

Letter to the Editors

By Gary Lauger

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[1] Last Tuesday, I was in an office where they have access to CNN on their computer. On the screen could be seen the first tower burning. Three or so people came in to watch when the second plane crashed. People were stunned - the first fire was thought to be an accident - obviously not the second. Shortly, the Pentagon crash was announced and people became shocked and panicked. Very many people were directly affected with relative and neighbors working in the towers. At this time, things are returning to normal. [2] I will be very interested in learning how others view what happened and how to react. Over here there is a lot of talk of patriotism and war. But the talk I hear is from people who are nationalistic rather than patriotic and in terms of a conventional war. To me, actions seem to be in the categories of the anti-Communism of the 1950's with the spying and constant concern over a neighbor who could be a communist sympathizer. Perhaps the experience of the 1970's when cities in the US were burned down during urban riots, buildings blown up by the radical underground, planes hijacked to go to Cuba - general anarchy and mutual mis-trust among neighbors. But not an organized war - after all, the people who took over the planes were someone's neighbors the day before. We can't declare war on Florida! Can we trust each other? [3] I think the Zizek paper ("Welcome to the desert of the real", distributed by email a week after the bombings) is quite good in linking the media fantasy with the American fantasy. I can see a concentric ring of defenses that end finally in the secured house of a family living in a gated suburb surrounded by rings of police and other gated communities, with occasional escapes to a secure mall to get more things or to see one of these movies. As you know, we have not even acknowledged that Mexico is on our border or is a neighbor, except to the extent of building a wall (the obvious ring of security) to keep the Mexicans out (except the ones we want in to clean the house and yard). [4] I especially like the last sentence - to prevent it here we must prevent it anywhere else - because it applies not just to terrorist bombings to the obvious commercial, global economy and to disease, starvation, and so on. [5] So, do we want to become more globalized than we are? If the US does acknowledge that prevention elsewhere may be a good thing, can it be done in a non-imperialistic way? Do you think the questions raised by the Tower attack are fleeting or will we really start to address some of these topics seriously