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Norway

Mass murdering the left

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This article was the editorial in *Internationalen*, the newspaper of the Socialist Party, Swedish section of the Fourth International, after the mass murder in Norway at the end of July. For technical reasons we have only just received the comrades' English translation but we think it is still valuable to bring the perspective of socialists elsewhere in Scandinavia to allow us all to better analyse this deeply disturbing event

Performed with utmost efficiency, the single worst mass murdering in the history of the labour and left movement in Scandinavia has taken place. Behind the deed stood an ideologically convinced and well planned right wing extremist, whose openly articulated political goal was to destroy socialism, Marxism and the multicultural society. A best product of decades of massive bombardment of anything that has to do with socialism has shown itself to the world in a bloodbath of young, peaceful and defenceless socialists. But in our Swedish mass media, editors, politicians, TV talk shows and experts, are speaking about the danger coming from "extremists", whether from the right or the left.

"Just as for the extreme left, Islamism and other sects that celebrates violence, we should not be too surprised when the words of hate take the physical form of mass murder and terror", Sweden's biggest daily Dagens Nyheter writes in an editorial (24 July). The next day the editors add that "not all members of Young Left are accomplices when the autonomous left perform their 'actions' where people are hurt and the police corps is one of the targets". In the radio program Good Morning Sweden, the Department of Democracy minister from the liberal People's Party compares the massacre in Norway with the Gothenburg riots in 2001. The so-called extremist expert Anna-Lena Lodenius wants to "broaden the perspectives" and talk about "lonely men who feel that they are marginalised, not least those who are also unemployed and/or with little education" (DN Debatt, 24 July).

These shameful insinuations serve the purpose of reshuffling the cards and make both right and left equally the culprits. Yes, they aim for a ruthless plundering of the victims, they exploit the grief and the terror for vested interests, by saying that left activists and anti fascists, unemployed and poor, are a part of the same magma out of which the monster Anders Breivik poured out.

But Breivik, the son of a diplomat and a long standing member of the right-wing populist Progressive Party in Norway, a man with Christian and conservative values, he was no lumpen proletarian who had lost his unemployment benefits. He was no street fighter and certainly not the inverted mirror image of some "left extremist". He was charged with bourgeois Christian and anti-socialist values that had been extended into extreme fantasies about the world and his own calling in it. The ruthlessness of a psychopath was the trigger off the mass murder.

In this way, Breivik comprises the refined fanatisation of thirty years of right wing propaganda, from the anti-communist crusade against socialism and welfare states in the 1980's, via the islamophobic Huntington with his "battle of civilisations" in the 1990's, to the "war against terror" and the massive return of right wing extremism into European politics in the 2000's.

Today's efforts by the whole political spectrum – xenophobic parties like the Sweden Democrats included – to establish a smoke screen of symmetry between extremism to the right and to the left, whilst doing lip service to "the open democratic society", cannot be left unanswered.

The labour movement and the left in Scandinavia have been the target of the worst and most murderous attack ever. Never before – not even in war time – have so many socialist in Scandinavia become victims in one single attack.

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This blow is directed against us all. The scope of the right wing terror must be made perfectly clear, the responsibility of anti-socialism must be scrutinised into its bone, its fanatics confronted, its networks torn apart, its violent thugs arrested and its riff-raff culture and mentality eradicated.

The Norwegian socialist youngsters who were butchered must not have sacrificed their young lives in vain. Their martyrdom for the socialist vision of the equal value of all human beings, cherished in a society of social justice and equality where oppression is no more, must lead us to our promise: that we will never be put down, that we will never give up, that we will never be defeated.

After thirty years of right-wing offensive, and against today's hypocrisy and smoke screens, the whole labour movement and the left must let the storm blow. The mass murder in Norway is the ultimate and most terrifying consequence of this right-wing offensive.