

After the Fall

Analysis of the Events of September 11th, 2001

CrimethInc.

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A New Morning Breaks...

When I laid down my weary head to rest on Monday, September 10, 2001, I felt that I had a fairly clear idea of where the anarchist project was heading in the next few years and of what my part in that project was to be. We were picking up momentum, patiently building the infrastructure that we hoped would ultimately facilitate the system's demise and occasionally confronting it, overtly by day and covertly by night. We did the quiet work, built quiet armies, and went largely unnoticed while the powers that be largely slept — so fat, lazy, senile and over-confident that it really did seem like maybe we could just evade them until we could bring them down. When I woke up Tuesday morning to the twin towers falling and the Pentagon burning, it became quickly apparent that this trajectory was no longer realistic.

This unexpected development has understandably thrown most of us for a loop — to say the least — but we need to accustom ourselves to the fact that the times have changed somewhat. We need to realign ourselves to this new situation, and we need to do it quick or we risk quickly becoming irrelevant as all of the ground we have won recently is lost in the flood of the coming war, the likely recession, and the quite plausible specter of nuclear fucking armageddon.

For better or for worse the new situation opens up possibilities that were not present before. If we can move fast we may get somewhere — soon. In that spirit, this here is a modest proposal from some individuals affiliated with the CrimethInc. Ex-Worker's Collective: A few humble suggestions as to where to go, where we have been, and what is to be done from here. For starters, expressing unabashed jubilation or even tacit approval of the hijackings is an exceedingly bad idea for a variety of reasons. There is absolutely no way to get around the fact that over six thousand people died horrifically — “disappeared” as they would say in Latin America — leaving many thousands more parents, children, friends and relations to pick up the pieces or the lack thereof. If we allow ourselves to gloss over this simply because it's “cool” or “exciting” that the Pentagon is finally on fire we render ourselves completely alien to almost anyone with any sense and rightly so. We do the State a very great favor in the process by fulfilling every crude caricature that they create of us. This is unwise tactically, if for no other reason.

We don't need to impress each other with facile displays of militancy. We should recognize that we are in some degree of danger right now and act accordingly. To pick a fight with the government at this point, while remaining blithely oblivious to the fact that we are currently unable to win it, would demonstrate a clear inability to understand power and the fact that right now we have very little currently — at least in the domain of physical warfare.

Make no mistake, we are preparing for war. The day will come when we will have to fight it and there is no reason to set it off before we can prevail. In the meantime, it will be important to remember that the system's not just made of bricks; it's mostly made of people. The demons of domination and abuse which plague our relationships with each other will not be exorcized by destroying buildings — however odious — and to massacre people at will is to contribute to the problem. The type of wholesale slaughter that we saw on September 11th is a clear expression of an authoritarian arrogance that is the exclusive province of hierarchs, archons, and ideologues. The war that our self-proclaimed leaders have begun to wage will be an even clearer expression of that arrogance.

We should think twice before pledging allegiance to anyone or anything that claims to tell us who is innocent and who is guilty as if such a dichotomy actually existed. Those who speak, with the heavenly judgment of God himself of the infinite justice that will befall those who have fallen from grace, are bloodthirsty maniacs and no friends of mine.

So, “in the meantime”, what?

And The Sun Still Rises Over the Western World

The beast has been awakened — snarling — and wants to bite someone... soon. We fear, not without reason, that it may be us. At this moment the Underground Armies of Barbarian Anarchists are getting scant attention. Still, we are on a very short list. We have recently been considered a genuine threat to national security. We have yet to be linked in any manner to the hijackers and their supporters, despite the obvious advantages that the reactionaries stand to gain by doing so. This will not last forever. We are being given a grace period, to rally around the flag and return to the fold, or else. They will connect the dots or create the dots to connect, and just because many of us are Americans does not mean we are safe.

Without a doubt, the government is killing an immense number of people, in Afghanistan and soon elsewhere, in short order. They are already moving troops into Pakistan, despite furious protests from many of the people who live there and they are already bombing Afghanistan to rubble. Some of our old friends and erstwhile associates have already been given their notice and for the first time in most of our lives conscription seems within the realm of remote possibility. What starts as a stream becomes a flood.

