

Worker Bulletin #47

Top secret communiqué for members only

CrimethInc.

October 21, 2007

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The most important question for the revolutionary is how to escape disciples—and enable equals.

“An imperious need to destroy ... and to simultaneously laugh and cry over that which has been destroyed.”

It was right in front of everyone’s face—we just made it visible. It was on the tip of everyone’s tongue—we just gave it a name. All the words you wish you could speak, all the life you wish you could live—that’s us. We fight like you want to fight, we love like you want to love, we never submit or compromise—we are free in all the ways you wish you could be.

We do not exist.

You were looking for a way to change your life. You could not do this on your own. You were looking for evidence that what you wanted was possible. You found it in a ghost—which you made flesh.

People do this every day—they talk to themselves, they daydream, they see themselves as they would like to be. They project what they long for, fear, worship upon others, when it is already present within themselves.

CrimethInc. is not an elite commando unit of freedom fighters. CrimethInc. is the fucking Wizard of Oz. The various poor saps who act as “CrimethInc.” have no patent on crimethought—they barely know what they’re doing. You know much better than they do. Whatever is free, glorious, real about anything CrimethInc. has ever done is your doing: you made it so, by needing it, exalting it, making it breathe and stir. You were ready for it, but you weren’t ready for it to be you—so you created it, reflected it off of the world as a distress signal to yourself, and seized it as a life preserver. By itself, the text is a prescription in a dead language—you brought it to life.

There is no CrimethInc.¹ CrimethInc. is simply you.

CrimethInc. is not a membership organization—it belongs to anyone who has the audacity to claim it, just as death belongs to anyone who can pick up a frying pan. Anyone can put on a black mask and join the Black Bloc, anyone can dumpster food and become Food Not Bombs, anyone can act on behalf of the E.L.F. or design a poster with the familiar bullet logo at the bottom. Crimethought is everywhere—it’s in every life, in every heart, woven into the history of humanity and the cosmos as surely as submission and inertia and everything else are—if it weren’t, there would be no such thing as CrimethInc., and you certainly wouldn’t be reading this.

If CrimethInc. is everyone, then, by the same token, it is no one. There is no enchanted inner circle working secret spells upon the world, creating from the void those propositions and subversions and dares that have been so important or infuriating to you. CrimethInc. is not the property of some board of trustees, there is no genius to credit for it, no malefactor to blame for it; there is simply the world which wrought this strange thing and shaped the hearts that respond to it.

¹ It’s true. If you go to the CrimethInc. H.Q. address in Atlanta, you’ll find a suburban house like all the others for miles around, inhabited by a well-behaved middle class woman who wants nothing to do with “revolution” or anything like it [ask Marietta native Robert Bly, he tried it].

Naturally, you're still wrestling with this, so sometimes you're still you—"just you."

Those moments of absolute terror when everything around and inside you is alien should come as no surprise. You're not just tweaking a few knobs here, you're trying to step into an alternate universe. Sometimes nothing will make sense. Be patient, let the fear wash over you, survive until the wave passes and the horizon is a step closer.

During those instants, it will seem like everyone knows what is going on but you. Is it unusual that at such moments you are capable of inventing fantastic underground societies possessed of super-human powers?

Other times, you imagine yourself watching us.

Little by little you're breaking free, letting yourself go.

The lengths the child of the bourgeoisie must go to in order to shake off his conditioning are incredible. It may be that for some to begin they need a myth to believe in, as some recovering addicts claim to need a "higher power."

If sometimes you still need us, then so be it—"we" will drag you kicking and screaming into the new dawn, bearing all the blame for the suffering you have been yearning to bring upon yourself: for the one who wants to be born must first destroy a world. But you cannot arrive until you divest yourself of your crutches. In the end you will turn to thank us, and find you are all alone.

"We" are still here if you need something to rebel against.

