

Ten Years After 9/11: An Introduction

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This issue of *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* considers the anarchist milieu in the ten years since the attacks of September 11, 2001 (hereafter “9/11”). A host of obvious questions accompany an attempt to encapsulate an event such as 9/11 and the ten years that followed, foremost among them: Why situate 9/11 as a date of exceptional importance? Does a reflection of this kind merely contribute to, for example, neoconservative attempts to enshrine 9/11 as a propagandistic tool? Memorialization often carries reactionary politics, whether intentional or not.

The most common reactions to 9/11 can be categorized broadly as liberal, conservative, and skeptical. Liberals tended to see the attacks of 9/11 as blowback for wayward US government foreign policy since World War II. Conservative responses accepted the narrative of the *9/11 Commission Report*, and framed the attacks as an expression of a “clash of civilizations” and the touchstone of a new era in world affairs. Skeptics believed the 9/11 Commission was too compromised to provide an accurate account of the event, and often called for a new investigation. Anarchist responses varied, but may be summed up by the title of punk band Leftover Crack’s 2004 album: *Fuck World Trade*. The title actually originated in a pre-9/11 work by Choking Victim, a continuity of political analysis, however crude,

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I wish to explore in more detail later. Anarchists, I argue, were among the few radicals whose analysis of history and power was not transformed, directly or indirectly, by the events of 9/11; whereas many liberals and progressives either became flag-waving robots in the aftermath of 9/11, or employed forms of analysis that resembled the neoconservative propaganda of the epoch.¹ Below I examine examples of the latter from noted intellectuals Slavoj Žižek, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida. I do not believe these intellectuals espoused neoconservative politics; however, it is striking to note how significant features of their analyses, especially the way they framed the importance of 9/11 and the nature of future “threats,” resembled the contours of the neoconservative propaganda of the immediate post-9/11 era.

Ten Years On: The Fascist Creep Continues

Of course, it is impossible to fit most individual responses to the attacks into such narrow categories, and no single response to 9/11 by anarchists defines the radical milieu. At the very least, however, the response of the US government (and capitalist states worldwide) to 9/11 diminished the capacity of anarchist social movements through a barrage of draconian laws, militarization of police forces, and repressive new forms of technological surveillance. The apparently reinvigorated alter-globalization movements that surfaced in Seattle in 1999 only had time to catch a breath of insurrectionary freedom before submerging once again in the post-9/11 crackdown. While North American radical movements have had few substantial successes in the past decade, recent social uprisings in Greece, Northern Africa and the Middle East have provided radical movements worldwide with inspirational examples of truly radical responses to oppressive conditions. The disappearing resistance to a multitude of repressive apparatuses in the post-9/11 era, especially after a failed global anti-war protest in 2003, is even more noticeable in the context

¹ Some of the most visible instances of this phenomenon include: Christopher Hitchens' reaction to 9/11 and his support of the invasion of Iraq; would-be liberal and Editor of *The New Republic* Peter Beinart's decision to support the invasion of Iraq; liberal academic, supposed human rights champion, and failed politician Michael Ignatieff, who, transformed by 9/11, became an apologist for torture and a supporter of the invasion of Iraq; and failed comedian Dennis Miller, who, in response to 9/11, switched from snickering liberal commentator to shrill neocon guest on Fox News.

of flourishing state and capitalist criminality in the past decade.

Consider just a sampling of post-9/11 realities, most in the United States alone: the imperialist invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, combined with war crimes in countries such as Yemen, Pakistan and Libya, in a “war on terror” that has now cost well over 225,000 lives and \$4 trillion, now approaching the financial cost of World War II (Isenberg, 2011); the largest private sector theft of public money in history, an estimated \$16 trillion, during the so-called financial crisis of 2007 to 2010 (Webster, 2011), followed by an aggressive “austerity” push that targets the poor and people of colour; the largest illegal domestic wiretapping program in history; the escalation of widespread torture; stolen elections; the confirmation by scientists that we are now living in the sixth mass extinction event in the history of the planet; the largest corporate environmental disaster in US history, the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico; an income disparity gap between rich and everyone else as large as it was during the Great Depression; the creation of Homeland Security and a massively integrated and technologically sophisticated police state apparatus (expertly and regularly described by Tom Burghardt at <http://antifascist-calling.blogspot.com/>); the ongoing mass slaughter of non-human species; health care fraud upwards of \$400 billion every year, and over 50 million uninsured Americans; and the list goes on, punctuated and sustained by structural racism, ableism and sexism. And yet, at least it seems, most Americans are still waiting to feel the cold, unforgiving surface of *rock bottom*.

