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The Attacks of September 11: Suicidal Tendencies of "Technicized" and Atomized Society[**]

« In the government you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of the empire. »[1]

On November 12, 2000, at 10.30 p. m. I was coming home from a meeting. 36 hours later I woke up in a hospital bed. One or more individuals had hit me on the head, provoking a brain trauma. This happened in Tbilisi, the capital of the Republic of Georgia (south of Russia) where I was staying on a teaching mission. My complete loss of memory of the attack has probably preserved me from hatred and fear. These feelings might have prevented me from understanding that this assault, the first in a series of many aggressions in Tbilisi mainly against Western foreigners[2], was a terrible reaction within a country wrecked by recent adoption of capitalism. Even official sources say that only 5% of the population have benefited from the economic changes since 1991[3].

This personal experience may provide some clues for explaining the attacks on September 11, 2001 and their aftermath. The attacks have provoked a wide range of emotions, namely fear, resulting in a need for security, and anger, producing a wish for revenge.[4] These feelings go along with a confrontational bi-partisan attitude and thus prevent differentiated and, in particular, self-critical analysis. Human behavior and discourse usually result from a balance between contradictory desires: They are torn between the need for social recognition and the desire to win. Such a major disaster perhaps increases the need for recognition, reduces the desire to win and thus diminishes critical capacities.

We know from psychoanalysis that if emotions like hatred or fear are not expressed but repressed (as is the case in Western everyday-life), they nonetheless continue to exist but operate in more or less perverse ways in and from unconsciousness.[5] As long as communities and governments do not provide occasions and incentives for people to express their aggressivity ("abreaction") without doing harm to anybody, but on the contrary, instrumentalize it to gain support for a policy of confrontation, individual psychological patterns and problems will accumulate on the collective level and influence politics.

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[1] THAYENDANEGEA, Mohawk tribe, ca. 1742-1807.

[2] On 12/9/2001, Günther Beuchel, a member of the European Union's delegation in Tbilisi, was murdered on the staircase of the house where he was living by four blows to the head.

[3] In 2000, the monthly salary of a university professor was 42 Georgian Lari (= $ 22). Cheap pajamas cost 6 GEL, about one seventh.

[4] That is why collective mourning after Sept. 11 is far from being sufficient; it even bears the danger of internalizing rage and fear. Therefore, if it is true that politicians and media were undemocratically united in propaganda, nevertheless psychotherapy has not replaced political controversy, as Susan SONTAG claims in *The New Yorker*, Sept. 24, 2001, http://groups.colgate.edu/aarislam/susan.htm. – All Internet sites have been checked on Nov. 2, 2004, but may have disappeared since.

[5] See Alice MILLER, *Thou Shalt not be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, Pluto: London 1998.

Before trying to develop an explanation of September 11, I have to deal with a major, almost epistemological difficulty. If I have been busy studying these events ever since that fateful date, there are now more and more information and analyses available suggesting that factions of the US government knew in advance of the attacks or even helped to make them happen. Among several hundreds, here are some of the hints nourishing this hypothesis[6], asserted by a growing number of researchers, journalists and statesmen[7]:

- According to a congressional report, high US officials are warned, in early July 2001, « that UBL [Usama bin Laden] will launch a significant terrorist attack against US and/or Israeli interests in the coming weeks. »[8]

- Between July 4 to 14, Larry Mitchell, C.I.A. official in Dubai, meets O. bin Laden at the American hospital of the emirate where the latter receives treatment for kidney disease.[9]

- In August, the Pakistani secret service wire transfers $ 100.000 to Mohammed Atta.[10]

- From September 6 onwards, financial speculation (« put options ») against the stocks of United Airlines and American Airlines, the two companies affected by the attacks, allows gains of 12-15 millions dollars.[11]

- On September 10, top Pentagon officials suddenly cancel travel plans for the next morning, apparently

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6 They mainly come from the inquiry by German journalist Mathias BRÖCKERS : *Verschwörungen, Verschwörungstheorien und die Geheimnisse des 11.9.*, Zweitausendeins: Frankfurt/M. 2002. He has compiled numerous Internet sources: www.broeckers.com/9_11_Links.htm and www.zweitausendeins.de/broeckers/, among them research by Canadian professor Michel CHOSSUDOVSKY, *War and Globalization: The Truth behind September 11*, Global Outlook: Oakland/Ca. 2002; one of the central chapters is on www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO111A.html: "Cover-up or Complicity of the Bush Administration? The Role of Pakistan's Military Intelligence (ISI) in the September 11 Attacks". The investigation is pursued in M. BRÖCKERS & Andreas HAUSS, *Fakten, Fälschungen und die unterdrückten Beweise des 11.9.*, Zweitausendeins: Frankfurt/M. 2003. See also Gerhard WISNEWSKI, *Operation 9/11. Angriff auf den Globus*, Droemer/Knaur : München 2003, and Thierry MEYSSAN, *9/11. The Big Lie* and *Pentagate,* Carnot USA Books : New York 2002. A chronological timeline surrounding September 11 has been conceived by Michael C. RUPPERT : www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/02_11_02_lucy.html.
   For much further information, various books and many links, see
   - Visibility Project : In support of the 9-11 families' struggle for truth: www.septembereleventh.org;
   - 9-11 Truth: http://www.911truth.org/;
   - International Citizens' Inquiry into September 11, San Francisco, March 26-28, 2004 and Toronto, Mai 25-30, 2004: http://www.911inquiry.org/. – All Internet sites have been checked on October 29, 2004, but may have disappeared since.

7 See the former German minister Andreas von BÜLOW, *Die CIA und der 11. September. Internationaler Terror und die Rolle der Geheimdienste*, Piper : München 2003, and the interview with him in *Frankfurter Rundschau – Magazin*, Aug. 23, 2003, as well as the former British minister Michael MEACHER, "This war on terrorism is bogus", *The Guardian*, Sept. 6, 2003, www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4747953-103677,00.htm.

8 Patrick MARTIN, "One year after the terror attacks : still no official investigation into September 11" (Sept. 12, 2002), www.wsws.org/articles/2002/sep2002/sept-s12.shtml; House of Representatives and Senate intelligence committees' joint inquiry concerning September 11, Sept. 2002, p. 23, quoted by David CORN, "Bush Stonewalls on Pre-9/ll Knowledge", *The Nation*, Sept. 20, 2002, www.thenation.com/capitalgames/index.mhtml?bid=3&pid=106. D. CORN is pursuing the investigation: "The 9/11 Investigation", *The Nation*, July 24, 2003, http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20030804&s=dcorn and "The 9-11 Bog", *The Nation*, March 26, 2004, http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20040412&s=cornweb.

9 Alexandra Richard, *Le Figaro*, 31 oct. 2001, www.globalresearch.ca/articles/RIC111A.html. This information has, however, been denied by the C.I.A. and O. bin Laden, see M. Bröckers 2002 (supra note 6), p. 159.