It seems clear that the government’s behavior is going to provoke more attacks on us, and equally clear that they cannot protect us. If anything, the attack on September 11th made clear that no government could protect its so-called “citizens” from violence. Government, being based on violence on all fronts, can only bring violence and inflict it upon others.

The stock market has been in a nose-dive since it reopened. They claim we’re not going into financial chaos, but most of us don’t really know whether to believe them or not. The airlines and many other industries are laying off thousands of workers and the economy in general seems weaker. All of these events should cause us to crack a little smile. The foundations of our despair are not as solid as their architects would have us imagine.

Already we are seeing a rash of arsons, murders, and assaults on Arabs and other minorities, their homes, businesses, and places of worship. The flags are flying, the radio is playing “Proud to be an American”, and we have seen many of our neighbors and parents acting a bit more than patriotic and a bit less than fascist.

Are we ready for this? Is the world that we were trying so desperately to set on fire about to blow up in our face? Are these truly the last days? Do we need to lay low and hope this blows over?

Solidarity Forever – with Exceptions?

We are not soothsayers. But here is some advice:

Don’t panic. Most of us don’t need to run to the hills just yet. Remember that paralysis — a state of powerlessness or incapacity to act — is generally the least effectual reaction to threatening

stimuli. Doubtless the road will become more difficult, but don't blow this out of proportion. You will see that many things have not changed. Do not contribute to the demoralizing hysteria that is understandably running amok amongst us.

Stay up on what's going on but don't watch the television too much. It immobilizes you, to say the least, and it is designed to scare you and make you feel isolated. Go outside. Talk to people. Figure out the mood on the street. Try to casually slip in your analysis of the situation in conversation with random people. There are thousands, if not millions, of people who are looking for answers who distrust the government and the media implicitly. Find them. Make plans. We are not alone. Revolutionaries are hiding around every corner in your town, even now.

This is not going to blow over. We cannot afford to lose momentum, it may be much harder to regain in the near future. Right now is the best opportunity we will have to move, not after this madness has been given more time to develop. This is urgent. Everything is at stake. At this point, we're fighting for our lives – and more importantly, for everything that makes them worth living.

None of the conditions that have motivated our activity have changed in character. We are still held hostage, flying on a suicide course that is going straight to hell; tied to ecological, economic, and political time bombs; with madmen or possibly nobody at the helm. If anything, these conditions will intensify as globalization becomes increasingly militarized, as economic apartheid becomes racist slaughter. To renege on our attempts to bring the empire down from the inside would sabotage any such attempts to do so from the outside, because at this point it is this empire which ultimately enforces the entire world order. Such spineless behavior on the part of American revolutionaries would reveal an immense amount of arrogance and privilege, since most of the world does not have that option. Those who are by nature dangerous to Capital and the State, such as the starving farmers overseas who exchange their plowshares for guns and groups closer to home like MOVE, do not have the luxury of leaving the struggle. Truthfully, neither do we. It seems absolutely certain, with the course we are now on, that there will be massive suffering and degradation in the quite foreseeable future, and there is no guarantee that we will be spared this time.

The smoke has cleared, and the stakes have been raised. Our resistance was becoming comical and scripted. Our actions were repackaged and sold to us as harmless videos, with ritualized, predictable, and no longer dangerous roles such as “The Black Bloc”, “The Direct Action Protesters with a Three Letter Acronym”, “Puppetistas” (a group engaged in valiant art but possessing a name absurd to the Zapatistas and Sandinistas who actually died participating in armed rebellion rather than providing the papier-mâché backdrop), “CrimethInc Ex-Workers Collective” and so on. Hopefully, now that these roles will no longer be as safe, we will be willing to abandon them, change our masks, and charge headlong into the future. Revolution walks the thin line between victory and ruination, even thriving on danger.

If Their Explosion is Their Message...

The explosions on September 11th did not happen in a social or historical vacuum. We all know why someone would want to destroy the World Trade Centers, and the Pentagon. The official explanation is that the hijackers were by nature evil and jealous, and possibly possessed by the devil, demons, a tall thin man with a beard, or some exotic religion. We cannot agree.