"The adolescence of every free human being is a war, a struggle with those who came before; it is this war that maintains vitality, that fashions destiny—a deadly war one must wage against the very factors and influences which gave birth to oneself." –Brutus to Julius Caesar

The only thing to do with something you have put on a pedestal is knock it off. If, once you realize your mistake, you find that you need to reject us, rebel against us, assert your selfhood and independence from us, then by all means do it! But don't go on to assume that everyone who isn't rebelling as you are must therefore be a CrimethInc. robot, a mindless follower. They have reasons of their own to do what they do: maybe they are where you yourself once needed to be in order to arrive where you are; maybe they are actually where you hope to be in the future; maybe they are on a track of evolution entirely different from yours. You might succeed in wasting a lot of time, theirs or your own, by pointing out faults instead of new vistas. And do you really want to provoke the mindless choosing of sides, the accusations and insults and defensiveness, the struggle for superiority that always accompanies such contentions?

Ultimately, it makes as much sense to attack "CrimethInc." as to attack punk rock, the state of activism, the human race itself. There are negative and positive forces within all of them, but these things are simply what we make of them. The spectator passively votes for or against things, imagining his status to be greater the more he finds below himself, and seeking something illustrious and perfect enough that he can invest in a distinguished identity by associating himself with it. The individual who has become conscious of her powers as an active participant

in life approaches everything in terms of what it might have to offer, then adds what she feels is missing, making shortcomings into opportunities. It is healthy to critique individual ideas, methods, actions, decisions; it is thus that better ideas, methods, actions, decisions come to be. But it is infantile to attack a forum for ideas, methods, etc. because it does not serve your particular needs—let those who need it use it; you can apply your energies where you choose.

Those who believe that there is a CrimethInc. to be rejected are the last guardians of the myth that there is such a thing as “CrimethInc.” at all.

But you will not be free until you realize that we do not exist.

Once you apprehend that CrimethInc. is not a disembodied force or a strictly-defined entity, that whatever it has been and is to be is entirely under your control, you will be free to dispense with it entirely—and then, if you like, to contribute to it. CrimethInc. is composed of individuals who are not enamored of it or threatened by it, who have no illusions about it, who see it merely as one of many possible means to greater ends. Certainly it has its shortcomings, like any tool; it also offers some advantages others don't. Consider this an invitation to show what can be done with it.

CrimethInc. must be superseded to be realized. Whether you act autonomously as “CrimethInc.,” or under any other name, is immaterial—the important thing is that you begin to act autonomously, to discover your own capabilities and dispel the mythology you have created around those who exercise theirs. The next move is now in your hands, the fate of CrimethInc.—and much more important things—with it.

“Now I bid you: lose me and find yourselves. For it is only when you have all denied me that I will return to you.” –Zarathustra, taking leave of his adherents

Postscript for the Faithful

As a famous theoretician's ex-lover once said to him: “I wish I could be as sure of anything as you are of everything.” Doubt killed Jesus, Socrates, countless other crime-thinkers ... but seems to pose no problem for Christians, philosophy professors, subscribers to CrimethInc.TM—that's ideology at work for you.

In the words of another wise woman: nothing is true, everything is permitted. We're trying to give permission, not instructions—don't take us at our word, whatever you do! Less faith—more mercilessness, my friend.

One more time now—

what good is CrimethInc., if it doesn't even exist?

For one thing, CrimethInc. offers an alternative for those of us who have been frustrated to see our efforts to make things happen interpreted as attempts to glorify ourselves. By putting the CrimethInc. tag on our projects, we can avoid attracting attention to ourselves (and communalize the work we've done, offering credit for it to whomever calls themselves an Ex-Worker), while simultaneously establishing that the project is part of a larger current of anti-capitalist/anarchist action. Beyond these practical purposes, CrimethInc. also serves as a sort of placebo

revolutionary organization for those who know that the traditional “revolutionary organization” with all its hierarchy and inertia is a contradiction in terms, but still feel the urge to associate themselves with an “organization” of some kind. There’s an undeniable pleasure to be found in secret societies and clandestine plots; with CrimethInc., one can indulge in mythmaking to one’s heart’s delight, without ending up supporting some vanguardist power elite².

If you’re still interested in becoming a “member” of the ’Collective, now that you know there is no such thing, here are some steps to take:

1.

