



Motivated by our different religious traditions, we believe that attitudes, priorities, and institutions can be changed to reflect a just and democratic use of the universe's bounty; we believe in the value of work that contributes to the common good; and in the healing influence of respect for the differences as well as the commonness of human experience.

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Religious Socialism

THE JOURNAL FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH AND SOCIALISM

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11: What Now?

RELIGIOUS SOCIALIST VOICES ON TERROR AND WAR

There is no one unified position in our ranks on the question of what to do about September 11. Perhaps the only unity we have is a shared sense of disgust, that knot in our stomachs that confirms that we did not expect and do not want to be in this place — a place of ugly options and no easy answers. This publication is not taking an independent position, at least not here and now: our parent organization, the Democratic Socialists of America has issued a statement coming out of a spirited discussion at our national convention. We print two statements from that convention in this issue, and offer you four perspectives from some long-standing activists in our religious socialist community.

Now is a time to reflect deeply, and then do what we think is right as people who seek lasting social justice. We may not find agreement amongst ourselves, but we have to find a way to respect our disagreements for the sake of the rest of our common agenda. Somewhere, at the end of this crisis, there is still a world to be won, and a real war on poverty and oppression that has to be waged in every corner of that world. If we can keep focused on that, we will make it through the other side. In the meantime, as is our wont, maybe we might say a prayer or two.

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editor's notes

It's interesting to note that as this issue deals with "the day things changed," we are apparently beginning to see the first signs that in some ways, things are already getting back to normal. The Enron fiasco, while not to be trivialized, is a sign that at least corporate disregard for people's lives is still just as vibrant as it was before September 11.

The planes that struck the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were events that happened too quickly to stop or prevent. The noble passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 were faced with the same horror, but being aware of what had happened elsewhere, they acted nonetheless to try to prevent it, as well as a greater loss of life on the ground. And as often is the case, we call such people heroes. Yet we are assured by their families that the way they behaved on board that plane is just the way they always did in life. Any decent human being would do what they could to prevent a tragedy from occurring if they knew it was about to happen.

Which brings us back to Enron. What names shall we call those people in the business world and in the Bush administration who months ahead saw the inevitable crash of Enron, and did nothing but grab their own parachutes and jump out of the cockpit? Certainly not heroes. One would offer that when executives of a company conduct an operation by which they ruin the lives of thousands of people while destroying their own company in the process, well... I guess we might call that a kind of "suicide mission," or economic terrorism. But you can bet that there will be no "Operation Economic Justice" to deal with the perpetrators of such economic terror.

And that's just the problem that some of us have with trusting the current American administration to solve the problem of global terrorism: Something, even if involving the use of force in this one writer's opinion, has to be done. But the people who are supposed to be defending us have been economically attacking our own societies for so long now that it's almost as hard to feel safe with them as it is without them.

While we do indeed need to fight for our democratic vision of society — if socialists can fight against capitalist men in suits, why not men who openly seek to return our world to the Dark Ages? — it is *not* a fight between Muslims on one side, and everyone else on the other. As Dr. Muqtedar Khan points out in his "Memo to American Muslims" (page 8), Muslims have suffered at the hands of Muslim despots more than anyone else. One can only wonder if the security of Israel would have been guaranteed a generation ago, had the West had the creativity to support popular Arab movements to bring democracy to the ridiculously feudal, anti-Jewish fiefdoms of the Arabian Peninsula. Instead, we have done absolutely nothing constructive to support the overthrow of those artificial nations; those overly bloated family businesses we call by names such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Oman were created out of former colonies to preserve our oil interests.

So even when we can see a clear qualitative difference between bourgeois democracy and extremist theocracy, it's hard to speak convincingly about "freedom" to those who have watched you thwart every effort they have made to achieve it. Had the US simply left Iran's social democratic prime minister Mossadegh alone in 1953 (instead of using the CIA to overthrow him and install an absolute monarch — sound familiar?), it is arguable that Iran could have become a shining example of a modern, progressive state with a Muslim majority, rather than an Islamic Republic in search of nuclear weapons. Numerous other examples of more or less the same tactics follow throughout the world, and none of this is new to us as socialists. While we are certainly not responsible for people holding on to their grudges and oppressive social traditions from 600 years ago, we have all too often, for the sake of realpolitik or unfounded Cold War-era paranoia,



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LETTERS

REACTION TO OUR WEBSITE

To the Editor:

I was stunned to come across this site while wandering around the Web. My political views grew out of my religious beliefs, and I see those same values reflected here on your site. As a person deeply involved with low-income issues in rural Wisconsin, a state where social justice reached an all-time low under the former governor, I have grown more accustomed to hearing (at least, in the media) views that are pretty much the opposite of what you are saying. Frankly, you sound like my grandfather and his father, two of the most "truly good" people I have ever known.

I look forward to learning more about you, and I will be mailing in a subscription at the end of the week.

Thank you,
Diane H. Fabian

editor's notes cont'd...

undermined the home-grown attempts of progressives in those societies to break away from those bonds.

Does that then mean that we are responsible for others' acts of terror? No. That's too simple, and a *tu quoque* argument can only go so far. The "blame the victim" attitude of much of the left in reaction to September 11 is both ignorant and irresponsible, unless we also want to return to the barbarian rationale that women are "asking for it" when they are raped.

The terrorist impulse is not so easily reduced to poverty; it is far more of a psychological issue. The hijackers of September 11 were well-educated and wealthy, and a quick study of the history of terrorism will show that most leaders of terrorist movements have been significantly less than downtrodden members of the proletariat. By the same token, millions of poor people around the world do not hate the West, or seek to do violence against innocent people, because they are oppressed.