The Twin Towers were a nerve center of a global economic arrangement in which a very great many of the world's people are impoverished and dispossessed. They were also possibly the world's most potent symbols of this arrangement, which is called capitalism. The Pentagon is a nerve center of the military might that is capitalism's ultimate guarantor, and possibly the world's most potent symbol of that might. Since the hijackers are Middle Eastern, they were likely incensed by the Washington's decisive diplomatic, military, and economic intervention in support of Israel's brutal military occupation of Palestine, the daily humiliations to which Palestinians are subjected, the expanding settlements which are designed to break up the occupied territories and take control of their resources, and other actions which are recognized as acts of war throughout much of the world. It is also conceivable that they were motivated by Washington's decade long assault on the civilian population of Iraq, which has devastated that society completely and caused over a million deaths, including over five hundred thousand children. Or maybe the specific impetus was Washington's complicity in wholesale slaughter in Lebanon during the Eighties or possibly the Clinton administration's bombing of the Sudan with no credible pretext, destroying half its pharmaceutical supplies and killing unknown numbers of people. Who knows?

The hijackings are the fairly predictable result of this government's particularly foul and odious behavior in the Middle East, which has caused untold suffering, sorrow, starvation, and humiliation. The United States government has the capability to overwhelm any conventional military force in the world, so no one in the world has the option to oppose them in a conventional way. When these forces are the ultimate guarantors of intolerable situations unconventional means will inevitably be employed. When these forces are the ultimate guarantors of intolerable situations unconventional means will inevitably be employed. The hijackings were not an isolated and random event that should strike us like a meteor. The conditions of widespread suffering and attendant reactionary ideology that led to the hijackings have been around for longer than the short memory of the complacent West can comprehend. This act of madness serves as an extremely convenient pretext for something which our self-proclaimed masters were going to have to do anyways in order to maintain the status quo: The consolidation of military control in the third world, particularly in central Asia. The extremely finite nature of petroleum reserves was always the Achilles heel of industrial capitalism, and even now it is the great blind spot, the great point of denial at the heart of the priesthood's theology of growth and accumulation. A copious supply of oil is absolutely necessary for civilization as we know it to function at all. The entire infrastructure that provides most of us with food, water, housing, heating, transportation, and dumpsters is completely dependent upon it. World oil supply is in short and irreversible decline, but there is still a great deal in Central Asia, particularly in the old Soviet republics. We are seeing the same process by which the major capitalist states consolidated control over Middle Eastern oil play itself out in a different context in central Asia. World oil is already in sharp and irreversible decline, and with it our current civilization. Following well-rehearsed patterns developed in the Gulf War: the United States may well try to establish a foothold in the form of a client state (using Pakistan much like Saudi Arabia) while a nearby country (Afghanistan instead of Iraq) is reduced to smoldering ruins and wreckage — and the engines run, the toilets flush, and the bulbs light as the sun sets.

The gears of civilization churn on... for the time being with us underneath.

We should not fool ourselves into thinking that the status quo can perpetuate itself without increasingly resorting to Wild Conflagrations of Massive Carnage Overseas. Even if it survives

in the short term it is still not going to be able to last forever. The events are out of control of even the global bosses, who are blundering from one reaction to the next in a system that was already incredibly unstable. There is no reason to think that they will not resort to mass murder of entire peoples if they feel that it is in their interest to do so – which may well be the case. Anarchists half jokingly refer to the coming downfall of civilization, the fascist backlash, and the massive wars abroad. Do we think the world will wait until we are ready?

What is Our Message?

