

The Alarm! Newspaper

a local newspaper for an engaged populace

September 20th, 2001

Special Edition

Free

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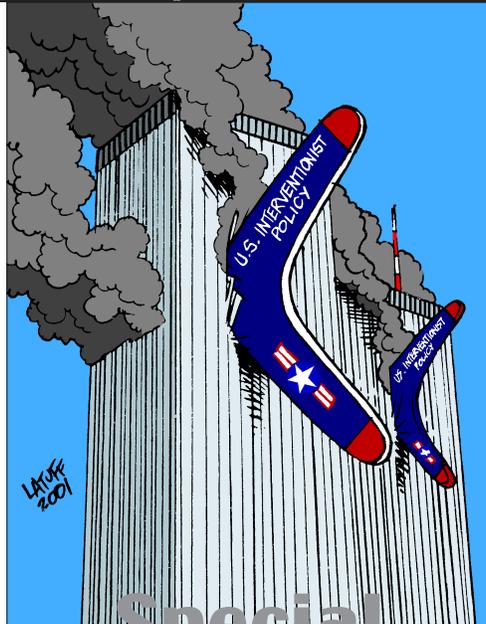
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America's New Crusade the continuation of that same old war

By leila and sasha

The Alarm! Newspaper collective & contributor

In bold letters, the bottom of TV screens everywhere say "America's new war". Who is this new war against? They don't know who rammed those planes into the Pentagon and World Trade Center, but does it matter? We can simply wage war against barbarians that hate freedom wherever they are. This is a war of values they say, a war between civilization and barbarism. "Values" is a powerful yet totally vague concept. They leave it open to interpretation both what our values are and the nature of the values of our supposed enemies, this is suspiciously convenient. The United States—the country with the

Analysis

see *CRUSADE*, page 4

TERRORISM & BACKLASH Special Issue

Infinite *In*justice Challenged in Santa Cruz and across the globe

By Fhar Miess

The Alarm! Newspaper collective

Even as the U.S. military gears up for war against Afghanistan in what it has dubbed "Operation Infinite Justice", concerned folks around the globe are mobilizing for a peaceful solution to the conflict and the end of a cycle of violence and terrorism fostered by, and now inflicted upon, the United States.

Yesterday, the Pentagon ordered warships into the Persian Gulf and as we go to press, mainstream media report over 100 warplanes have been deployed to bases Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait, from where they could strike either Iraq or Afghanistan, with more to come.

Meanwhile, over 600 people showed up for a forum at Santa Cruz's Pacific Cultural Center in the Seabright neighborhood. Forum organizers announced that over 450 were in attendance, while nearly 150 more had to be turned away because there was not enough room. The forum, supported by the Doug Rand Action Fund, Santa Cruz Green Party, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Resource Center for Nonviolence, and the United Nations Association, among others, consisted of speakers addressing the topic of "peaceful responses to the terrorist attacks." This very tired reporter was unfortunately unable to attend in order to

get this paper out, and he asks the forgiveness of organizers and the public if his second-hand information proves inaccurate.

This space was originally to be set aside to provide a comprehensive listing of peace & justice and anti-war actions which have happened and which are happening around the city and around the globe, but in the last twenty-four hours, that number has so expanded as to make such a listing impossible for the size of this paper.

see *RESISTANCE*, page 3

by Simin Javad

I was in class when the planes exploded into the buildings, several miles north of downtown. As soon as I found out what had happened I began making my way downtown. Manhattan's streets were chaotic. Smoke was billowing on the horizon, people gathered around deli television sets. All the buses and subways were shut down and people were lined up for blocks to buy phone cards and use pay phones. Eventually a bus began to run downtown. I climbed in the back and got down to Times Square before I frantically got out to watch Arafat address CBS camera crews on

Civil Liberties get the axe

■ "Terrorist threat" rationale precipitates erosion of civil liberties and an increasingly secretive government

By Fhar Miess

The Alarm! Newspaper collective

A cynical consensus is building on Capitol Hill to take the opportunities presented by last week's attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon to surge forward with the most sweeping erosions of civil liberties since anti-terrorism laws passed in 1996 in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing.

see *CIVIL LIBERTIES*, page 3

Tragedy Strikes New York

the big screen. Hundreds of New Yorkers were gathered outside the CBS studios. People were crying and fixating on the screen for the next bit of information, cringing as the network repeated the footage of the Twin Tower's crumbling, glancing down the street to the hole in the sky where the buildings had been replaced by black smoke.

First-hand Account

After the news cast became repetitive, I began walking downtown. After a brief stop to the IMC, on 29th street, I made it to a downtown bus on fifth avenue. No one knew where the bus would stop, not even the bus driver.

see *TRAGEDY*, page 6



Normalcy equals Shopping

■ “Return to normalcy” translates into “return to the retail store” for many Americans but consumer spending remains light

by Fhar Miess
The Alarm! Newspaper collective

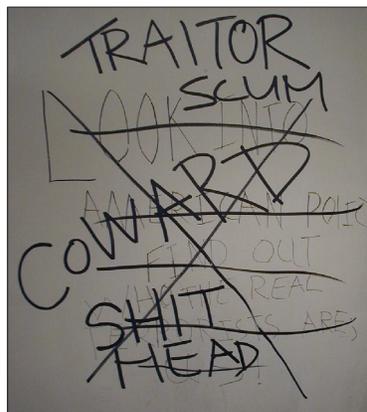
In the aftermath of the deadly attacks on the World Trade Center towers and Pentagon on September 11th, countless local residents sought refuge from despair and sorrow under the roofs of area retail stores. Enormous crowds were reported at regional malls a few days after the tragedy and staff at Borders Books on Pacific Ave., noted a brief spike in the number of browsers after the initial shock of Tuesday's tragedy wore off. “They just wanted to go out and watch a movie, maybe buy a book or a CD, just to sort of escape” the gravity of it, one worker said.