But those who choose terror exploit oppressive environments, whether we're talking about Al Qaeda or the Ku Klux Klan. So more than a fight against terror, what we need is a fight *for* democracy, a fight *for* economic justice, because that is the only thing that will *kill the seeds of terror*.



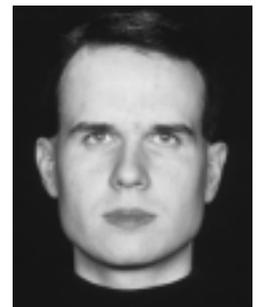
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Without some broader, wiser strategy of political engagement to take away the vast social and economic deprivation that provides food to those seeds, they will just grow more varieties of terrorist groups. If not now, then in 10, 20, 50 years.

That does not mean that we should capitulate to terrorist demands. What it means is that we need to help change the conditions in Muslim nations that have brought about popular support for terrorists. What *that* means is addressing the cycle of poverty and political powerlessness inside Muslim nations, which has classically been blamed on someone else (the "infidels", most notably the Jews) as a cheap diversion from the real causes of the problem: their own oppressive leaders. In many of those nations, again, they're the ones we put there, and if we really care about defeating extremism, we should at least have the decency to help Muslim democrats take them out.

This issue of *RS* also brings a slight change in staff. With the blessing of Co-Editors Maxine Phillips and Norm Faramelli, Alex Mikulich and I have agreed to continue as editors of *RS*. This is largely a change in whose names go where: we all work hard to help make sure that *RS* remains an important voice of faith and justice.



Andrew Hammer

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11: WHAT NOW?

A VIEW FROM NEW YORK

MAXINE PHILLIPS



In the days that followed September 11, so many people wanted to show how much they loved New York. A delegation from Jamaica flew in to bring coffee to rescue workers. "We know what it's like to depend on tourism," the group leader said. "We want to show New York that we care."

At the Family Assistance Center where I volunteered to help displaced workers, the temporary walls were covered with crayoned flags and messages: "We love you New York," "United we stand," "I hope this makes you feel better." Teddy bears from Oklahoma City lined a corridor hung with posters of people missing in the attacks.

A Baptist church in Hawaii sent \$1,500 to my Greenwich Village church. Its members had looked on a map to find a sister church near the World Trade Center. They prepared a scrapbook of consoling messages. We were asked to respond.

"Send it to the people who really need it," I wanted to write back, but people in New York *did* need it. Our church was now a conduit for funds for hotel and restaurant workers, scores of whom had died in the attacks, many of whom were undocumented workers.

It was unsettling to be on the receiving end, the one getting the sympathy, not giving it. I was grateful for the outpouring of love and concern from my friends and relatives, but it felt wrong. After all, we're the rich country, the strong ones. We console the weaker ones. We send the aid packages.

And we send bombs and covert operatives and aid to prop up corrupt regimes. Was this payback time? Had the sins of the fathers been visited on the children? My impulse was to blame the United States. Why had we supported a regime in Afghanistan so corrupt that its people welcomed the Taliban, which in turn welcomed al Qaeda? Why didn't we have a more

evenhanded policy in the Middle East?

But damn it, common sense replied. You were just attacked. You're not safe. And since you're not a pacifist, you still want the state to protect you. This is the same state in which you have had no confidence since about 1964.

These were not comforting thoughts.

It didn't matter. The government had to respond. At first it behaved better than we expected, fighting a de facto war of liberation against its will. It reverted to type almost immediately, though, balking at the cost of increased airport security, maintaining our dependence on Middle Eastern oil instead of exploring renewable energy sources, keeping nuclear power plants in

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operation despite their clear vulnerability, using "unity" to attack civil liberties, and planning a show trial of a troubled young American to stand in for the young men who blew themselves up on those planes.

Too many on the left reverted to type, also, unable to notice that it wasn't 1964 or even 1984. In doing so, we shared with the right the same hubris regarding American superiority. I received notices of demonstrations or peace initiatives that made no reference to what had happened in New York or at the Pentagon, as if the war was just another imperial venture. The subtext was, *We're different. We don't have to pay attention to our pain, because it can't possibly match that of other countries. We can't be scared and distraught. We can't worry about the end of our civilization. Our empire is invincible. In fact, our empire is so big and bad that it's the only reason all this is happening.* We can't admit that others have their own agendas, that they might act independently of us.

In the days and weeks after the attacks, I was afraid in ways I had never known—afraid that the right wing, aided by spineless Democrats, would seize the opportunity to officially abandon our democratic values, afraid that our very openness made us vulnerable to more attacks, and afraid that in our anger we would inflict on others the misery that we were going through.

Those fears haven't gone away. The first two are still major threats. The work of prevention will require a tougher politics than the pork-barrel route of more money for the police and the military. The third came to pass, although it may also have saved lives that would have been lost to famine.

The pervasive fear is less immediate. But I don't want to lose it. I want to remember what it's like to be a target, to be as vulnerable as others from less powerful states have always been, and in remembering, to work for policies that increase the security of all.

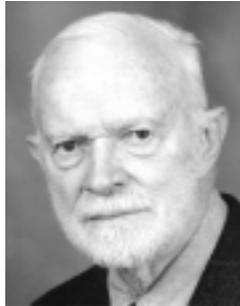
I don't want us to lose sight of ourselves as both targets and aggressors, as those in need of help and those whose power for good and evil is enormous. It is in this legacy of September 11 that we may yet find hope.▀

Maxine Phillips is Managing Editor of Dissent, and a contributing editor to Religious Socialism.