10 Manoj JOSHI, "India helped FBI trace ISI-terrorist links", *Times of India*, 9 oct. 2001, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/html/uncomp/articleshow?xml=0&art_id=1454238160, cited and commented by M. CHOSSUDOVSKY on www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO111A.html and by M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 139-142.

11 See Christian BERTHELSEN & Scott WINOKUR, "Suspicious profits sit uncollected. Airline investors seem to be lying low", *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 29, 2001, www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2001/09/29/MN186128.DTL, and Rolf BOVIER & Pierre MATTHIAS, "Insidergeschäfte vor den Terroranschlägen in den USA?", economic magazine *Plus Minus* of the *Bavarian Radio*: www.br-online.de/geld/plusminus/beitrag/20010925/thema_2.html, cited and commented by M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 107-109, 133-135.

because of security concerns.[12]

- With it widely known within airport and military officials that four planes have been simultaneously hijacked, the National Command Authority waits for 75 minutes, till 9:30 a.m., till scrambling intercepting aircraft, although the airbases of McGuire in New Jersey and Andrews are only minutes' flight from New York and Washington.[13]
- The first of the twin towers is hit at 8:45 a.m., at a time when most of the directors and important personalities have not yet arrived.[14]
- On the evening of September 12, the hijackers' names are presented to the public, although they did not figure on the passengers' lists. However, several of these individuals are still alive.[15]

After his installation as US president, George W. Bush blocked or suspended investigations and concrete measures of the F.B.I., the C.I.A. and other agencies against O. bin Laden and his family, to such a point that in summer 2001, John O'Neill resigned as chief investigator of the F.B.I.[16] After September 11, an investigation was considered contrary to national security.[17] One may ask which were the reasons for this: the close business relations between the Bush and the bin Laden families[18] or O. bin Laden's probable role as double agent? Concerning the latter, he has denied being involved in the attacks.[19]

However, obstruction by US authorities may not be the main obstacle for checking the official thesis of a conspiration by O. bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Another difficulty lies in conspiratory theories' capacity of autoimmunization. This makes them resemble to demonology as developed during European witch-hunting at the end of the Middle Ages. At that time, any doubt about the presence of the devil attested his perfidious capacity to lie in ambush and made him all the more dangerous. Today, any reserve about the idea of an Islamic fundamentalist conspiration is immediately qualified as obsession about a state plot, if not as complicity with the hijackers.[20]

It is tempting to deepen these reserves and to start a journalistic, if not criminal investigation. However, I am not competent for that. What may be more important: Such a probe has a limited scientific value. It does not tell us anything about the imaginary construction of the Other and of scape-goats, about the functioning of capitalist society, its individuals and the hatred it may cause, nor about Christian, Islamic, Jewish and other fundamentalisms.

This does not mean that a criminal examination and a sociological and philosophical exploration are incompatible. Even if American services or individuals were aware of the planned attacks or supported them, a participation of Islamic fundamentalists seems probable. And even if there was no such contribution, it is

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12 *Newsweek*, Sept. 24, 2001.

13 M. RUPPERT, www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/02_11_02_lucy.html, no. 65 with references.

14 M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 73.

15 M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 89, 293.

16 See for instance the Executive Order (W)199-EYE-WF-213589 (see http://www.infowars.com/w199eye.htm), published by the journalist Gregory PALAST (www.gregpalast.com/detail.cfm?artid=144&row=1) and the BBC program *Newsnight*: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/events/newsnight/newsid_1645000/1645527.stm, cited and commented by M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 167-172, 173-177, 250, 315, 324, 327; also Rashmee Z. AHMED, "Bush took FBI agents off Laden family trail", *Times of India*, Nov. 7, 2001, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/html/uncomp/articleshow?xml=0&art_id=1030259305. See also Jean-Charles BRISARD (who could interview J. O'Neill before his death in the twin towers) & Guillaume DASQUIÉ, *Ben Laden. La vérité interdite*, Gallimard: Paris 2002.

17 P. MARTIN, supra note 8; D. CORN 2002, supra note 8.

18 See Chris, "Un goût amer dans la Bush", www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHR205A.html ; M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), spec. p. 166-167, 171 with a long quotation from *Hindustani Times* of Sept. 28, 2001.

19 See the interview with O. BIN LADEN to the Pakistani daily *Ummat*, Sept. 28, 2001, p. 1 & 7, http://www.serendipity.li/wot/obl_int.htm. The videocassette on which he would have approved them seems to be manipulated, see www.whatreallyhappened.com/articlesosama.html with – partially invalid – links to many further Web sites; also M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 196-198.

20 See M. BRÖCKERS 2002 (supra note 6), p. 258 and the solemn warning by George W. BUSH against any questioning of the official version, on Nov. 10, 2001 before the UN General Assembly, quoted ibidem p. 1.

easy to notice that there are groups of people in the Islamic world ready to commit politically motivated crime against the US. Whatever the facts, there is sufficient matter for reflection and research. Conversely, this paper is not meant to caution the official version of events. Nor does it invalidate efforts by journalists and criminalists to find out what happened. On the contrary: It makes them even more urgent in this period of military focusing and bipolarization between "good" and "evil".

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In this very provisional contribution to an ongoing inquiry, my ambition is to show that with September 11, capitalism seems to threaten the survival of mankind in a new way, in addition to the destruction of the environment and war. The atomization of society and the "technization" or mechanization of human life give individuals – emancipated from social control and perhaps projected out of their original social context – the technical means to destroy human life, possibly on a much wider scale than on September 11, with the help of nuclear power, biological, chemical and genetic weapons.[21] Therefore, I would first claim that astonishingly, the attacks on the WTC reflect suicidal tendencies of, and within capitalist society (I).

Whereas former societies did not have to worry about many of their members being unhappy, mainly because individuals' potential for destruction was limited, I would then assert that contemporary societies, simultaneously individualistic and highly "technicized", will only be able to survive if they provide the material conditions of happiness to everyone (II). This, of course, sounds naive because it is precisely contrary to the current, capitalist organization of most of the planet. However, the main reason why social change, in this case the transformation of capitalism, is difficult, may be the widely unconscious aggressivity deeply rooted in modern individuals (III).

The reflections developed here are also a modest effort to contribute to the understanding of the legal organization and evolution of contemporary society, concerning topics such as: individualism as the basis for personal rights, the respect of the rule of law by the state which can be paradoxical as the state is the author of law, the limited role of international law, social control and public security, the functions of criminal justice, ...

I. September 11 Reflecting Capitalist Society

It is a widespread belief that the attacks on the WTC « separate the civilized of the world from the uncivilized »[22]. The underlying assumption is of course not just Norbert Elias' neutral idea that occidental society has civilized human drives and feelings[23], but also a value judgment: A positive meaning of civilization attributes brutal and inhuman character and behavior to the so-called uncivilized. Since ancient Greece and Rome, dominant societies have pretended to be civilized in both senses and especially in the second. Like the even wider distinction between good and evil, this attitude is grounded in the dichotomic thinking characteristic of Western culture.