September 11, 1609

The propaganda push that followed 9/11 transformed many American faux progressives into what NYC hip-hop artist Sage Francis called “makeshift patriots.” Even people of profoundly oppressed communities joined in the media-sponsored orgy of jingoism. Under such conditions anarchist forms of resistance become more difficult to espouse publicly, and yet they are obviously as relevant as ever. I am particularly struck by the way 9/11 seemed to narrow the scope of radical possibilities, to truncate the radical imagination, even in very subtle ways.

Consider, for example, the invocation of another “9/11,” the CIA-sponsored coup in Chile in September 1973, in which a military junta replaced the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende.

Certainly, a CIA-backed coup d'état is an appalling injustice, and the horrors of Augusto Pinochet are well documented. However, this example of the "other 9/11" remains an example of one form of State being replaced by a more repressive form of State. For anarchists, the "other 9/11" might be September 11, 1609, the day on which Henry Hudson sailed into the upper bay of the river that now carries his name. Hudson's arrival marked the establishment of what eventually became Manhattan Island, much to the chagrin of its inhabitants. The hijackers who piloted into the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001 used the Hudson River as a guide for their suicidal mission. But this other 9/11, the arrival of Henry Hudson, matters, I think, for a different reason. The 9/11 of 1609 marked the imposition of a State on a stateless society, and the eventual nexus of early modern capitalism.

The World Trade Center towers in Manhattan stood,

quite literally, on the multilayered foundation of the city's colonial past and sedimented legacy of social and racial inequality. With the exception of a few historic landmarks, the visible traces of [Manhattan's] colonial history of violent conquest, appropriation of Native American lands, and black slavery were buried beneath the city's infrastructure during the rapid conurbation and construction booms of the Industrial Revolution and subsequent economic transformations. (Foote, 2004, p. 3)

Hudson's legacy, the colonial history of Manhattan, exemplifies the sustained, structural forms of oppression often overlooked as our gaze moves from one modern capitalist crisis to the next. The 9/11 of Henry Hudson is notable for becoming the nexus of state-capitalist assemblages in the early modern era, the deep time of human atrocity. Many progressives referenced US imperialism in the post-WWII era, when trying to fit 9/11 into an historical context; however, this historiography carries the potential inference that there was a golden age in which the US state was a benevolent force, instead of the recognition that all State forms have always been sources of oppression. We should talk about Henry Hudson's 9/11 instead, as a moment in the broader march of racist, statist colonialism. Thelma Wills Foote notes:

During the early modern era of European expansion and the emergence of the capitalist world system, Manhattan Island

became a crossroads for the articulation of the ideal and material relations of colonial domination that produced relationally constituted and differentially valued racialized subjects — for example, civilized and savage, colonizer and colonized, enslaver and enslaved, black and white. (Foote, 2004, p. 7)

Four hundred years later Manhattan remains a “crossroads” for global capitalism, now as the primary nexus of finance capital. The longevity of capitalism is staggering. When the Towers imploded on September 11, 2001, the concretization of a murderous colonialist legacy landed on the bedrock of modern capitalism: “in the shadow of the twin towers of New York City’s World Trade Center the skeletal remains of an estimated 20,000 enslaved laborers were buried under nearly 25 feet of landfill, stretching across roughly six acres of prime Manhattan real estate” (Wills, 2004, p. 8). The first invasion of Manhattan Island, in 1609, was a 9/11 many times the monstrosity of September 11, 2001, as is the case anywhere a capitalist state lands on a self-governing people:

By the time European explorers reached Manhattan, that island-peninsula had supported the self-sufficient life of the Wappinger for at least 500 years . . . When the European explorer Henry Hudson first laid eyes on Manhattan, he did not discover a vacant land but instead observed a wooded landscape, interrupted by Wappinger housing compounds, burnt clearings, cornfields, canoe embarkments, and ancient burial sites. (Wills, 2004, p. 23)

The colonial invasion of what is now Manhattan Island was, of course, only part of the Native American Genocide, and only part of the wider global capitalist expansion; however, we should never forget — indeed, anarchists are among the few who continue to remember — what the French Annales School study of history calls the *longue durée*, the deep time of historical structures. While propagandists tried to convince us that “everything changed” on 9/11 — an absurd conflation of historical time — victims of continuing racist colonialism knew otherwise. So, while this journal issue marks an historical milestone of ten years since 9/11, it does so largely as a counter-narrative to the inevitable onslaught of jingoistic prattle that will accompany the anniversary.

