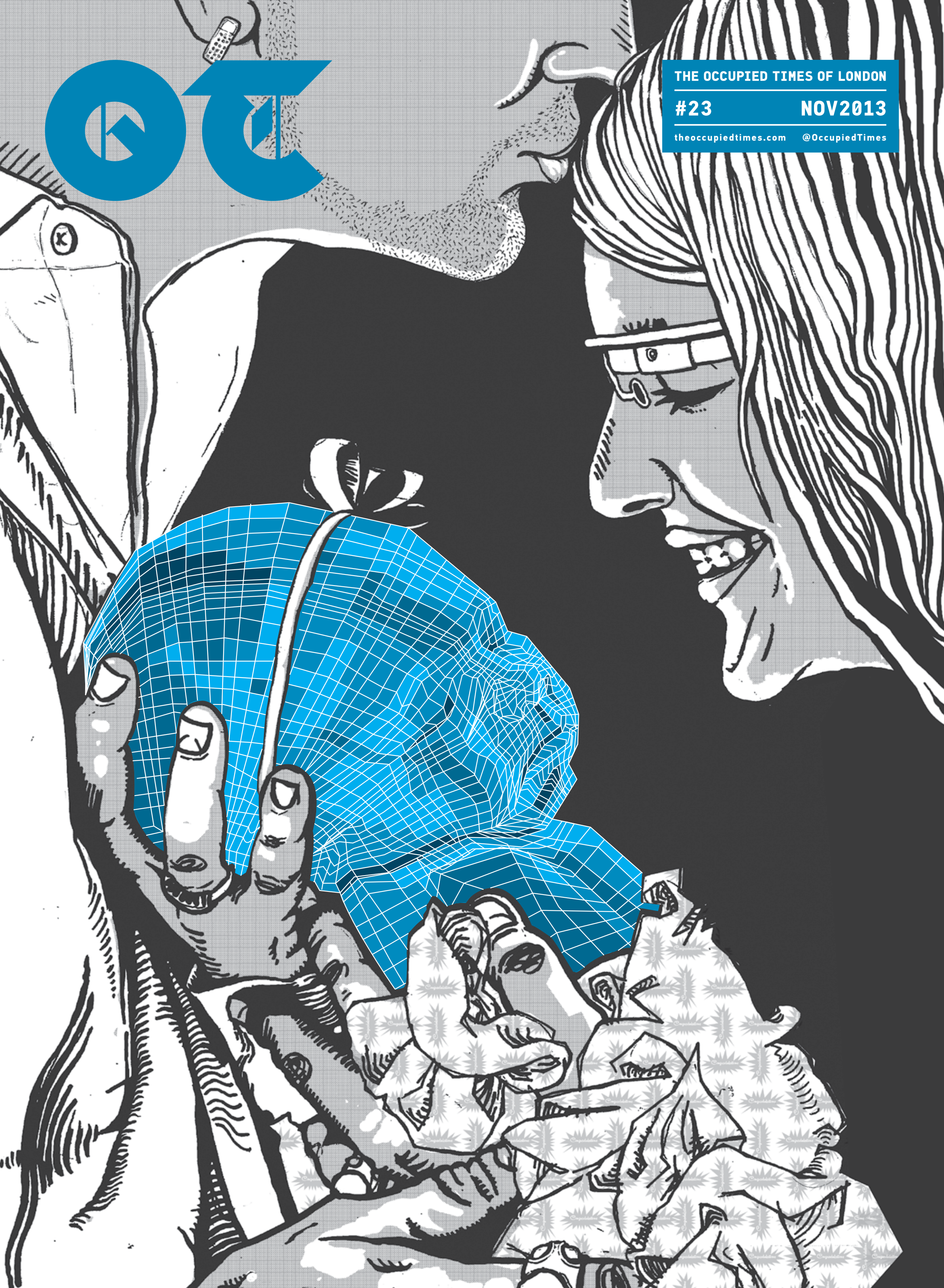


THE OCCUPIED TIMES OF LONDON

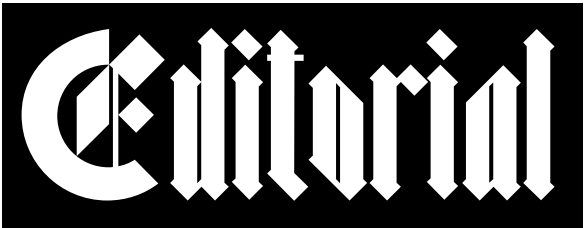
#23 **NOV2013**

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The popular visions of 20th-century Science Fiction appear, in retrospect, often restrained and lacking in the scope and ambition of today’s applied technology and its societal impact. Visionaries on the periphery of the genre provide the most astute analysis, with the tamer shores of the likes of JG Ballard warning of environmental catastrophe, elsewhere exploring the often traumatic psycho-social condition of the human or post-human subject.

The surreal poetics of Ballard's seminal work, Crash, can be traced in the death drives of popular entertainment and digital warfare. In a recent episode of Homeland, the CIA director, a character we are compelled to empathise with, looks on as a number of ‘targets’ are vaporised by drones. The success of this operation is exhilarating - for those in the room and for the audience looking in. This futurist zeal for the aesthetics of war and technology has become the collective hedonism of pop culture: curated for cinema, TV and game - viewable through a thousand perspectives and multi-playable in every imaginable setting. Beneath the layer of violence, the reach of our participation and observation within this collective imagination underscores the pervasive grammar of the technological dynamic.

Technology is simply the creation and implementation of tools designed for particular uses, bridging the gap between the power of the human body and the world at large. The journey from the wheel to a point where nuclear-powered devices patrol Mars has taken little more than 6,000 years. As time passes, we delegate more and more to our machines - real and virtual.

Keynes’ prediction that the most grueling human work would eventually be automated is unlikely, despite the fact that the automation of labour moves forward with history, including the kind that had previously been too complex for machines to simulate - Artificial Intelligence can now mimic the voice and conversation of a call-centre worker. Such a utopian prediction also underestimates the capacity of the ruling classes to reconfigure the liberatory potentials of technology. Capital’s embrace has ensured that the vast majority of our transactions, logistics and communication infrastructures are choreographed through a complex of algorithms. The purpose here hasn't been to reduce the amount of time we spend shackled to labour within the machine, but to entangle us in chains of code whilst removing the human condition from the conditions of production.

We often reveal violence at the genesis of production. Many technological developments in recent history have come directly from the state of permanent war: artillery rockets, rifles and torpedos in the late 19th century; aircraft, vehicles, radio and chemical technologies in the early 20th century; nuclear technology, the Internet, GPS, bio and nano technologies and computing leading into the 21st century. Warfare has been the catalyst for many of these advances, largely born from the desire to control, monitor and eliminate each other in more and more sophisticated and distant ways.

The Iron Triangle has unquestionably made its mark, and it has done so easily through the use of ideological threats, lobbying and political collusion - the infamous NSA/GCHQ surveillance scandal being but one recent example. In the 21st century the situation remains unchanged: those with the largest empires are also those with the most detailed and sophisticated technology at their disposal.

For the citizen and end-user, the experience of technology throughout post-WWII decades has been one of increasing degrees of separation between the internal blood and guts of the machine - from hardware to code - and the soft, alluring outer shell of the commodity form. All the traces of isolation and alienation that stem from this formula place an increasing number of steps between the immediate sensory encounter and the reality of the machine.

To catch a glimpse of the world removed at the heart of this machine, consider this century’s resources warfare in Congo. With the tech sector operating on the back of corporate appetite, the pressure to produce is carried from the drawing boards of Silicon valleys to the point of production’s material origin. In Congo, where demand for hi-tech device resources such as Tantalum has escalated in recent years beyond the capacity to supply, this pressure has only served to fuel the wider

conflict over the control and appropriation of these resources. This situation is estimated to have claimed the lives of more than 5 million people, making it the world’s deadliest conflict since the second world war.

Here we can trace commodified communications technology born from the arse-end-of violence to the mouth of your receiver. From ass to mouth - the food chain of 21st century technology production crosses gulfs, from violence to exploitation, until reaching civility; a history revealed only through the will to examine the world beneath the shimmering electronic propaganda of the new Samsung or Apple device.

We find ourselves removed from the very tools we use, encountering an unarticulated domain between production and use. The space-time contours of everyday social life are dramatically revised. This is especially true in our use of technology and how we mediate our relationships with the ‘real world’, as it becomes harder and harder to define and separate our technological identities from the idea that we also exist ‘in real life’. Our agency, as political beings, flows in between these spaces; interacting and composing itself from the vast caches of information that circulate on the network while at the same time being coerced by the near-universal grammar of our state of technology.

Beneath this existential predicament, however, we remain grounded in matters of fact - and the facts of matter. Underneath the polished, gleaming surface and the noise of code, beyond the hum of the machines and the steaming engines of industry, lies the vestige of the world we used to inhabit. Our celestial body has been drilled, zealously populated and polluted to the extent that it is now struggling to house us. To return to the world of the Science Fiction paperback, the well-used image of rising sea-levels is one envisioned threat worth its weight in post-industrial consideration.

Forecasts have revealed that if our industrial situation fails to stray from its current course, we could be looking at an approximate 4 degree increase in temperature by the end of the century. Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will continue to accumulate, increasing the likelihood of tipping points, such as a further retreat of permanent ice and permafrost, resulting in the release of more Methane. With this

trend even the conservative estimates of the IPCC state that: "Unmitigated climate change would, in the long term, be likely to exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt."