Have your own reasons for being involved, your own ideas of what is worthwhile about CrimethInc. and what it should do next. No one can be a CrimethInc. Worker who is still waiting for instructions—that’s what the whole “ex-worker” thing is about, of course. Those who are already active are busy enough directing their own projects—and, as the poet writes, “To be governed is tragic. To govern is pathetic.”

2.

Be ready to claim responsibility for everything the C.W.C. has done, ever—especially in the case of tracts and actions that contradict each other. Thinking in terms of “collectives” (rather than atomized individuals) means that when one of us acts, she acts on behalf of whatever part of the rest of each of us, however small, would do the same thing. Rather than fighting over the “right” individual method, our program must be to find effective ways to integrate our individual actions into a symbiotic whole. We are all responsible for each other, and for making each other’s actions into something beneficial; this revelation should put an end to the old infighting about who is “most revolutionary,” an end long overdue.

Remember, crimethought is not any ideology or value system or lifestyle, but rather a way of challenging all ideologies and value systems and lifestyles—and, for the advanced agent, a way of making all ideologies, value systems, and lifestyles challenging. It is not crimethought just to survive without a job by dumpstering, squatting, and hitchhiking; it is crimethought to realize that this lifestyle provides resources that can be used to revolutionize demonstration activism, or underground literature. It is not crimethought simply to distribute propaganda attacking the monotony and limited options of traditional employment; it is crimethought to create situations in which both workers and ex-workers benefit from each others’ different experiences, and consequently discover new options and new adventures that were previously obscured.

² “The revolutionary organization must be dissolved at the moment of revolution”—otherwise, it becomes another vanguard, another authority. For years, I wondered how this could be accomplished—after all, “revolution” isn’t just one moment, it’s an ongoing process of decentralization and empowerment, one therefore always impeded by the existence of “revolutionary” elites ... and, for that matter, how does one dissolve the power of a group that has already exercised an influence on human affairs? Even if the organization is broken up, its legacy will continue to influence the present: for example, the Situationists, who have been contemplated as “authorities on revolution” for decades since their self-annulment. Power, once established, is hard to undo. The solution finally struck me: the way to dissolve the authority of the revolutionary organization is simply to communalize its powers by extending them to everyone. The greatest resource a non-hierarchical, largely mythical organization like CrimethInc. has is its reputation: if this can be put at the disposal of all, then the authority CrimethInc. has can be effectively undermined. The moment of revolution is the dissolution of the revolutionary organization—that is, the appropriation of its resources by everybody.

3.

Be sure to deny authorship of any projects you undertake, and avoid accruing personal glory as a “member of the C.W.C.” If we aren’t careful about this, CrimethInc. could become a traditional “membership organization” after all, with status established simply by celebrity standing.

4.

Pick some projects that need doing and do them. If you need help, contact others (fellow “CrimethInc. workers” or not) for advice and collaboration ... if you need raw materials, don’t hesitate to steal from previous CrimethInc. projects, or from anywhere else for that matter. Some media you might enjoy working in include wheatpasting, pranks (call in bomb threats to workplaces on sunny days, dress as Santa Claus and give children “free toys” off the shelves in department stores during Christmas, etc.), providing resources to people capitalism deems unworthy (food, baby-sitting, companionship), spreading wild rumors, creating new urban legends ... the sky’s the limit.

5.

It can be fun (and useful in preserving anonymity) to choose a CrimethInc. alias for yourself. Think of something hilarious, something that says everything that needs saying without an essay or manifesto, like Jello Biafra or Rolf Nadir. Once the myths of intellectual property and changeless identity itself are dispensed with, the signature on any work has significance only as a part of the work itself. Remember that using just one alias will not obscure your identity for long—better that you shift between a series of them, or, better yet, borrow someone else’s name or pen name from time to time! All the former CrimethInc. aliases are fair game, for example ... confusion as to “who is really who” protects CrimethInc. workers from both stardom and F.B.I. investigations, and keeps the focus on the relevance of the ideas to the readers’ lives, where it belongs. [See below for an example of this principle in action.]

6.