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21 See the American constitutionalist Bruce ACKERMAN, "Don't Panic", *London Review of Books*, vol. 24, no. 3, Feb. 7, 2002; Thomas L. FRIEDMAN, "A Manifesto for the Fast World", *New York Times Magazine*, March 28, 1999, article adapted from his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux: New York 1999.

22 Lance MORROW, "The Case for Rage and Retribution", *Time*, special issue Sept. 11, 2001. See Immanuel WALLERSTEIN, "America and the World: The Twin Towers as Metaphor", Charles R. Lawrence II Memorial Lecture, Brooklyn College, 12/5/2001, detailing this belief that the Western world is civilized (http://fbc.binghamton.edu/iwbkln02.htm#N_1_ and other locations).

23 Norbert ELIAS, *The Civilising Process*, 2 vol., Blackwell: Oxford 1978.

Dichotomic and especially moral classifications usually serve a hidden political objective: concealing one's own violence, power and exploitation by speaking of oneself in terms that have positive connotations such as "civilized". The effect of such a discourse is a good conscience; the dominating society thus becomes unconscious about what it inflicts upon other people.[24] In the US, Christian religions may be an important way of providing good conscience.[25] Law also has this function, among others.[26]

From a psychological point of view, it is doubtful whether any human being and even any action can be classified as good or evil, mainly because all behavior seeks to promote the acting self and is therefore selfish.[27] However, in order to have a good conscience about one's domination, the distinction between good and evil and other dichotomies allow one to project one's own rejected tendencies upon the victims of the powerful.

On this basis, it seems to me not only that the so-called civilized world is not particularly humane. Most of the atrocities of the XXth century have been committed or instigated by the most industrialized countries. For example, the recent wars against Afghanistan and Iraq were probably as horrible as any other war. Perhaps more importantly, many characteristics of civilization – civil liberties, absence of censorship and torture etc. – are currently curbed in probably all Western countries, in the US by « the strongest restrictions in our history » (Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor) contesting both the rule of law and the separation of powers.[28] In other words, the humane stance of the "civilized" quickly vanishes in conflict.[29] Why? War, like competition, implies on the national level that the élites increase their power and wealth by disciplining their country's population.[30]

More fundamentally for my analysis, the hijackers[31] could themselves be

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24 See Hans Herbert KÖGLER, "Is Dialogue with Terrorism Possible?", paper presented at the University of North Florida, 10/25/2001, www.unf.edu/dept/ceppp/bktalk.htm.

25 I was struck by a remembrance service in the Calvary Baptist Tabernacle in Vestal, N.Y., on Sept. 15, 2002: Led by a young-dynamic pastor who announced the « fight against evil » while gleaming with self-assurance and certitude, the assembly first sang the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* (« the Lord, He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible, swift sword; His truth is marching on »), later on *Lead on, O King Eternal* (« Lead on, O King Eternal, The day of march has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest [...] And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song [...] The crown awaits the conquest »), *The Celebration Hymnal. Songs and Hymns for Worship. Containing Scriptures from The King James Version of the Holy Bible*, Word Music / Integrated Music 1997, nos. 804 & 724.

26 See Vincenzo RUGGIERO, "Daniel Defoe and busines crime", chapter 11 in : idem, *Crime and markets. Essays in anti-criminology*, Oxford University press 2000; Klaus GÜNTHER, "Kampf gegen das Böse ? Zehn Thesen wider die ethische Aufrüstung der Kriminalpolitik", *Kritische Justiz* 1994, p.135-157 (149-150).

27 C. POLLMANN, "Pour un matérialisme psychologique", review of: Claude et Danielle Allais, L'épanouissement amoureux et sexuel du couple, Bernet-Danilo: Meschers 1999, *La Pensée* no. 326, April 2001, p. 161-165.

28 Philip S. GOLUB, "American Caesar", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Jan. 2002.

29 See Michael RATNER, "US: no longer the Land of the Free", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Nov. 2001. Lance MORROW, supra note 22, already announces all of this when he asks for « rage » and « a policy of focused brutality », before concluding « Let the civilized toughen up, and let the uncivilized take their chances in the game they started. »

30 See John HOLLOWAY & Eloína PELÁEZ, "The War of all States against People", www.links-netz.de/K_texte/K_holloway_war.html, in German: *Analyse und Kritik*, Hamburg, no. 457, Dec. 20, 2001, p. 6-7.

31 I refrain from speaking of "terrorists" because this is an opportunistic and confrontational concept designed to prevent reflection and analysis; today's "terrorists" were called "freedom fighters" some years ago (as Ronald REAGAN in 1985 described Abdul Haq, commander of the Mudjahidins in Kabul, *Le Monde diplomatique*, Oct. 2001, p. 23) and their most blatant behavior was hardly noticed in the West (see Tariq ALI, "Blood and Belief", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Oct. 2001). Noam CHOMSKY shows that the US is "terrorist" itself; see "The New War Against Terror", lecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 10/18/2001, *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Dec. 2001, www.zmag.org/GlobalWatch/chomskymit.htm, and

representatives of our civilization and its two main features: individualism and technology. I would therefore affirm that the attacks against the WTC reveal suicidal contradictions within the global capitalist system.[32]

On the surface, the perpetrators do not seem to belong to "our" individualistic society, because they claim to follow a specific version of Islam and to be part of a strong community inspired by this faith.[33] However, what I consider decisive for qualifying human beings and their life individualistic or not are their *material* practices rather than immaterial phenomena such as representations and beliefs. Therefore, Western society is individualistic not so much because faith and philosophy of life differ widely from one person to another, but because contemporary human beings are increasingly deprived of the quasi-organic bonds with the natural and human environment – through family, village or tribe – which characterize "traditional societies" and allow and oblige their people to share activities and products in a way that everyone is taken care of[34]. In our more and more atomized society, by contrast, human beings can rely on each other less and less[35]; everyone is supposed to organize and obtain her own living. Similarly, I do not take the Islamist discourses at face value and assume their followers are non-individualistic, just because they say they are and because they oppose Western countries and the Western way of life.

If we examine some of the lives of the presumed authors of the attacks, we find (according to the little information available) that they have been living in a completely unnoticeable way outside any communitarian (non-individualistic) frame in industrialized countries like Germany and studying at Western universities.[36] Nomadizing from Jihad to Jihad, they are "disterritorialized", disconnected not only from existing states, but also from the big Islamist movements.[37] Even if their perfect integration into individualistic societies was the result of their ambition to hide aggressive intentions, succeeding in such concealment entailed a particularly high degree of self-mastery, the quality that epitomizes the capitalist individual.