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11: WHAT NOW?

IS RELIGION THE PROBLEM OR THE SOLUTION?

JOHN C. CORT



A journalist named Polly Toynbee has the answer to the current conflict. She writes in *The Guardian*, a British newspaper: "The only good religion is a moribund religion; only when the faithful are weak are they tolerant or peaceful."

In the same paper Richard Dawkins refuses to admit that even weak, dying religions are any good. No, he argues, religion devalues life because it "teaches the dangerous nonsense that death is not the end."

So, looking around for societies that have agreed with Mr. Dawkins and vigorously discouraged belief in a future life, what do we see? We see the Soviet Union during 72 years of state-sponsored atheism and China ditto for 52 years. Did they value life more highly than more religious societies? Were they more tolerant and peaceful? Yes, there was a sort of peace, the peace that you find in an undertaker's parlor, with relatives keening over a lifeless corpse. Actually, corpses. Millions of them.

No, Mr. Dawkins, we'll stack up our "dangerous nonsense" against yours any day.

But still we have to give Ms. Toynbee and other critics of religion some partial agreement. To wit, the wrong kind of religion is certainly part of the problem. Some

Muslims have interpreted the Koran, some Jews have interpreted the Hebrew scriptures, some Christians have interpreted the Christian scriptures in ways that would justify intolerance and repression, belligerence and slaughter. But the Koran also says, "Let there be no compulsion in religion".

In all the sacred scriptures — Muslim, Jewish and Christian — and in authoritative interpretations of those scriptures, you can find passages that emphasize love of neighbor, peace, forgiveness, kindness, especially to the poor and the stranger. In all you find passages that take a very negative view of the killing of innocent people.

We have been wronged, but we are also guilty of wrong.

Mostly, however, this terrible conflict reminds us that there will be no peace finally until the rich and powerful among us get off their money bags and share their wealth with the poor and the miserable, here and throughout the world.

"Pair opus Iustitia". Peace is the work of justice. We have been wronged, but we are also guilty of wrong. The world not only needs religious socialism, but socialist religion, a religion that takes seriously the words of the Frankfurt Declaration of the Socialist International: our priority must be, not private profit, but "the satisfaction of human needs."

That kind of religion is not the problem, but the solution.▀

John Cort is the founding editor of Religious Socialism.

cont'd on next page

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

PAUL BUHLE

In my view, the catastrophe of September 11 and the subsequent war (with more wars apparently in the offing) should push us back upon ourselves. A new study of Chile under Pinochet, by Patricia Politizer (*Fear in Chile: Lives Under Pinochet*, published by the New Press) describes a “sick Catholicism” embraced by the leaders of the coup, torturers and bureaucrats alike of the bloodbath, repression, ecological devastation and theft of Indian land that followed.

A bitterly hostile response to modernism (especially women’s rights), toward parliamentary democracy in which an ally of the Communist Party could legitimately win power, and also apparently toward the reforms of Vatican II, this “sick Christianity” (as we might better call it) is the precursor of the “sick Islam” of the terror networks. As in the case of slavery, empire and neocolonial economic domination, we in the West bear more of a responsibility than any elected politician this side of Venezuela seems willing to admit.

But the significance even goes deeper, for us as socialists close to the labor movement. Insiders point out that the Meany office was bitterly hostile to the elected Chilean president and that its intelligence-connected wing, AIFLD, devoted much attention to destabilizing the regime. This policy was only part of a continuing fanaticism, a wrongheadedness with deep religious ties evident especially in the labor bureaucracy’s unyielding support of the US invasion and massive destruction of Vietnam. Indeed, DSA came into existence in no small part because Michael Harrington’s wing of the Socialist Party belatedly — very belatedly — came out in opposition to the Meany



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policies, for withdrawal of US forces, and for the election of peacenik George McGovern, Meany’s despised enemy.

We badly need the painful reminder that there is no fanaticism or terrorism in the world today greater, no force more brutal, than the bombing upon that small jungle nation (home to some of the world’s richest biodiversity), in tonnage greater than dropped in all Europe during the Second World War. And we need to be reminded, more painfully, that prominent and rising American Catholic leaders were among the most prestigious supporters of the repression South Vietnamese governments—not excluding future Cardinal O’Connor, a propagandist for the war (he was said later to regret his actions).

To what degree were American labor leaders drawn into this deep sickness and how can we understand its origins, perhaps more important its antidotes? This small essay cannot do justice to such a difficult question. But we know that the US labor movement suffered its most calamitous defeat, and loss of moral stature, with the ascendancy of George Meany and his colleagues of the building trades, the most politically conservative, exclusionary white, male—and in

some key sectors, historically Catholic. I have carefully assayed Meany’s background (in my volume, *Taking Care of Business*) in the notoriously corrupt building trades of Manhattan, his lifelong opposition to affirmative action, his contempt for women’s and gay rights. We might charitably say that the Cold War impetus that blunted labor’s idealism also brought him to power, blinding better leaders to Meany’s true character.

I’m afraid, however, that this view is too generous by far, because labor involvement with intelligence agencies both domestic and international had been set into place, and exceptionally dark figures like

businessman J. Peter Grace, a powerful Catholic ultra-conservative, fitted easily into the AIFLD's conspiratorial projects throughout the Americas. The human rights violations committed across the Third World, with the eager assistance of the AFL-CIO (and the AFL before it), have only begun to be recorded, but the destruction of genuine anti-colonialist governments, rebellious labor movements and indigenous communities in the name of anti-communism remains a horrifying blot upon the record. American labor had, as we look back, suffered a moral meltdown long before the Tonkin Bay Resolution.