The Forgetful Memory of 9/11

The popular slogan “We will never forget,” which was written and repeated all over the United States in the wake of 9/11, was typical of the ways in which 9/11 was overdetermined by cultural excesses both progressive and propagandist, popular and idiosyncratic. Obviously, forgetting takes place. Maybe more important with regard to 9/11, who is this “we” in the popular sentiment? And will 9/11 be remembered in the same way by each of “us”? The other 9/11, Henry Hudson’s arrival, has been forgotten by most, and even when remembered it serves a variety of purposes in the present. In terms of commemorating the 9/11 of 2001, however, I would add a third category: that which was never remembered, let alone remembered and then forgotten, and which continues to haunt the retrieved knowledge. Michael Bernard-Donals calls this “forgetful memory”: “Rather than see the relation between history and memory as that between what happened and what can be retrieved of those events, we should see it as a relation between what has been retrieved and what is lost to that retrieval and yet which haunts it incessantly” (Bernard-Donals, 2009, p. 161). Forgetful memory is akin to Blanchot’s disaster: “forgetfulness without memory, the motionless retreat of what has not been treated — the immemorial, perhaps” (quoted in Bernard-Donals, 2009, p. 161). 9/11 has often been treated as an event not subject to forgetful memory, not susceptible to that which is lost but continues to haunt, largely because, as we are so often told, it was the most recorded event in history. Not only was it filmed by news videographers and amateurs with cell phone cameras, it was also archived on the Internet for repeated retrieval. The apparent omnipresence of recording technology and availability of that audio-visual record online has magnified the ontological cleavage between the certainty with which some people ascribe to the official narrative of 9/11 and the certainty with which others invoke alternative scenarios or broadly defined skepticism (often dismissively referred to as “conspiracy theories”).

There is no *we*, and the memories of 9/11 are haunted by anomaly. Maybe these haunted echoes of ambiguity, once collected into a narrative coherence, resemble the tall tales of conspiracy theorizing, but, then, maybe the epistemological problem lies in the narrativization of these echoes and not the echoes themselves? And yet, still more troubling in my view, forms of 9/11 skepticism that do not — be-

cause they *cannot* — provide coherent alternative scenarios stitched from the strands of an official story that unravels here and there are tossed aside as epistemologically illegitimate. We are not allowed to be agnostic in the post-9/11 era. And so we are haunted by 9/11, but not always because of what happened, and not because of the history told based on what happened, but because of the excess of the event. According to Bernard-Donals in his Levinasian account of *the event*, “the occurrence of events begins interminably to recede into an inaccessible past at the very moment of occurrence, while the event’s passage into language — into any knowledge that we might formulate of the occurrence — makes of the occurrence something (narrative, testimony, history) *other* than the event” (2009, p. 3).

Unlike most events, 9/11, though it is a massively complex assemblage of social fields, was framed by the voices of the State from the beginning as an event that was both accessible and known. Before any investigation took place, before journalists had time to collect testimonies, before oral histories were released to the public, before a civilian trial of suspects was a possibility, President Bush stood before the United Nations on November 10, 2001 and warned, “Let us never tolerate outrageous conspiracy theories concerning the attacks of September the 11th, malicious lies that attempt to shift the blame away from the terrorists themselves, away from the guilty” (Bush, 2001). In fact, television commentators were assigning blame for the attacks before the fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania. Within days of 9/11, various neoconservative pundits took to the airwaves alleging Iraq was responsible for 9/11. Within weeks they said Iraq was responsible for the anthrax attacks, too. Years later, we found out the anthrax attacks came from within the US military-industrial complex.

Žižek, Baudrillard, Derrida: Closet Neocons?

Academics sought and replicated the responses to 9/11 from celebrated intellectuals such as Slavoj Žižek, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida. Žižek characterized “the collapse of the WTC towers as the climactic conclusion of twentieth-century art’s ‘passion for the Real’ — the ‘terrorists’ themselves did not do it primarily to provoke real material damage, but *for the spectacular effect of it*” (Žižek, 2002,

p. 11).² In essence, he argued, the spectacle of 9/11 “shattered our reality,” or at least “the symbolic coordinates” that structure reality for us (p. 16). However, the focus of Žižek’s essay, in keeping with a discussion in continental philosophy of the previous decade, is whether 9/11 constitutes an “event”:

What if, precisely, nothing epochal happened on September 11? What if — as the massive display of American patriotism seems to demonstrate — the shattering experience of September 11 ultimately served as a device which enabled the hegemonic American ideology to ‘go back to its basics’, to reassert its basic ideological co-ordinates against the antiglobalist and other critical temptations? (pp. 46–47)

Ten years later, we can say with confidence that indeed this is what happened: whatever actually happened that day, and especially in light of the US government’s response, 9/11 was not an historical break, but rather a continuation and escalation of the same legacy that put thousands of slave corpses under the shadow of the Twin Towers. Thus, Žižek’s assessment of 9/11 manages to frame the event as both a “climactic conclusion” and a deadly continuation. The same apparent paradox surfaces in Baudrillard and Derrida. Žižek also speculates that the future “is something much more uncanny” than the spectacular airborne assault of 9/11: “the spectre of an ‘immaterial’ war where the attack is invisible — viruses, poisons which can be anywhere and nowhere” (pp. 36–37). This projection is congruent with the neoconservative propaganda of the immediate post-9/11 era, filled with nightmares of bioterrorism and invisible armies that constitute an “existential threat.” This aspect of Žižek’s analysis is also visible in Baudrillard and Derrida.

Jean Baudrillard was less equivocal about the *eventness* of 9/11:

² Žižek ascribes an intention to the attacks of 9/11, even though when he published these remarks no one had taken credit for the attacks or articulated an intention. Žižek later acknowledges this fact: “. . . not only are ‘terrorists’ themselves no longer eager to claim responsibility for their acts (even the notorious al-Qaeda did not explicitly appropriate the September 11 attacks, not to mention the mystery about the origins of the anthrax letters); ‘antiterrorist’ state measures themselves are clouded in a shroud of secrecy. . .” (p. 37). It is curious how many critics of the capitalist state were untroubled by the absence of anyone taking credit for the attacks — indeed, Bin Laden actually stated three times he had nothing to do with 9/11 — and how quickly these critics assumed the US government’s narrative to be *true enough* to proceed with lengthy dissertations on the subject of 9/11.

9/11, he wrote, might be “the absolute event, the ‘mother’ of all events, the pure event uniting within itself all the events that have never taken place” (Baudrillard, 2003, pp. 3–4). “The whole play of history and power is disrupted by this event,” he continued, “but so, too, are the conditions of analysis” (p. 4). And similar to Žižek’s proclamation that “American got what it fantasized about” (Žižek, 2002, p. 16), Baudrillard argued that “we can say that they *did it*, but we *wished for it*” (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 5). Both celebrated intellectuals posited that an attack on the order of 9/11 was inevitable for a system of such globalized dominance. “Terrorism,” wrote Baudrillard, “is the act that restores an irreducible singularity to the heart of a system of generalized exchange” (p. 9). The “spirit of terrorism,” for Baudrillard, lies in the “symbolic and sacrificial” death (on 9/11); “that is to say, the absolute, irrevocable event” (Baudrillard, 2003, pp. 16–17). This “sacrificial” suicide has “resuscitated both images and events” (p. 27).

One problem with Baudrillard’s assessment of 9/11 is his repeated insistence that 9/11 was a “unique and unforeseeable event,” which “corresponded to a precedence of the event over all interpretative models” (p. 34). He calls the “collapse” of the World Trade Center towers “unimaginable” (p. 28). These assessments are categorically false, since multiple news sources and a host of government reports show that the events of 9/11 were anticipated and even wargamed by the US military (Floum, 2011). Substantial evidence exists to suggest multiple intelligence agencies, investors, and elements of the US government had some kind of foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks (see my contribution to this issue). Baudrillard’s characterization of 9/11 thus mimics a form of neoconservative propaganda (that 9/11 could not have been anticipated or prevented, that it changed everything, etc.).

It is interesting to observe with the hindsight of a decade how notable intellectuals such as Baudrillard treated skepticism of the official 9/11 narrative in the immediate aftermath of the event. Baudrillard writes, playfully, “[a] small step, then, to imagine that if terrorism did not exist, the system would have invented it. And why not, then, see the September 11 attacks as a CIA stunt?” (pp. 53–54). He actually gives considerable space to this hypothesis, but not to legitimize it. He calls the theories of “an internal terrorist plot” the “most eccentric,” a “thesis so unreal that it deserves to be taken into account, just as every exceptional event deserves to be doubted: we always have in us a demand for both a radical event and for a total

deception” (p. 77). Baudrillard does not discount these theories so much as he declares them inconsequential: “If it were to turn out that such a mystification were possible, if the event were entirely faked up. . . . Even if all this were the doing of some clique of extremists or military men, it would still be the sign (as in the Oklahoma bombing) of a self-destructive internal violence, of a society’s obscure predisposition to contribute to its own doom. . . .” (pp. 78–79).