The statistics and forecasts stemming from this inexcusably marginalised field of science, and the consequences of industry, offer an escalating dose of sobriety for those unwilling to succumb to ignorance. How might we propose or enact the first steps in response to these circumstances? Should we succumb to a state of anomie or continue to deny the larger reality and maintain the status-quo of ignorance in bliss?

Rather than surrendering the last few threads of a future to despair, perhaps we would be better placed by reinforcing the support networks that will become increasingly valuable as the veil on our predicament slips further, while at the same time preparing as best we can for future breakthroughs that could inform our choices.

For the networked environment of today’s subject, we appear to be experiencing milestones and cultural re-wiring faster than we can contextualise these changes. Consider the transition from the one-time dreams of the AOL/Time Warner megalith to the alternative, participatory culture of peer-to-peer media sharing that has served to shift this entire industrial dynamic. There was no manifesto or sense of shared predicament feeding into this new dynamic, but its occurrence nonetheless instantiates the very real possibility of a tectonic shift in the way we address the problems of our time within the channels of technology.

With forecasts revealing the expanding potential for people to circulate ideas and build reservoirs of data, we have only to overcome the enclosure of knowledge by private interests in order to access the general intellect of our whole collective body. It is estimated that at the current rate of technological development a \$5 Hard Drive will soon have the capacity to retain the world’s total digitised media output. The axis of this particular struggle is the promise of a world population plugged into the history of knowledge, with the capacity - and will - to rewire injustice:

Do you want to borrow my hard drive?
What’s on it?
Everything.



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Universal Jobmatch Chrome Extension

Universal Automation is an extension for Google’s Chrome browser that automatically searches and applies for jobs on Universal Jobmatch (the government-run job search website that benefit claimants are forced to use). The purpose of this project is to “support the unemployed in their fight against the bullying and repressive regime of benefit sanctions.”

The application is currently at a very early proof of concept stage of development. You can download and install the extension from www.automation.strikenow.org.uk

BENEFIT CLAIMANT / Download the software and feedback to the group developing it. You need to give your Universal Jobmatch account details and job search parameters to the app. Once that’s done, it will perform the search you requested and try to apply to all jobs on the first page of search results. It needs a lot of improvement and additional functionality to be a complete product but it shows that the basic idea is viable.

TECHIE / The project is far from complete and seeks other developers contributing to it.

LONDON SQUATS ARCHIVE



The London Squats Archive is a historical Wiki project that can be found at www.londonsquatsarchive.org

The aim of the project is to map evicted Squats in London, creating an open source visual tool to better understand the history of squatting culture in London. Anyone can contribute to the archive by visiting the site and submitting/clarifying details.

PARK ST OCCUPATION

21-23 Park Street made headlines in early November as news that Southwark Council was auctioning off the property with a reserve of £2.25 million earned it the title of “the most expensive council house in Britain”. Just as news that the property had been sold for £2.96 million began circulating, it also became clear that the building had been occupied by local residents, some of whom are part of a new mutual support group called Housing Action Southwark & Lambeth, in an attempt to prevent the sale of yet more public housing. I briefly spoke to a number of those occupying the building about their reasons for taking action and their opinions on the housing crisis affecting the borough.

Occupied Times: Why did you choose to occupy this particular building?

Occupiers: This building was on sale with a starting price of over £2 million which I guess just symbolises the totally ludicrous state of the London property market at the moment. But for us it was simply yet another council house that was being sold and, if we can stop that, if we can keep this house as common property instead of being sold off to some private property developer who is going to turn it into luxury apartments, then that’s something that is worth doing. This is public property, and at a time when people are desperate for housing in Southwark every piece of public housing which is sold off denys people a chance to be housed. There was no mandate to sell the building and the argument that the money from the sale is going to be used to reinvest in new council housing doesn’t seem to come from a council whose actions hold true to their word.

But this is also wider than this one building. It’s about the loss of public/ council housing across London - whether that be through it’s sell off or the loss tenants evicted due to bedroom tax arrears - and if we can challenge that, hopefully more people will take direct action to defend all of our homes.

OT: How does this building fit into a larger process of gentrification across Southwark, and London as a whole, for a number of decades now?

O: In the context of gentrification, this building is situated in a particularly important place. It’s slap bang in the middle of the small area where the gentrification of Southwark actually began, just next to the Tate Modern and Borough Market. It’s backed onto by social housing which is finding itself more and more out of place with its surroundings. The council say they’re going to build 20 council houses “somewhere else”, but the point is they’re not going to be here. It’s taking publicly owned property in an area with higher housing prices, selling it off and forcing any potential social tenants to find housing further out. That’s definitively social cleansing in action. It’s

important that people with low incomes, who work and have lived in Borough for many years, have the right to live in their area. But it appears that the council don’t feel that these people do have that right. They’ll just put you somewhere out on the fringes of Southwark.

OT: How is this part of a larger project to defend people’s homes?

O: We want to raise the issue of council housing being sold off by councils across the country, particularly in London, where the housing crisis is especially severe: we know across the border that Lambeth Council are selling off short life properties and here in Southwark there’s been the Heygate estate, where thousands of social housing units have gone. All of this is being lost. The housing list in Southwark is disastrous. There’s 25,000 people on the waiting list and there is a huge waiting time before people are housed. If you’re band 1, which is for those with the most urgent need for housing, a one bed place can take up to eight months to find, for a three bed you’re looking close to two years. And that’s those in the most need even according to Southwark Councils criteria. Those with ‘lower priority needs’ are being forced to wait for years and years. People are then finding themselves forced to turn to the private sector or be made homeless, but if people are struggling to afford council rents, what possibility have they got of being able to afford private rates?

OT: So that makes this occupation far more than symbolic then doesn’t it?

O: This isn’t an academic discussion, there are people being made homeless right now because they’re not being provided with homes, and so, if people find a property, that could house people quickly, then suddenly this is about defending actual places where people could live. That’s the problem with these tired old promises of “twenty new houses” [the number of houses that Southwark Council claim they can build with the proceeds of the sale of the building], they don’t exist, if they ever will. We can’t live in promises, especially the kind that Southwark council make. There’s got to be a point at which we decide we’ve had enough of the resources which we all own being sold off in the name of a kind of progress that leaves most of us impoverished. If we can put a stop to a process that has destroyed our communities and entire ways of life surely that’s something worth doing?

The occupiers have since left the building. Housing Action Southwark & Lambeth (HASL) are a group taking collective action to defend and improve people’s housing across the two boroughs. The group meets twice a month - on the second Thursday and last Wednesday - to discuss and act together on their housing problems. You can find more details about the group, it’s work and the locations of the meetings at www.housingactionsouthwarkandlambeth.wordpress.com



Ragnhild Freng Dale

NORWAY'S RIGHT TURN

On 9 September 2013, the Norwegian people gave their votes to a conservative majority, which is now forming the most right-wing government in Norway's history. Norway, alongside the rest of Europe, is stepping to the right. But in contrast to most European countries, Norway is not in financial difficulties. On the contrary, by the standards of capital, it is performing better than ever; economic growth, increased employment, and none of the austerity other countries suffer. This seeming paradox goes to show how intimately connected the increasing free-market mindset is with a rising hostility towards those who are seen as "other" to liberal ideals. The removal of collective platforms and securities interweave with xenophobia as more people compete for ever scarcer public resources, in a discourse where human beings increasingly become categories instead of persons, consumers instead of humans, and productive or faulty on the free meat market of the modern world.

To return to context: Norway's elections last month showed a clear conservative majority. Whilst the Conservatives in Norway can be considered more as liberals in a European context, their partners in government, the Progress Party (FrP), are renowned for their anti-immigration attitudes and climate change denialism, all founded on a political conviction that lower taxes and increased market 'freedom' is the way to bliss. In a world deeply entrenched in the financial crisis, and a Europe where the cuts to public spending hit the most vulnerable in society ever harder, one would think that the Norwegian people would safeguard their welfare state rather than opt for the Conservative's slogan "new ideas, better solutions". But whilst the Norwegian people may soon have reason to regret their decision, when the 'freedom and flexibility' of a liberal free-market solution leads to privatised health-care and education, and an erasure of hard-won worker's rights, the entry of FrP into government represents a far more worrying problem.

That FrP is a party with strong anti-immigrant and populist tendencies is undeniable. Though it appears that Norwegians have forgiven and forgotten that the terror attack in 2011 had anything to do with this mindset, foreign media were quick to draw the link to Anders Behring Breivik on election night. The Independent released an article stating that the winning centre-right parties would form a coalition with what they called an "Anti-immigrant party with links to mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik", and a total of 12 countries writing about the Norwegian elections focused on this link. Whilst it's true that FrP did lose a significant percentage of votes when compared to the 2009 elections, they have to a large extent succeeded with sweeping Breivik under the carpet. When it became clear that the foreign media would not lose focus on this issue a press conference was hastily organised. Deputy leader Ketil Solvik-Olsen and Himanshu Gulati, leader of the party's youth group, asked the press to consider the party's history as a fight for lower taxes, less state intervention and to "limit immigration" rather than being anti-immigration per se. As several commentators have pointed out, this is at best obscuring the facts, at worst an outright lie. The

party has fostered a long record of racist statements from their members, and the coinage of words such as "sneak-Islamisation" prove where their true convictions lie.