If these suggestions don’t please you, make up your own. CrimethInc., just like the rest of your life and the whole world for that matter, is whatever you make it. Get busy.

— *Hakim Bey for the CrimethInc. Central Committee for De-Centralization*

We have at hand the guns for war. Now, to seize them:

Given that our lives and our world are occupied territory, that relations of struggle and competition exist on every level in our society because once introduced they tend to replace other relationships: everything then depends on whether we can find ways to reappropriate our own creativity and productivity from this cycle, and thus subvert and abort it.

Revolution will never be bought at list price. Obviously, we’re not going to get our “money’s worth” for either our labor or our capital on the “free” market; we have to create situations, as fleeting as need be (for nothing can or should be sustainable, in an unsustainable world), in which we have power over resources that are otherwise out of our hands. We need to learn from those

already adept at these practices: the bank robbers, the cheating high school students, junior high students who call in bomb threats in spring, workers who cheat the time clock or use company materials for private projects, office-supply pilferers, suburban adulterers, grill cooks who pull off workers' compensation frauds. With this precious contraband, we contra-bandits can rediscover the folk arts—which we can use both to create new, liberated environments, and to rescue our fellow human beings from the current nightmare.

Folk Art

murals, markers, spraypaint, stickers, posters, wheatpaste, stencils, bricks, gasoline and styrofoam ...

The reappropriation, by every individual, of the means (and “right”) to transform the environments we live in. The realization that as the fashioning of the world is a collective project, the designing of it must be as well.

Folk Lore

stolen photocopies, broadsides, pamphlets, 'zines, phone trees, discussion groups, oral tradition, independent media networks ...

The circumvention of the mass media by direct, decentralized, and non-hierarchical means of communication. The rejection of History, any History, in the objective sense, in favor of myth and legend and storytelling.

Folk Music

d.i.y. punk rock and hip hop and techno music, pirate radio, drum circles, demonstration chants and songs ...

The demystification of the role of musician—the realization that anyone can create an aural environment, that anyone can shape the emotions of her fellows into fear or courage, love or sentimentality, rage or despair—and the subsequent insight that this must be done cooperatively, or else the result will be a dreadful, atonal mess. Thus, the recognition of music-making as the perfect analogy for human relations.

Folk Science

squatting, dumpstering, gardening, inventing, d.i.y. building and plumbing and decorating and printing and repairing ...

The end of specialization—the end of expertise as a commodity in a scarcity economy. The rejection of technology as a deity mediated by an elite priest caste, and of linear “progress” as the sole and unquestionable principle of human history. The realization that each of us can do anything, that it is more valuable to make your own progress than to passively accept or even contribute to a “progress” beyond your control.

Folk Love

Food Not Bombs, local and international communities, communal living arrangements, community spaces, open relationships, loving friendships, affinity/infinity groups ...

The emergence of mutual aid and emotional support outside the exchange system, for their own sake rather than as a transaction, so that we can build communities which protect and foster individuality and cooperation at once.

Folk War

demonstrations, squatting, Critical Mass, Reclaim the Streets, the Black Bloc, wildcat strikes, spokescouncil meetings, topless federations ...

The collective establishment of means of defending our individual freedom and autonomy that do not endanger those in the process. The abolition of leaders and orders, even in times of war (like this one), in favor of radically democratic, decentralized or consensus-based strategies of resistance.

Some Strategies

- Identify potentially revolutionary classes of people whose frustration and resources are currently not being channeled into anything positive: apolitical punk rockers and other rebellious teenagers, rejected would-be sorority sisters the week after rush, forgotten mothers whose children have grown up and left home, devoted librarians whose jobs are endangered by administrative budget cuts. Seek common cause with them—what can you offer each other?

Revolution is not the sole province of a specialist class—there are revolutionary currents in all circles. Revolution happens when these autonomous currents become aligned in such a way that they change—better, derail—history. It’s up to you to find connections to people in other walks of life with whom you can build symbiotic relationships of resistance. Quitting your job was about having more time to do what needs doing, not just isolating yourself from the rest of humanity—wasn’t it?