The interests of shoppers and browsers shifted dramatically as well. Staff could scarcely keep their newspapers in order with the number of people who came in to rifle through them for the latest news. There was a sudden demand for Nostradamus—who had predicted a scene evocative of the attacks on the World Trade Center towers—at nearly every bookstore in Santa Cruz, and the staff at most bookstores noted an increased demand for titles on Middle Eastern history

and studies of Islam. Hugh Holden at Streetlight Records remarked that there was an increased interest in patriotic music which continues as of press time.

And the shift in interest was evident not just on the book and music racks, but on the bathroom walls. Political commentary in the bathroom stalls at Borders shifted from the usual anti-corporate rants to statements against military retaliation. These were in turn met with charges of “Traitor!” by subsequent lavatory pundits.

But, as reported in the Wall Street Journal last week, for all the activity in retail stores after the attacks, few shoppers were actually dipping into their wallets, many feeling less confident due to reports of plummeting stock markets and heralds of recession.



Graffiti in the men's room at Borders Books underneath was written “Look into American policy, find out who the real terrorists are”

Introduction to the Special Edition

You have in your hands the first issue of The Alarm! Newspaper, a Santa Cruz local weekly newspaper for an engaged populace. This issue is being released in response to the airplane attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon outside of Washington D.C. and in response to the outpourings of public sentiment and the disturbing racism, jingoism, warmongering and blind patriotism that we have witnessed both through the “mainstream media” and direct observation in Santa Cruz and environs.

We are pleased to be sharing this space with the Cement Boat, whose trenchant commentary will hopefully provide you with an effective foil for our occasional lapses into newpeak. Thanks, especially, to Hiya for sharing her living room with this issue's editor.

This issue will not be representative of The Alarm! as we intend it to be once it goes into full production sometime next year. For one, we do not have the resources at our disposal which we hope to have by then. The publication of this issue will likely be rough and somewhat inconsistent because of this. Also, the nature of the situation will force the focus of this issue to diverge from that of The Alarm! of the future: what you will find will primarily be editorials, opinion editorials and scant local news relating to the September 11th attack and its fallout. In contrast, the eventual focus of The Alarm! will consist more of local news reporting and investigative journalism, with occasional rigorous analyses of current events and their historical precedents and a good deal less editorializing. This change in focus has been brought about largely because of the distance of the event from us, as well as the unreliability of what sparse information we have received. Lastly, you will find very few articles in the Spanish language. We eventually hope to have at least one third of our content in Spanish.

If you like what you read here and are interested in learning more about us, please visit us in whatever way is most convenient for you (see our masthead at right for contact info).

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The Alarm! Newspaper Vision is:

- We maintain a commitment to local news coverage to encourage and inspire direct, unmediated interaction with and intervention in our common daily civil experience.
- We are not “the voice of the people”—we cannot suppose that we can represent the views and opinions of all of Santa Cruz, or even a particular segment of its population, nor would we want to. And even within the Alarm! collective, we do not attempt to represent our collective voice, but to give voices to our presence as everyday social actors.
- We in Santa Cruz do not need an institutionalized representation of our voices. What we need is a community in which our voices and actions are of consequence and are not drowned out by the deafening ramblings of institutions which claim to speak and act for us. We would prefer that we did not have to amplify our own voices and actions to make them matter, and we hope that our voices and actions will bring us closer to a point where amplification is unnecessary. Like all the best anarchist projects, this one strives to make itself obsolete.
- Our aim is not to represent the community, but to inspire it; not to create a citizenry of fence-sitters through “objective”, “balanced” journalism, but to motivate community members to deliberate and organized participation in the creation of their social environment.

We are in great need of help in getting this very ambitious project onto the streets. If possible, please consider lending us assistance in any of these three areas:

Funding & Subscriptions

The cost of starting a new newspaper publication, even without the cost of the press itself, is enormous. We hope to eventually have a circulation comparable to that of other less interesting weeklies. Charitable donations are appreciated. Subscriptions will also be available (we aim for the beginning of next year for the first full-production issue). The focus will be local news, but it will be from a broad perspective of interest to people outside of the region.

Correspondents

In addition to covering mainly local news and issues, The Alarm! will also feature articles covering other communities. Corporate news wires will be woefully inadequate, so we rely upon correspondents. If you would like to contribute regular news articles, columns or opinion editorials, please get in touch with us.

Collective Members

We will eventually need a large staff of paid reporters to produce a quality paper. If you live in Santa Cruz or are considering moving here and are interested in working in an anarchist worker collective, call us. In particular, we are looking for Spanish language writers and folks with experience in journalism or printing. We are still very much in the incubation stage of this project, so we are eager to meet people with a clear and articulate vision with which to complement our own.

