

Terror in Oslo



by Bruce Bawer

At a quarter after one o'clock on the night before Oslo's pride parade is scheduled to take place, a 42-year-old Iranian-born man shouts "Allahu akbar!" and starts shooting wildly and randomly at people in and around London Pub, the city's largest gay bar. In all, he kills two people and wounds twenty-one. And within a few hours the police have a theory as to why he committed these latest barbaric acts: he has psychiatric problems.

Yes, "psychiatric problems" – the euphemism of choice for Islamic terrorism. They tried to get away with this in the case of another soldier of Allah who attacked a gay club – namely, Omar Mateen, who killed 49 people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando just over six years ago. By contrast, when the truly insane Anders Behring Breivik (just read his "manifesto") killed 77 people in and near Oslo in 2011, authorities did everything they could to have him ruled sane – so that they'd be able to pin his actions on critics of Islam

who'd never come close to calling for violence.

The police who float the theory about "psychiatric problems" are the same police, note well, who've chosen to pretend that the major terror threat to Norway is posed by "right-wing extremists." As recently as June 16, Norway's Police Security Service (PST) [stated](#) in a press release that the likelihood that Norway would experience a terrorist act by "right-wing extremists" (which here, as in the U.S., is chiefly a left-wing establishment phantasm) during the next 18 months was 40-60%, while the likelihood of such an action by "extreme Islamists" (as opposed, presumably, to "moderate Islamists") was under 40%.

On Saturday, the day after the atrocities, I watch the coverage on Norwegian television for several hours without hearing the word "Islam" or "Muslim" a single time. Bits of information drip out. The murderer's name: Zaniar Matapour. He came to Norway as a refugee at age twelve. He's a *småbarsfar*, which means he has one or more young children. He's been living off of the social-welfare system for years. He has a previous conviction for a violent knife assault, served a prison sentence in 2016 for a drug offense, and was arrested in 2019 for attempted murder and gross illegal possession of a firearm – only to see the case (and a prosecutors' appeal) dismissed. And yes, as it turns out, he's been treated for psychiatric problems – but (to raise a question explored definitively in Jamie Glazov's 2018 book *Jihadist Psychopath*) what exactly does it mean, in a Western society, to speak of the mental fitness of a Muslim who, like so many other adherents of Islam, is devout to the point of being willing to commit mass slaughter of infidels?

Oh, and he holds Norwegian citizenship. Did he acquire it, I wonder, before compiling his rap sheet, or afterward? What exactly does a violence-prone immigrant have to do to be deported? These are questions that the mainstream Norwegian media used to permit itself to ask now and then, but not so

much nowadays.

Finally, at a 2 p.m. press conference, PST head Roger Berg declares the atrocity an act of “extreme Islamist terrorism.” Matapour, he explains, belongs to a network of radical would-be terrorists. He’s been on PST’s radar since at least 2015. In fact they had a sit-down with him last month, because he’d “shown interest” in statements that he’d regarded as “offenses against Islam,” but had decided he wasn’t a threat. “We can’t monitor everybody,” Berg explains.

This is the same PST that called me in several years ago, and wasted over an hour grilling me because they thought I, a writer about Islam, represented some kind of danger.

Even after the PST links the savage shootings directly to Islam, none of the gay people interviewed on the streets of Oslo about it make any reference to the Religion of Peace. And when the prime minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, goes on TV at about 3 p.m. he only mentions Islam by way of expressing concern for Norwegian Muslims, who, he says, must be “scared and despairing” in the wake of Matapour’s misdeeds, and who deserve our acknowledgment that no one other than the perpetrator himself is responsible for them. Later in the day, Masud Gharahkhani, a 39-year-old Iranian who came to Norway as a refugee and who last November was named president of Parliament – a largely ceremonial position that makes him, technically, the highest ranking individual in the country after the king himself – [states](#) that the atrocity had “nothing to do with religion.” And in a Sunday morning TV interview, parliament member Abid Q. Raja, who before entering politics was the spokesman for a mosque, tries to play down Islamic hatred for gays by saying that Norwegian Christians have their prejudices, too.

I also read reports connecting Matapour to Arfan Bhatti, a leader of the Norway-based Profetens Ummah movement who has recruited on behalf of ISIS and who, on July 14, posted on

Facebook a picture of a burning rainbow flag along with a hadith – i.e., a saying of Muhammed – calling for the murder of homosexuals. (In the course of all this reading, incidentally, I discover that Karianne Solbrække, who since 2016 has been news editor of Norway's leading privately owned television channel, TV2, was once Bhatti's mistress.)