But there is good news, too. Catholic lay figures, mostly nuns and priests at the bottom layers, helped lay the basis for labor's rebirth under the Irish Catholic John Sweeney by joining genuine reformers working to topple Meany and his fumbling, equally conservative successor, Lane Kirkland. This is the religious history, along with the support of the civil rights movement (not of course by labor's top figures, who refused to endorse Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 March on Washington, and turned against him with his criticism of the

Vietnam War), of Farm Workers, and of course support of Central Americans against US-guided policies. These, and their Protestant, Jewish and Muslim counterparts, are our living antidotes to sickness.

The will to resist, both governments and the mistaken policies of religious hierarchies alike, have yet to be heard forcefully on the new campaign of endless war. (The Bishop of Wales, considered slated to become Archbishop of Canterbury unless vetoed by Tony Blair, has recently taken the lead in denouncing anti-personnel weapons and other US violations of human rights). When they are, religious socialists and labor reformers will be helped to grasp the complex elements of terrorism by governments and groups around the globe. Labor, having failed almost completely during the Vietnam War, may yet redeem itself. ▀

Paul Buhle, Lecturer in American Civilization at Brown University, writes on Liberation Theology in Tikkun magazine and elsewhere.

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11: WHAT NOW?

TO COUNTERACT TERRORISM

EVERT SVENSSON



It is extremely uncertain if bombs can eliminate or counteract terrorism. This doesn't help in any way, but merely creates a countereffect by producing more terrorists, who are ready to sacrifice their own lives and the lives of others.

The US is living in a dream world where the juxtaposition of military and economic power jades their insight. This could be summed up as the power of arrogance. In reality civilians suffer, refugees increase — which altogether results in catastrophe.

[We face] the development of impending state terrorism with the same brutality experienced by victims in the World Trade Centre and Pentagon. Apart from this recent incident, there are many examples to refer to.

Initiated measures to alleviate sufferings must be connected to the UN as well as led by the UN Security

Council. The US and Britain as self-elected pioneers of powers cannot implement ideas at random and then inform the UN afterwards on the measures taken. International law that includes Human Rights and Children's Convention ought to be weighed in on such decisions.

The leadership role of the UN must be strengthened because the UN lacks operative power to implement decisions — such power ought to be created. *An international court also ought to be created — where terrorists can be tried, judged and sentenced in accordance with International law.*

The US immediately ought to join and support this available suggestion. It is not appropriate for a president of the US to decide death penalty in other domains. The death penalty ought to be abolished because it is obsolete.

One could see two acute reasons in connection to terror deaths. The economic sanctions towards Iraq resulted into the deaths of more than 100.000 children due to the lack of medical needs. The Palestinian situation is no longer viable. It has instead deteriorated. Both incidents instigate hatred and terror towards the US — seen as the culprit in both ends.

cont'd on page 14

A Memo to American Muslims

DR. MUQTEDAR KHAN

In the name of Allah, the most Benevolent and the Most Merciful. May this memo find you in the shade of Islam enjoying the mercy, the protection and the grace of Allah.



I am writing this memo to you all with the explicit purpose of inviting you to lead the American Muslim community in soul searching, reflection and reassessment.

What happened on September 11th in New York and Washington DC will forever remain a horrible scar on the history of Islam and humanity. No matter how much we condemn it, and point to the Quran and the Sunnah to argue that Islam forbids the killing of innocent people, the fact remains that the perpetrators of this crime against humanity have indicated that their actions are sanctioned by Islamic values.

The fact that even now several Muslim scholars and thousands of Muslims defend the accused is indicative that not all Muslims believe that the attacks are un-Islamic. This is truly sad.

Even if it were true that Israel and the US are enemies of the Muslim World (wonder what is preventing them from unleashing their nuclear arsenal against Muslims), a response that mercilessly murders thousands of innocent people, including hundreds of Muslims is absolutely indefensible. If anywhere in your hearts there is any sympathy or understanding with those who committed this act, I invite you to ask yourself this question, would Muhammad (pbuh) sanction such an act?

While encouraging Muslims to struggle against injustice (Al Quran 4:135), Allah also imposes strict rules of engagement. He says in unequivocal terms that

ISLAM IS NOT ABOUT DEFEATING JEWS OR CONQUERING JERUSALEM. IT IS ABOUT MERCY, ABOUT VIRTUE, ABOUT SACRIFICE AND ABOUT DUTY.

to kill an innocent being is like killing entire humanity (Al Quran 5:32). He also encourages Muslims to forgive Jews and Christians if they have committed injustices against us (Al Quran 2:109, 3:159, 5:85).

Muslims, including American Muslims have been practicing hypocrisy on a grand scale. They protest against the discriminatory practices of Israel but are silent against the discriminatory practices in Muslim states. In the Gulf one can see how laws and even salaries are based on ethnic origin. This is racism, but we never hear of Muslims protesting against them at International fora.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine is perhaps central to Muslim grievance against the West. While acknowledging that, I must remind you that Israel treats its one million Arab citizens with greater respect and dignity than most Arab nations treat their citizens. Today Palestinian refugees can settle and become citizens of the United States but in spite of all the tall rhetoric of the Arab world and Quranic injunctions (24:22) no Muslim country except Jordan extends this support to them.