Resistance mounts against racism and war *(continued from page 1)*

Some highlights of actions locally and around the world

- In **Portland, Oakland** and other cities, there are “**Instant Reaction**” teams being formed. The idea is that this is a list of names and phone numbers of people who are willing to be contacted at a moment’s notice to be support for Arab-Americans, Palestinian-Americans and other Muslim-Americans who may be targeted with violence or threats. Support may include rallying around mosques, providing personal accompaniment to people who’ve been threatened, spending the night in threatened people’s houses, etc.
- **This not-so-very-removed reporter** is coordinating a similar effort here in **Santa Cruz** (and could use some help). Contact The Alarm! Newspaper (see the masthead for info) to get involved.
- Relatedly, **Anti-Racist Action** is restarting its local **Santa Cruz** chapter. While most local racist boneheads have found themselves in the lock-up, racism in Santa Cruz remains prevalent, especially now. For more information, e-mail ara-sc@dojo.tao.ca. Information will soon be up on the web site at <http://www.tao.ca/~ara-sc/>. To attend the **first meeting** to form the chapter, come by the HUB for Sustainable Transport at 224 Walnut Ave., Suite C at 6:30pm on **Monday, September 24th**.
- Again in **Portland**, at least **2600 people** showed up for a **peace march** on **Sunday** afternoon.
- At the other end of the spectrum, **Caroline Hanley** and **Shakina Nay-fack** have been spending their mornings walking up and down Pacific, from Kinko’s to the Clock Tower, “showing that [they’re] ready to mobilize for peace” and striking up conversations with folks along the way. They are looking for people to join them. If you’re interested, meet them at **9am** on **Friday** in the **Kinko’s parking lot**.
- Early **Tuesday** morning, **10 activists** stationed themselves at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and River St., holding signs advocating peaceful solutions to the conflict. “We could tell that people were eager to see that there were other people against the war,” says **Cassandra Brown** of the event. She reports that some motorists exclaimed “Finally!” as they drove past. It was not always so positive, however. **Cassandra** also related the story of one man in a large truck with a large American flag who yelled “Nuke the Niggers!” See the first three action items in this list for suggestions for an appropriate response.
- If last night’s forum at the Pacific Cultural Center is any indication, turnout at this **Saturday’s** anti-war **march**, scheduled to start at **noon** at **San Lorenzo Park**, should be spectacular. Beachfest, an enormous Christian event, will be held that day as well. Uhh, no further comment, there.
- **Massive protests** are scheduled for this evening (**Thursday**) at **college campuses** across the country.
- On **Wednesday, September 12th**, at least two **student walk-outs** were reported to have occurred in **Quebec City** (those Quebecois don’t waste any time, I guess), in protest of imminent military build-up
- **Polish activists** staged a **postering campaign** just days after the attack with fake recruitment posters for mercenaries interested in joining the American Foreign Legion. The posters advertised free KFC meals, \$600 per month and eligibility for a green card after service. Those willing to accept suicide missions would receive a bonus and a free plot in Arlington cemetery. The posters were quickly removed.
- A **little bird** told me that lots of posters and banners were put up by other little birds (no relation) **Tuesday** night in **Santa Cruz** and were likewise quickly removed before dawn. I’m sure they all had very clever slogans which you should be sad that you missed. And, no you can’t have the little bird’s number—I would lose all credibility amongst their kind and I’d never get a scoop from them again.
- Other **anonymous-types** surreptitiously slipped anti-war flyers in many of the local newspapers in **Asheville, North Carolina**.

Civil Liberties

(from page 1)

On Thursday, September 13, the Senate already passed legislation which loosened restrictions on wiretapping. In a floor speech that same day, Sen. Judd Gregg (R-New Hampshire) called for a global prohibition on encryption products without backdoors for government surveillance, a cause championed by security zealots in Washington for nearly a decade.

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft has asked Congress for a series of changes in existing policy, ostensibly aimed at thwarting the effectiveness of terrorist groups organizing in the United States. Realistically, this is likely to be used to stifle legitimate dissent against government.

Ashcroft is also instituting structural changes in the way investigations are conducted which will most likely outlive the current investigation into last week’s attacks. Most notably, Ashcroft announced the creation of anti-terrorism task forces in every U.S. Attorney Office in the country. Ashcroft notes that “task forces will be a part of a national network that will coordinate the dissemination of information and the development of a strategy to disrupt, dismantle and punish terrorist organizations throughout the country.”

Such task forces are already being used, in conjunction with easily-abused grand jury investigations, to harass environmental, animal-rights and anti-capitalist activists for their dissenting views and organizing. Ashcroft’s language is reminiscent of the language of COINTELPRO, which was designed to “misdirect, discredit, disrupt and otherwise neutralize “specific individuals and groups. Congress ordered COINTELPRO discontinued after investigators found it to be little more than “a sophisticated vigilante operation.”

One of the country’s most active anti-terrorism task forces can be found in Portland, Oregon, which is, coincidentally, also the site of the largest anti-war demonstration since the attacks (see RESISTANCE page 2).

In a May 10 statement before the Senate Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services and Select Committee on Intelligence, FBI

director Louis Freeh listed Reclaim the Streets, a group which stages impromptu street parties with music systems and dancing, among a host of other terrorist groups, including Usama Bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda organization. This designation would be cause for mirth were it not for the gravity of the implications for state repression of activists simply for throwing orchestrated street parties.

In addition, the Justice Department has drafted proposals now before Congress for the expansion of powers to detain or deport immigrants suspected of terrorist activity. If these proposals are passed, a German with the misfortune of having been dancing in the streets at an RTS party might just be deported to her nation of citizenship, where government officials are rethinking their policies on suspect profiling.

Olaf Scholz, interior minister of Hamburg, said in an interview that the government would start profiling suspects—taking actions, such as detentions or searches, based on racial or other criteria. Profiling is banned in some countries but allowed under German laws passed in the 1970s, when the country was hit by a wave of bombings and assassinations carried out by the Red Army Faction. It has rarely been used since then.

