour. To endlessly repeat the charge that the Greens are totalitarians, intent on destroying modern life as we know it, for example, is to be wanton, and to a degree culpable in the violent action of individuals who act on such an argument. It is our contention that such fabrications are as one with the Right's ideological project, to divert despair and anger at worsening social problems away from any solution that would challenge the real economic and political power in capitalist society.

But none of the above justifies attempts by members of the Right to absolve themselves of any *political* culpability when their words are turned into violent action by individuals, groups or organisations.

Lest anyone think the possibility of such violence is remote in Australia, it is worth recalling the Cronulla 'race' riot of 2005 when, as Scott Poynting wrote in his authoritative 2006 paper on the subject, of 'a violent, frenzied mob of 5,000 ‖white‖ Australians, fuelled by alcohol, attacking anyone of ‖Middle Eastern appearance‖ that they could find near Sydney's Cronulla beach'. The Sydney radio shockjock Alan Jones was later found by the Australian Communications and Media Authority to have made on-air comments in the days before the riot that were 'likely to encourage violence or brutality and to vilify people of Lebanese and Middle-Eastern backgrounds on the basis of ethnicity' – essentially a finding of incitement.

But, more broadly, the riot had occurred after a prolonged period of media and political attention to the 'problem' of Lebanese Muslim Australians in the context of Australian participation in the War on Terror. In particular after the terrorist attacks of July 2005 in London, committed by 'home-grown' British Islamists, the Howard Government had intensified its coded anti-Muslim rhetoric. Reflecting on the London attacks, Education Minister Brendan Nelson told the media that Muslims who failed to assimilate should 'clear off'. After the riots Howard refused to describe the rioters actions as racist, and joined the chorus of commentators who put the violence down to 'alcohol' and 'criminality', thereby denying the obviously political nature of the mob's intent.

Massacres of the type perpetrated by Anders Breivik are rare – though, as we have argued in this book, his act should be seen as rational, but extreme on a spectrum of Right-wing violence. Because of that, the Right, in Australia and across the world, cannot be permitted to simply brush off the moral challenge embodied in such an event, and its seeds in the wanton and reckless manufacture of hate.

This book has been a contribution, therefore, to clarifying these issues and laying the groundwork for the Left to regain its confidence to both call the Right on its radicalisation of the public debate and the need to oppose such politics actively and unequivocally.

Acknowledgements

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