While we loudly and consistently condemn Israel for its ill treatment of Palestinians we are silent when Muslim regimes abuse the rights of Muslims and slaughter thousands of them. Remember Saddam and his use of chemical weapons against Muslims (Kurds)?. Remember Pakistani army's excesses against Muslims (Bengalis)?. Remember the Mujahideen of Afghanistan and their mutual slaughter? Have we ever condemned them for their excesses? Have we demanded international intervention or retribution against them? Do you know how the Saudis treat their minority Shiis?

Have we protested the violation of their rights? But we all are eager to condemn Israel; not because we care for rights and lives of the Palestinians, we don't. We condemn Israel because we hate "them".

Muslims love to live in the US but also love to hate it. Many openly claim that the US is a terrorist state but they continue to live in it. Their decision to live here is testimony that they would rather live here than anywhere else. As an Indian Muslim, I know for sure that nowhere on earth, including India, will I get the same sense of dignity and respect that I have received in the US. No Muslim country will treat me as well as the US has. If what happened on September 11th had happened in India, the biggest democracy, thousands of Muslims would have been slaughtered in riots on

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mere suspicion and there would be another slaughter after confirmation. But in the US, bigotry and xenophobia has been kept in check by media and leaders. In many places hundreds of Americans have gathered around Islamic centers in symbolic gestures of protection and embrace of American Muslims. In many cities Christian congregations have started wearing hijab to identify with fellow Muslim women. In patience and in tolerance ordinary Americans have demonstrated their extraordinary virtues.

It is time that we acknowledge that the freedoms we enjoy in the US are more desirable to us than superficial solidarity with the Muslim World. If you disagree than prove it by packing your bags and going to whichever Muslim country you identify with. If you do not leave and do not acknowledge that you would rather live here than anywhere else, know that you are being hypocritical.

It is time that we faced these hypocritical practices and struggled to transcend them. It is time that American

Muslim leaders fought to purify their own lot.

For over a decade we have watched as Muslims in the name of Islam have committed violence against other Muslims and other peoples. We have always found a way to reconcile the vast distance between Islamic values and Muslim practices by pointing out to the injustices committed upon Muslims by others. The point however is this — our belief in Islam and commitment to Islamic values is not contingent on the moral conduct of the US or Israel. And as Muslims can we condone such inhuman and senseless waste of life in the name of Islam?

The biggest victims of hate filled politics as embodied in the actions of several Muslim militias all over the world are Muslims themselves. Hate is the form of intolerance and when individuals and groups succumb to it they can do nothing constructive. Militias like the Taliban have allowed their hate for the West to override their obligation to pursue the welfare of their people and as a result of their actions not only have thousands of innocent people died in America, but thousands of people will die in the Muslim World.

Already, half a million Afghans have had to leave their homes and their country. The war has not yet begun. It will only get worse. Hamas and Islamic Jihad may kill a few Jews, women and children included, with their suicide bombs and temporarily satisfy their lust for Jewish blood, but thousands of Palestinians then pay the price for their actions.

The culture of hate and killing is tearing away at the moral fabric of the Muslim society. We are more focused on "the other" and have completely forgotten our duty to Allah. In pursuit of the inferior jihad we have sacrificed the superior jihad.

Islamic resurgence, the cherished ideals of which pursued the ultimate goal of a universally just and moral society has been hijacked by hate and call for murder and mayhem. If Bin Laden were an individual then we would have no problem. But unfortunately Bin Laden has become a phenomenon – a cancer eating away at the morality of our youth, and undermining the spiritual health of our future.

STATEMENTS ON ACTION AGAINST TERRORISM

Obviously, all democratic socialists oppose terrorism. But the four statements below, from the bodies which represent our broader community, show that there are different ways of formulating that opposition. Along with official statements from DSA, the International League of Religious Socialists, and the Socialist International, we have also printed a statement from the Women's Caucus formed during the DSA Convention in Philadelphia.

Democratic Socialists of America Convention November 11, 2001 • Philadelphia, PA

CONVENTION RESOLUTION ON WAR AND TERRORISM

Democratic Socialists of America unequivocally opposes the mass murders of September 11, and supports bringing those responsible for those crimes to justice.

DSA recognizes the right and responsibility of the US government, in defense of its people, to take appropriate steps to ensure that future September 11ths do not occur. Those steps would include:

- Diplomatic initiatives
- Technical improvements in domestic security
- Measures designed to eliminate the international arms trade
- The regulation of international and domestic financial transactions
- The limited and directed use of multilateral armed force

DSA calls for a halt to the bombing and immediate delivery of sufficient food and other supplies to prevent a famine in Afghanistan.

DSA opposes restrictions on civil liberties and immigration in the name of fighting terrorism and opposes racist scapegoating of Arab-Americans and American Muslims and all other racist scapegoating.

DSA opposes "war profiteering" in which working people bear the brunt of the sacrifices in the campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, while corporations make super-profits and receive government subsidies.

Adopted by DSA National Convention November 11, 2001

WOMEN'S CAUCUS STATEMENT

The Women's Caucus of DSA was convened on an emergency basis on November 11, 2001 as a response to the significant concern of sexism and male domination in DSA that has affected women members' abilities to participate on a particular political question in the organization. The reporting committee that was entrusted with bringing the main motion concerning DSA's position on the war in Afghanistan has been a space in which the voices of women have been disregarded, silenced, and treated with a level of disrespect inappropriate to a socialist organization that claims to encompass feminist principles.