The climate has changed after September 11th, but the instincts and desires that fuel us have not. We cannot forget what we are trying to do with our lives. While unanimity is impossible – and not even to be desired – we all in our own way are attempting to bring this horrific ten thousand year reich to its fucking knees. This has not changed. Destroy what must be destroyed, and create what must be created, by any means necessary. What those things are is up to you. We can only hope to hear your advice and aid in your actions. We must realize that people are legitimately terrified and angry, and that their feelings are not delusional. They know that they are in danger, and this changes what we can do. Often we have dealt with problems that could be ignored. Children dying in Iraq and clearcuts in Northern California are relatively easy to avoid if you don't happen to live there, and no one really knows how to explain what the World Trade Organization does anyways. But the attack on the World Trade Center made many people fear for their safety. They want to know why this happened and they want to know what to do about it, and they not nearly as sheepish as the media pretends or as activists believe. Indeed, they probably suspect already the audacity of our self-proclaimed leaders who refer to the hijackers as faceless cowards (when at least they killed themselves too) while these maniacs just convince other people, mostly ordinary people – many of our grandfathers, fathers, uncles, and now friends and brothers – to do their shit for them.

Currently the State's answer is that Our Enemies are Evil and Jealous, and the plan is to Exterminate the Brutes. This is the only viable explanation and the only viable plan that is being presented to the great majority of Americans. Many may harbor secret and not-so-secret doubts that this is wise, but for lack of better options most will follow along. To counteract this we must produce our own analyses, and our own programmes; which address what is happening here, and present a course of action that seems to make more sense than worldwide state-sponsored butchery.

We should point out to our neighbors that maybe they should remember the horror of this experience the next time the government decides to reign hell down from the skies on little dehumanized brown people somewhere. When they become enraged at pictures of Palestinian kids waving and cheering in celebration of mass murder we should remind them of many fifth grade American classes, where comfortable white kids did just that during the Gulf War. We can be disgusted by the rank hypocrisy of the professional rationalizers in the media, who wring their hands when Americans are slaughtered, and grin contently when Americans do the slaughtering. We can also point out that declaring war on countries like Afghanistan will only further lead us down the road the mad bombers of September 11th perhaps wanted – a full out war between many of the Islamic countries and the West, a war that has already entered its first stages.

Already such alternatives to the government's actions are being presented by peace groups – most of which by nature are haunted by a privileged pacifism, ridden by religious morality, and are unable to grasp that this situation was created by global capitalism, unable to be stopped without the overthrow of global capitalism. Many peace groups, while in the Eighties posed a threat by revealing the system's machinations overseas, also have a tendency to become harmless and even congenial by limiting their actions to marching in circles and “witnessing” wanton destruction in distant lands. Then the whole array of bizarre and ineffectual Old Left relics, with even more three letter acronyms, understand only too well the cause of the situation, but by casting it in ridiculous Marxist jargon, unabashed moralizing, lack of any real action – and using it as a pretext to seize control of power themselves – ultimately only damage any movement. Neither of these groups analysis or plans make the least bit of sense, which is why most people will avoid them like the proverbial plague – which is still different than believing that a never-ending world war is the answer.

The anarchist analysis of the situation also appeals to people, if only because it hopefully fits to reality more than the 21st century cowboy movie our leaders are currently engaged in. First, the prime justification of the existence of the state is that it will defend its people against terror. The state's ability to do so was tested by the events of Sept. 11th, and despite the clamor for war people above all want to be safe. Carpet-bombing Afghani villages to find terrorists will seem more like sheer madness than a just war after the initial patriotic thrill is over, and if retaliatory attacks inside America continue, these wars will seem even more futile. The anarchist case that the government is neither infallible nor invisible, incapable of serving its people and the environment, is only being proven. As our so-called representatives blindly march in line with drumbeat, funding the war machine and the large corporations, the point that big government and big business are the same and fundamentally undemocratic will be driven further home. Their hypocrisy will be further revealed as they decry religious violence from Muslims while singing “Onward Christian Soldiers”, as they invade other countries to protect our supposed national sovereignty, and as people slowly become unable to differentiate our “just” war from terrorism.

When kids start returning in body-bags people will be only more sad and angry than they are now – and their rage will need something to focus on. Anarchists should try to channel that valid rage against the real culprit of the government that put the world in this situation to begin with, otherwise they will channel it back to the government-approved targets such as the Afghans, Osama bin Laden, or even us.

