



„Native informers” and the Norwegian mass-murderer

Before a single fact about the Norwegian terrorist attack was established, news outlets around the globe reacted with a Pavlovian reflex: Starting with supposedly serious media, including the BBC, the Financial Times, New York Times and Washington Post - down to blogs, twitter and the usual “terror experts” of the second channel of German television broadcasting (ZDF) - all began hinting that Muslim terrorists attacked Norway. Even U. S. President Barack Hussein Obama blamed "Islamic terrorists" and used this attack to further justify his wars against Muslim countries. But soon, they all had to backtrack in shame when the news spread that a white, blond, blue-eyed Norwegian was responsible for this heinous crime. Like the mass murderer Timothy J. McVeigh in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the Norwegian killer Anders Behring Breivik did not fit into the standard image of a terrorist (he did not look like a bearded Muslim!).

No one apologized to the American or to the Muslim communities for these erstwhile insinuations. After the first explanation failed, they declared him "nutty".

There is probably not a unique explanation for the Norwegian incident. But can rampant islamophobic discourse spread daily by mass media in the U. S. and Western Europe be one of the main causes for the Norwegian terror attacks? Breivik’s so-called Manifest includes numerous quotations from serious philosophers down to the most primitive islamophobic writers, chosen specifically to justify his weird worldview. But what does the following sentence tell us? "So let us fight together with Israel, with our Zionist brothers against all anti-Zionists against all cultural Marxists/Multiculturalists." Does not this militant neo-fascist Christian-Zionist raise questions about the growing links between the Far-Right, the “mainstream media”, the Norwegian police, Israel and rightwing terrorism, asks James Petras in an article published on “Palestine Chronicle”? At least, almost all party leaders of the far-right in Europe got on a pilgrimage to Israel to receive their “kosher” imprimatur from Israeli right wing politicians from the Likud party and Lieberman’s Yisrael Beiteinu.

Hamid Dabashi, an Iranian-American Professor at Columbia University, describes meticulously in his book “Brown Skin, White Masks” the role played in the United States by “native informers” or “comprador intellectuals” not only in justifying U. S. wars and attacks against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen but also in contributing to anti-Muslim prejudices that boomed after the 9/11 terror attacks. Another example of an “armchair criminal” is an Indian-American by the name of Dinesh D'Souza who propagates the legend that Christianity and the United States of America are the greatest things that happened to mankind whilst the Left and the Muslims are the darkest evils an earth. Ironically, this author belongs to the “brown” section of humanity! Such anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic bashing evolved into a whole industry since 9/11.

Is there a similar extraordinary situation in Germany? Indeed, a certain number of media outlets, islamophobic websites and journalists vigorously peddle anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim prejudices. A person referred nine times to by Breivik is the German-Jewish journalist Henryk M. Broder. In 2006, he published an anti-Islamic pamphlet entitled “Hurrah, we capitulate! The desire of caving in.” (“Hurra, wir kapitulieren! Von der Lust am Einknicken.”). Together with two other journalists he heads an obscure website called “The axis of good” (Die Achse des Guten) around which a small crowd of pro-Israeli, pro-U.S. neoconservatives assemble and argue inter alia against the thesis of climate change. Some of the more serious journalists have already left that notorious company. In his book, he presents a heterogeneous sample of incidents that are supposed to prove his weird assumptions about Islam and Muslims. His writings are sometimes riddled with misanthropic cynicism such as “...it’s more fun to be a

perpetrator than a victim” or that it cannot be denied that Palestinians were expelled by the Zionists, “but not far enough”. Broder calls himself a “reactionary”.

Since 2001, even the prominent political weekly “Der Spiegel” has carried quite a few anti-Islamic stories in which the cover contained the anti-Muslim message. The neoconservative daily newspaper “Die Welt”, for which Broder writes, pursues an uncritical pro-Israel and pro-American editorial policy. In that newspaper, Muslim “native informers” find an open forum to tell the German audience what it wants to hear and not what it should know. These “informers” are reinforcing pre-existing and virulent anti-Muslim prejudices. The anti-Islamic website “politically incorrect” plays in this respect a particularly odious role by looking for anything negative in the world that can be attributed to Muslims in order to incite the German public against Islam and its followers.

Of course, none of these writers or any single Muslim “native informer” can be held personally responsible for the heinous crime committed by Breivik. But we cannot dismiss the category of so-called “armchair criminals” who do not directly harm anybody, but write stuff that incites others to do so. An appeal to their political responsibility may, ultimately, be futile. Responsible intellectuals must, therefore, confront this crowd head-on and try to stigmatize their islamophobic incitement. The liberal values of Western societies should not be surrendered to these anti-Islamic ideologues.

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