Moreover, they used several modern technologies: in particular air-planes filled with jet fuel as weapons, skyscrapers as targets and mathematical formula determining the point on the buildings, 20% down from the top, that would maximize destruction.[38] All this allowed them to accomplish the most devastating individual (that is outside war) action in history. Their preparation of the actual plane attacks – traveling, taking flight lessons, studying plane routes, airport security and sky control, coordinating themselves – required and reveals the setting of goals, long-

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"America: the Outlaw State", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, August 2000. But state terror is hardly ever called as such, except that the Cold War's doctrine of mutual assured destruction was founded on a "balance of terror".

32 This analysis is shared in three papers by Jean BAUDRILLARD, published under the title *Power Inferno*, Galilée: Paris 2002.

33 For a comparative reflection on efforts to define a pure form of religion, see Julie INGERSOLL, "Religion and Violence", paper presented at the University of North Florida, 10/25/2001, www.unf.edu/dept/ceppp/jitalk.htm.

34 Louis DUMONT, *Essai sur l'individualisme: une perspective anthropologique sur l'idéologie moderne*, revised ed., Seuil: Paris 1983.

35 See Theodor W. ADORNO & Max HORKHEIMER, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Continuum: New York & London 1994 (*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, new ed. S. Fischer: Frankfurt/Main 1969, p. 94).

36 See for instance Harro ALBRECHT et al., "Attentäter wie du und ich", *Die Zeit*, Hamburg, no. 39, 9/27/2001; Jonathan RABAN, "My Holy War. What do a vicar's son and a suicide bomber have in common?", *The New Yorker*, Feb. 4, 2002.

37 Olivier ROY, "Tragique impasse du fondamentalisme sunnite", *Le Monde diplomatique – Manière de voir*, no. 60: « Ondes de choc », Nov. 2001, p. 48-51 (51).

38 This is based on the assumption that it was the planes and not the explosions many people heard in the towers which brought them down.

term thinking, strategic planning, self-discipline and other features of « instrumental reason » that define, along with other aspects, the modern subject[39]. September 11 indicates a « privatization of terror » which is viewed by the managers of the state monopoly of violence as « unwarranted poaching of their market ».[40] From this point of view, it is less astonishing that others, perhaps even many, were – openly or secretly – fascinated by the technical and military perfection with which the attacks were executed.[41]

Instrumental reason does not leave much place for feelings like sorrow, fear, rage or shame. Or more precisely, it rationalizes and represses feelings such as hatred which may have motivated the perpetrators. As psychoanalytic theory and practice show, the rationalization and repression of emotions is one of the characteristic aspects of Western civilization.

« Most of the intellectual baggage of the jihad movement, like the life style of its guerrillas, is disconcertingly familiar. »[42] Nothing, indeed, distinguishes the perpetrators' way of behavior from what Western military commanders, secret service agents, political leaders, managers and soccer trainers etc. do – except their faith. However, this specific motivation does not alter the individualistic and technological character of their behavior. It is finally nothing more than a particular way of searching for, expressing and justifying power, since claiming one's faith in public implies the desire to make other people adopt it (if not to destroy them as in this case).

Using a very provisional analogy, some currents of Islamist fundamentalism may also be understood as a sort of fascism[43], with respect to their objectives, means and recruitment. Their goals could be, as in fascism, the industrial modernization of society, the control and domination of women and the elimination of criticism. Their tools may comprise, as in fascism, a superficial communitarian stance against capitalism and the liberal nation-state, designed to conceal increased exploitation of workers and women. The recruitment of leaders is based on a profound feeling of humiliation – by the Allies after World War I and by Western society today – and consists of attracting namely well-educated people belonging to the élites but frustrated with traditional politics[44]. Now fascism, I would claim, is not the opposite, but rather the continuation and modernization of capitalism and individualism under extreme circumstances.[45] Fascism is the brutalized but superficial revolt of the atomized masses against their existential loneliness.

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39 See Max HORKHEIMER, *Eclipse of Reason* (1947), Continuum: New York & London 2000.

40 Lewis H. LAPHAM, "Spoils of war", *Harper's Magazine*, March 2002, p. 9.

41 For instance the composer Karlheinz STOCKHAUSEN who declared, on September 16 in Hamburg, that the attacks were « the biggest work of art by Lucifer », according to Suzanne STEPHENS, www.stockhausen.org/eyewitness.html.

42 J. RABAN, supra note 36.

43 See Bill VANN, "What is bin Ladenism? Al Qaeda leader's letter to Americans", http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/nov2002/lade-n29.shtml. Somewhat in this sense also Andrew BUCHWALTER, "Globalization, Modernity and Fundamentalism", paper presented at the University of North Florida, 10/25/2001, www.unf.edu/dept/ceppp/abtalk.htm. On Al Qaeda's racism and anti-Semitism see Pierre CONESA, "Al-Qaeda, the Sect", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Jan. 2002.

44 That is the case for some, if not most of the French *Front National*'s leaders, see C. POLLMANN, "The two-fold Idealism of Far-Right Politics", *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture* (Kyoto), vol 14, no. 1, May 2002, p. 201-209. For a similar process in Arab countries, see Steven C. CLEMONS, "United States: All-powerful but Powerless", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Oct. 2001; Th. L. FRIEDMAN, *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 2002. On a more theoretical level, Xiaoxia GONG analyzes such « relative deprivation » rather than poverty as the main cause of current 'terrorism', "War among the Privileged Classes", *Harvard Asia Pacific Review*, Spring 2002, p. 51-52.

45 See, although insufficient on the psychological level, Nicos POULANTZAS, *Fascism and dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism*, Verso: London 1979.

Osama bin Laden has been analyzed as « a man of homoerotic narcissism »; « he radiates with every self-adoring gesture an actor's awareness of the lens », displaying « his barely containable male vanity, his appetite for self-drama and his closet passion for the limelight ».[46] Narcissism is perhaps another feature of capitalist society: The isolated individual may need public – positive or possibly negative – recognition in order to compensate for the loss of the aforementioned quasi-organic relationships of everyday solidarity.

This brings me to the assumption that the perpetrators must have been, again like fascist individuals, profoundly wounded in their former lives, namely in childhood. Some voices indeed claim that they were pushed into spectacular careers as martyrs for the Muslim world and as anti-heroes for Western society in order to compensate for their individual failures on the relational, emotional and sexual level and to revenge their humiliation as Muslims.[47]

I would claim that no human being is able to commit mass murder plus suicide (which is an act of deep despair, even if it is thought of as a sacrifice for a higher cause), unless she is immeasurably hurt, and needs destruction as a revenge against society.[48] I suggest (but this requires further psychological and anthropological investigation) that such behavior is only possible in an individualistic – or perhaps in a traditional but individualistically disturbed – context. In a communitarian society, human beings may either be sufficiently satisfied by recognition within strong interpersonal relations, allowing them not to behave in a destructive way. Or, if they are psychologically injured by other people – and communitarian societies are of course not like paradise –, social control is so intense and internalized that acts of major destruction are hardly imaginable. This is confirmed by suicide being rare in these societies.[49]

It is for all these reasons that the perpetrators are part of our Western societies, in the sense that they are their products and that they behave like us. Osama bin Laden is indeed « the American president's dark Doppelgänger ».[50] Beside this metaphoric sense, there may even be some actual complicity: It has been claimed that US intelligence agencies not only received numerous advance warnings of the attacks, but that five of the hijackers had even trained at US military facilities. After September 11, investigations seem to have been systematically hampered. The explanation advanced is that at least some of those involved in the attacks were known to the US government as past collaborators. Those who seem to have facilitated the activities of the hijackers may have thought that a standard hostage-taking was being planned, and did not envision the scale of the damage. They might

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46 John LE CARRÉ, "The War that Came in from Cold", *The Weekend Australian*, Oct. 20, 2001, p. 17. On the same line, concerning the Taliban, see John L. ANDERSON, "After the Revolution", *The New Yorker*, Jan. 28, 2002, p. 62-69 (65 with photos p. 62-63).

