

Protecting the Prophet in Norway

by Bruce Bawer



Elin L'Estrange

Forget 9/11, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, the 2015 San Bernardino killing spree. Banish all memories of the nationwide depredations by Antifa and BLM. In Biden's America, the real extremist threat is from Trump voters.

As Daniel Greenfield [reported](#) here on May 24, Hina Shamsi, a former lawyer for the Hamas-linked Holy Land Foundation, is one of several Muslim activists involved in a new Defense Department initiative to counter "extremism" in the military – not Islamic extremism, but MAGA "extremism."

Then there's that July 11 FBI tweet encouraging U.S. citizens to monitor their relatives for "signs of mobilization to

violence.” Again: they’re not worried about would-be jihadists or violent Communists but about the kind of folks who run Old Glory up a flagpole on July 4.

In the U.S. in 2021, in short, the cry of the enemy isn’t “Allahu akbar” but “God bless America.”

But America isn’t the only Western country where freedom-loving citizens are being targeted as “extremists.” In Norway, the tenth anniversary of that country’s worst terrorist attack is being exploited to paint a bulls-eye on the backs of people who’ve risked life and limb to *warn* against actual extremism.

A quick recap, if you’ve forgotten: on July 22, 2011, a madman named Anders Behring Breivik bombed a government building in Oslo, killing eight, then shot 69 people, mostly teenagers, to death at a Labor Party youth camp on the island of Utøya. In a voluminous manifesto, he defended his grisly handiwork as a response to the Islamization of Europe – the premise being that the campers, who belonged to the Workers Youth League, the Labor Party’s youth cadre, were future politicians who’d grow up to carry on their elders’ reckless immigration policies.

Needless to say, no responsible critic of Islam had ever suggested mowing down teenagers in response to Europe’s Islamization. On the contrary, the jihadist butchering of young people – for example, in Beslan (2004), at Orlando’s Pulse nightclub (2016), and at the Manchester Arena (2017) – is one reason why some of us oppose the mass Muslim influx into the West.

But Norway’s elites didn’t let the facts keep them from using Breivik’s atrocities against the critics of Islam, who in a slew of op-eds and TV commentaries were painted as mentors of Breivik – his co-conspirators, even – who should be silenced, or worse. (These are the same elites who respond to acts of jihad by insisting that they’re unrelated to Islam – never

mind the Koranic commands to kill infidels and the perpetrators' cries of "Allahu akbar!")

Eventually the *cris de coeur* died down. But as the tenth anniversary of 7/22 has approached, those of us who were among the left's targets back then have seen the pitchforks coming back out. In a July 7 [op-ed](#) entitled "Together against Extremism," Prime Minister Erna Solberg took aim at "xenophobia, hate speech, and conspiracy theories." Five days later came the [news](#) that the Labor Party would commemorate 7/22 by calling for an "extremism commission" to "prevent and counteract radicalization."

In 2021, while American progressives use terms like *xenophobia*, *hate*, *hate speech*, *conspiracy theories*, *extremism*, and *radicalization* to smear Trump voters (and hence avoid an honest engagement with their opinions), the Norwegian left employs these terms to discredit critics of Islam. Yes, the "religion of peace" has been out to subjugate Christian Europe ever since the time of Muhammed; but to suggest as much nowadays in Norway is to be a "Eurabia conspiracy theorist" (a ridiculous term derived from the title of Bat Ye'or's 2005 book *Eurabia*).

Several of these anti-"extremist" warriors have used the term *ta et oppgjør*, which means to "settle accounts" – in other words, avenge a misdeed. In a June 12 [op-ed](#), Ragni Løkholm Ramberg, a Labor Party official and lawyer who represented the victims at the Breivik trial, suggested that many Utøya survivors and other Workers Youth League members have long "waited for the political settling of accounts [*politisk oppgjør*] that had to come." What kind of settling of accounts? "A settling of accounts with the hate and conspiracy theories. An opportunity to settle accounts by viewing right-wing extremism as a terror threat equal to that of jihadists. An opportunity to settle accounts with the steadily growing acceptance for racism."

For “hate,” “racism,” and “right-wing extremism,” read principled and informed opposition to Islam; for “conspiracy theories,” read an awareness that, yes, Muhammed’s religion of bloodthirsty conquest and forced submission still means business.

In a column last Saturday, Eirin Eikefjord, the political editor of *Bergens Tidende*, contended that while Norwegian society had “settled its accounts” with Breivik by putting him on trial and sending him to prison, the Utøya survivors “still haven’t had the chance to settle their accounts. Now it’s their turn.”

Their turn to do what? Settle accounts with whom? Just as the English term “settling accounts” is usually followed by the word “with” and one or more names, so *ta oppgjør* is usually followed by *med* plus a name or names. Why the vagueness here? And how exactly does Eikefjord think those survivors should be allowed to “settle their accounts”?