In order to bring the political perspective of DSA women to the committee of the whole, the convention, on the question of military intervention in Afghanistan, we have organized amongst ourselves to resolve the following:

That we oppose military intervention in Afghanistan. Even assuming that an intervention carefully targeted against elements of the Al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan – and against the military forces of the Taliban government that has supported them – was possible and could have been effective, it is clear by now that this is not what is happening. Instead a month-long bombing campaign has already resulted directly in the loss of possibly thousands of lives in "collateral damage". This war has shown that it will not bring justice to the victims of September 11, prevent future acts of terrorism, bring peace and stability to the Middle East, nor promote economic or social equality. That while we condemn terrorism and the attacks of September 11 as vicious crimes, we reject a "just war" paradigm as a framework for analysis. We affirm our feminist, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and socialist

analysis that is rooted in historical and geographic specificity and is the foundation of the ideals of our organization.

That we assert that DSA must, in good faith, be active in the anti-war movement that is still taking shape around America, for the purpose of supporting feminist, anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and socialist analysis within that movement.

That, as feminists, we see the humanitarian crisis (and the bombing of Afghanistan) as a situation that will disproportionately affect the women and children, who have already greatly suffered under the Taliban regime, as demonstrated by the bombing and sanctions in Iraq.

That we staunchly oppose the US government's program of nation-building that would seem to be directed at replacing one misogynist, fundamentalist,

and unelected regime in Afghanistan with another, in the interests of our imperialist government, and, to some extent, under the pretense of the liberation of the women of Afghanistan.

That we see US foreign policy and global capitalism as significant causes of this instance of terrorism. We therefore assert that the only legitimate means for preventing future acts of a similar nature is to address the inequities that these policies have created in the Middle East.

Therefore, the Women's Caucus supports the Steering Committee motion as the only motion on the table that can serve as an appropriate starting place – but only a starting place - for beginning a dialogue around immediate action and analysis to constructing a socialist response to the war in Afghanistan.

International League of Religious Socialists Statement on Military Actions in Afghanistan

The ILRS expresses its deep concern over the US/British military actions in Afghanistan.

This crisis must not be allowed to escalate into a material war between peoples, religions, civilisations, or states. We should not allow ourselves to drift into the thinking of 'us versus them', (i.e. Western values versus Islam); this is the mindset of the terrorists, and we can only defeat it if we uphold the idea of unity and the common bond of all humanity.

As we seek safety against terrorist acts and justice for the victims of 11 September, we must also take this opportunity to call for all those in our own societies, who have chosen to use violence against other nations, to be brought to justice. The democratic community shares a commitment to the process of law to achieve such justice. We call for the creation of a new and binding international legal justice system for resolving disputes and guaranteeing universal human rights.

Such a system would include the creation of an international court where those who commit crimes

against humanity can be charged and brought to justice. When criminals can be apprehended by universal means, i.e., by public security forces in civil society, the option to use force between nations to seize criminals will no longer exist. An international legal justice system would be the most effective long-term response to terror, by ensuring that no one, from any nation, will be beyond the reach of international law.

**...as the use of terror results
in a world living in terror,
the means of our response will
eventually have to correspond
to the end we seek for
the future of our entire world.**

Any global campaign against terror must also be a campaign against global poverty. After 11 September, we must recognise that the amount of money being spent on security and defense will be of no use if we do not take a longer view of the problem, by committing an even greater amount of funds to ending the kind of poverty which creates the extreme conditions that can be manipulated by extremists into hate, violence and terrorism. Relieving the debt of the world's poorest nations is an urgent priority, along with raising the percentage of specifically targeted foreign aid donated by the world's richest nations to 1% of their GDP.

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In regard to the international economic system, it is essential that radical reform of the WTO, IMF, and World Bank take place immediately, in order to implement fully transparent and democratic processes for strengthening the global economy in such a way as to help raise the standards of living in the poorer nations.

As members of the socialist political movement in democratic society, we do not believe that the ends justify the means in political matters. Rather we believe that the means shape the ends. Therefore, while we condemn and confront those who choose terror, it is all the more important that we carefully consider our own means of response to this crisis. Because as the use of terror results in a world living in terror, the means of our response will eventually have to correspond to the end we seek for the future of our entire world.

Socialist International Statement on Fighting the Funding of Terrorism

Fighting terrorism and the organisations that support it begins primarily by attacking its funding. It is clear that any action to eradicate terrorism will only be effective if it disrupts primarily the means and structures that allow the operation and existence of those organisations.

Fighting the funding of terrorism means an unceasing combat with all forms of financial crime perpetrated by criminal organisations connected with drugs, arms sales or human trafficking. But it also implies a fight against the flow of legal funds that support terrorism.

The arduousness of this task was made very clear to everyone with the dramatic events of 11 September. Therefore, we need to think and act upon two main imbalances in current financial markets:

- the role of tax havens and their way of operation;
- the lack of effective international mechanisms for the regulation of capital flows.

Tax havens and offshore centres

When the so-called offshore centres and tax havens were created their main purpose was to contribute to the economic development of peripheral regions and their need to attract new investments. Today that does not correspond to reality.

Many offshore centres have become platforms that work as a hub for money laundering, for the establishment of covert companies for organised crime, and for the funding of terrorism, as we clearly see from the information released by the United States after the events of 11 September.

Recently the International Monetary Fund, IMF, estimated that the global amount of money connected to money laundering in offshore centres corresponds to 2 to 5 per cent of the global GDP.

Today there are 90 offshore centres identified all over the world and in many of them the financial authorities do not carry out adequate inspections. There are offshore centres where the tax benefits are becoming larger and larger without anybody knowing the source of the money.

