

The Progressive Insanity of Norwegian State Television

by Bruce Bawer



Living in Norway, I'm compelled to cough up cash every year to fund NRK, the state-run media entity whose many TV channels and radio stations, funded to the tune of a billion dollars a year (in a country of five million people), proffer massive daily doses of its own pro-welfare state, pro-immigration, pro-Islam agitprop (critics call the network ARK, for "Labor Party Broadcasting") as well as imported material that also serves its own propaganda purposes. I rarely watch NRK, but I did put it on last Thursday night to watch a live ["town hall"](#) in which the three leading candidates for prime minister – national elections are scheduled for September 13 – took questions from a studio audience in Trondheim.

As it happens, I've been so distracted in recent months by the spectacle of Joe Biden destroying America that I've almost totally neglected Norwegian politics; this was a good chance to catch up. Before the big event itself got underway, one of the hosts interviewed a pollster who explained that the issue today's young Norwegians are most worked up about is climate: they like the government's COVID restrictions on travel and other activities, and want to see similar rules introduced to tackle climate change. They're also passionate about "anti-racism": they've "seen strong films about racist acts, especially from the U.S.," that have "fired up their commitment" on that score. Finally, they care about "equality for people with different gender identities." Briefly put: at least when it comes to the younger generation, NRK brainwashing has plainly done its job.

On to the “town hall” itself. One exchange alone made me glad I’d tuned in. When a girl in the audience criticized the massive size of the national budget, Labor Party leader Jonas Gahr Støre explained that the budget can’t be reduced because it pays for all kinds of welfare goodies. But don’t dare suggest that this means some Norwegians are getting a free ride on other Norwegians’ backs. As Støre explained, “In Norway we don’t live off of others’ work, we live off of one another’s work” (*“Vi lever i norge ikke av andres arbeid, vi lever av hverandres arbeid”*) – to my mind, a brilliant bit of socialist wordplay! Got the difference? The mistake is viewing people as individuals, some of whom pay taxes to the state and others of whom get supported by the state. No, no, no. We’re all part of a collective, see? (As a great man once said: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”)

During the “town hall,” there was lots of hand-wringing about climate change. It’s always struck me as funny that people living in a country defined by its icy climate and mountainous landscape are terrified by the prospect of average temperatures rising a degree or two and sea levels climbing by a couple of centimeters. In fact, living in the far north of [Norway](#) is so unpleasant for most people who weren’t born into a tribe of reindeer-herders that there’s a host of government incentives – from lower tax rates to breaks on student loans – designed to encourage people to relocate. Still, a young lady at the “town hall” had a question for the pols: how can the far north be made more attractive for people who move there to work? Of course, the answer was clear: climate change!

Then another woman in the audience stood up and identified herself as the mother of a “non-binary” child, and asked why a third sex option – “hen” – can’t be added to passports and other official documents. Støre, unsurprisingly, said he was all for it; Conservative Party Prime Minister Erna Solberg

said she was thinking about it; Center Party leader Trygve Vedum, rather gutsily, said no. What was entertaining here was watching the mother herself struggle to get her kid's pronoun right. Replying to the pols' answers, she tried to be forceful – “It doesn't matter what you think. My child exists!” – but then, instead of saying “hen,” she said “henne,” which means “her,” and, visibly flustered, stopped talking mid-sentence and sat down.

Toward the end of this extravaganza they showed a video of a tearful Afghan woman speaking into the camera, explaining in broken Norwegian that she and her family came to Norway years ago as asylum seekers only to be denied asylum and sent home. She asked that they now be allowed to come to Norway to stay. I was actually impressed by the strong negative replies from all three candidates, who held their own even though one of the TV hosts tried valiantly to guilt-trip them over the family's fate. The sense of tragic urgency was diminished somewhat when it emerged that the family is actually not in Afghanistan at present but in Athens.

I made the mistake of not switching the TV off immediately after the “town hall.” I'd have preferred to remain ignorant of the existence of the item that followed, an American documentary entitled *Healing from Hate*. But when I saw that the man behind it is Michael Kimmel, I felt obliged to stay tuned. Kimmel is an academic hustler of the first water who has written books with titles like *Manhood in America*, *Angry White Men*, and *The Politics of Manhood*; in 2013, he [founded](#) the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at Stony Brook University. But don't mistake him for a practitioner of “Male Studies,” which seeks to examine, not condemn, male identity. No, he's a top-seeded figure in “Men's Studies,” aptly described by David Clemens as a “camouflage version of Women's Studies.” Kimmel buys into the whole patriarchy rap and treats maleness as a disorder: as his own [website](#) brags, he's been described by the *Guardian* as “the

world's most prominent male feminist"; the founding advisory board of his cockamamie center at Stony Brook included Gloria Steinem, Jane Fonda, and Eve (*Vagina Monologues*) Ensler.

Healing from Hate portrays a group of former neo-Nazis who've been cured by a program called Life after Hate. Unfortunately, they've been cured only of hate, not vacuousness. Their conversations, shown at length in this film, are excruciatingly dull. They alternate with clips of far-right meetings and protests, of the 2017 Charlottesville rally, and of (what else?) Donald Trump speeches. Several segments feature white supremacist Richard Spencer, who is first identified onscreen as Robert Spencer, the bestselling author and Islam expert. There's an interview with sociologist Randy Blazak, who has traveled the world to do research on far-right skinheads – which is pretty funny, given that he's on the faculty at Portland State, where he could have studied a far larger and more menacing radical movement without ever having to leave town.

The film's goal is obvious. It seeks to convince viewers that white supremacy is a formidable and dangerous mass movement in the U.S., that it can best be explained not as an ideological phenomenon but an inevitable consequence of toxic masculinity, and that there's a strong overlap between this handful of swastika-tattooed ne'er-do-wells and the great mass of Trump voters. (Indeed, we're instructed that because MAGA folks oppose Democratic politicians who violate immigration laws to bring armies of gangsters and other unvetted aliens into the U.S., they're pretty much indistinguishable from neo-Nazis and the KKK.) What was glaringly missing from the documentary was any indication that the handful of losers portrayed therein had ever actually done anything truly harmful, other than bore a TV viewer to death. Had they, like thousands of Antifa and BLM thugs, committed acts of vandalism or arson? Had they beaten anybody up – or worse? To judge by the documentary itself, pretty much all they'd done was to

hang out together a lot and talk about Hitler.

It was clear why NRK had snapped up this tiresome offering: like so many of the other American programs it's broadcast over the years, *Healing from Hate* painted a picture of middle America as a swamp of racist extremism, and basically equated Trump to Hitler. Many Norwegians have spent enough time in Minnesota or Wisconsin or North Dakota to not be fooled by Kimmel's drivel, but for those who haven't crossed the pond – especially all those ardently anti-racist young people who need to be properly brainwashed in these matters – such programming can shape mental pictures of the U.S. that help swell the ranks of Labor Party voters. Would NRK ever air a documentary that painted a remotely honest picture of Antifa or BLM? The question, alas, answers itself.

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