

President Trump

Countdown to Apocalypse

CrimethInc.

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Move the doomsday clock forward another click.

We were right about the direction things are heading, but wrong about the timeframe. We thought Clinton would win the election, and would then be discredited by new scandals and the challenges of preserving an increasingly unpopular status quo, producing a reactionary surge like the one that recently toppled Dilma in Brazil. Instead, the scandal broke before the election, with the announcement of further FBI inquiries into emails associated with Clinton. And, as with the Brexit vote, everyone underestimated just how desperate and reactionary the general public has become—at least the ones who still identify with the ruling order enough to vote at all. It's later than you think.

It's significant that the news event that rescued Trump's presidential bid was essentially an intervention by the FBI. This tells us a lot about the era we are entering: it is the security apparatus of the state that will be calling the shots, not the aspects of government that purport to improve the lives of citizens. Capitalism, long stabilized in the so-called First World by the compromises that produced the middle class, will henceforth be imposed by force. The surplus of the 20th century has run out; the velvet glove is coming off the iron fist. Sure, demagogues like Trump and Sanders will continue to promise us the moon every four years or so, but it won't be peace treaties that will preserve the prevailing order—it will be police.

News like this is bound to induce despair, but we must not let this election cause us to lose faith in humanity as a whole. Elections serve to represent us to each other at our worst, distilling the most offensive, cowardly, and servile aspects of the species. Many people who would never personally wrest a mother from her children are capable of endorsing deportation from the privacy of a voting booth, just as most people who eat meat could never work at a slaughterhouse. Were it not for the alienation that characterizes government itself, most of the ugly policies comprising the Trump agenda could never be implemented.

Presidential campaigns are calculated to promote apathy, giving the impression that all the important decisions in the world are out of our hands. That's the point of state politics: to immobilize us outside the halls of power, distrusting each other and ourselves.

Today, even the most law-abiding liberal must realize that we cannot continue to watch from the sidelines. Against the spectacle of powerlessness, we must counterpose our own agency. But to what purpose? Surely not to prop up yet another political campaign. We have to think bigger.

The fundamental problem is that power is structured into such vertical concentrations in the first place. If the President of the United States did not wield such disproportionate influence over the fate of humanity—if the free market did not enable businessmen to accumulate so much leverage over society—then Donald Trump could not be so dangerous, however despicable a person he is.

Those on the Left who have persisted in the naïve belief that the right government could solve the problems generated by global capitalism are partly to blame for this situation. The Democratic Party was foolish to back an establishment candidate at a time when so many people are desperate, angry, and rebellious. In legitimizing the idea that America is or should be great in the first place, Democrats smoothed the way for Trump to promise to make it great once more. Every tax dollar good liberals paid to the government hoping it would care for the poor, sick, elderly, and underprivileged has built the juggernaut that will now roll across their civil liberties. Every law they continue to obey will aid and abet that process. And if the media outlets and politicians that decried Trump as the candidate of the apocalypse accept him now in the name of the democratic process, this only confirms their complicity.

The problem is democracy itself: the form of government that brought Adolf Hitler into office. In response to the polls, we assert that no one should have the right to rule over anyone else. Neither Donald Trump, nor Barack Obama, nor Mother Theresa could ever use such power for good. We have to create horizontal structures and autonomous movements that can meet our needs directly, rather than continuing to feed resources into structures that will be used against us for the benefit of a few.

Let us look for silver linings in this cloud of oncoming tear gas. Perhaps it is for the best that someone like Trump is coming to power now, rather than four years hence. Let the right wing demonstrate that their solutions are just as inadequate as those proposed from the Left. In a time of economic crises, ecological collapse, and spreading war, the state is a hot potato: no one will be able to hold it long. Those who voted for Trump will be disappointed indeed if they actually believe he will bring back the heyday of Fordist capitalism in a globalized world.

Of course, disillusioned Trump voters will not necessarily join our ranks. They are more likely to move further to the right, just as Sanders supporters may simply entrench themselves deeper in futile and antiquated fantasies of 20th century socialism. We should set out to debunk the arguments from both sides, keeping dialogue open with everyone we can while preparing for open conflict with those who are determined to bring about a more totalitarian world.

We must not let the outrage that people feel today shift into a hopelessness that could become the new normal. Only in taking action, however small, can we come into a sense of our collective agency. This is the time to strengthen ties between communities in struggle and those who will be most affected by Trump's policies. This is the time to dispense once and for all with hope for any solutions from above, any brighter future apart from the actions we take on a day-to-day basis in our immediate surroundings. This is the time to learn and practice proper online security—who knows how far the repressive operations of the state will go, or how fast.

There will be new social movements, new uprisings, new fights ahead. This is the time to find each other and prepare to go resolutely forward into them.

Cradle the seed, even in the volcano's mouth. Good luck out there, comrades.

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