



[Norway Massacre](#) (Aug 2011)

by [Mark Iddon](#)

On Friday 22nd July at 3.25pm Anders Behring Breivik aged 32, a lone UK born Norwegian, parked his rented Volkswagon Crafter outside the prime minister's office in Oslo and detonated a half a ton fertiliser bomb. It killed 8 people, caused a blast which damaged buildings within a radius of several hundred yards and could be heard up to a mile away. Two and a half hours earlier he had posted a farewell message in his diary along with a 1500 page manifesto stating his grudge against Norwegian liberalism and a multiculturalist agenda.

After detonating the murderous device, and under the cover of the chaos and devastation, he drove 40 miles to the East Coast to take a ferry to the island of Utoya with his weaponry in a holdall whilst dressed in a police uniform. He then went on an 80 minute killing spree shooting children and teenagers, at close range, who were attending an annual summer camp of the ruling centre right party.



The Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, was due to speak the next day and a former Prime Minister had visited earlier that day. There were some survivors who have spoken of the carnage and things they saw that they wish they would never have had to witness. A further 69 people died on the island bringing the total dead to 77 in the worst horror that Norway had experienced since the Second World War. At 6.27pm Breivik made his way back to the landing pier where he was met by police, he laid down his weapons and was placed under arrest seemingly without remorse or emotion. During his spree he was said to have been humming and smiling and at one point exclaimed 'Victory is mine'.

Norway is normally a peaceful country and this event was quite extraordinary. At first there was speculation about whether it was due to the actions of Muslim extremists but it soon became apparent that this was to be attributed to a young white middle class male, the son of a retired diplomat, albeit a loner with some archaic views regarding foreigners and women.

This introduction is to consider for discussion three issues around the causes and implications of the horrific events in Norway as follows; multiculturalism, freedom and surveillance and the rise of the far right.



Breivik's manifesto alleges that his grievance was with those who promote a multicultural agenda of the liberal left political persuasion who he had classified as traitors for allowing greater prominence and integration of 'other cultures' into Norwegian life. It seems strange that someone should feel so enraged to vent such anger towards those of a view that suggests equality. The multicultural ethos is presented as an equality of cultural values and promotes the respect of difference. However, if we look more critically at the doctrine we wonder if Breivik perceived that respect for Muslims is at the expense of what he saw as the marginalisation of his own identity as a white western middle class male. With multiculturalism, there is a problem that the preoccupation and relativism of identity and difference take precedence over the universal bond that unites us as human beings and deserving of equality. Could it be that the disenfranchised Breivik was so enraged because his sense of identity was compromised by the incorporation of a relativist multicultural outlook?

Freedom and Surveillance

As Norway is such a peaceful country and has not had to deal with terrorist threat, to the same extent as the UK, that the virtues of a free and open society have been maintained. It is a country which has asserted its independence by declining to become members of the European Union. Some commentators have noted that Norway was possibly an easy target for such an atrocity because it does not have such tight security and surveillance measures in place as other European countries. It is as if the adoption of restrictive practices is stopping events such as this happening on a more frequent basis throughout the rest of Europe. Jens Stoltenberg, the Norwegian Prime Minister, in the aftermath declared that 'we will not be intimidated by violence' in response to suggestions that increased security measures are implemented. It can only be hoped that Norwegians can stay resilient to pressure to step up security as they refuse to live in a constant state of alert and suspicion that has eroded liberty in other European countries. Indeed the ubiquitous CCTV camera and frequent security checks, let alone consideration of compulsory identity cards have arguably created more fear and suspicion of others which results in further division and alienation. How, therefore, do we ensure that freedom and liberty are not compromised because of murderous consequences of one unhinged madman.

Some investigations have found that Breivik did have some communication with right leaning organisations in the UK such as the English Defence League (EDL) and its sister organisation in Norway the Norwegian Defence League (NDL). In one communication he said to have praised the EDL and urged them to 'keep up the good work' and was issued under the guise of a pseudonym. His joining of the NDL was resisted as they thought he was too extreme and didn't condone violence. He is said to have had been a member of Progress, whilst in his twenties, a Norwegian party with alleged far right views on tax and immigration. Progress is actually the second party in Norway and attracted 23% of the vote at the last election. The party call for strict immigration policy to be administered rather than repatriation except in the case of convicted criminals.

We need to question whether Breiviks' actions were an extreme expression of views held by many people or is the perceived myth of a rise in far right groups a result of other tensions in society which appear to have a racial dynamic. For example, the rise in racially associated crime may be to do with changing classifications of criminal acts, and think we should discuss the following issues:

1. Problems associated with the promotion of the values of a multicultural society.
2. Issues of freedom and liberty in a society that is living under the threat of terrorism.
3. The myth of the rise of the far right.

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Some useful background readings

[Don't turn Norway into Europe's 11 September](#) by Brendan O'Neill, spiked, 25 July 2011

[It's not naive to defend liberty](#) by Natalie Rothschild, spiked

[EDL A wet dream for purposeless lefties](#) by Patrick Hayes, spiked

[The intolerant legacy of multiculturalism](#) by Sabine Beppler-Spahl, spiked

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jul/30/norway-attacks-anders-behring-breivik>