Despite this, it seems that Norwegians have a fear of taking right-wing extremism and extremist talk seriously. When a professor at the University of Bergen told the media that FrP MP Christian Tybring-Gjedde's statements in public debates and in the media were those of a "xenophobe" and someone hostile to immigrants, Tybring-Gjedde claimed that he felt "bullied" and demanded that the University of Bergen obliged the professor to issue a formal apology. Both the professor and the university refused to do so, referring to the importance of political debate and academic freedom. Similarly, the current minister of development tweeted a message about FrP that caused a small panic from the Conservative leader, who subsequently reprimanded him for doing so. He, too, refused to apologise, but the tendency is clear: the new government does not want to display too clearly who this coalition contains, but it needs to be said loud and clear: FrP is a party whose members lump "immigrants" and "Muslims" into categories that threaten Norwegian society - when the real threat comes from the policies the party is about to implement.

Liberalism should take its share of the blame for this development. In the name of freedom of speech, we have opened a door for racist and xenophobic statements to enter the public sphere, and to categorise human beings as backwards, pre-historic or even worse. If someone looks like us and speaks like us, not to mention jokes like us, then they can pretty much say what they want. But if they threaten the flows of capitalism, or use their freedom of speech to perform a critique of the system, then they are in trouble. Liberal discourse is, to paraphrase a line often attributed to Zizek, where everything is said but nothing is argued. Words cease to have a consequential meaning, shrouding how ideologies lead to actions that profoundly affect the way that we live our lives. This is no less true with the liberal use of the word "freedom" as an excuse to cut welfare and public institutions that make society possible.

Even leaving the terrorist links to the side, it is clear that the acceptance of FrP as a party suitable to govern a country forms part of a worrying European shift to the right, from the much more extreme Golden Dawn in Greece, and the Hungarian Jobbik party, to the less explicit Swedish anti-immigration mindset, or Labour and Tories accepting a shift similar to Norway's in the UK. These convictions are growing not only in size, but in their acceptability as part of public debate. Even in countries with few explicitly extreme groups, there is a plethora of extremist individuals existing just below the surface of what seems to be a civil society with liberal, open mindsets. And increasingly, parties with such a membership base are making it into government. To fight this issue we will need to challenge the liberal mindset in which statements and policy interests towards the extreme are accommodated and deemed acceptable.

СВО

Oksana Chelysheva

POLITICAL PRISONERS



БО

sometimes Saint Petersburg to become visible to the international community. In Yekaterinburg in March 2013, Maxim Petlin, the regional coordinator of the Yabloko and also a deputy of the city council, was sentenced to three years in prison. He was accused of demanding 3 million rubles from a property developer to end protests against demolishing a park and building a shopping centre in its place. That there was, once again, a lack of evidence and multiple perversions of justice during the trial of Maxim Petlin didn't prevent the judge from pronouncing an unfair sentence.

The period between 2012-2013 gave rise to an unprecedented increase in the number of political trials. Putin's authorities don't see any limits in organising mass trials. In most cases the charges and the subsequent punishment are absolutely inadequate to what a person actually did or is suspected of having committed. There was nothing new in the tactics deployed by the prosecution against Pussy Riot in 2012. Two of whom - Maria Alyokhina and

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova - were convicted for "aggravated hooliganism" - a charge handed to many activists recently.

On 6 May 2012, "March of the Millions" was held in Moscow. Its violent dispersal by the special police force and subsequent numerous charges against its participants of alleged "riots" are regarded to be the culmination of the authorities' clash against Russia's civil society. As of now, 28 people have been charged. Three of them have already been given prison sentences, one more, Mikhail Kosenko, has been ruled to undergo forced psychiatric treatment. In Moscow, a show trial of 12 other participants is ongoing. Others charged are awaiting their trials. Several dozens have fled Russia seeking asylum. One of those, Alexander Dolmatov, committed suicide in a Dutch extradition center in January 2013, his asylum request having been refused.

In Murmansk we have seen baseless charges of piracy against the international crew of the "Arctic Sunrise" ship. On 18 September, Greenpeace took action at the Prirazlomnaya oil rig where Gazprom intends to become the first company to pump oil from Arctic waters. Over a day later the ship was illegally boarded by armed Russian special forces before being towed to Murmansk.

Thirty activists, including 3 journalists, have been refused bail while an investigation into the action is underway. That the Greenpeace vessel was attacked while located in international waters makes Russia guilty of violations of international law.

These examples are not comprehensive. I have not mentioned the scientists serving sentences for appalling charges of "espionage" due to contact with their colleagues in other countries. There are stories of persecuted journalists: Mikhail Beketov, the editor-in-chief of a small town newspaper in Khimki, a Moscow satellite, was attacked in 2008. The assault left him heavily disabled. Mikhail Beketov died on 8 April 2013. Just recently, on 16 October 2013, Elena Tkach, a municipal deputy of Moscow was beaten during public hearings on the plans to construct another shopping mall in a historic part of Moscow, erasing two monuments in the process. Elena Tkach was thrown from the stage by a representative of the developers and taken to hospital unconscious.

The Russia of gulags and secret police was supposed to be a shameful aspect of our nation's history, a lesson to be learnt and never repeated. Instead we see innumerable cases which show there is still a clear tendency that the authorities of Russia are acting in full confidence that they will get away with whatever injustices they perpetrate, before and into the future. When dissent is stifled, the only way to resist it is to do so in greater numbers, together.

ДА

There was a short period of time in recent Russian history when a tiny hope emerged that there would be no more stories of people imprisoned for their political views: people falsely diagnosed with "continuous sluggish schizophrenia", expelled from big cities to areas from which foreigners were completely banned. Then 1993 came and Boris Yeltsin gave the order to crash the parliamentary crisis with tanks and shooting. The violent resolution of the crisis led to more than 70 deaths and 172 injuries. It was an important stage in Russia's path away from democracy. Then came the military assault on Chechnya, which had dared to proclaim independence. Yeltsin acted more and more like a self-proclaimed czar and in 1996 picked up his successor, the almost invisible former FSB director, Vladimir Putin. Russia under Putin has become an authoritarian police state.

This year, European politicians began to apply the term "political prisoners" when describing the current political reality in Russia. This doesn't mean that their usually very cautious attitude towards anything Russia-related has drastically changed. It is just an indication that it is getting harder and harder to keep their eyes closed towards the growing number of political prisoners in Russia, not to suggest that political prisoners in Russia are a new phenomenon.

When hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Moscow in December 2011 to express their indignation with the fraudulent results of the parliamentary elections, it wasn't the beginning of a movement. Since July 2006 there have been regular protests, including Marches of Dissent, Days of Wreath and Strategy 31. There was also Occupy Abay on Chistye Prudy boulevard in Moscow with its singing, dancing and lectures.

Of all the political groups with high numbers of people imprisoned on politically motivated charges, The Other Russia, a non-registered party founded by Eduard Limonov, comes out on top. Their members were imprisoned en masse for holding political actions which some would regard as controversial but which were never violent. In 2004, forty-one young people went to the public reception office of the Russian President Vladimir Putin. They demanded that Putin leave power. Forty of them were imprisoned. They all spent one year in the infamous Moscow Butyrka prison. The incident became this century's first

mass trial in Russia - and a lot more were to follow. A few months earlier, another group of people held a peaceful takeover of three offices inside the Ministry of Health, protesting reforms which they claimed monetised social benefits, affecting the most vulnerable social groups in society. Although all three offices were vacant at the time of their occupation, seven young people were given sentences ranging from 2-3 years in a general-regime colony.

Currently, six people affiliated with Other Russia are serving sentences on politically motivated charges. The most cynical of these is the case of Taisia Osipova, the 28-year-old wife of Sergey Fomchenkov, one of the key people in this political group. In November 2010 Taisia was arrested in her native town of Smolensk on charges of illegal drug possession/distribution. From the start, the case has been characterised by two shocking details: the investigation failed to provide any significant proof of Taisia committing any crime and there is strong evidence that the whole case was fabricated by the Police Centre to Counteract Extremism, which now serves as the political police of Russia. Despite a lack of evidence, Taisia was found guilty of the "intention to commit crime" and sentenced to 8 years in a penal colony.

Taisia Osipova's case, where politically motivated charges are brought, is not an isolated one. Vasily Popov, the leader of the Karelian branch of the Yabloko party, nearly shared the same fate. In February 2009, Popov was found guilty of extortion from a local businessman and libelling the head of regional government. Despite inadequate evidence, Popov was given a 4 year suspended sentence with 4 years of probation, halting his work as the chair of the Petrozavodsk (the regional capital) city council. The sources within Yabloko party told me that soon after the term of the punishment had expired, Popov was nearly trapped again when drugs were planted in his belongings. This provocation failed as Popov underwent a medical test proving he hadn't taken drug-related substances.

Despite its status as an officially registered party, Yabloko has more and more political prisoners among its ranks. It is emblematic that all the cases of the party members persecuted on political grounds are taking place outside the Russian capital. This is one of the most dangerous features of the Russian political scene: it is rare for the problems of people outside Moscow and



Arran James

“Democratic” Psychiatry

When I hear the phrase “democratic psychiatry” I immediately think of the rhetoric of “service user involvement” and the ideology of empowerment. These aren't the directions psychiatry should take simply because this is the direction psychiatry is already taking and which it is already perfectly able to assimilate. I am opposed to this rhetoric and ideology not because I think they will be the ruin of psychiatry as it exists, but because I am convinced that they will not.