“The conspiracy theory,” he concludes, “merely adds a somewhat burlesque episode to this situation of mental destabilization. Hence the urgent need to combat this creeping negationism and, at all costs, safeguard a reality that is now kept alive on a drip” (p. 81).

From wherever the attacks originated, Baudrillard assumes, the symbolic significance would be the same: proof of a global system wishing for its own demise. This is a dubious conclusion. If it were revealed that the 9/11 attacks were inspired or aided by elements within the US government or intelligence factions among its allies, for example, this would have a devastating impact on the existing mythology of American patriotism. The effect of his statements on the academic Left, then, is to legitimize the absence of their concern for ambiguities, omissions, and demonstrable lies in the official 9/11 narrative. Baudrillard contributed to a form of quietism that enveloped the topic of “9/11” immediately after it occurred, even if much of his analysis of the event remains valid.

Jacques Derrida also debated whether 9/11 constituted “an event,” an event “that truly marks, that truly makes its mark, a singular and, as they say here [in New York City], ‘unprecedented’ event” (Derrida, 2003, p. 86). “A major event,” he wrote, “should be so unforeseeable and irruptive that it disturbs even the horizon of the concept or essence on the basis of which we believe we recognize an event *as such*,” a concept very similar to Baudrillard’s contention that 9/11 changed the grounds of analysis (p. 90). On this criterion, once again, 9/11 is not an event, because it was foreseeable, it was imaginable, by many. Derrida’s conclusion, however, resists the certainty of Baudrillard:

Were we to accept this minimal definition of the event, minimal but double and paradoxical, could we affirm that “September 11” constituted an event without precedent? An unforeseeable event? A singular event through and through? Nothing is less certain. (Derrida, 2003, p. 91)

Derrida argues, “what is terrible about ‘September 11,’ what remains ‘infinite’ in this wound, is that we do not *know* what it is and so do not know how to describe, identify, or even name it” (p. 94). German sociologist Ulrich Beck concluded the same thing in 2002: “No one has yet offered a satisfying answer to the simple question of what really happened [on 9/11]” (p. 39). We ritually repeat the moniker “9/11,” but it only acts as a placeholder for this thing we have yet to understand. Despite this clear statement of uncertainty, however, Derrida then proceeds to develop an elaborate theory of the meaning of 9/11.

Derrida converges with Žižek and Baudrillard when he introduces the concept of “autoimmunitary process,” or a “strange behavior where a living being, in a quasi-*suicidal* fashion, ‘itself’ works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its ‘own’ immunity” (p. 94). All three celebrated intellectuals, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, declared the attacks and the US government response a kind of internalized sabotage of America, of Empire. That is, the topography of their collective responses to 9/11 reveals a conceptualization homologous with the liberal narrative of “blow-back,” with the basic sentiment that America *got what it deserved*, and, worse, that America *got what it desired*.

By reducing the attacks to a psychoanalytic trope (Derrida’s “quasi-suicidal” process, Žižek’s fantasy, or Baudrillard’s “wish”), these intellectuals could both *have something to say about 9/11*, and admit that *not enough is known about 9/11 to say something about it*. It is worth recalling that even the compromised 9/11 Commission did not publish its report until 2004. The intellectuals in question were developing their grand pronouncements about 9/11 based on a narrative released by the US government/military almost immediately following the attacks. The intervening years have revealed significant holes in that account. My point here is not to affirm every so-called conspiracy theory around, but instead to direct our attention and consideration to the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and the forms of analysis it produced (from, in this case, prominent public intellectuals who are expected to remain above the fray enough to provide a perspective of the event not informed by the same rush to judgment exhibited by, for example, the US government, which invaded Afghanistan not even one month after 9/11).