While the U.S. intelligence community is busy in a war of attrition with our civil liberties, the U.S. government is taking more liberties unto itself, especially where privacy and non-disclosure is concerned. Military operations in particular are being conducted in unprecedented secrecy, with compartmentalization insuring the fewest possible number of people with classified information and press restrictions not seen in years. Many government web sites have gone blank or have not been updated since before September 11th’s attack.

Some of our readers perhaps consider these worthwhile sacrifices in order to live in safety. But, first, they will come for the Arabs, and then they’ll come for the anti-capitalists. We have to wonder when they’ll be coming for you. Likely they’ll have gotten to us first, so don’t count on us to be able to sound the alarm when they do.

News

The economic incentive of war

■ Many anti-globalization groups cower in shadow of tragedy while capitalists surge forward

by Fhar Miess

The Alarm! Newspaper collective

The spectacular attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon sent just about every resident of the United States reeling. Priorities were abruptly shifted while personal and ideological agendas were temporarily set aside in the aftermath.

Anti-capitalists and capitalists alike were on agreement on a couple things: this was an outrageous waste of human life and a profound attack on the institutions of capitalism and U.S. military supremacy. While both camps might have found some common ground amid the rubble in deploring the former, their views on the latter quickly diverged as the hours and days wore on.

Anarchists, anti-capitalists and anti-globalization activists were quick to condemn this wanton destruction of life, but were wary of having their political agendas—not to mention their tactical practices—conflated with those of the terrorists who piloted their airplanes into the heart, as most can agree, of the symbols of American financial and military might.

This led to a situation where a number of anti-globalization organizations withdrew their participation in up-coming protests against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC at the end of the month. Some organizations, like the bellwether environmental group, The Sierra Club, even went so far as to cancel all their campaigns and advertisements and remark, “For now we are going to stop aggressively pursuing our agenda and will cease bashing Bush.”

Some groups became so squeamish about articulating their political and economic critiques that they ended up issuing confusing statements like this one from Friends of the Earth: “out of respect for those who lost their lives and out of concern for the safety of protesters, we have chosen to demonstrate our commitment to peace and justice by not demonstrating.” As Rick Giombetti notes in his recent article “Has the Left Unilaterally Disarmed?”, the sentence “reads like it is comparing holding a peaceful demonstration with blowing up a building.”

Other anarchists and radicals have taken the opportunity to differentiate between their very precise and carefully-planned attacks against property (carefully-planned so as to insure that no lives are lost) from terrorist acts which hold life in such low regard. As anarchist author John Zerzan explains, “I would hope this week helps put the protesters’ acts of vandalism into perspective. How can what they do be called terrorism after this?” *see CHICKENS, page 5*

American Crusade (continued from page 1)

highest incarceration rate in the world—is supposed to stand for freedom; involved in more wars than any other country, Bush calls it a “peaceful” country. The unknown others stand for militant Islam, barbarism, and anti-freedom. Cultural differences between the US and Islamic countries are being distorted to the point where the media

presents Islam itself as if it leads to Terrorism and America as if it were the great source of Freedom and these two pairs as fundamentally opposed: a clash of civilizations. Conservative thinker William Bennett stated, “We have to declare war on militant Islam.” This is the new racism, where race is defined by culture and values. In the end, we are left with the simplicity that Dubya is so famous for: “This will be a monumental struggle of good against evil. But good will prevail.” A simple ideology, but it does its work: the real causes of such terror are hidden, as is the terror the US inflicts upon the world.

Colin Powell said clearly, “I think every civilized nation in the world recognizes that this was an assault not just against the United States, but against civilization.” Oh no, it’s nothing to do with US actions around the world; it’s just barbarism with no political content or reason.

The Taliban’s treatment of women has been brought up as an example of Islamic fanaticism, to tarnish Islam’s image in general, in spite of the fact that it cannot conceivably have anything to do with these attacks. Videos of children being trained by Osama bin Laden’s troops are shown repeatedly on TV. Last year there was a BBC special on fundamentalist Christianity in the US that looked very similar. It showed children shooting guns and people talking at length about the apocalypse. One wonders how people who live in Muslim countries would view that. But sadly, here attacks on Moslems and people who look Middle Eastern are beginning; it’s a crusade, you know, a clash of values.

James Lindsay, a foreign policy analyst at the Brookings Institution said that American values and culture are “profoundly threatening” in parts of the world. If those who attacked the Pentagon and World trade center were motivated by anger at cultural and religious differences why didn’t they attack Sweden? We don’t know who attacked or even why but we do know what they attacked, the center of US political power and the center

of US economic power, in fact one of the great centers of Capitalism itself. The US is now the world superpower; its hegemony is almost complete. Any group or any country which operates against US interests is marginalized economically, bullied, then attacked if they go too far. The list of US atrocities is long and well documented. Directly

or indirectly, US foreign policy’s complete disregard for the lives of civilians in other countries brought this on, and further attacks on civilians in other countries would only incite more violence on American civilians in return. If this is going to be a war between civilization and the barbarians it is only so in the sense that it will be a war between the world superpower (the great Spartan global city-state) and those who dare defy it.

Just because we disdain the US government and its foreign policy doesn’t mean that we look positively upon the Taliban or Osama bin Laden or

the hijackers; that would be absurd. Just as absurd though is the logic of unity—that all Americans need to rally behind the flag or that all those who are opposed to Tuesday’s attacks should support whatever retaliation the government is planning and surrender what rights we have left by supporting anti-terrorist legislation. Anyone who was saddened by the images of office workers falling one hundred stories to their death—that is, nearly everyone—is supposed to now support retaliation against a nameless headless entity, but really against many similarly innocent people. As some Polish comrades put it, “We are sad. We have been sad for years.” As we were when they wasted the lives of 200,000 Iraqis.