47 J. RABAN, supra note 36; on the past life of Z. Moussaoui who had planned to fly on the plane crashed in Pennsylvania but was arrested before, see his brother Abd Samad MOUSSAOUI & Florence BOUQUILLAT, *Zacarias Moussaoui, mon frère*, Denoël: Paris 2002; see also supra note 44. For humiliation as the cause of ethnic, religious and similar violence see Amin MAALOUF, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, Arcade Publishing: New York 2000.

48 See John BERGER, "Sept niveaux de désespoir", *Le Monde diplomatique – Manière de voir*, no. 60: « Ondes de choc », Nov. 2001, p. 82; Alice MILLER, supra note 5; Jonathan H. PINCUS, *Base Instincts: What Makes Killers Kill?*, Norton & Co.: New York 2001, commented by E. GALEN, http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/apr2002/base-a17_prn.shtml.

49 This hypothesis by Emile DURKHEIM, *Le suicide* (1897), has been confirmed since: see David LESTER, *Patterns of Suicide and Homicide in the World*, Nova Science Publishers: New York 1996, p. 59-61, 67-69, 127-133, 158 (showing equally, though, that the disintegration of society also results in a decrease in homicides); Norman L. FARBEROW, "Cultural History of Suicide", in: idem (ed.), *Suicide in different Cultures*, University Park Press: Baltimore et al. 1975, p. 1-15 (11).

50 Arundhati ROY, "The Algebra of Inifinite Justice", *The Guardian*, Sept. 29, 2001, www.guardian.co.uk/saturday_review/story/0,3605,559756,00.html; similarly, Peter SCOWEN, *The Black Book of America*, McClelland & Stewart: Toronto 2003 where a global critique of the US government and its policies is developed.

have wanted the action to go forward to provide a pretext for US military intervention in Central Asia and the Middle East.[51]

The atomization of society not only enhances individual suicide, but also fosters actions of vengeful destruction. That is why the contemporary world will be obliged to reflect more on the well-being of all people than it does today.

II. General Well-being as a Condition for the Survival of Atomized and Technicized Society

In former societies, power and wealth were often already more or less unequally distributed (although much less than today, as we shall see). The élites could exploit, humiliate and torture poor and powerless people without difficulty or fear. They could keep even a majority of the population starving, without having to be afraid for themselves most of the time. Sometimes, the poor mass of the population did rebel and on some rare occasions even overthrew the reigning classes. But even then, there was never a risk, as far as I know, that a suicidal revolt would eliminate an entire society or a significant part of it.

There seem to be two basic reasons for this limitation. First, the potential for material and organic destruction was limited. Epidemic diseases like plague and malaria were the greatest danger to those societies (which survived them, though), but thanks to insufficient medical knowledge, they could not be used as weapons by individuals. Second, human beings were under strong social control. Everyone was bound mainly by religious patterns of thinking and acting which were transmitted by socialization, and assured that even individual suicide was rare.

In contemporary capitalist society, these two limitations have disappeared. On the technical level, the potential for destruction has been multiplied in many different areas. Military and economic competition have created numerous possibilities to destroy significant sectors of the natural environment and to kill hundreds of millions of human beings: nuclear power in weapons and reactors, poisonous substances, germs and other agents of infectious diseases, as well as genetically modified organisms (according to one quickly forgotten theory developed by Prof. Jacob Segal, the AIDS virus accidentally escaped from the military laboratory in Fort Detrick, Maryland[52]). Risks of destruction also involve an increasing number of people because of growing interdependence within societies and urbanization (more than 30 million inhabitants, in the Tokyo area). The quantitative dimension of the risk is illustrated by the attacks on the WTC which sometimes contained more than 100,000 people at a single time, probably the greatest massing of human beings in a single building ever attained.

On the level of social control, probably all contemporary societies have more or less disintegrated under the influence of capitalism. This atomization goes along with individualism and therefore often sounds attractive, especially in the US. If the positive aspects of personal freedom cannot be denied, the reverse side is, among others, decreasing social control. While they are in fact more and more interdependent, people are brought up nowadays as if they were not and are taught a culture of autonomy and *individual* fulfillment. As long as people are satisfied with themselves, there is probably no reason to object to this type of socialization and life. However, those who are not satisfied and possibly threatening to society are growing in number.

At the same time, the reasons for dissatisfaction have been growing. The

51 See the Introduction above and in great detail P. MARTIN and D. CORN, supra note 8.
52 See Kuno KRUSE (ed.), *AIDS – Erreger aus dem Genlabor? Die Diskussion der rätselhaften Krankheit, die die Welt bedroht*, Simon & Leutner: Berlin (West), 2nd ed. 1987.

economic development of capitalist societies, especially after World War II, has created the illusion that disparities between rich and poor have been reduced. While it is probably true that the poor in Europe, North America and Japan are better off nowadays than a century ago, the *distance* between rich and poor has never been as big as it is today: the three richest *individuals* in the US possess the same wealth as the poorer half of the whole population![53] Internationally, the situation of the poor has worsened in relative and in absolute terms. Up to the middle of the XIXth century, the material standard of life in India and in other Third-World-countries was similar to that in England, before the colonization impoverished the former and enriched the latter.[54] At the beginning of the XXth century, Argentina was one of the richest countries, though now it is facing economic devastation. Today, the proportion of people in the world living under conditions dangerous to their lives has never been so high, in spite of some amelioration in the middle of last century.

Lacking the basic conditions for survival is of course not the only cause of dissatisfaction. The supposed hijackers and extremely wealthy individuals like Osama bin Laden illustrate the claim that cultural and religious humiliation can mean to the élites what exploitation and poverty mean to the poor.[55] Since the chasing of Muslims and Jews from Catholic Spain, the European countries, and later on North America, have regarded the rest of the world with contempt, expressed by ongoing exploitation and oppression, Christian missionaries proselytizing in countries with different faith[56], and ideological depreciation through use of the pejorative term "uncivilized".[57] For some twenty or thirty years, this disdain has been revitalized against Islam, notwithstanding the fact that for more than a millennium, Islamic realms were incomparably more tolerant toward other religions than Catholic – and later Protestant and other Christian – countries[58]. Even during these last decades, there were in Islamic countries probably more women and more men from different faiths or "races" in leading political positions than in Christian countries.

