

Massacre in Norway: A Personal Interpretation

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik deliberately and methodically massacred 68 people, and killed eight more in a bomb blast, in Norway. These horrific actions have been attributed in the press to his right wing extremist views and Islamophobia; yet the real motive for his actions lies much deeper in the badly emotionally damaged psyche of a young boy.

Commentators in seeking to determine why Anders Breivik massacred 76 people in Norway, have mistakenly sought to link his actions with this or that terrorist group, but have yet to probe his psyche. In this particular case, any real understanding of the 'why' behind his deadly actions lies within 'the boy'. It is highly significant that Breivik reportedly called his father to announce 'the shooting has begun' at the moment when he proceeded to methodically massacre members of the youth wing of the Labour Party at their summer camp.

The lesson to be learned from this particular tragedy has nothing to do with right wing extremism, or Islamophobia, but rather confirms the age old aphorism: 'as the sapling is bent so grows the tree'. It is yet another case of a man emotionally damaged in childhood, seeking vengeance for his emotional suffering. In Canada we have had the case of Robert "Willie" Pickton, who as a young boy returned home from school to find that his mother had killed his pet pig; hung it up in the barn; gutted it; and let the pig bleed out before his very eyes. Pickton suppressed his rage for years; took no action against his mother; but eventually transferred his rage against women in general. Over an extended period of time he proceeded to murder at least twenty prostitutes, or as many as 49 women by his own count. All, or many of whom, once killed, were hung up, gutted, and left to bleed out in his barn before their bodies were ground up and fed to his pigs. With Anders Breivik we also have a man who emerged from childhood deeply emotionally disturbed, and bent on vengeance.

In the case of Breivik we have the tragic case of a child who, deprived of the love, affection, contact, and even an acknowledgment of his existence from his biological father, developed a pathological hatred for his absent father. That hatred found its expression in a rejection of everything that his prominent social democratic father believed in, and represented. Initially Breivik's anger found its expression in right-wing extremist pronouncements and Islamophobia in direct rebellion against his father's beliefs. However, Breivik's ever growing rage soon found its focus on the Labour Party, which he ultimately sought to destroy as it represented, inclusive of its multi-cultural values and immigration policies, everything that his absent, neglectful, and uncaring father – a Norwegian diplomat living abroad – stood for.

The fertilizer bomb detonated in Oslo was deliberately planted near the Norwegian Prime Minister's Office. Although the car bomb created a horrific explosion causing eight deaths, the aim was clearly to kill the Prime Minister – the leader of the Labour Party – and to create a diversion to keep the police away from Utoeya Island where Breivik planned to eliminate the young, future leaders of the Labour Party. Only through the destruction of the Labour Party, and all that it stood for, could he satiate his seething rage. To destroy it in such a savage and brutal manner constituted a public statement of his hatred for everything that his absent father held dear. It appears that in Breivik's twisted mind the Labour Party was seen as having taken his

father's love, affection, and attention away from him as a young boy; and his victims were seen not as individuals, but as components of a party that needed to be eliminated. The Utoeya massacre was, and is, the public expression of yet another personal family tragedy writ large, in which modern weapons were used to spread carnage among innocent bystanders as a neglected, emotionally deprived 'young boy' expressed his long suppressed rage for all to see, but few to understand.

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