Where democracy is meant in terms of a process of democratisation of existing institutions, we are caught in a problem that resembles Zeno's Paradox of Achilles and the Tortoise: the infinite divisibility of stages of democratisation that renders the process essentially illusory. In the paradox, Achilles and the tortoise are set against each other in a race where the former is pursuing the latter. The idea is that in order to reach the tortoise, Achilles has to traverse the space from where he begins running to where the tortoise began. In the time it takes him to do this the tortoise has moved further ahead and so he must now race to that point, and so on to infinity where Achilles must bridge ever diminishing intervals of space. The upshot is that Achilles never catches the Tortoise, and all the spectators go home entirely bored by the never-ending logical nonsense.

This paradox is a logical problem that doesn't match our experience: of course a hero like Achilles would catch the tortoise. The point is that it also serves as a fable of democratisation. Conceptually, it is uncertain where we could draw the limit-point, the transgression of which would mark psychiatry as being truly democratic. Against traditional readings, democratisation is not a transition from pre-democracy to democracy but is in fact the bad infinite of adding "a little more democracy". This is how I understand the democratisation of psychiatry: the attempt to increase participation in psychiatric service design and review by those who receive psychiatric treatment and their

significant others and families. All very well and good, but conceptually such increases in participation can be infinitely divided into ever more vanishing gestures. This is played out in practical terms in the tokenism that many psychiatric survivors see in the way that psychiatry has appropriated the democratisation agenda.

In practice, democratisation has come to mean increased involvement in a system that is necessarily founded upon the cognitive authority of medicine, despite its scientific stature being almost entirely spurious. When a system of governance mimics and grounds itself in the cognitive authority of experts, and when it advances its own "expert" opinions as unassailable necessities, then such cognitive authority becomes the scaffolding for a form of authoritarianism. The democratisation of psychiatry isn't a transition to a democratic regime, but the increased embedding of dissent within psychiatry so as better to neutralise it. When authoritarianisms can no longer neglect, exclude, or otherwise destroy those in their grip they move onto become adepts of management, negotiation, and, therefore, containment and pacification.

While there has undoubtedly been a radical improvement in the conditions people find themselves in and the way they are treated by "services" (a term that implies a consumer-commodity relation that is entirely lacking) since the early days of psychiatry, this is not evidence of a transformation of psychiatry itself. Without a fundamental reorientation of psychiatry, democratisation is simply the attempt to create a space within psychiatry, and therefore outside of the political, that resembles an agonistic play of voices. This chorus is tolerated and even encouraged but also within limits. Those limits are defined by the contours of psychiatry itself: just like with democratic political regimes, you are free to choose whatever you like as long as you choose what has already been chosen.

I am an advocate of the position that those who are affected by a decision should also be those who are making those decisions. In psychiatry this is a difficult position to maintain; we can't really allow floridly psychotic people to make decisions about their own care, nor can we allow violent people the last word on whether or not restraint is ever to be used on their bodies. These are sensible objections but they also miss the point insofar as they remain wedded to the "empowerment" ideology that is, in reality, only the application of an atomising individualism to the people who are already feeling the most acute consequences of that ideology.

So how can this principle - arguably the principle of democracy - be applied? It can only be applied by considering that the people making the decisions aren't only psychiatric subjects, but are capable of such decision-making (even if they aren't capable of understanding the nuances of psychiatry as it conceives itself today.) Do you have to be a psychiatrist to make a decision about what's best for a person? I think not. It is the experience of non-expertise that is required by psychiatry today.

We hear a lot about the idea of the "expert by experience". Some people champion this as a way of saying that only the person who experiences mental distress is able to understand it and that the professional must listen and be receptive. This is an attempt to equalise the power relationship within psychiatry by disrupting the distribution of roles of expertise through the affirmation of personal and collective counter-knowledge. And yet, this has been integrated into psychiatric and nursing training programmes without having made much of a difference. Distress is still pathologised, voices that escape the democratic regime are still "behavioural" or "unstable" etc., and spurious treatment regimes continue to destroy the capacity of people to engage in the processes of their own care - with the full legal backing of the state.

I don't find this surprising at all - the argument of expertise is not liberatory or emancipatory but caught within the democratic management of positions. The patient is an expert and the professional is an expert - their mutual expertise is complementary and reciprocal. In clinical practice this expertise is often that of the individual, whether it is the psychiatrist, nurse, or patient/client/service user/survivor, while in terms of policymaking it is too often the privilege of select pressure groups.

The discursive horizon of expertise is naturally the horizon of the expert-as-expert who recognises the expert-from-experience as possessing an expertise that is announced as "different" from her own, but where this "difference" really means subordinate or a mere point of interest. The expertise of sufferers is usually only really regarded as such when it comes wrapped up in the expert's own expertise: An unquiet mind will always be recognised as the real deal. By attempting to disrupt the discourse of the expert, the discourse of the sufferer is consumed by the structures of expertise as if by phagocytosis.

An emancipatory psychiatry should involve a genuinely democratic move by asserting that in terms of mental health there is no expertise and no expert. Psychiatrists, nurses, pharmacologists, people in distress, their friends and their families (none of these categories are exclusive): none of us know what is going on and none of us know what to do about it. But, psychiatry operates by pretending, by acting as if it knew even when it is repeatedly shown that its theories, evidences, and treatments are wrong, do not work, and cause more harm than they do healing.

I am not arguing that reforms are unimportant or that all mental health activists withdraw any involvement in the structures of psychiatric power. I am not suggesting a manichean binary wherein professionals are bad and people in distress are good. Rather, I am suggesting that democratic psychiatry can't even be realised outside of its own ideal image while it remains allied to a practice of the self-management of psychiatric subjects within psychiatry.

When I think about democratic psychiatry I think about the ambiguity between democratisation of the same, and the radical possibility of a dictatorship of psychiatric survivors informed by the knowledges of psychiatric workers that are no longer considered as structural experts. This would resemble a kind of self-managed vision of mental health services where democracy was a material precondition, rather than an outcome, for emancipation from psychiatric oppression. There are already nascent examples of this throughout the world in the forms of self-help groups, peer-support, the Hearing Voices Network, the Soteria Project and others. Rather than being a democratic psychiatry these movements are something else entirely. These groups already implement a praxis that assumes an implicit demand: the supersession of psychiatry itself.

Raymond Lunn

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The cell door opened for slop out to discharge the piss bucket. Bang, bang and bang again. The sound of an unwieldy wooden scrubbing brush clubbing me in the head. Two much older lads decided that I was responsible for doing a “Borstal Whistle” during the night. This was one of my first mornings in prison, only just 16 years of age and finding myself on the 'YP' (Young Prisoner) wing of Her Majesty’s Prison, Hull. An adult gaol, previously classified a 'Cat A' top security prison. The fear of what else could happen in that prison cell, the trauma of the assault, the anxiety it created, have never left me. It moulded my morality as a dangerous and prolific offender for the next 6 years.

If we're to persuade people to stop offending, do you think the memory I've shared with you is the sort of merciless incarceration experience likely to lead to change? It isn't. Put simply: prison doesn't work. Or maybe it does work, just not in the way we're supposed to believe it's meant to.

At the vulnerable age of 16, the experience of just one month in Hull turned me into a “hardened Con”. A career criminal, eager to learn the tricks of the trade. It gave me the status of a boy who became a man too quickly, having done hard time in a man's prison. Any idea of the value of that status on the street? I left prison much more damaged than when I went in. People in power think they know what's best for society. If they saw the logic and reality from the perspective of those who have lived it, they wouldn't send so many young children into prisons. Or, maybe they would, because it delivers the raw material needed to keep the control mechanisms alive.

Early on in life I came to understand the coercion of materialism, and the pressure to possess things. Growing up in Gipton, a council estate where kin are often referred disparagingly as the “salt of the earth”, we were aware of class. Not the type of class written about in books or romanticised by middle class interpretations. The class divide for us inner city kids was real, we touched it daily and lived it through school life: a sense of powerlessness and a lack of expectations. Just as working class inner city kids still do. We created our own solution to inequality through crime, as they still do. I'm not trying to excuse my behaviour or the young that offend today. I'm just telling you the reality of living in an unfair society and the lengths people will go to to create an identity.

It could be argued that the system expects children from disadvantaged communities to commit crime, and become

offenders. The criminal justice system ensures that rehabilitation rarely occurs - who has ever been rehabilitated? Does the system ensure recidivism through trauma, conditioning and socialisation with other offenders?

Do you believe material offenders are fools, dependent on crack and alcohol, unintelligent because they don't possess the rules of grammar, the state's standards of literacy and maths? Academia and charities revel in this type of narrative for the causes of crime. They don't understand the sedition, the desire to create your own rules and ways of communicating, a phenomenon that academics sometimes naively call subculture. The ability of the “criminal class” is to provide for themselves, often adequately compared with how society fails them. This is the truth of why people steal, burgle, rob and deal drugs.