Furthermore, Western countries habitually count victims in a way denigrating those who die in Third-World-countries[59]: The 3,000 dead in the WTC weigh infinitely more than the 500,000 children killed from 1991 to 1996 in Iraq by the US-embargo; Madeleine Albright found their death acceptable.[60]

It is for these different reasons that today's highly technicized and individualistic societies will only be able to survive, I would advance, if they provide the basic material *conditions* of happiness to everyone, whatever happiness may consist of.

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53 More generally on the distribution of wealth in the US see Kevin PHILLIPS, *Wealth and Democracy: The Dangerous Politics of American Prosperity*, Broadway: New York 2002; Chuck COLLINS & Felice YESKEL (with United for a Fair Economy), *Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity*, New Press: New York 2000.

54 Mike DAVIS, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*, Verso: London 2002 (*Génocides tropicaux, catastrophes et famines coloniales (1870-1900) – Aux origines du sous-développement*, La Découverte : Paris 2003; German transl. Assoziation A: Berlin et al. 2004), French extract in *Le Monde diplomatique*, avril 2003, p. 3.

55 X. GONG analyzes such "relative deprivation" rather than poverty as the main cause of current "terrorism", supra note 44.

56 For a survey of current practices, some of them pursuing the goal of wiping out Islam, see Barry YEOMAN, "The Stealth Crusade", *Mother Jones*, May/June 2002, p. 42-49.

57 On the problem of such a projection of the Other as evil, see H. H. KÖGLER, supra note 24.

58 See VOLTAIRE's complaint that whereas Christian churches were frequent in the Levant, it was impossible to find a mosque in France. In Greece, even people full of anti-Turkish resentment recognize that the Orthodox religion has survived thanks to the Ottoman Empire rather than Catholic occupation. Islamic countries did not practice anti-Semitism to the extent that is probably foundational for occidental society nor did they engage in a "femicide" as in the European late Middle Ages against "witches".

59 See Günter GRASS, "Der Westen muss sich endlich fragen, was er falsch gemacht hat" [interview], *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Oct. 27, 2001, p. 45, showing that he notices this logic in himself.

60 According to A. ROY, supra note 50.

This requires not only the dismantling of big private fortunes and the diminishing of disparities between rich and poor. More importantly, it is also necessary to tackle the *mechanisms* leading to poverty and humiliation. Basically, that means reducing competition with its stimulus to seek power and profit. Under these conditions, that is, without individuals appropriating wealth at the expense of whole populations, globalization may be beneficial for everyone. (One may of course wonder whether globalization would take place without its present capitalist engine.) Liberated from the obligations of profit, performance and success, the wealthy and the powerful will even be happier themselves, because for the time being, they are the first victims of their never-ending quest for accumulation: « The superior [...] petrify completely into the commanding self », their « victory is always one upon their own nature ».[61] On the cultural level, a "moral contract" between majority and minority cultures has been suggested, so everyone will feel equally respected and equally involved in public life.[62]

Taking care of the Other is also necessary in international relations. Before attaining this demanding level of conduct, governments will at least have to learn to treat each other with respect. The successive US governments have often been lacking this respect, probably because they were so much more powerful than anyone else. President Franklin D. Roosevelt knew the date of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, three weeks in advance; the assault had been facilitated by the transfer of the US Pacific fleet from California to Hawaii, because the government, facing a strongly pacifist population, needed a good pretext for war.[63]

In 1950, the Truman administration succeeded in provoking the North-Korean invasion of South Korea, thus justifying the war against North Korea.[64] Similarly, the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin on August 2, 1964, was instigated by the movement of Navy spyship *USS-Maddox* off the North Vietnamese coast, thus launching the Vietnam war.[65] Later, the Soviet Union was trapped in Afghanistan in 1979[66] and Iraq was snared into Kuwait in 1990[67]. And, as indicated above, the attacks of September 11 may have been the result of some obscure complicity between factions of the Bush administration and the hijackers: The blueprint for it may have been written in September 2000 when the "think-tank" PROJECT FOR THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY, including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, wrote in its report *Rebuilding America's Defenses* that the transformation of the US into « tomorrow's dominant power » required a « catastrophical and catalytical event – like a new Pearl Harbor ».[68]

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61 HORKHEIMER/ADORNO, supra note 35, p. 41, 54 note 5, my translation from: « Die Oberen [...] erstarren ganz zum kommandierenden Selbst »; ihr « Sieg ist stets einer über die eigene Natur ».

62 A. MAALOUF, supra note 47.

63 See Robert STINNETT, *Day of Deceit. The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbour*, Free Press: New York 1999 and further editions; interview with the author on www.disinfo.com/archive/pages/article/id1488/pg1/index.html.

64 See André FONTAINE, *Histoire de la guerre froide*, Fayard: Paris 1967, p. 14-15, quoted by Claude JULIEN, "Fauteurs de guerre?", *Le Monde diplomatique*, Oct. 1990, p. 17.

65 Tom WELLS & Todd GITLIN, *The War Within : Amercia's Battle over Vietnam*, University of California Press : Berkeley 1994, quoted by Philip S. GOLUB, "Comment s'est décidée l'offensive contre Bagdad", *Manière de voir – Le Monde diplomatique* n° 67, janv. 2003, p. 19.

66 See Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI: « This secret operation [...] had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap. [...] What is more important [...]? The Talibans or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of central Europe and the end of the Cold War? », *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Paris, no. 1732, Jan. 15, 1998 (my translation from French).

67 See C. JULIEN, supra note 64, quoting in particular *Newsweek*, Aug. 20, 1990, and *International Herald Tribune*,Sept. 15 & 20, 1990. On the basis of a recent inquiry , see the detailed account by Michel DESPRATX & Barry LANDO, "Notre ami Saddam", *Le Monde diplomatique*, Nov. 2004, p. 12-13 and their television documentary " Saddam Hussein, the Trial the World Will Never See".

68 PROJECT FOR THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY, *Rebuilding America's Defenses. Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, Washington D. C. 2000, p. 50 à 51

It is difficult to engage in international politics as a sinister game of trapping other countries without being caught one day oneself. September 11 is indeed terribly new in the sense that it is probably the first time for many centuries that the guns have been pointed in "our" direction.[69] Last but not least, the present US policy is also problematic because it is an invitation for the revival of imperialist tendencies in the country I was born in, Germany.[70]

In the past, demands for profound social change were often expressed in religious or humanist terms. Since all human behavior is self-centered, I propose to appeal instead to selfish (though long-term) interests. This approach is valid independently of September 11. Major attacks against our societies are possible "from within", by unhappy, more or less frustrated individuals. The US and other industrial countries have seen people running amok, organizing mass suicide or killing to attract political attention[71]. Furthermore, my main argument also seems to be valid, even if the perpetrators of the attacks did not belong to the atomized and technicized world: As it is less and less far-sighted to make individuals unhappy, it is of course not very wise either to frustrate entire societies, because they could also have the technological means to destroy major parts of human life on earth.