As usual, the new “crusade” appears to be aimed at expanding US hegemony both internally and externally. Those who stand against it have reason to be fearful this week, and in the weeks to follow. “America’s new war” will be a pretense to destroy opposition to America’s grand geopolitical plan whether it comes out of the mountains of Afghanistan or a local Santa Cruz activist group. Already counter-terrorism bills are passing without a thought—the FBI’s ability to use infiltrators and wire taps are expanding. Bush says this is a new war, the first of the 21st century, but really it is the same old racist war to maintain power and hegemony over the world and to cut off dissent here at home.

“

Behind the sadness and exhaustion, there is a desire by the American people to not only seek revenge, but to win a war against barbaric behavior, people that hate freedom and hate what we stand for.

—G.W. Bush

This is a second Pearl Harbor. The series of attacks on the United States is a fundamental assault on the principles and values of Western civilization.

—Steve Forbes

It puts the basic rules of our civilization in question. Together, we will not allow these values to be destroyed, be it in America, in Europe or wherever in the world.

—Chancellor Gerhard Shroeder of Germany

A war between civilizations has begun. A war of Allah against Jesus, the poor against the rich, barbarians against the civilized world.

—Izvestia, a liberal Russian paper

”

Why No Retaliation?

By Travis Workman



When an empire creates the historical conditions for revolt, the people of such an empire, however shocked they are by the violence of the acts themselves, should not be surprised that they have occurred. To call the recent attacks on New York City and the Pentagon “terrorism” is to empty those acts of their political content. “Terrorism” suggests a completely criminal act, but considering the targets of these attacks, this term is an obvious attempt to repress this content instead of face it. Just because no group or leader has claimed responsibility for the acts, does not mean that there was no message in the attack. As the U.S. government mobilizes against “the enemy,” the criminal investigation continues to search for and fabricate evidence of who this enemy is, but for now the expanding designation “Middle Eastern terrorists” suffices to incite U.S. nationalist vengeance against somewhere in the Middle East on the one hand and fellow Arab-American citizens on the other. “Bin Laden,” who may or may not have had any hand in

the attacks, gives a face to “Middle Eastern terrorism,” despite the fact that there are at least ten terrorist organizations with the capacity to orchestrate such a low-tech operation. Just as Bin Laden provides a fixed image for the phantasm of “Middle Eastern terrorism,” the CIA, the Pentagon, and the World Trade Center are/were metaphors for a ghostly force that seems to lurk behind political and cultural situations everywhere—the U.S. state and the U.S. business interests it supports. But who is responsible for embedding so much power, in terms of metaphorical significance and actual political weight, into these buildings, so much that their destruction became the means of bringing reality to bear on their centrality in the phantasm of global U.S. hegemony? And who is responsible for creating the phantasm itself?

If we take Afghanistan as an example, not because it is certain that the Taliban or Bin Laden has any direct or complicit responsibility for the attacks, but because they are the focus of the U.S. government’s criminal investigation and will be the object of its vengeance in the near future, then the answer to these questions becomes clear. Over the past seven years, the U.S. government has had extremely erratic and ill-conceived diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime. Unocal’s Central Asian Oil Pipeline project, and the U.S. government’s attempts to help actualize it, led the U.S. to support the Taliban’s regime as a potential stabilizer of Afghanistan, also wooed by the Taliban’s promises to eradicate the heroine trade and keep the country’s roads open. One would hope that along with this economic interest in the region would appear a clear diplomatic policy with the leadership and citizens of the country. However, the U.S. government, in cohorts with Unocal executives, attempted to push through plans for the pipeline despite the civil war and the Taliban’s fostering of a highly violent Islamic fundamentalism. It did this by supporting the

funneling of weapons and troops from its allies Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It did this without concern for perpetuating rather than abstaining from the violence it helped start by supplying Afghan resistance forces with weapons throughout the 1980’s (in an attempt to keep the Soviet Union out of the region).

“Terrorists” are specters, created in the imaginary, to give an identity to entities that can strike at any time, and whose motivations are not always explicit. They appear at once to change a political situation forever, and then vanish when strategically necessary. The U.S. government and the businesses it supports move in a similar fashion, show interest in an area long enough to cause or exacerbate political turmoil, and then disappear when the damage has been done, confusing the content or purpose of their presence to such a degree that the name of “Satan” is invoked to explain their actions. As the U.S. government and media search for a face or a nation to attach to “terrorism,” one should also reflect on the metaphors deployed in this effort—the flags, the monuments, and the songs, and wonder what those symbols might mean if one were on the other side, uncertain of what ghostly presence is haunting. The referents of these metaphors, real economic and political hegemony around the globe, are not always tangible, but the metaphors themselves are made real in their destruction, and will continue to be as long as what they represent continues to use its own means of violence haphazardly, as a form of economic speculation. The political content of the recent attacks was to open the U.S. citizens’ eyes to a chaos their nation has helped create, and from which it can no longer attempt to isolate itself. To retaliate, to mobilize the metaphors of nationhood and embroil the U.S. military in an ineffective action against an illusory enemy, is to perpetuate the chaos, and to increase the chance of another explosion.



Chickens

(from page 4)

Still, the rush to leave Washington DC to politicians and government bureaucrats continues, with everyone from the AFL-CIO to the Ruckus Society to the Mobilization for

Global Justice (MGJ) bailing out even before the official announcement of the World Bank/IMF that they are postponing their fall meeting indefinitely.