Therefore the Socialist International supports all measures that could be taken at international and national levels in order to:

- put an end to tax havens that do not allow total financial transparency, namely providing information on the source of the money and the entities involved;
- change the rules of bank secrecy in the countries that,

although not technically considered tax havens, may carry out the same type of functions for the funding of international terrorism.

International financial regulation

It is clear today that the fact that we do not have efficient and global mechanisms to regulate international capital flows is a huge barrier to the fight against the funding of terrorism and terrorism itself. It is not only the problem of money laundering but also the flow of legal funds that support terrorism.

The regulation mechanisms that we have today at a regional level or just at a bilateral level are clearly insufficient to prevent terrorist groups accessing international financial markets.

To create the right tools and policies within a limited geographic area is not enough. We need to create mechanisms to assure global application and coordination.

Therefore it is crucial to ensure the reinforcement of international co-operation in the financial area, with in the United Nations framework. The mechanisms that make possible the regulation of the markets can only be created at this level.

The SI proposed that through international cooperation and within the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions new mechanisms be established to guarantee the main recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force, namely:

- 1.the ratification and immediate implementation of the tools already defined by the UN, such as the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, approved in 1999 and Security Council Resolution 1373;
- 2.the criminalisation of the financing of terrorism and associated money laundering;
- 3.the freezing of terrorist organisations' assets;
- 4.the obligation to track and monitor transfers of funds, identifying the name, address and account number of each operation, and
- 5.support for the application of law enforcement and support for regulatory bodies in different countries as well the investigation of terrorist activities.

Honoring Thy Mothers: The Red Tent's Boost for Biblical Women

by Deborah Hammer

The Red Tent,
Anita Diamant
Picador USA, 321pp.



The Red Tent is the story of the Hebrew matriarchs, told through the voice of Jacob's daughter, Dinah. In the Bible, we are told the stories of Jacob, his sons, and his father and grandfather. The account of his wives describes their beauty and eyesight, and little more. Here, in the Jewish story telling tradition of the Midrash,

Anita Diamant has imagined what life may have been like for those women, whose voices we have never heard before. Although her book is officially "fiction", Diamant's background in Jewish and women's studies brings these revered but unknown women to life.

Dinah's account receives a very brief, but sad, telling in Chapter 34 of Genesis. The only daughter of Jacob's thirteen children is said to have been "visiting the daughters of the land" (commonly interpreted to mean acting as a midwife) when a young man named Shechem falls in love with Dinah and has sex with her. Shechem then goes to Jacob and asks permission to marry Dinah. Shechem's parents, Hamor and Hivite, are wealthy leaders of this land, but have no prior knowledge of Abraham's covenant with G-d. Jacob agrees to a marriage between his daughter and Shechem, on the condition that he and all of his people become circumcised and believe only in G-d. Shechem, his father, and all of the men of the land comply with this request. However, Dinah's brothers, still bitterly angry about the perceived rape of their sister, murder all of the men as they lay recovering from their surgery. After this incident, Jacob and his sons flee to Beth-El, and we do not hear about Dinah (or her mothers) again.

In *The Red Tent*, we are introduced to the four daughters of Laban: Leah, Zilpah, Rachel, and Bilhah. The sisters become the wives and concubines of Jacob and give birth to his 13 children. Each one offers her



own unique personality and talents to the growing household. They weave together a tribe from their collective skills and children. Diamant imagines a monthly gathering, where the women — far from being banished from society — enjoyed a respite from tedious work and men. Inside the Red Tent, menstruating women passed down oral traditions, swapped stories, and bonded with each other.

Dinah, as the only female child, is privy to the secrets of her mothers, as well as learning about the G-d of her grandfather, Abraham. Some readers may find fault with Diamant's supposition that the women of this generation continued to worship fertility idols. However, it offers a realistic portrayal of the transition that occurred between the worship of goddesses and the birth of monotheism. Other controversial images in the book include portraying Jacob as much less of a righteous figure than most Sunday School teachers would have people believe.



**Anita Diamant
seeks to give
voice not just to
women today,
but to end the
silence of our
ancestors.**

Among women, debate has arisen over the interpretation of Dinah's relationship with Shechem being one of mutual attraction versus rape. The traditional understanding that her brothers punished a man for a heinous crime can be viewed as setting precedent for having zero tolerance for rape. However, women's rights advocates can also find much to cheer about in Diamant's new perspective. Dinah represents a strong, independent woman, capable of making her own decisions. Women in biblical times were considered the property of their fathers until they were sold into marriage. For Dinah to choose a husband on her own would have invited intense anger from her family, perhaps resulting in their murderous rampage.

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What Now?

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The sanctions against Iraq must therefore stop — (it only helps to strengthen Saddam Hussein's position) and a peaceful solution between the Israeli government and Palestine National Authority must be encouraged. There is already a ready-made plan. A general and all-inclusive agreement is an immediate necessity.

The underlying factor of terrorism is no doubt the injustice between the rich and the poor. *It is therefore a high time to do something seriously in order to alleviate world poverty — at a high political level instead of resolutions.*

Isn't it cynical to observe that nations of the world have enormous amount of money for war machines but no money for the needy when it comes to reality. The US and Britain gave out official development assistance (ODA), 0,2-0,3 percent of their GNP (the Nordic countries and The Netherlands meet the requirements

from UN of 0,7 per cent) whilst their defence budget is being redoubled. Parliaments decide, without any obstacle, to spend billions on the war machine whilst the voluntary organisations have to put up with begging cans to get a dime to help those in acute need.