Like the judicial system, in the form of “the criminal”, charities and the academy are fed a raw material to commodify and abuse. I accept this is a generalisation. However, do you not question why the prison industrial complex is so massive? The almost immeasurably large industry and its mechanisms created to deal with crime, and yet the rates of crime and recidivism rarely alter? Perhaps you'll think my view sounds as if a complot is afoot? There might be for all I know.

The fact remains that integration is arduous. It feels as if it's meant to be impossible for the “ex-offender”, trapped on welfare and charity due to unemployment and other social needs. We are caged within the codification of legislation and policy. What I do know is this: it's hard to “go straight”. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the related Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau) are the other control mechanisms that fail society and prevent the integration of people who have offended. This legal framework bars us from joining in, it fosters prejudice and disadvantages those wishing to desist from crime.

Desisting from crime is me choosing to stop for whatever reason or reasons. It's not because of the system or any rehabilitative programme. I've often wondered why I desisted from a life that had its dangers and consequences, but at least gave me a sense of self and determination. Instead I've swapped it for a life in a prison cell without bars or locks - surely the worst incarceration. I'm the commodity - victims of crime, the police, the criminal justice system, Hull Prison, welfare services, charities, academia, awaits to enter through the door again, again, and again.



The Logic of Punishment

Criticsticuffs

The logic of punishment— in democratic states—

Crime pays - especially in the public debate. These days, almost everybody seems to be concerned with how best to fight crime. While there are divergent approaches, many believe in the need for punishment and for the state to use force (where would we be without the protection of private property, freedom and so on?). Even if some would admit that harsher punishment does not help the situation and that harm is not necessarily undone or compensated, the necessity for the state to punish in order for a society to work isn't even an issue. We question the core assumption in this: that criminal law is made for the benefit of those subjected to it.

Breaking the law— and bourgeois order— belong together—

Private property is the institution regarded as safeguarding secure access to 'things'. But, in fact, it mainly excludes people from the things they need, i.e. from anything and everything they do not own. This exclusion time and again gives rise to situations where people violate property law, simply to be able to satisfy their material interests. It is a daily habit to dodge the fare, to evade taxes or to cheat to get just a little more out of benefits. These examples of crime show that most people's lives, even in successful capitalist states, are not ones in which needs, wants or desires are provided for. Instead, people break the law to satisfy them. Moreover, in a society based on its members' pursuit of economic success in competition against each other, it is no surprise that the rules set to maintain this competition are constantly broken. So, while not all forms of crime result from the dependency on property, most crime only exists because of the pursuit of economic success in competition with and against each other. And it is this regular production of crime that makes a penalty system in bourgeois societies imperative.

No crime without law—

It is also public opinion that by means of the (criminal) law the state simply reacts to breaches of interest that happen all the time, in every society. However, it is the state which provides the conditions for these breaches in the first place. The right of ownership - granted by the state - forces everyone to pursue success in the capitalist economy by means of their property against the competition. It is the state itself which brings about the material reasons for mass breach of the law.

Put differently, public opinion and bourgeois law assume that breaches of interest inevitably exist in society. However, antagonistic interests on a systematic basis only exist because of the state and its law. No crime without law is true in another sense. A crime is that which the state defines as such. The standard is not whether someone else is negatively affected (e.g. sacking people or shooting enemy combatants in war are not crimes) or not (e.g. prohibition) but simply what interests the state considers it necessary to protect (inviolability of property and person).

The state's demand— against its subjects—

The state is aware that competing interests characterise the social and, in particular, economic life of its subjects, within the conditions it asserts. Through its superior force and armed with the law, the state organises that the pursuit of these antagonistic interests lead to overall national economic growth, or at least do not present a problem to it. It does not necessarily care for the success of a particular citizen, but rather that the motley all-against-all produces the economic success it wants; and for that it wants subjugation under its laws.

For the state, this demand is a matter of principle. When one person violates another person's rights - i.e. violates an interest protected by the state - the state treats that as a criminal

offence against itself. The state itself is an affected party as its laws have been broken and punishment is meted out to re-establish the authority of the law over the law breaker. The restoration that criminal law is predominantly concerned with is the restoration of the law, not the restoration of the victim's well-being. While you might think that smoking a spliff is a victimless crime, the state always considers itself to be the victim when somebody disregards its law.

...and its citizens’ appreciation of the law—

People usually refer to the law's alleged social achievements when it comes to justifying it: punishment limits crime. It is assumed that people refrain from stealing, robbing or assaulting if the penalties are sufficiently high. This justification of the law is made from the standpoint of the existing conditions in a bourgeois society. From this people extrapolate how “the world” would look without the state's monopolisation of force, without a legal system and punishment to keep fellow citizens at bay.

A picture is painted where no one takes rights seriously any more and chaos and misery ensue. If such thought experiments ‘prove’ anything at all, it is not that punishment is useful. Instead it shows that a reasonably peaceful communal life is not possible without violence in a world of property, competition and socially produced scarcity.

Furthermore, by ‘justifying’ democratic punishment in this way the state is not recognised as responsible for establishing the conditions that give rise to crime but rather as a response to those conditions. A society based on everyone competing against each other and the misery caused by this are thought to be conditions already existing before and outside of the state's existence.

For a more extensive text on punishment in democratic states we recommend <http://antinational.org/en/punishment>.

Sara Cameron

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW: DATA ECONOMY

The data economy can be summed up as follows: the acquisition and exploitation of personal information on behalf of the marketing and commercial profiling industries. This includes practices such as lead generation which encompasses things like online surveys and cold calling, market research, signing up to a company's mailing list, viral marketing, liking a page on facebook, online behavioural advertising (OBA) and tracking technology – receiving any sort of communication from brands trying to sell you something, or an organisation that wishes to know more about your consumer habits. Companies do this through a variety of channels: telephone, SMS, email, direct mail, social media, and fax.

Naomi Klein's 'No Logo' offered a good analysis on the advertising industry's transition from the manufactured product to the creation of a "brand essence" as part of the new experiential communications industry. But advertising is undergoing another development - a technological revolution - in the form of lifestyle research and "shared endorsements", whereby the onus to advertise a product is firmly placed on consumers. This beefed-up brand essence strategy has added greater value to companies, not simply in terms of sales revenue but in the form of data, and we create a lot of it.

Companies like Facebook can be worth billions without possessing many physical assets, making it hard for investors to realistically price companies. The social network, for example, has ascended to a \$100bn valuation in five years, despite the assets on its balance sheet amounting to a reported \$6.3bn. Business is starting to appreciate the amount of money to be made in the data world; data is a massive driver of growth for many big companies, but remains elusive when it comes to examining its real value.

Given this difficulty in measuring value, the data economy risks becoming another asset bubble: its worth is not accountable in any meaningful way, it can be overpriced, it lacks sufficient regulation and oversight, it can depreciate, and predicting a return on investment is, more often than not, guess work as it relies on modelling behavioural, social, knowledge and relationship capital. How do you determine what a phone number or email address is worth, or what it will be worth in the future? Market research into consumer behaviour, however, can be monetised and this is what we are seeing now as market researchers and lead generators are put to work by brands to analyse and predict your behaviour.

The systematic banality of everyday activities that can see your personal information added to commercial databases, incestuously shared with third parties, enhanced and appended to a data-set, filtered through analytics, tracked, monetised and sold off to a brand for profit (or spammed to high hell), lends itself nicely to Hannah Arendt's

work, Eichmann in Jerusalem. These commercial practices are not planned and conducted by sociopaths, but by labourers (and users) under the guidance of capitalists who accept the desires and needs of production capitalism. Personal information is commodified and sold to others for a profit, part of which is reinvested and used to expand the venture by acquiring more data and the latest software. Users sign up and freely share their data in the hope that they'll get a bargain, money back under payment protection insurance, or help managing their debts that the system created.

The unique aspect of this process at this particular link of the chain under industrial capitalism is that information (your name, contact details, gender, lifestyle choices, financial history - the list goes on) is in itself the commodity being sold to, and valued by, brands. Brands can then, in turn, increase their campaigns to a wider pool of "warm data" who are more likely to buy into brand identities and increase the brand's profits.

The information regulator, the ICO, will tell you that most of these marketing and data practices are legitimate, but what one company purports to do in its privacy policy is not always what they do in practice. Moreover, people will often ignore the fine print as it is purposefully obscured by voluminous and difficult to read small print which, if the spirit or even the letter of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) is to be followed, lacks the principles of transparency and fairness under the first data protection principle.

Although a new data protection regulation is working its way through Europe (to replace the outdated DPA and take account of the Snowden leaks), the DPA and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 (PECR), which provides additional rules to help protect 'subscribers' from unsolicited marketing, are still good law for the purposes of electronic communications in the UK. Privacy policies aside, the main rules for marketing and data collection by companies can be summed up as follows:

Email – companies must have your prior consent, unless you are a 'corporate subscriber' (i.e. they are emailing your business email address) and they are only contacting you with goods and services that you would be likely to purchase in a professional capacity. You must also have been given the opportunity to opt-out. The requirement for prior consent can be nullified where you are an existing customer of the brand (as long as a few other criteria are met).

Automated Telemarketing, SMS and Fax marketing – again companies need prior consent.