For the most part, the capitalist class has not remained nearly so circumspect. There were, however, some initial misgivings about consideration of financial profit or loss in the wake of such an immense loss of human life (especially brokers’ lives). In a memorandum to clients, David Gilmore, a partner at consultants Foreign Exchange Analytics in Essex, Connecticut wrote,

“Perhaps we are being naive or altruistic, but these are times when taking short-dollar positions in stocks, bonds and the dollar in the wake of [the] horrific news is too much to stomach. Surely the world must go on and markets must discount [Tuesday’s] news, but shame on those who are building positions and thinking profit. Moreover the notion that ‘if I don’t do it someone else will,’ is equally reprehensible.”

However, as the days wore on, “cooler” (“colder” might be more accurate) economic heads prevailed, as evidenced in Brian Wesbury’s editorial in Friday’s Wall Street Journal: “While it may seem crass and uncaring to turn our attention to the economy and financial markets at a time of national mourning, it must be done. After all, free-market democracy and specifically the capitalist system of the U.S. was attacked on Sept. 11.” Mr. Wesbury, chief economist of Griffin, Kubik, Stephens & Thompson in Chicago, goes on to share his thoughts on the war effort: “the government must act swiftly with a renewed focus on strengthening capitalism and its wealth-

creating abilities. Good economic policy is just one facet of our recovery. Our government’s action to extract a victory in a new war against terrorism is equally important. The indecisive approach of appeasement, negotiation and ‘rules of engagement’ will not win the war and could easily lose the economy in the process.” This may seem a little over the top for some of our more sensitive readers, but, Mr. Wesbury clearly isn’t speaking from the position of the “sensitive guy”, but from the position of the economist, which becomes even more self-evident a couple paragraphs later: “From an economic perspective, the Bush administration’s job in this situation is to reduce risk. And the way to reduce risk is to actively pursue a strategy of eliminating the enemy. Only an aggressive campaign will suffice.” Well, with an article entitled “The Best Economic Stimulus: Victory”, we shouldn’t expect Mr. Wesbury to mince his words. But just to drive home his point once again, he writes, “A tepid response by the U.S. government toward

Tragedy Strikes New York City *(from page 1)*

Everyone was distracted by the beret wearing, national guardsmen guiding traffic with riffs all along fifth avenue. At eighth street we were kicked off of the bus. From that point and that location, until we made it to the foot of the buildings later, we were dumped in the midst of total chaos. We were basically trying to get to ground zero by any means possible, and the police were trying to keep us out by any means possible. Needless to say, the adventure was exhausting and lasted for four gruelling hours.

At every street corner a different group of cops told us to take off in the opposite direction we wanted to go and at every street corner we tried to convince them to let us in. Eventually we made it to the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge where frantic crews of volunteers in street clothing hauled two-by-fours and plywood to the park to make hundreds of make-shift stretchers. They probably made one stretcher every minute. These crude devices were then packed into empty garbage trucks and hauled along with a crew of volunteers to the foot of the buildings. The real urgency of the situation was not apparent to me until I watched the hurried way these people worked and the number of stretchers they made. It was here that I met Paul and Jose. Paul, a 23 year-old white kid came up to me and asked me for a cigarette. When I told him I didn't have one he began to talk out loud, so I listened. He told me that his father works in the North Tower, which tumbled first, on the 76th floor and that he hadn't heard from him since the buildings collapsed at eight this morning. His mission was to find anyway he could to get into the building area and find his dad. He was determined. Jose was his younger friend who presently looked like he was eighty years old. He walked up limping, pulling his bike along with him. His hair was completely grey as was his ten speed. He told me he was thrown several feet off his bike when the first plane hit. He was going with Paul to find Paul's dad.

After I watched Paul almost get clubbed and

arrested by a group of cops at a near by barricade, I couldn't help but try to calm him down. He was telling the cops that someone should have attacked their precincts. The coppers weren't responding well to all of this. I was also interested in getting as close as I could. So we joined forces. As we got closer and closer to the foot of the buildings, the air got thicker, our skin and eyes dryer, our lungs weaker and our shoes and clothing greyer. The landscape of lower Manhattan was surreal. A thick grey dust covered everything. It reminded me of a post-bomb scene or walking on the moon. The streets were deserted, except for a few business people and workers covered in dust with masks over their mouths and eyes, looking for a way out of the area. We were still a quarter mile from ground zero. The grey soot was mixed with hundreds of pages of charred paper, mostly financial reports and an occasional grey apple core and some half-eaten bread. Venders had abandoned their fruit and bagel carts and people had looted them for sodas and water. Red and Black smoke covered the skyline. Cars covered with dust had messages written on them. One said "You Can't Stop NY". Another read: "Revenge is the Only Answer." We found a few water bottles, a couple of masks and marched on.

Repeatedly we were turned back by the cops and fire department personnel. We lost track of where we were, but we kept moving, we tried every street that we could. Soon we were walking down Wall Street toward Broadway. You could hardly see even one block away. Within minutes we heard a rumbling. The third building was falling, Seven World Trade Center, a forty-seven floor building near the towers. The dust and smoke which ensued left us kneeling on the ground coughing and covering our eyes, also reminiscent of Seattle.

We decided to take a different route. Taking advantage of the dust and confusion we were able to get close enough to see the once 110-floor building at an undaunting four-floor height.

Capital's War *(from page 5)*

international terrorism at this juncture will have devastating effects to the long-run health of the U.S. economy. Purposeful military action will reduce the economic risk."