- Locate pressure points in society at which the right stimulus could trigger massive responses: the graduation of thousands of state university students with grim job prospects; the cancellation of welfare programs that enabled poor single mothers to afford child care; the inauguration of an unpopular president, attended by thousands of angry voters aggravated by a hostile police presence. Apply that stimulus.

In reference to making propaganda, this point bears some explication, for the sake of those who still are accustomed to and expect the old-fashioned approach of simply trying to “say what the truth is” [a activity now recognized as impossible by philosophers, historians, and scientists alike] and waiting for everyone to understand. The way we see it, the value of the propaganda is not in whether or not what it says is “objectively true” or not, but rather in what the effects of saying it are. For example: if one makes propaganda extolling what is revolutionary about shoplifting, one is not necessarily trying to get would-be revolutionaries to shoplift so they can be “more revolutionary” [obviously a stupid approach if there ever was one—although exploring the tactical benefits of shoplifting for a class

of people looking to do less buying might make sense]—one might instead be trying to identify for shoplifters what is already insurrectionary in their actions, so they can broaden their analysis of their own lives. The same goes for adultery, hitchhiking, and a thousand other subjects. When approaching any of these pressure points, where massive tension exists between what people desire and the world they know themselves to live in, expect other radicals to sometimes misinterpret your work as urging people to indulge in these half-measures rather than celebrating what could be revolutionary about them if they are followed through to their logical conclusions. Don't be distracted by them. The last ones you need to worry about reaching with your propaganda are other radicals, for heaven's sake.

- Find ways to provide for people's needs in ways that demonstrate the value of cooperation and resistance: organize dumpstering parties for middle class students short on cash, put on film festivals featuring radical speakers discussing conventional films, set up tables giving out anarchist literature at gun shows, put on subtly subversive puppet shows for children and their otherwise isolated parents, put together community bicycle exchanges and similar projects to replace the religious condescension of "Christmas gifts for poor children" and other such smug charity, get state funding for youth centers run by insurgents in which youth can learn to organize themselves.

Otherwise, why should people believe you or your "alternatives" have anything to offer? And without a support system, how are they supposed to have the time and peace of mind to get active?

- Confound expectations. Eschew clichés of all kinds. Introduce foreign elements to stable environments to create volatile situations. When talking politics, use poetry—new poetry, not the poetry already seized by and subordinated to politics; when making poetry, make poetry that demands more from the political, not poetry that answers to it. When you strike, strike to reveal potentialities to everyone that were invisible before; only strike when this can be accomplished, so people will watch closely when you do. By inventing new languages for music, relationships, social change, reinvent the possibilities of music, relationships, social change themselves. Break with the past incessantly. Create each morning the first dawn the world has ever seen.

Don't put on an act for other activists and artists—address yourself to the ones who will not construe your actions in the museum-categories of activism or art. Avoid politics-as-usual (that is, all politics, as we know them today), don't stick around to argue, don't be sentimental; be ruthless, take risks, vandalize what your heart insists must be defaced, do something children will remember all their lives, be spontaneous, let the muse possess you (and study how to live in a life that keeps you vulnerable to her). Dress up. Leave a false name. Be legendary. Act against the law, live against the law (for aren't you—against the law?), but don't get caught—that's too predictable. Remember, the best crimes aren't illegal yet!

Build your castles on the rims of volcanoes. Throw caution—and everything else—to the winds.

Live dangerously. Think dangerously. CrimethInc.

P.O. Box 13998, Salem, OR 97309, U.S.A.

cyberspace cadets should proceed directly to crimethinc.com

and then on out the door into the world. It is now safe to turn off your computer.

... the cats locked in uptown apartments, staring out through the windows the train cars bearing graffiti and runaways back and forth across the country the broken automatic-flush toilets carrying on senseless conversations in empty airport restrooms ...

At the public library, in the air raid shelter converted into a museum, in their apartments, they long to be protagonists of their own stories, for once, not professionals or protesters—a whole generation wasted, working in the service industry, collecting comic books, matching skin tones to shades of lipstick ... but the fuse is lit, now, a hiss in the distance like air escaping from a slashed tire—and ears are pricking up.

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



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