The next day, in an *Aftenposten* [interview](#), Labor Party chairman Jonas Gahr Støre maintained that it’s time for the government “to settle accounts with the extreme political opinions that lay behind” Breivik’s actions. That, too, is an odd formulation: Støre speaks of settling accounts with “opinions” presumably because it sounds less ominous than settling accounts with the people who hold those opinions.

Not enough has been done, Støre told *Aftenposten*, “to stand up to utterances built on conspiracy theories, hate, and racism.” Among his prescriptions: he’d have police double down on trolling the Internet for “hateful utterances” (such as this article, I assume), and he’d defund Human Rights Service (HRS), an Oslo-based think tank that produces statistical reports on the impact of immigration and integration policies. In other words, HRS (full disclosure: my former employer) deals in hard, cold facts; but because many of those facts represent a challenge to left-wing orthodoxies, it’s routinely

denigrated as, yes, “extremist.”

Eivind Trædal of the Oslo city council also mentioned HRS, charging in a July 10 [op-ed](#) that the think tank represents an “ideology” that’s “frighteningly close” to Breivik’s. How better to dismiss inconvenient truths than to recast them as an “ideology” – and then to smear that “ideology” by linking it to a killer?

In a July 13 [op-ed](#), one Elin L’Estrange treated enthusiasm for free speech as a kind of fetish, complaining that it’s been used to protect the expression of “right-wing extremist and dangerous ideas.” Who’s L’Estrange? She’s an Utøya survivor – and Labor Party boss in the city of Ullensaker. In her view, it’s “unreasonable” for survivors such as herself to have to endure criticism or have their arguments challenged.

As with many American leftists, L’Estrange’s trauma *is* her argument. “I’m done moderating myself,” she declares. “Because I’m angry. Furious, in fact.” She mocks the importance of freedom of speech, then uses that freedom to smear Peder “Fjordman” Jensen, the astute writer and Islam expert who, since 7/22, has repeatedly seen his name linked – libelously – to that of the murderer.

“Breivik’s words were...dangerous,” L’Estrange writes. “Jensen’s words are dangerous. To glorify ethnic cleansing is dangerous.” Jensen has never glorified ethnic cleansing. Nor has any other responsible critic of Islam. But religious cleansing? Now there’s a topic. In the Middle East, in recent years, Muslims have eradicated or driven out millions of their Jewish, Christian, and Hindu neighbors. Do L’Estrange and her ilk want to discuss this? Of course not. Even to mention it is to commit Islamophobic hate speech.

L’Estrange voices dismay that there aren’t more “vulnerable minorities” criticizing freedom of speech. “Especially...Muslims.” Can she really be unaware that the

snuffing of free speech in Europe under Islamic pressure is one of the huge, dark developments that many of us have been banging on about for years? Has she never heard of the trials of Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Lars Hedegaard in Denmark for stating plain facts about Islam? Does she know about the European Court of Human Rights's 2018 [ruling](#) that the freedom of speech doesn't protect criticism of Muhammed?

Among the other soldiers in the Norwegian war on "right-wing extremism" is Marie Sneve Martinussen, who was [quoted](#) the other day as applauding the proposal for an "extremism commission." Who's Martinussen? She's deputy head of Norway's Red (Communist) Party. Her grandfather was in the Red Army. A couple of years ago, she was one of several female Red Party politicians featured in a flattering newspaper profile [headlined](#) "They Stand for a Red Revolution." Other Communists against "extremism" include journalist Marte Michelet, who as a kid was head of Red Youth (the Communist Party's teen squad) and whose dad, famous novelist Jon Michelet, was an outspoken Khmer Rouge fanboy.

These are the opponents of "extremism" in Norway today.

It's ludicrous, of course. But sinister, too. What's going on here is that Norway's elite, which has long accepted Communism as part of the social and cultural mainstream, has now also welcomed Islam into the tent. (One sign of this – which HRS was recently attacked for criticizing – is the proliferation of hijab-clad program hosts on NRK, the state TV network.) Meanwhile, those who recognize Islam as a threat are being frozen out of the mainstream: as Øyvind Thuestad [pointed out](#) on July 15 at the *samizdat* website document.no, the "biggest taboo" in the Norwegian media is "tying anything remotely negative to Islam."

Yes, Islam is as much of a problem as ever: in June alone, noted Thuestad, the local court in Oslo heard no fewer than three cases related to Islamic terror. But was this fact

widely reported in the mainstream media? No.

During the run-up to July 22, the same media hammered home daily the obscene proposition that conscientious, knowledgeable critics of Islam – men and women who put their lives on the line to inform the public about a very real peril – were merchants of hate, xenophobia, and extremism.

And more: they're the moral equivalent of Anders Behring Breivik himself.