While we may lack the complete control over the corporate media behemoth to shove our viewpoint down the throats of everyone, we have the even more potent weapon of talking to people while not being arrogant pricks about their ideas (which may at first be cloaked in the jargon of the right-wing, but simply reflect their terror at their own inability to control their world). Many people are already anarchists at heart and simply do not know the word for their feelings, feel alone, or lack the heart to stand up. Anarchists must present to people why such carnage overseas is murderous to everyone everywhere on all sides, ruinous to the earth, and that it is possible to stop it. Anarchists should offer concrete assistance or attempting to destabilize the system at home, which is inflicting the destruction in the first place. We should not expect others to read our anarchist papers or come to our anarchist social events. Instead, we can find ways to make ourselves relevant to people by propagating our ideas in a form that can be understood and digested by them. The good old toolbox of wheatpasting, newspaper wraps, and guerrilla

theatre are just a few among the many tactics we can imagine. Yet the tactics that have not yet been imagined – those are the ones that will prove vital in the coming days.

This Moment Despair Ends — and Tactics Begin

Anarchists, us motley crew who learned our politics by starving and stealing, sharing food from dumpsters, by working bad jobs and learning how to avoid them, by watching our parents sweat and scratch to merely survive, by putting our bodies between civilization and the trees, by breaking the windows of corporate complacency — now is not our time to surrender. We realize that our forms of decentralized control and direct action, rediscovered by us youth in only a few short years, are the key to any victory. We must not let any pretentious so-called “leadership” develop, and we should ourselves not devolve into boring marches with the same uninspired slogans that will only serve to further alienate the potentially sympathetic people. All sorts of people, such as older people and families, will now be involved whose support is crucial. This is a whole new development which we must be prepared for and welcome with outstretched arms. Let our demonstrations for peace and in solidarity with all those who suffer be festive and anarchistic in an older sense of the word, folk uprisings against a bloodthirsty regime and insane wars.

Let us never forget to cause actual damage to the system when they least expect it. Peace is not pacifism. Rampant destruction of corporate property at the next mass demonstration might be less socially acceptable by either the general populace or the government at the current moment. Despite the darkening times, we should keep up clandestine activities when they are still effective, and this recent event should have little impact on the perpetuation of acts committed in the style of the ALF, the ELF, or the RAF for that matter. Perhaps even the adaptation of these tactics against the coming war may be needed. With the tightening of the petty freedoms our government so arrogantly allows us, people will have to decide which side of the law they will have to choose to operate on, and live with that in mind. People who go underground for political reasons should be supported by whatever means needed with utmost caution – with no illusions that to do will be easy or safe.

Just as “America’s New War” will operate across borders, so must we. We are much more effective if we work in concert with others who can do things we cannot do and who we can aid by doing what they cannot do. For example, it is easier to obtain money, books, replicate propaganda, and steal computer parts in this country than it is in Bolivia. Unlike many anarchists overseas, we operate in comparative safety, can acquire resources quickly, can broadcast struggles overseas to a great many possibly sympathetic audiences, and have relatively easy access to the entrails of the war machine. We can make the most what we have and attempt to aid our sisters and brothers, especially when the hellfire of the U.S. military might rains down upon our potential allies. Let us not confuse the whole of Arabian resistance worldwide with the wretched and reprehensible right-wing religious networks such as the Al-Qaida and the Taliban; just as we hope we will not be confused with the actions of our government. Potentially revolutionary forces such as the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan are fighting for their lives against both the clerical fascists and U.S. foreign policy, and are ever in need of assistance. Many of our sisters and brothers in the third world live daily with the understanding that they can be reduced to

charred corpses at any given moment by the government that claims to represent us, and it is our special responsibility to undermine that government's ability to do so.

We should also adapt to the place and people we are fighting with, and realize that anarchism in Afghanistan will be different than anarchism for American train-hoppers, but just as effective and important. If in some parts of the world the impulse toward a dignified and egalitarian existence — as free as possible from domination and coercion — does not self-consciously identify itself as Anarchism with a capital 'A', then let us work with whatever segment of the population seems most likely to tear down the existing both local and global hierarchies. We must work internationally and with those who live down the street who we never bothered to talk to. A cross-pollination of strategies, tactics, material assistance and general activity will aid us all.