A personal note. London Pub used to be my regular watering hole. It's a rambling, slightly musty, basement-level space with a dark, cozy feel and large framed pictures on the wall of Oscar Wilde, Dirk Bogarde, Ian McKellen, Jean-Paul Gaultier, and other famous gays. It was there that I met, over twenty years ago, most of the people who would become my best friends in Oslo. It was the place where, on 9/11, my fellow patrons queued up to give me, the American expatriate, hugs of condolence and solidarity. And it's still the place that I drop into whenever I'm in Oslo. It's no longer, for me, a place where everybody knows my name, to quote the theme song from *Cheers*, but it's still a place where there's almost always a familiar face.

It's also a place that's been an oasis of friendly faces in a city that, for gay people, has become increasingly unfriendly. I've written previously about the several occasions on which my partner and I were attacked on the streets of Oslo by Muslims who appeared to have gone berserk at the mere sight of a gay person. I've also written about Stein Sjaastad, the genial London Pub regular who was several of my friends' GP, and who in 2006 was stabbed to death at his office – stabbed 19 times in total – by a Muslim patient. Both of the men Matapour killed on Friday night, Kaare Hasvik and Jon Erik Isachsen, were old friends of old friends of mine. Isachsen, by the way, was one of Norway's thousand or so Jews – a coup for a jihadist, I suppose.

It was partly because of the worsening Muslim crime situation in Oslo that I moved out of the city eleven years ago. As I [discussed](#) at length in *City Journal* in 2018, the Muslim

population of Oslo has grown rapidly over the past generation (Muslims now make up over ten percent of the city's population) and the resulting increase in Muslim violence has made the streets far less safe. It's also made me more vigilant every time I've ventured into London Pub, because when residents of Oslo think of gay people they think of London Pub, and many Muslims – raised on a book that calls for the murder of homosexuals – don't have very warm and fuzzy thoughts about gay people.

The events of Friday night led several commentators to reflect on this fact. On Saturday morning, Hans Rustad, editor of the alternative news website [document.no](#), [wondered](#) whether Norwegian politicians and journalists had ever considered that, “for followers of a religion that views homosexuality as a crime,” the ubiquitous, over-the-top, month-long celebration of gay pride “is a constant provocation?” On Facebook, writer Nina Hjerpset-Østlie [raised](#) the same question: “have authorities thought that there can be some cultural frictions” when “a large and growing religious group...has extremely intolerant attitudes toward gay people”? If so, she asked, what do those authorities plan to do about it?

What indeed? Of course this is one of many questions that politicians across the Western world should have contemplated seriously a long time ago. So far they've preferred to ignore it. There's no reason to expect them to change now. It's probably too late, anyway.

Also on Saturday morning, writer Christian Skaug [recalled](#) a telling incident from several years ago: several gay organizations in Oslo requested that the taxi stand outside London Pub be moved to another location, because Muslim cabbies – as in other Western cities – were suspected of spying on gays from Muslim families.

All of which is by way of saying that this monstrous attack shouldn't have shocked anyone. If it did come as a shock, it's

because the media, government, and police have conspired for years to whitewash the reality of Islamic gay-hatred. And too many gay people, I'm sorry to say, have been complicit in this activity, either staying silent on the subject or parroting the absurd line that gays and Muslims are oppressed minorities and hence allies. (Sadly, many of the friends I made at London Pub are now ex-friends because my views on Islam grated against their politically correct sensibilities. I wonder if the Koran-inspired carnage at our old haunt has changed any of their minds.)

After the Friday night shootings, PST suggested that Saturday's pride parade be canceled. It was. Was this a good idea? Some of us have been arguing for years that these parades, which began as civil-rights marches, no longer have a serious purpose in societies with same-sex marriage, and have, in fact, been taken over largely by silly narcissists and vulgar exhibitionists who, to most gay people, are nothing but an embarrassment. Yet in the face of a provocation like Matapour's, it would, I think, have made sense to hold the march – and to reroute it through the heart of Muslim Oslo.

Admirably, in spite of the parade cancelation, and in a display of *real* pride (as opposed to today's cheap, ersatz, hypersexualized, corporate-sponsored kind), thousands of gays chose to turn out in downtown Oslo on Saturday afternoon to march in angry defiance of the antigay hatred – the *Islam-inspired* antigay hatred – that motivated Matapour. If anything good comes of this butcher's evil bloodbath, perhaps it will spell an end, in Norway at least, to the absurd charade of gay and Muslim concord.

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