Now, I am not especially surprised at the audacity of Mr. Wesbury (say it without letting your top and bottom teeth part, it works better) in his remarks. I am more surprised and concerned at the timidity of social justice groups in dealing (or failing to deal) with the reality of what countless Mr. Wesbury's are doing while they decide to put anti-capitalist protest agendas on the back burner "out of respect for those who lost their lives", as if the reasons that so many of those people lost their lives were not endemic to precisely this variety of capitalism that they've been protesting heretofore.

Of course, not everyone has cowered under

the weight of the tragedy. The Anti-Capitalist Convergence has maintained its commitment to protest and the struggle against hegemonic economies, even in absence of WB/IMF delegates and officials. In fact they've just issued a renewed and revised call to action in light of the turn of events.

While blind adherence to any program for demonstration is ill-advised, a terrorist attack and the resultant backlash should not drive us into blind adherence to a national program of manufactured "solidarity" under the U.S. flag. If decisions are to be made to retreat from our commitment to protest in a certain form, those decisions should be made based on material changes in the circumstances, not out of an amorphous and poorly-defined "respect" for the tragic loss of life. To reiterate one of Rick Giombetti's more salient points, "there is no better time to stand up for principles than when they are deeply unpopular."

Medics and volunteers, including many activists were standing idly. The fire and excessive debris made it impossible for them to get to possible survivors. Ambulances couldn't get in to pull people out. Besides, most people knew that the majority of bodies they were searching for would be lifeless.

We were quickly discovered and escorted out of the area. Itchy, exhausted, slightly blind and short of breath. We decided to get out of the area before another building fell or we got arrested. It took us at least an hour to find a way out of lower Manhattan. Along the way, Paul, slightly defeated mumbled about the idiots who hijacked the planes. A few stragglers we had picked up, also young white boys, hoped that we'd go to war. At first I remained silent. What do you say to a kid who may have just lost his father so traumatically? But eventually I found a way to explain the other side of the equation. I tried to gently explain that people are killed like this by the American government all the time, that this may have been a reaction to America's international policies and actions. I guess being working class kids from Queens, Paul and Jose were not jumping to protect their government. Eventually we were agreeing, albeit not completely. But I felt better about it. Paul and Jose and I departed in China town. He called a few hours ago to tell me his father got out of the building in time to save himself.

I came back here to the IMC and we're putting together some reports, while constantly laughing and shaking our heads in frustration as we watch Bush give his speech and congress sing their patriotic songs and news analysis about the menace of Bin Laden. We are working hard, washing our clothes, skin and hair, trying to get the camp-fire smell out and trying not to itch our skin too much. People pass out occasionally and then get up again to send emails and write stories and every once in a while we sit around together to figure out what we should do next. The schools and most of downtown will be closed tomorrow. We are holding a meeting in Union Square tomorrow at noon to discuss how to respond to the rampant patriotism emerging to fuel a possible war or bombing attacks. It feels like a daunting task. We will make some pamphlets and distribute them around the city. I'll forward the statement as soon as it is complete and edited. People are meeting throughout the country and hopefully something will come out of this. We have already heard that Arab NYC residents have been harassed in the streets and at their work places, but we haven't heard anything serious yet. For now we are taking things minute by minute, drinking coffee and laughing at the president and the ridiculous propaganda the media is spouting so we don't get too depressed. Right now a few of us are going to ride down to the Javit Center where civilian volunteers are gathering for search and rescue teams. Do what you can locally. Any minute now we could be in the midst of massive war, internationally and nationally. No doubt the anti-terrorist propaganda will affect all of us.

Editorial Acratador Radio

Millones de muertos anónimos llaman a las puertas del dueño de Occidente. Son los muertos impunes de Sabra y Chatila, de las dictaduras de Pinochet o Papá Doc, las “a tanto la pieza” de la contra nicaragüense, los borrados del mapa por el Napalm en Vietnam, los daños colaterales personificados en miles civiles de Bagdad o Kosovo... Los crímenes de guerra de Estados Unidos se vuelven contra ellos en una masacre atroz que transforma a los ciudadan@s de tercera en muertos de primera. Porque unos muertos valen más que otros y un ciudadano de tercera vale en este caso más muerto que vivo. De sobra sabemos también que no vale lo mismo un cadáver del Tercer Mundo que del mundo rico. Bush no dudó en esconderse como una rata, mientras todos sus sofisticadísimos sistemas de seguridad, redes Echelon, CIA, FBI y contraespionaje se veían superadas cuando los símbolos del capital y el militarismo eran destruidos y morían miles de inocentes. Ahora este fanático del armamentismo, el cow-boy al que no le tiembla el puelso para mandar personas a la silla eléctrica, amenaza con una guerra que se convertirá con toda seguridad en una nueva escabechina de población civil. Una población civil que vive bajo el yugo de tiranos que primero fueron alimentados por Reagan o Papá Bush. Porque, ahora

parece que conviene olvidar que quien pagó e instruyó el ejército de mujaidines de Osama Bin Laden y a los talibán no fue otra que la siniestra CIA, para ayudar a derrocar el régimen prosoviético afgano. Al amparo de ese mismo árbol brotó el ahora “demonio” Sadam Hussein. El fenómeno del Integrismo Islámico no es otra cosa que un monstruo que Occidente alimentó y que ha terminado por volverse contra él.

Pero no sólo debemos buscar la amenaza al otro lado del océano. El enano mental que habita la Moncloa rinde pleitesía a su señor y quiere meternos en lo que podría ser un conflicto bélico de proporciones inesperadas.