Non-automated Telemarketing – this is a huge area in the marketing and data world. More often than not, telemarketing operations are outsourced to a call centre packed full of young agents in boiler room type buildings on industrial parks in the north of the country, swiftly replacing

the manufacturing factories with desks, phones and dialling equipment to create and trade in lifestyle information. The rule here is that you can cold call people in their homes at certain times, unless they have previously notified the brand (or the third party call centre) that they object and/or are registered with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS - our 'do not call' list). However, being on the TPS file does not take precedence, so if you opt-in to being called by a brand, they can and will call you. Even where you have given over your personal data via a data capture form, neglected to tick the opt-out box and are registered on the TPS, you can still expect a call.

One of the many problems with telemarketing (despite the fact that we live in a culture that demands its existence), and why it is the cause of much distress and frustration by many, is that many brands and their call centres do not strictly follow the letter of the law. Some companies will devise a multitude of devilish strategies which can include buying the TPS file as a fresh list of data to spam (instead of using it to meet their data protection obligations, such as screening before a telemarketing campaign to knock off the names and numbers that cannot be called).

Others will collect personal information under the guise of conducting market research (which does not require TPS screening) and instead use it for marketing purposes (known as 'sugging' and 'dugging'). This purposefully creates complexity around obtaining consent so that lead generators can try to increase their data pool, warm up leads and make a cash cow out of you. Some call centre agents won't even provide you with their name or the brand on whose behalf they are calling, which makes it incredibly difficult to find out who holds your data, where it came from and what they intend to do with it. Once you are lost in the profiling and marketing world, sometimes it's tempting to simply disconnect your landline and get rid of your mobile number to escape the neverending spiral of behind-the-scenes data sharing between companies, and to avoid harassment.

Telemarketing is a huge area in the commercial data world, but the ICO and Ofcom are ill-equipped to actually monitor and challenge these types of practices which are commonplace amongst lead generators and brand marketing departments. List brokerage by companies such as Acxiom and Experian, compounds the problem as your data is rented or sold (often without you knowing), to other brands and list brokers. Although suppliers are meant to protect their lists containing personal information through the use of contracts and seeding methods, among other things, lists still get misused in the quest to generate more revenue.

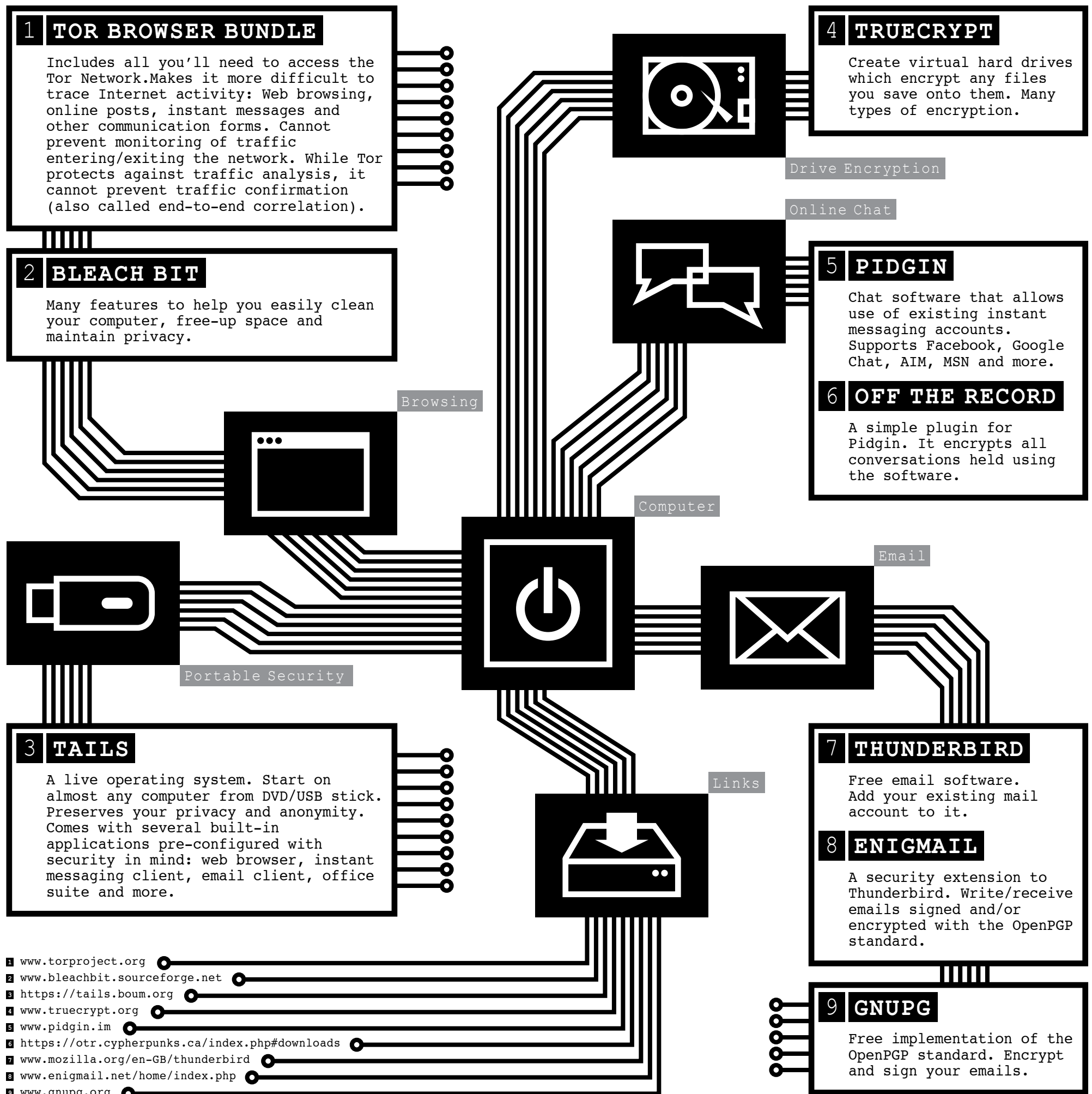
Many people understand the amount of money to be made in this area, so they

set up fly-by-night operations in the hope of collecting huge volumes of data (of a questionable quality), spam it and send on the details of unwitting 'consumers' who don't hang up, have not asked to be removed from their lists, or are not registered with TPS. It should be noted that TPS registration is not a perfect solution – if the new data protection regulation comes into effect in the UK as it currently stands, telemarketing may become opt-in like email. Lobbying by various big name brands has already watered down many of the more 'consumer-friendly' provisions of the regulation, and it is likely that the telemarketing sector will plead the tiresome 'economic growth and more jobs' card.

Consent issues also arose over cookies technology back in 2012 when the PECR was amended in 2011 providing that users give explicit consent to having their browsing habits tracked. At the eleventh hour, and after much commercial pressure, the requirement to check a box when opening a new browsing session was downgraded to 'informed consent' i.e. providing information on the website that cookies are used and the type of cookies. For session cookies which, for example, allow you to browse a webpage and save items in a shopping cart, this is a practical decision, but for third party cookies which are described as persistent i.e. information is dropped on your computer between browsing sessions to monitor your browsing patterns, and third party cookies such as Omniture and Google Analytics, they were shoved under the session cookies requirement for informed consent. Internet users who don't have knowledge of these online practices (or how to install decent software to limit the effects) are still at risk of having their browsing habits (aggregate or personally identifiable information) tracked by different companies for the purpose of monitoring and marketing (lest we forget OBA).

It is becoming increasingly difficult to escape tracking and commercial practice. Gone are the days when adverts scattered only the physical realm of newspapers, billboards and town centres. Marketing and branding is digital. This is the way we live now. Various tools to combat different aspects of the hostile terrain do exist, from Ghostery and Adblock, to changing your own browser setting, coupled with updating your privacy settings on the social media platforms you use. But again, you will only find these tools if you know what to look for. Hopefully, the dragnet surveillance programs and the far-reaching welfare reforms (in particular Universal Credit which is due to be fully rolled out this October), will put people on notice and allow activists the world over to start experimenting and implementing alternative spaces on the web, where you can still browse and access what you want, free from commercial and state interference. Watch this space.

HOW TO COMBAT ONLINE SURVEILLANCE



Governments have transformed the internet into a surveillance platform, but they are not omnipotent. They're limited by material resources as much as the rest of us. We might not all be able to prevent the NSA and GCHQ from spying on us, but we can at least create more obstacles and make surveilling us more expensive. The more infrastructure you run, the safer the communication will be. Download installation software for these programs. Read detailed instructions at: www.theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=12178

THIS GUIDE IS A VERY BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE SECURITY IN THE HOPES THAT YOU'LL INVESTIGATE FURTHER. DON'T TRUST YOUR LIFE TO IT.

ORGANISED NETWORKS

FROM WEAK TIES TO STRONG LINKS

Geert Lovink
& Ned Rossiter

Sloganism for late 2013: "I feel protected by unpublished Suite A algorithms." (J. Sierpstra) - "I am on an angry squirrel's shitlist." - Join the Object Oriented People - "When philosophy sucks, but you don't." - "See you in the Sinkhole of Stupid, at 5 pm." - "I got my dating site profile rewritten by a ghost writer." - "Meet the co-editor of the Idiocracy Constitution" - The Military-Entrepreneurial Complex: "They are bad enough to do it, but are they mad enough?" - "There really should be something like Anti-Kickstarter for the things you'd be willing to pay to have not happen." (Gerry Canavan) - Waning of the Social Media: Ruin Aesthetics in Peer-to-Peer Enterprises (dissertation) - "Forget the Data Scientist, I need a Data Janitor." (Big Data Borat)

//// If we look back at the upheavals from the past years (2011-2013) we see bursts of 'social media' activity. From Tahrir to Taksim, from Tel-Aviv to Madrid, from Sofia to São Paulo, what they have in common is communication peaks, which fade away soon after the initial excitement, much in line with the festival economy that drives the Society of the Event. Corporate social networking platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are considered useful to spread rumors, forward pictures, file reports and comment on established media (including the Web). But no matter how intense the street events may have been, they often do not go beyond 'short ties'. As temporary autonomous spaces they feel like carnivalesque ruptures of everyday life and are perhaps best understood as revolts without consequences.