Like Žižek and Baudrillard, Derrida also (perhaps unconsciously) inscribes the neocon vision of the future as a world defined by invisible threats. According to Derrida, however, the future threat is a

product of a trauma *to come*: “We are talking about a trauma, and thus an event, whose temporality proceeds neither from the now that is present nor from the present that is past but from an im-presentable to come (*à venir*)” (p. 97). At times, Derrida sounds like a French Donald Rumsfeld being poorly translated: “Traumatism is produced by the *future*, by the *to come*, by the threat of the worst *to come*, rather than by an aggression that is ‘over and done with’” (p. 97). As with the other noted intellectuals, Derrida appears to invoke the preferred neocon fear fable of the “existential threat”:

. . . what is thus put at risk by this *terrifying* autoimmunitary logic is nothing less than the existence of the world, of the worldwide itself. There is no longer any limit to this threat that at once looks for its antecedents or its resources in the long history of the Cold War and yet appears infinitely more dangerous, frightening, terrifying than the Cold War. (pp. 98–99)

In other words, the trauma of this event is a product of the future, and it is a future that “bears on its body the terrible sign of what might or perhaps will take place, which will be *worse than anything that has ever taken place*” (p. 97; italics in original). But 9/11 only appeared that way — only appeared to anticipate an unimaginable catastrophe — to the general American public because of a corporate media hell-bent for war, a corporate oligarchy hell-bent for oil, a media spectacle that included an interruption of scheduled television programming for weeks, a series of anthrax attacks that, we now know, came from within the US military-industrial complex, and centuries of racist colonial narratives that prepared the American public for yet another war against non-white people.

Derrida, like Žižek and Baudrillard, was responding to the climate of fear and jingoism in America immediately following 9/11, and he, like most on the Left, did not have either the capacity or the courage to articulate a narrative other than the one most liberals were developing at the time, and this narrative was largely sympathetic to nationalist mythology (and continued to be for years, as liberals argued over the *right* country to invade — Afghanistan, they said, not Iraq, instead of *neither*), even if in the details this narrative appeared to confront nationalist mythology. By conceding that 9/11 was an unimaginable event or the end of an era, and by conceptualizing the future as an unfolding of invisible menace, these intellectuals and broad portions of the Left conceded the imaginary ground on which

the neoconservative faction created its world of “existential” threats and “noble” lies. Once the grand narrative of the post-9/11 era (yes, even the term “post-9/11 era”) was constructed in the hours after the Twin Towers were attacked, even the most erudite commentators found themselves tracing its ideological contours.

The Post-9/11 Revolutionary Process

It is difficult to produce a critique of State forms when the State form resides so deep within our being, and I certainly do not mean to castigate the great minds of Žižek, Baudrillard, and Derrida for what I think was a lapse in analysis quite common across the Left in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Deleuze and Guattari understood this internalized enemy as a kind of *microfascism*, a “cancerous body rather than a totalitarian organism” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 236). Baudrillard, similarly, recognized “terror” as something “already present everywhere, in institutional violence, both mental and physical, in homeopathic doses” (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 59), a very anarchistic sentiment for sure. Even though the “post-9/11” moment has passed and the era was successfully defined by the most rancorous of ideologues, perhaps a reflection such as this journal issue can offer us contemplation suitable for conditioning the internalized forms of State terror that each of us must confront.

Contemporary America exists within the most comprehensive and sophisticated propaganda matrix in human history, which makes the intellectual cancers of psychological warfare, public relations, advertising and State propaganda more difficult to detect, and certainly more difficult to confront. As the Tikkun collective describes the current situation:

Historical conflict no longer opposes two massive molar heaps, two classes — the exploited and the exploiters, the dominant and the dominated, managers and workers — among which, in each individual case, one could differentiate. The front line no longer cuts through the middle of society; it now runs through the middle of each of us, between what makes us a *citizen*, our predicates, and all the rest. It is thus in each of us that war is being waged between imperial socialization and that which already eludes it. A revolutionary process can be set in motion from any point of the biopolitical fabric, from any singular

situation, by exposing, even breaking, the line of flight that traverses. (Tikkun, 2011, pp. 12–13)

In that context, the purpose of this issue — which reflects on events and ideas of the past decade such as torture and the law, the Green Scare, State terrorism, and race and labour radicalization — is to expose those lines of flight that may in some way be traced to September 11, 2001, but in no way should end there.

If there is a reason to have hope in the post-9/11 era, it is because of the widespread recognition, articulated by David Graeber and others, that the revolutionary processes that exist are informed primarily by anarchist principles. In addition, the study of anarchist history and theory is enjoying a rebirth (see recent anthologies such as: Amster et al., 2009; Jun and Wahl, 2009; Rousselle and Evren, 2011). The acceleration of fascist creep that followed the events of 9/11 created a new generation of anarchists, a phenomenon akin to the “Foucault paradox,” in which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses emerge simultaneously and in reciprocal relation to each other (Lyon, 1993, p. 672). While anarchists are right to be gripped by a sense of urgency in the current crisis of capitalism, they should also remember that this is a crisis centuries in the making.

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