Ambitions are certainly not lacking. Many high level meetings have been held in favor of fighting poverty, disease, and the availability of housing, food and clothing for people in need. But paradoxically when the bills need to be paid — economic means are always out of range. There are many possibilities to harness resources. For example: A raise of 0,7 percent on aid from the GNP of the West. Also the implementation of the so-called "Tobin tax" — or a US dollar on every gallon of oil, or extra addition on international flight tickets. *There are lots of possibilities to materialise these aims.*

The world has never been as rich as it is at the moment! In the long run nobody loses in social and economic equality. This has been demonstrated in the Nordic affluent system. "Send bread over the ocean and one day you'll get it back" as indicated in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Implement a system of international child allowance to mothers for the upbringing, education and welfare of their children. This was suggested by a former Member of Parliament in Sweden — Mrs. Lena Klevenås of the Social Democratic Party in Sweden.

The risk for strong antagonism between the western world of Christianity and the Muslim world of Islam must be discouraged at all cost. Both sides are talking of evil and Satan. It's typical that a contemporary is always accredited with these negations — while one imagines himself as the element of goodness. At this juncture we have no need for extremists.

It is late now and a great deal is already lost. Broken promises are galore but it is still *not too late* for reparations. Maybe current problems can help the world to see clearly in a more realistic way, the injustices in today's world. ▀

Evert Svensson is President of the International League of Religious Socialists. His comments in this piece are his own; the ILRS statement is on page 11.

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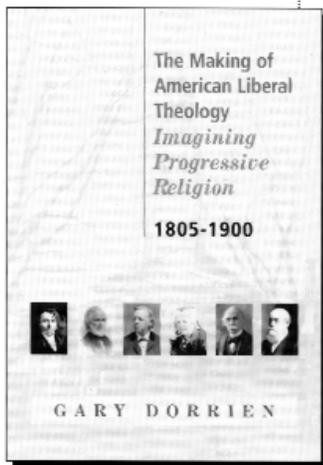
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Gary Dorrien is the Ann V. and Donald R. Parfet Distinguished Professor at Kalamazoo College. Previous WJK works include *The Word as True Myth*, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, and *The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology*.

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Red Tent

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For this reader, many questions arose while reading *The Red Tent*. What was life like for other women mentioned in the Bible? What was their relationship with G-d and how did they influence religious practices? How have past interpretations of women in the Bible influenced the way religious institutions — and society — treat women today? And finally, where is the closest red tent and can I make a reservation for next month?

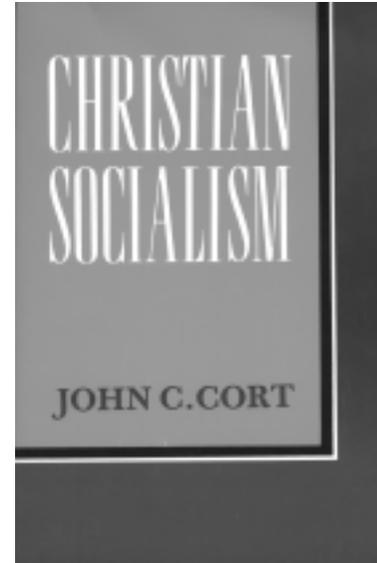
Both religious and secular women have embraced this book as a work of empowerment and as a stepping off point for discussions about the role of women in the world today. Although women have always represented 50% of the population, their voice has been heard perhaps less than 1% of the time. Anita Diamant seeks to give voice not just to women today, but to end the silence of our ancestors.

This book also raises relevant issues for socialists. Many of the struggles facing women of Dinah's era continue to effect women around the world today. These include health care for women, family planning, domestic violence, choice in marriage, education and career opportunities for women, child care, and the ability to speak one's mind and make one's own decisions.

All in all, Diamant has given us an entertaining exploration of gender and religious history and its correlation to our modern lives. ▀

Deborah Hammer is an activist and special education teacher in Alexandria, VA.

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Memo to Muslims

cont'd from page 9

Today the century old Islamic revival is in jeopardy because we have allowed insanity to prevail over our better judgment. Yes, the US has played a hand in the creation of Bin Laden and the Taliban, but it is we who have allowed them to grow and gain such a foothold. It is our duty to police our world. It is our responsibility to prevent people from abusing Islam. It is our job to ensure that Islam is not misrepresented. We should have made sure that what happened on Sept. 11th should never have happened.

It is time the leaders of the American Muslim community woke up and realized that there is more to life than competing with the American Jewish lobby for power over US foreign policy. Islam is not about defeating Jews or conquering Jerusalem. It is about mercy, about virtue, about sacrifice and about duty. Above all it is the pursuit of moral perfection. Nothing can be further away from moral perfection than the wanton slaughter of thousands of unsuspecting innocent people.

I hope that we will now rededicate our lives and our

institutions to the search for harmony, peace and tolerance. Let us be prepared to suffer injustice rather than commit injustices. After all it is we who carry the divine burden of Islam and not others. We have to be morally better, more forgiving, more sacrificing than others, if we wish to convince the world about the truth of our message. We cannot even be equal to others in virtue, we must excel.

It is time for soul searching. How can the message of Muhammad (pbuh) who was sent as mercy to mankind become a source of horror and fear? How can Islam inspire thousands of youth to dedicate their lives to killing others? We are supposed to invite people to Islam not murder them.

The worst exhibition of Islam happened on our turf. We must take first responsibility to undo the evil it has manifest. This is our mandate, our burden and also our opportunity. ■

Muqtedar Khan, Ph.D., is Director of International Studies at Adrian College, a member of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, and the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy.



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