/// There is growing discontent over event-centred movements. The question of how to reach a critical mass that goes beyond the celebration of temporary euphoria is essential here. How can we get over the obvious statements about the weather and other meta fluctuations (from Zeitgeist to astrology)?

Instead of contrasting the Leninist party model with the anarcho-horizontalist celebration of the general assembly, we propose to

integrate the general network intellect into the

organisation debate. We've moved on a good 150 years since the Marx-Bakunin debates.

It is time to integrate technology into the social tissue and no longer reduce computers and smart phones to broadcasting devices. As so many know, either tacitly or explicitly, technologies are agents of change. To understand social transformation, therefore, requires an understanding of technology. Innis and McLuhan both knew this well. It is thus not unreasonable to say that media theory provides a reservoir of diagnostic concepts and methods to assist those making interventions against regimes of control and exploitation. We would even go one step further: don't just rehash concepts on file, but invent your own by deducing the correspondence between concepts and problems as they manifest within your own media universe of expression. Find sites of conflict, passion and tension, and you'll soon get a rush of thought to the brain.

The organised networks model that we propose is first and foremost a communication tool to get things done. We are aware that this proposal runs into trouble when tens of thousands of users start getting involved. Once you hit that kind of scale the Event takes over. The orgnet concept (short for organised networks) is clear and simple: instead of further exploiting the weak ties of the dominant social networking sites, orgnets emphasise intensive collaborations within a limited group of engaged users. Orgnets are neither avant-garde nor inward-looking cells. What's emphasised is the word 'organ'. With this we do not mean a New Age-gesture of a return to nature or a regression into the (societal) body. Neither is it a reference to Aristotle's six volume work called the Organon. Even less does it refer to the tired notion of the 'body without organs' (or Žižek's reversal, for that matter).

The organ of orgnets is a social-technical device through which projects are developed, relations built and interventions made. Here, we are speaking of the conjunction between software cultures and social desires. Crucial

to this relation is the question of algorithmic architectures - something largely overlooked by many activist movements who adopt, in what seems a carefree manner, commercially motivated and politically compromised social media software such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+.

Today's uprisings no longer result from extensive organisational preparations in the background, neither do they produce new networks of 'long ties'. They do, however, often emerge from a collective unconscious of accumulated discontent. Think of the public protests in São Paulo; initially a response to an increase in the costs of public transport, the underlying motivation behind such demonstrations was a longstanding malaise stemming from social inequalities and economic privileges bestowed upon a corrupt elite. What's left is a shared feeling: the birth of yet another generation, though one not limited to age or even necessarily class or political persuasions. Even though small groups have often worked on the issues for many years, their efforts are usually focused on advocacy work, designing campaigns, doing traditional media work or being focused on those who are immediately affected by the crisis on the ground. Important work, but not precisely about preparing for the Big Riot.

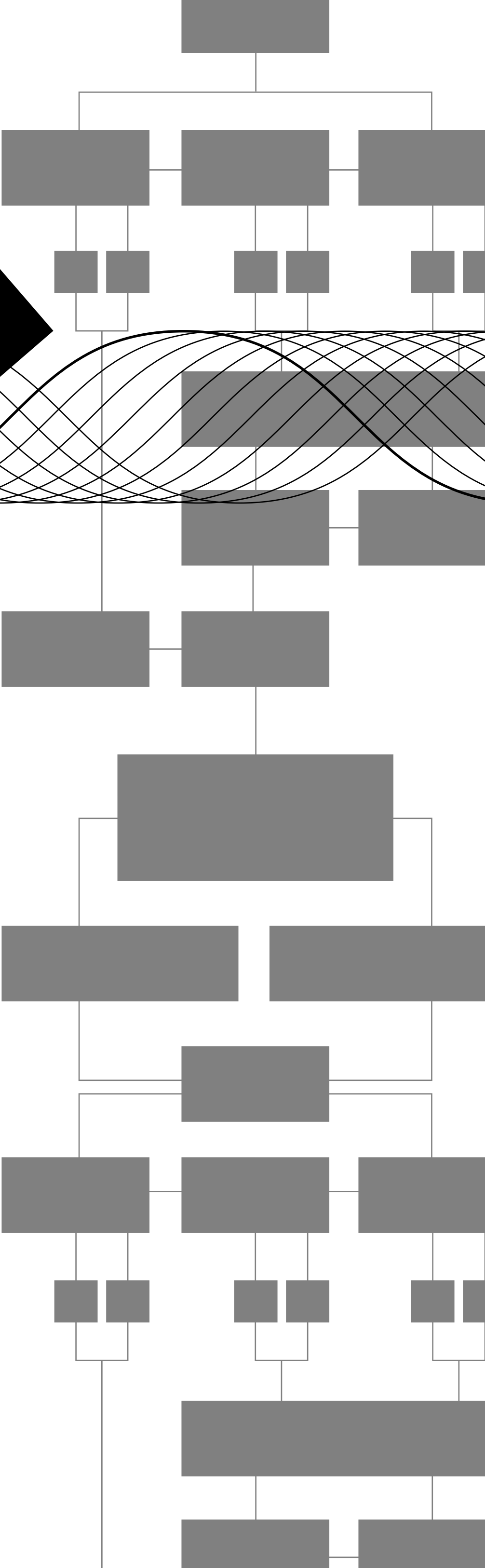
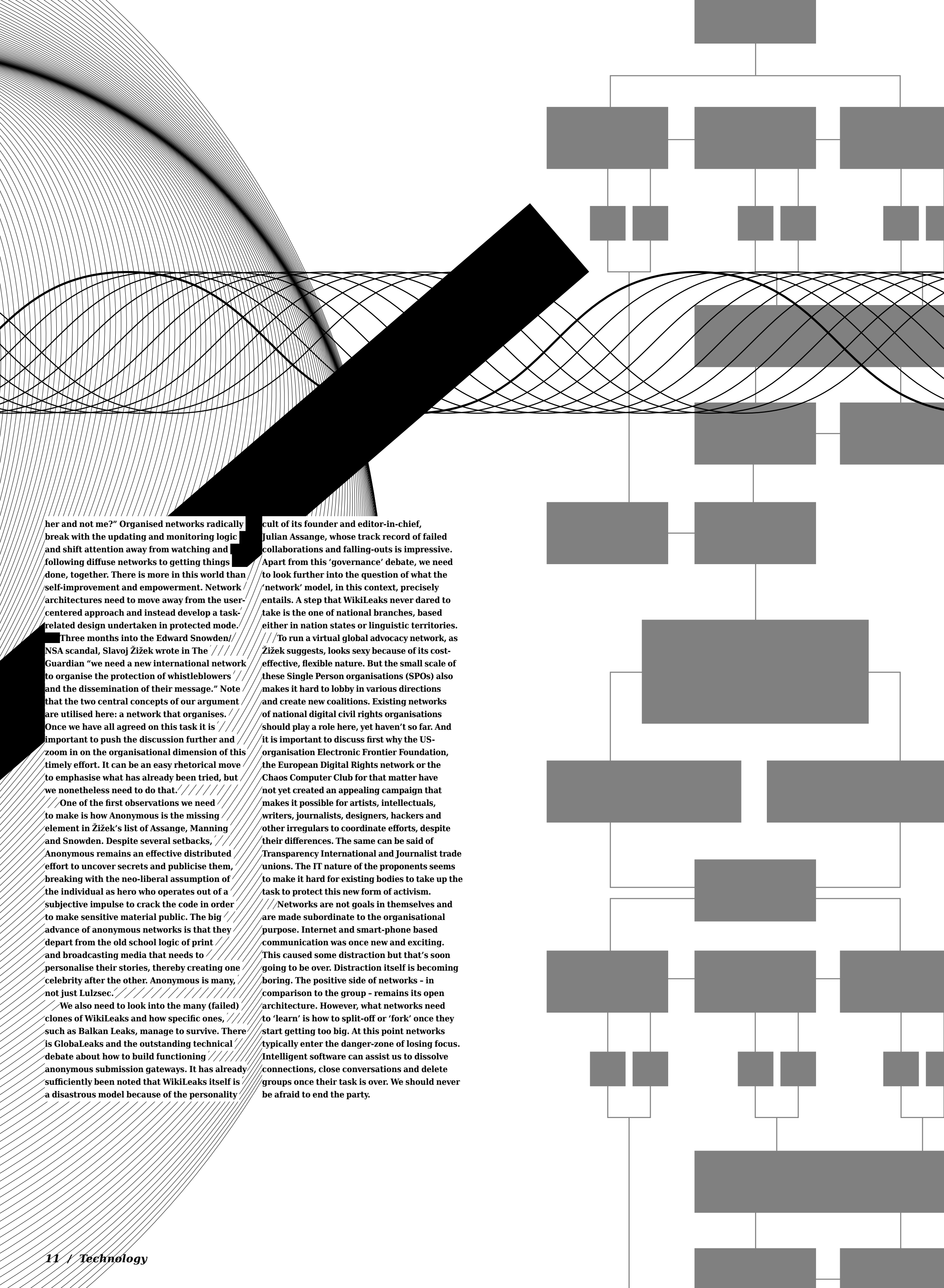
Is it wishing for too much to want sustainable forms of organisation when the world seems to be in perpetual flux? Very little stability defines labour and life as we know it. Ideologies have been on the run for decades. So too are political networks amongst activists. At best we can speak of a blossoming of unexpected temporary coalitions. What we need to focus on in the years to come is time-in-between, the long intervals when there is time to build sustainable networks, exchange ideas, set up working groups and realise the impossible, on the spot. How might such a long-term strategy be conceived and orchestrated within the logic of networks?