Above, I have described the decreasing social control in modern society. That is an ambivalent, if not dangerous approach. It can easily lead people to devote particular efforts to regain control over deviant individuals. This is not astonishing: In Western societies, the desire to master one's life, environment and future seems to be today's heaviest psychological pattern in individual and collective behavior.[72] This ambition to control everything probably flows from occidental society's being more and more subject to manifold change. At the same time, the need to control seems to be related to power and wealth: Control becomes necessary if one is privileged, and « the denigration of others is indispensable to sustaining the internal self-assurance that makes possible the effective exercise of world power ».[73] On the national level, most governments use mobilization against "terrorism" to increase the control of their respective populations. Besides confronting the official enemy, war also means constituting and disciplining one's own camp.[74]

One of the problems is that from a certain stage onwards, the ambition to control becomes fruitless and does more harm than good, not to speak of the growing costs security implies[75]. Control can suppress or at least diminish ordinary risks. Aircraft

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(www.newamericancentury.org/RebuildingAmericasDefenses.pdf).

69 Noam CHOMSKY, "The New War Against Terror", supra note 31. See also Harold PINTER, "The American Administration is a Bloodthirsty Wild Animal", *Daily Telegraph*, Dec. 11, 2002 : « The atrocity in New York was predictable and inevitable. It was an act of retaliation against constant and systematic manifestations of state terrorism on the part of America over many years, in all parts of the world ».

70 Illustrated by the conversion of the journal *Bahamas* (Berlin, http://www.redaktion-bahamas.org/) from left-wing, "anti-German" toward militarist positions.

71 See for instance "FC", *The Unabomber Manifesto. Industrial society and its future* (90 p.), 1970.

72 See C. POLLMANN, "Personal Identity – Fortress of the Individual in a World of Performance? The Self, Law and Social Power", talk at the Center for Basic Research in the Social Sciences, Harvard University, 2/21/2002, and at the University of North Florida at Jacksonville, 11/30/2001, http://www.cbrss.harvard.edu/events/ppbw/papers/pollman.pdf, *Asia University Law Review* (Tokyo), vol. 38, n° 1/2003, p. 178 à 139. For a critique of the idea of security, see Giorgio AGAMBEN, "Heimliche Komplizen: Über Sicherheit und Terror", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 20, 2001

73 I. WALLERSTEIN, supra note 22.

74 See J. HOLLOWAY & E. PELÁEZ, supra note 30. For Sept. 11 as a pretext for US military action abroad and a crackdown on dissent at home, in the works for more than a decade but hampered by the lack of support within the US population and resistance from its imperialist rivals, see James POULOS, "Why the Bush Administration Wants War", *Pravda* (English ed.), Sept. 17, 2001, http://english.pravda.ru/main/2001/09/17/15378.html.

75 See Steven BRILL, "Osama's Hidden Tax", *Newsweek*, Jan. 14, 2002, p. 50-51.

passenger control can prevent average criminals from boarding. Engineering skills were thought to protect the Twin Towers against any conceivable destruction. However, September 11 has shown that control cannot eliminate extraordinary risks.[76] On the contrary, these risks are probably increased by a false sense of security and by stimulating criminal ingenuity. Tightening passenger controls now means we do not understand these limits of control. However, strengthening measures of control and repression gives people an *impression* of higher security and thus prevents them from questioning the economic and social *reasons* for the atomization of society and the growing unhappiness of people. This repressive attitude has an extremely strong appeal.

III. Psychological Needs Preventing Social Change

My analysis and my proposals may sound naive. I now examine some of the obstacles to their realization, not to weaken my discourse, but to strengthen it by being as realist as possible.

Becoming more and more interested in human psychology, I have recently been struck by the following paradox in crime prevention and related areas: Since at least the beginning of the XXth century, criminologists and other social scientists have known that state punishment of "criminals" does not prevent crime.[77] On the contrary, it strengthens inclinations toward crime.[78] In the 1960 and 70, researchers showed that this fostering of crime is due to the labeling of punished individuals that stimulates their criminal career.[79]

In spite of these findings, repressive approaches to crime have been made or toughened since the 1980 (if not earlier) all over the world, as a response to an alleged or real increase in crime. Popular demands for more security and « revenge criminology »[80] have backed each other up in this respect. It is rare that people get beyond their rage against a direct aggressor, such as Nurit Peled-Elhanan who held the Israeli prime minister Netanyahu responsible for the death of her daughter Smadar, killed in a Palestinian suicide attack in 1997[81].

In the US in particular, the number of prisoners has sharply risen from 30 years ago to 2.4 millions today, a proportion about ten times higher than in France or Germany and 27 times higher than in Japan.[82] Although it has been suggested that

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76 See I. WALLERSTEIN, supra note 22: « apparently, no one had ever considered that two planes filled with jet fuel might deliberately crash into the towers, and hit the buildings at precisely the point, 20% down from the top, that would maximize destruction ».

77 So already E. DURKHEIM, *The division of labor in society* (1893), Free Press: New York 1964, p. 108-109; more recently Kai T. ERIKSON, *Wayward puritans. A study in the sociology of deviance*, John Wiley & Sons: New York et al. 1966, p. 14 ff., 199 ff.; Michel FOUCAULT, *Discipline and Punish : The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage: New York 1979; Alessandro BARATTA, "Les fonctions instrumentales et les fonctions symboliques du droit pénal", *Déviance et société* 1991, p. 1-25 (also published in Italian and German: *Mélanges G. Tarello* [vol. 2, Milano 1990] and *A. Kaufmann* [Heidelberg 1993]).

78 See Franz von LISZT (1900) and other criminologists quoted by Erich FROMM, "On the Psychology of the Criminal and the Punitive Society" (1931 in German), in: Kevin Anderson & Richard Quinney (eds.), *Erich Fromm and Critical Criminology. Beyond the Punitive Society*, University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago 2000, p. 129-156 (142-144).

79 Richard QUINNEY, *Critique of Legal Order. Crime Control in Capitalist Society* (1974), Transaction Pub: New Brunswick (N.J.)/London 2001; Knut ENGELHARDT, "Eine psychoanalytische Konstruktion des labeling-approach", *Kritische Justiz* 1975, p. 266-294.

80 See Dario MELOSSI, "Changing Representations of the Criminal", in: D. Garland & R. Sparks (eds.), *Criminology and Social Theory*, Oxford University Press 2000, p. 149-181 (165-172 with references).

