Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*, London: Zed Books 2014. 304pp. £16.99, pbk, Ebook. ISBN 978-1-7836-000-76

On July 22nd 2011, right-wing terrorist Anders Behring Breivik blew up a government building in Oslo killing 8 people, before massacring a further 69 on Utøya Island. The majority of his victims were teenagers and activists of the Workers' Youth League (AUF) - the youth branch of the governing Labour Party. Breivik was, and remains totally unrepentant about his unspeakably atrocious actions, confident in the knowledge that he was killing the future enablers of the 'Islamisation' of Norway and indeed Europe. Were these the actions of a psychotic madman; a rogue terrorist whose actions represented little more than his own twisted mind, or was Breivik radicalised by a culture and society in which Islamophobia has been allowed to thrive within a society dominated by 'free speech absolutism'? This is one of the fundamental debates within Norwegian Social Anthropologist Sindre Bangstad's *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*, with Bangstad convincingly arguing the latter.

The book is not in fact a fully-fledged analysis of Breivik and July 22nd 2011, but rather an examination of the political and media discourse surrounding Breivik's attack in the years before the fateful day and the aftermath. It is thus a book which seeks to 'shed light on the direction of Norwegian societal discourses regarding Islam and Muslims in recent decades' (p.xiii). Differing from the approach of other works on Breivik, such as Aage Borchgrevink's *A Norwegian Tragedy: Anders Behring Breivik and the Massacre on Utøya* (2013), which have focused on the nature of Breivik himself and his psychological state as being a primary cause for his radicalisation, Bangstad's main argument is that racist discourses within Norway are 'a *necessary* if not *sufficient* explanatory factor' in explaining Breivik's attack. Methodologically speaking, this book is firmly rooted within the social sciences and the author utilises an impressive array of secondary sources from a number of disciplines including political science, social anthropology, law, and media studies.

Critical of terrorism studies scholars who 'were more or less completely oblivious to any terror threat from Norwegian citizens other than that posed by al-Qaeda or its affiliates' (p.xiii), Bangstad tersely recommends such scholars to look elsewhere. Part of the authors critique of terrorism studies, is the notion that counter-terrorist authorities in Norway and their advisers in the academe failed to notice significant warning signs in the lead-up to Breivik's attack. Unfortunately, this argument is not expanded upon by Bangstad.If this were the case, it would surely add to Bangstad's argument that Norway's self-perception of itself as a 'tolerant, non-racist Nordic utopia' is at best disingenuous and at worst, dangerous.

One of the key strengths of the book, however, is Bangstad's examination of the ideology adhered to by Breivik and a network of online counter-Jihadists and conspiracy theorists. Readers will be left in no doubt that Breivik was radicalised by internet blogs, forums and websites espousing various theories on the 'Islamisation of Europe', the Eurabia conspiracy theory (which gently argues that the European Union and Arab States have been in collusion for decades seeking to foster mass-immigration into Europe with the eventual goal of an Islamic Caliphate), and various Islamophobic and racist rants inciting violence. Disturbingly, many of these ideas have been channelled and promoted by the Norwegian Progress Party (of which Breivik was a member) - a party which gained just under 23% in Norway's most recent parliamentary elections in 2013, gaining the third-largest amount of seats. One can be left in little

doubt that intolerant and Islamophobic ideas are creeping into the Norwegian mainstream and adds weight to Bangstad's overarching argument that the environment of populist Islamophobia which Breivik operated in, far from acting as a 'safety valve', contributed to Breivik's radicalisation.

Whilst the book represents a fine examination of the populist radical right in Norway and how the transnational counter-Jihad movement has impacted Islamophobic discourses in the country, it is less successful at broadening its implications to the rest of Europe. Bangstad states early on that Norwegian discourses 'are reflective of and relevant to similar shifts across most of western Europe' (p.xiii). Whilst this reviewer would not necessarily disagree, it was disappointing to see little comparative work, even within the Scandinavian context (where the populist right is thriving) to demonstrate that Breivik was not merely a product of an increasingly Islamophobic Norway, but Continent.

The book's final chapter, which deals with the legal status of freedom of speech and expression within Norway will be of most interest to policy makers and analysts. Bangstad argues that there is an endemic 'free speech absolutism' culture within the Norwegian media and elite, which has allowed the toxic ideas of Islamophobia and racism to go unchecked, despite their negative externalities, particularly on ethnic minorities. Bangstad is critical of Norwegian laws against hate speech, which he alleges are rarely enforced and have been the subject of numerous criticisms from commissions who have failed to understand the importance in curbing hate speech as a way of encouraging freedom of speech and expression from all segments of society, in particular minorities. This is a convincing argument, and one wonders if many in this elite would be as relaxed on hate speech if were Islamist in origin. Disappointingly, Bangstad does not extend this engaging discussion on hate speech to the internet. This is surely crucial given its importance to the Breivik case and the extent to which policy makers could have, or should, regulate the kind of online hate speech which radicalised Breivik.

In summary, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia* provides an interesting analysis of Islamophobia and right-wing populism in Norway using Breivik as a case study. The book will be of interest to both social scientists and policy analysts; in particular the sections which critique Norwegian hate-speech laws. Despite Bangstad's claim that scholars within the field of terrorism studies should look elsewhere, this is an important book for such scholars, particularly those examining 'lone wolf terrorism'. Bangstad undoubtedly succeeds in putting Breivik's actions in context and demonstrating the uncomfortable truth that he was radicalised within a country which has, over the past two decades, become increasingly ambivalent about hate speech and Islamophobia. More damning, the book demonstrates that Breivik's hate-filled, conspiratorial ideology was in fact shared by many in Norway and beyond - an ideology which has become increasingly mainstream. Perhaps the most chilling example of this comes from the obscure right-wing blogger Peder Are Nøstvold Jensen or 'Fjordman', whose Islamophobic incitements to violence greatly influenced Breivik. Breivik's atrocities did not lead to the wholesale discrediting of Jensen and his ideas. Rather, Jensen now writes for 'conservative' newspaper *Aftenposten* and is currently writing a book about the events of July 22nd in Oslo. Almost demonstrating Bangstad's point, Jensen's book is partially funded by a prestigious Norwegian free-speech organisation. Plus ça change?

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