En estos días oímos de todo: bombardeo selectivo, ataque masivo, incluso posible uso de armas tácticas nucleares. En los próximos días podemos asistir al comienzo de una nueva guerra o cuando menos a una nueva matanza perpetrada con el aplauso de Occidente, cuyos medios de información jalean intervenciones militares que venguen el ataque a la “civilización occidental”.

Algunos poderosos medios de comunicación, especialmente en los USA, no piden una respuesta: piden una cruzada. Como dijo el caudillo medieval un “matadlos a todos, que Dios reconocerá a los suyos”. Queda un después. Un futuro que amenaza cambiar libertades individuales por férreo control social. Si ya padecemos con la excusa del terrorismo, leyes tremenda-

mente injustas, ahora debemos prepararnos para lo peor. Cualquier movimiento disidente o protesta social podrá ser criminalizada y aplastada. El argumento es perfecto: son terroristas. También debemos preguntarnos a quién beneficia todo esto. Por un lado a la economía global no le van mal convulsiones, movimientos que haga que valores como el petróleo generen beneficios con subidas repentinas. La industria armamentística se debe estar frotando las manos porque sabe que puede seguir vendiendo armas a tirios y troyanos. El gobierno israelí se encuentra con las manos libres para cometer las mayores tropelías.

La extrema derecha también encuentra excusa para sus xenófobos ataques. Bush conseguirá que su proyecto del famoso escudo antimisiles salga adelante. Ya de paso puede estar seguro de que tendrá “barra libre” para cualquier inversión en defensa por descabellada que parezca. El cielo arde sobre Manhattan, la economía tiembla pero sigue adelante aunque sea chapoteando en sangre, en muchos lugares del mundo es un día de celebración mientras contemplamos asustad@s el espectáculo. En algún rincón del planeta alguien muere de hambre, los gendarmes del mundo afilan sus cuchillos, alguien desaparece o muere con el consentimiento de Occidente, en una mezquita anónima el muhecín proclama: Alá es grande.

A note from this issue's editor

When I got to the Oakland Greyhound station shortly before midnight the first night after the attack, I walked down the street to a friend's house where my bike had been kept since I left to go on the road back in May. There, some folks were talking about a meeting of activists which had just occurred, called in response to the attacks and the backlash against Arab and Middle Eastern folks and against civil liberties which was likely to follow. This was where I got the first clear picture of what actually happened, and it was a picture which motivated me immediately to action.

The next morning, I spent the last of my money getting myself and my bike back to Santa Cruz, eager to get to work confronting the racist and authoritarian backlash. I decided to get out this issue of the Alarm! and to start laying the groundwork for re-starting the local chapter of Anti-Racist Action. I was unable to find anyone at home at first to work with, so I logged on to the internet to gain more and updated information on what was happening. This was my first foray into any kind of media representation of the attacks, and it sucked me in as so many others around me had been sucked in. Lost in the labyrinth of information, my motivation to action dwindled. Here I was, reading generally critical reports about the attacks and the backlash from alternative news sites like Indymedia, A-Infos, CounterPunch, ZNet and AlterNet, but

still I felt paralyzed in the face of such a maelstrom of information and varying analyses. I can only imagine the sense of paralysis felt by the majority of Americans being hypnotized by the likes of CNN and MSNBC and their endless repetitions of images of burning, collapsing buildings, dazed people on the ground and celebrating Palestinians—images which I have had the good fortune of having been spared. I broke out of my paralysis to get myself to a meeting of the Direct Action Network. There was some organizing for action here, but not as much as I'd hoped. My next stop was to visit Hiya, where we laid plans for publishing this joint issue of the Cement Boat and the Alarm! Newspaper. I made a brief trip across town to get my computer and stopped at the vigil at the clock tower on the way back to Hiya's, where I found myself becoming immediately impatient at the already repetitious calls for prayer. After talking with friends for a few minutes, I took off and immediately set myself to the work of gathering information for articles over the internet. Again, I was caught in that labyrinth and did not find my way out before going to sleep.

So it has gone for the last several days, and I have finally made the decision to limit my time on the internet or reading the papers (I've generally only read the Wall Street Journal, which has largely refrained from spouting the more sensationalistic drivel found in other mainstream papers). And I have solidified my commitment to making this publication a tool for all of those people who find themselves in the same predicament: all the people with dazed looks on their

faces, lost in confusion about the reasons for what happened, lost in mourning at the sheer tragedy, lost in paralysis for the lack of any sensible course of action in their own lives. I hope here to make sense of the reasons for what happened, to critically engage the nature of the tragedy, and to suggest some clear courses of action in response to that tragedy (and I don't mean donating blood and money). Again, as I stated earlier, this is a departure from the ultimate vision of what the Alarm! will look like: we are generally loathe to be so forward in offering such heady analysis and suggestions for courses of action, trusting rather that folks armed with the truth and the tools for reflection and analysis will figure that out on their own. But the immediacy of the situation here calls for something a little more direct. Certainly, the flag-waving bigots poised to attack mosques and Arab-American institutions and individuals are not waiting for more information, more analysis or more suggestions for action, and neither are those politicians, law-enforcement and “intelligence” personnel who are eager to exploit the situation to further restrict our remaining freedoms. To fail to let this publication be the tool for urgent and immediate organizing to address these problems would be irresponsible. However, we do not presume to have all the answers regarding how best to address these problems—these are only some suggestions. We ask foremost and above all that you, the reader, do not sacrifice your critical faculties or your scruples in deference to some vaguely-defined “national tragedy”, grave though it is.