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will define the terms of terror and the appropriate responses to it. There are existing decentralized, grassroots networks and organizations that could provide the basis for such an initiative.

- Third, we must oppose military action against Osama Bin Laden, Afghanistan, or anyone else until these first two conditions are met.

Future:

We believe that anti-authoritarians should work to radicalize the anti-war movement. We should ensure that it is democratic and decentralized in structure, that its demands are anti-authoritarian in content, and that we use this movement to build cooperative relationships with the oppressed and enraged throughout the world who share our horror at the U.S.'s impeding military action and the world it seeks to create.

We believe there is a great potential to create a radically democratic and deeply oppositional movement against the war. We believe this movement could sustain the accomplishments of the struggle against global capital and bring our movement to a new level of engagement, diversity, and radicalism.

Another world is possible,

Marina Sitrin (active with the Direct Action Network)

Chuck Morse (active with the **Institute for Anarchist Studies**)

September 21, 2001

Dear Comrades,

We are living through scary times. Clearly the U.S. Government and its allies believe they have a grand opportunity to realign domestic and international relationships in their interest. This is frightening: major shifts in the political landscape threaten to tear the ground from beneath our feet.

However, these glacial shifts in the political scene also offer anti-authoritarians a unique opportunity to obtain a new, more secure footing in our struggle against economic exploitation, political hierarchy, and cultural domination. Political conditions are changing radically and, if we respond correctly, we have the chance to advance our movement to a much higher level.

First of all, we must not be cowed by present circumstances, as disturbing as they are. On the contrary: recent events call upon us to exercise political leadership in the best, most principled and visionary sense of the term. This is our challenge, and one that we can meet with an anti-authoritarian vision and politics.

We believe it is imperative that anti-authoritarians formulate a coherent response to the war build-up and their role within the growing peace movement. We must not allow our perspective to be subsumed under more prominent but less radical tendencies in the Left. Also, the peace movement is presently defining its politics and structures and we have a great opportunity—at this moment—to engage the movement and push it in the most radical direction.

The purpose of this letter is to explore the contours of an anti-authoritarian position on recent events. We encourage you to discuss this letter with your friends and comrades and to prepare for broader discussions that we intend to initiate in the near future.

We want to address three important issues in this letter: structure, politics, and the future.

Structure:

We anticipate that the anti-war movement will experience divisions similar to those that beset the peace movement during the Gulf War. In other words, national organizing efforts will be split into two organizations: one will be pacifist and more libertarian in character, and the other will be more militant and Stalinist. Both will be top-down mobilizations, built around well-known "leaders," and awash with a moralism that would turn off even the most open-minded citizens and activists.

Thus, we think our immediate challenge is to ensure that the anti-war mobilizations are decentralized and democratic in structure: specifically, that those doing the work make the decisions in these organizations. We recommend the model of assemblies, spokescouncils, or other horizontal networks of small, decentralized groups that are unified around an anti-authoritarian vision of social change. This will assure that those at the base hold decision-making power and thus that the mobilization reflects the political consciousness of the base, which is typically more radical and sane than that held by the leadership. It will still be possible for sectarian groups to infiltrate the base, but much harder for them to seize control. We believe that instituting such a decentralized structure is consistent with a principled commitment to democracy and should be our first act of defense against the party building hacks and the omnipresent "leadership."

Politics:

Decentralized political structures have little significance unless complemented by a decentralized, radically democratic politics. We need to have radically democratic goals as well as methods, anti-authoritarian means and ends. Our response to

the war must be concrete, immediately comprehensible, and one that gives political content to our democratic structures.

Presently we are aware of two positions on the war:

The right-wing position asserts that the United States is entitled to take unilateral military action against whomever. This position is not reasoned, just retaliatory, and is thus utterly barbaric. The argument crumbles when faced with questions of social justice.

The liberal-left position condones military action against Osama Bin Laden if—and only if—the UN or some pre-existing international legal body decides that such action is required and determines its nature. This appears to be Z Magazine's position, as well as many others.

This position is inadequate because it appeals to the political authority of the UN (and/or similar bodies). This is untenable because the UN is an illegitimate political body and thus incapable of determining a just or unjust response to the terror attacks. The UN is illegitimate because a) it presupposes the nation-state, which is inherently anti-democratic and b) because the United States has veto power over many of the UN's most important decision-making bodies, such as the Security Council.

The anti-authoritarian position must obviously be much more radical than the liberal-left position. We believe that anti-authoritarians should advance the following demands:

- First, all war criminals must be brought to justice (and judged by an international people's tribunal). Osama Bin Laden, Augusto Pinochet, Henry Kissinger, and those who have committed acts of terror and violence must be held accountable for their actions and dealt with accordingly.
- Second, there should be an international grass roots assembly/plebiscite/encuentro/assembly/truth and reconciliation commission on global terror. This assembly