81 Nurit PELED-ELHANAN, "Bibi, qu'as-tu fait?", *Le Monde diplomatique*, Oct. 1997.

82 OBSERVATOIRE INTERNATIONAL DES PRISONS, *Prisons: un état des lieux*, L'Esprit frappeur: Paris 2000. Objective evaluation is difficult; for more recent figures, showing a prison population of slightly more than 2 millions in the US, see INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PRISON STUDIES at King's

there is a material interest and objective in the imprisonment policy, namely to pursue apartheid against "racial" minorities by new means[83], the *proclaimed* goal of increasing security against crime has not been attained. Similarly, the « war on drugs » has not reduced the consumption of illicit drugs but increased it.

Therefore, we have to acknowledge the possibility that repressive policies do not pursue the declared objectives, but instead have a « sociopsychological function that no longer has anything at all to do with crime and its prevention ».[84] People's supposed need for security (against crime and other reasons for worry) conceals another, deeper concern which could be twofold.

First of all, what people profoundly seem to need is not increased material security but a *sentiment* of security allowing them to feel reassured about belonging to a – national or other – community. It has indeed been shown that the main goal of repressive policies is to enhance collective identities, because « one of the surest ways to confirm an identity, for communities as well as for individuals, is to find some way of measuring what one is not »[85]. Besides this "negative" tool, a positive means of reassuring oneself about one's inclusion in a group consists of identifying with its leaders. Criminal justice promotes infantile identification with the state as a substitute for the father.[86]

These patterns are confirmed by the current authoritarian and nationalist reactions to the attacks: If the latter were organized and perceived as an assault against the US, one of the causal reasons was its existence as a strong and united collectivity. Nationalist behavior therefore increases the risks of further attacks and hostility and is thus counterproductive to the search for security. However, it does enhance the feeling of belonging to the same community, well illustrated by the slogan « United We Stand ».[87] Similarly, a majority of Israel's population seems to prefer aggressive and heroic self-destruction to calm and negotiated security.[88]

Secondly, there may actually be a deep-rooted aggressivity in contemporary individuals and groups, due to their submission to authority, mobility, social change and the numerous requirements of performance and efficiency. Whereas criminal justice organizes the covert « expression of an unconscious need for revenge and retribution »[89], war is more or less open retaliation. Of course, the potential for aggression becomes much higher when people feel, as after September 11, a strong need for revenge.[90] I have not yet fully explored this aggressiveness in the context of September 11 and as an obstacle to the social change I advocate. Perhaps the

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College, London, http://www.prisonstudies.org/.

83 See Glifford GINN, "The Drug War", *Harvard Law Record*, Oct. 25, 2001, p. 5, according to whom 5 percent of all male black adults in the US are in prison and 13 percent cannot vote.

84 E. FROMM, supra note 78, p. 145.

85 Kai ERIKSON, supra note 77, p. 64, passim; Henrik THAM, "Drug control as a national project: the case of Sweden", *The Journal of Drug Issues*, vol. 25, no. 1, Winter 1995, p. 113-128.

86 See E. FROMM, supra note 78, p. 144-147.

87 See the interdisciplinary analysis of William BLOOM, *Personal identity, national identity and international relations*, Cambridge University Press 1993, passim.

88 Dominique VIDAL, "Israel's dominion of death", *Le Monde diplomatique*, English edition, Jan. 2002.

89 E. FROMM, supra note 78, p. 146. For this and the preceding passages, see also the work of René GIRARD, for instance Mark R. ANSPACH (ed. and with an introduction by), *Rene Girard. Oedipus Unbound: Selected Writings on Rivalry and Desire*, Stanford University Press 2004.

90 This is particularly well visible in Barbara DOYLE's letter to the editor (*The Daily Star*, Oneonta, NY 13820, Sept. 12, 2002) where she reacts to a critique of the "War on Terrorism": « Should we ignore 9/11 and ask the terrorists to please not hurt us again? Should we forget the hero firefighters, EMS and police who died trying to rescue innocent civilians trapped in the World Trade Center [...]? [...] Should we wait for another attack on our nation to confirm exactly who the "bad guys" are? »

essential things in this respect have already been said.[91] Contrary to one of the most commonly pronounced sentences after September 11, nothing has fundamentally changed[92]; the pathological tendencies of capitalist society have just intensified.

Prior to a more substantial analysis, these short criminological and psychological reflections lead me to the following "realist" conclusions:

1. Like crime repression and the « war on drugs », the current « war against terrorism » will also fail, not only because it resorts to terror itself, but foremost because it reproduces and even increases the various economic, social and psychic causes of "terrorism"[93], by pushing unequal wealth distribution out of public attention, by humiliating Islamic people as well as other populations in weak, Western dominated countries and by attracting rebellious individuals and groups[94]. « The "war on terrorism" [...] is [indeed] an extravagant metaphor blocking responsible thought about a serious problem. »[95]

2. However, this failure will probably bother hardly anyone in the industrialized world, for two reasons. The elimination of individual, let alone collective, political violence is not the real goal of the official activities against "terrorism". Their hidden objective is the expression of revenge and the fostering of national identity, possibly in order to strengthen capitalism at home and internationally. All over the world, September 11 and the "war against terrorism" are indeed a pretext for fighting marginal and minority groups and for restricting democratic rights and civil liberties.[96] That is also the reason why many countries and foremost the US itself are so reluctant to investigate the crimes of that fateful day and to acknowledge the hypothesis of some official participation: For repressive policies, the Al Qaeda trail is too precious to be put into question... These repressive measures trigger a vicious circle of violence, resulting in more terror.[97] The « war against terrorism » thus justifies itself in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The atrocity of September 11 announces a terrible truth we could already have learned from history: When the rich and the powerful refuse to engage in profound reforms in society, the inevitable change risks being more and more vicious and savage, equally distant from technocratic confidence in planning social innovation as well as from messianist yearning for a well-organized revolution.

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91 See also Gordon FELLMAN, *Rambo and the Dalai Lama. The Compulsion to Win and its Threat to Human Survival*, State University of New York Press: Albany 1998; E. FROMM, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973), Holt et al: New York et al. 1990; Edwin L. MEGARGEE & Jack E. HOKANSON (eds), *The Dynamics of Aggression. Individual, Group and International Analyses*, Harper & Row: New York et al. 1970; Alexander MITSCHERLICH, *Die Idee des Friedens und die menschliche Aggressivität. Vier Versuche* [Four essays], Suhrkamp: Frankfurt/M. 1969.

92 L. LAPHAM, supra note 40, p. 8.

93 A. ROY, supra note 50.

94 For this mechanism, see D. MELOSSI, supra note 80, p. 163-165 with references.

95 B. ACKERMAN, supra note 21. Similarly, Frédéric MÉGRET, "« Krieg »? - Völkerrechtssemantik und der Kampf gegen den Terrorismus", *Kritische Justiz* no. 2/2002, p. 157-179 (176).

96 See INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, *Human Rights after September 11*, ICHRP: Versoix/Switzerland 2002.

97 John LE CARRE, supra note 46.