Let us also not forget those who are struggling in the belly of the beast, now that the old white men in suits are throwing about the word "terrorist" with the same bellicose racism their doppelgänger predecessors used the word "nigger" with. The waves of racist hatred against Arabs must be combated with every ounce of power. Our freedom is tightly bound with theirs. The current militaristic jingoism would serve the particularly convenient function of killing off angry black militants, especially those currently incarcerated. We need to make plans for the day before, not the day after. If anything, now is the time for anarchists, especially white anarchists, to come to the aid of black and Arab radicals to prove ourselves the reliable allies that we aspire to be. The alliance of white radicals with black and Arab radicals needs to happen — for the government will eventually put us all in the same boat, and we shall all sink or swim together. Every racist indignity should be opposed — and we should be on the frontlines.

It's fairly easy for white ex-suburbanites with dreadlocks to flee the system, to dumpster dive to live, or to start farms and to grow organic carrots. Escape can be more difficult for those who are dangerous by nature, who capitalism has abused since birth, who have dirty hands and tired backs and hungry mouths to feed. The point is not to denigrate our struggle, which is as valid as anyone else's, but to make sure that we capitalize on the immense possibilities which will lie dormant until we build mutually beneficial relationships with other sectors of the population.

If anything, recent events should serve as a highlight to anarchists of our own weak position and our severe lack of social power. If we were in a position of strength we could effectively stop the war — today — and this is a position we need to be in. So, let us involve ourselves in the process by seizing by whatever means we can — both the means of production and means of consumption (stealing and dumpster-diving are tactics for consumption), creating self-sufficiency and autonomy. Imagine the possibilities of an anarchist union refusing to let ships out to fuel the war effort abroad. Impossible? Similar events happened before Seattle and even more recently in Charleston and after the G-8 protests. Or is soldiers refused to obey orders, and killed their superiors as was common during Vietnam. Nothing is forbidden and everything is permitted — as long as these acts have the net effect of bringing our modern madness to an end before it engulfs us all.

Now more than ever as anarchists we must create the world we want right now. Redoubling our efforts to plant the seeds of revolutionary change, which unnoticed in the current wartime frenzy, will blossom when least expected. Independent media networks, autonomous zones, safe houses, food programs, free clinics, and the like can only prosper as the current system of human relations continues to shamble on towards its impending doom. We must learn fast — how to grow food, heal ourselves, defend ourselves, and much more if we to survive. We can be constantly wary of false alternatives, traveling neither the path of 'Ben and Jerry's' nor that of the Taliban.

The distinctions between the ways we want to live and the way the system provides will only be sharpened, and it is us who must sharpen our knives and cut the cords.

One Solution — Revolution

Our war is a war without borders or flags, without clear enemies or predefined objectives. Capitalism, authority, domination are all more tendencies than specific individuals or buildings — although over the millennia these tendencies have manifested themselves to a dangerous degree in certain people and institutions, even ourselves sometimes. We must first acknowledge this in order to fight back.

We were always for the war, and we will always be for the war — and our war is not the same as the hate-mongering wars of any religious fanatic or any foul government. We are for the war which we fight every day when we struggle to live and die with dignity, in harmony with the earth and each other. Our war is being waged by all those who suffer under the thumb of this insane world order, by all those who realize that we have nothing left to lose control over — and our own lives to gain.

Can you hear the wind calling your name? Will you be the one who lights the spark that starts the flame? For this we promise you — as this world and its wars ends in flames we will be there with you, holding your hand and planting a kiss ever so gently upon you.

-In memoriam for all those who have died in any battlefield, in any office complex, in any nursing home, or from bombs of any nationality falling from the skies. Your deaths are not in vain my friends. We will assure you of that.

And in urgent anticipation of the day that will come when we can sleep under the stars without fear of airplanes, bombs, missiles, stock markets, civilizations, or buildings falling down.

— by Double Agents Osama Bin Bush and George W. Laden Warbinger Distro, CrimethInc Ex-Workers Collective

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