We can complain about social media

causing loneliness but without a thorough re-examination of social media architectures, such sociological observations can easily turn into forms of resentment. What presents itself as social media critique these days often leaves users with a feeling of guilt, with nowhere to go, except to return to the same old 'friends' on Facebook or 'followers' on Twitter. As much as mainstream social media platforms come with an almost guaranteed capacity to scale as mass networking devices, they are not without serious problems that many are now familiar with: security of communication (infiltration, surveillance and a wilful disregard of privacy), logic or structure of communication (micro-chatting among friends coupled with broadcasting notices for the many subscribed to the cloud), and an economy of 'free labour' (user generated data, or 'the social production of value').

While there has been some blossoming of social media alternatives such as Lorea, which is widely used among activists in Spain, other efforts such as Diaspora ended quite disastrously. After successfully raising \$200,641 in development funds through Kickstarter it failed to gain widespread traction among activists, until an overall implosion of the project after one of its founders committed suicide. The increasing migration of youngsters to Instagram (a subsidiary of Facebook) and Snapchat was probably inevitable (irrespective of whether the NSA leak happened or not). But as April Glaser and Libby Reinish note in a recent Slate column, these social media alternatives "all use centralised servers that are incredibly easy to spy on."

Current social media architectures have a tendency to incite passive-aggressive behavior. Users monitor, at a safe distance, what others are doing while constantly fine-tuning their envy levels. All we're able to do easily is to update our profile and tell the world what we're doing. In this 'sharing' culture all we can do is display our virtual empathy. "She really ain't all that. Why does all the great stuff happen to



her and not me?" Organised networks radically break with the updating and monitoring logic and shift attention away from watching and following diffuse networks to getting things done, together. There is more in this world than self-improvement and empowerment. Network architectures need to move away from the user-centered approach and instead develop a task-related design undertaken in protected mode.

Three months into the Edward Snowden/NSA scandal, Slavoj Žižek wrote in The Guardian "we need a new international network to organise the protection of whistleblowers and the dissemination of their message." Note that the two central concepts of our argument are utilised here: a network that organises. Once we have all agreed on this task it is important to push the discussion further and zoom in on the organisational dimension of this timely effort. It can be an easy rhetorical move to emphasise what has already been tried, but we nonetheless need to do that.

One of the first observations we need to make is how Anonymous is the missing element in Žižek's list of Assange, Manning and Snowden. Despite several setbacks, Anonymous remains an effective distributed effort to uncover secrets and publicise them, breaking with the neo-liberal assumption of the individual as hero who operates out of a subjective impulse to crack the code in order to make sensitive material public. The big advance of anonymous networks is that they depart from the old school logic of print and broadcasting media that needs to personalise their stories, thereby creating one celebrity after the other. Anonymous is many, not just Lulzsec.

We also need to look into the many (failed) clones of WikiLeaks and how specific ones, such as Balkan Leaks, manage to survive. There is GlobalLeaks and the outstanding technical debate about how to build functioning anonymous submission gateways. It has already sufficiently been noted that WikiLeaks itself is a disastrous model because of the personality

cult of its founder and editor-in-chief, Julian Assange, whose track record of failed collaborations and falling-outs is impressive. Apart from this 'governance' debate, we need to look further into the question of what the 'network' model, in this context, precisely entails. A step that WikiLeaks never dared to take is the one of national branches, based either in nation states or linguistic territories.

To run a virtual global advocacy network, as Žižek suggests, looks sexy because of its cost-effective, flexible nature. But the small scale of these Single Person organisations (SPOs) also makes it hard to lobby in various directions and create new coalitions. Existing networks of national digital civil rights organisations should play a role here, yet haven't so far. And it is important to discuss first why the US-organisation Electronic Frontier Foundation, the European Digital Rights network or the Chaos Computer Club for that matter have not yet created an appealing campaign that makes it possible for artists, intellectuals, writers, journalists, designers, hackers and other irregulars to coordinate efforts, despite their differences. The same can be said of Transparency International and Journalist trade unions. The IT nature of the proponents seems to make it hard for existing bodies to take up the task to protect this new form of activism.

Networks are not goals in themselves and are made subordinate to the organisational purpose. Internet and smart-phone based communication was once new and exciting. This caused some distraction but that's soon going to be over. Distraction itself is becoming boring. The positive side of networks - in comparison to the group - remains its open architecture. However, what networks need to 'learn' is how to split-off or 'fork' once they start getting too big. At this point networks typically enter the danger-zone of losing focus. Intelligent software can assist us to dissolve connections, close conversations and delete groups once their task is over. We should never be afraid to end the party.

IF THE ANSWER WAS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WHAT WAS THE QUESTION?

Dave King

Most debates about the pros and cons of information technology fail to ask a basic question: what is information technology for? In order to understand information technology's functions and effects on society, we need to examine its origins. This, in turn, requires a basic understanding of the systems that produce technology and their relation to capitalism.

TECHNOCRACY

In the 17th century, the medieval cosmology of the world as a single interconnected organism gave way to the idea of the world as a clockwork mechanism. Philosophers such as Francis Bacon and the founders of the Royal Society developed the experimental method of modern science. Partly because they no longer saw the world as alive, these writers developed a very explicit philosophy of domination and control of nature through technology, and the machine became the ruling ideal of western society.

The new regime, which can be called technocracy, although it is philosophically consistent with capitalism, needs to be seen as a separate system. This is what distinguishes our civilisation from those before it: a systematic application of science, in combination with capitalist social relations. The appellation 'capitalism' is inadequate - we live in technocratic capitalism.

Technocracy did not come into its own until the Industrial Revolution a hundred years later. Although driven by economic/geographical and political forces, the Industrial Revolution established for the first time many of the aspects of technocratic modernity: control of people through control of nature; domination of people by machines and systems; power shifting to those who have mastery over technical knowledge; an emphasis on efficiency and measurement e.g. the imposition of

clock time; and an ideological insistence that this process constitutes 'progress' for everybody.

The Luddite uprisings can be seen as a revolt not against machines but against the great Machine of the Industrial Revolution. The image of backward yokels obstinately resisting progress is a history written by the victors. In fact, the Luddites broke only those machines that were destroying their trades and livelihoods. Their motto was to put down all machinery 'hurtful to Commonality'. Luddism is anti-technocracy, not anti-technology.

By the end of the 19th century, the ideology of laissez-faire was giving way to a thoroughgoing managerialism. At the level of the factory this was represented in the Scientific Management of Frederick Winslow Taylor, a mechanical engineer famous for his studies on industrial efficiency and workers. By breaking down a complex task requiring skill into a number of small, repetitive unskilled tasks, Taylorism achieved not only the disciplining and subordination of workers to management, but the transformation of the factory into a more efficient integrated system. Central to this method was the collection and collation by managers of vast amounts of information.

THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION

As Frank Webster and Kevin Robins argue in *Times of the Technoculture*, this was the first Information Revolution, long before information technology, and it created the pattern for the rest of the 20th century. In a world dominated by systems (Taylor's motto was, 'In the past the man was first. In the future the system will be first'), information is central. It links elements of non-mechanical systems, whether they be computers, factories or what Lewis Mumford referred to as megamachines - large bureaucracies, corporations, the military etc.

The vision of the technocrats dominated the 20th century. In the capitalist countries, the key

task became balancing supply and demand in the economy. Scientific marketing and advertising involving the collection of masses of information about consumer demand proliferated. This information became the lifeblood of corporations, ultimately leading to the development of the first computers by International Business Machines (IBM).

Information technology, as we would recognise it, emerged from the military demands of World War II and the Cold War. It was here that the discipline of cybernetics (the control of complex systems) first appeared. Primarily funded by the US military, the development of Cybernetics (a more sophisticated version of the machine paradigm) has been the driving force behind information technology from the second half of the 20th century until today.

As Webster and Robins point out, by the 60s the Fordist industrial system, which had culminated in the first half of the 20th century, was facing increasing criticism due to its overall rigidity. The 70s and 80s saw the emergence of the 'post-Fordist' paradigm, when computers began to spread into all aspects of life - first in the workplace and then, with Microsoft and Apple, into the home. Consistent with the more flexible and 'smarter' forms of regulation of complex systems offered by cybernetics, this technology allowed people, it appeared, to escape from the rigidity of Fordist life and to express their individuality and creativity.

As has now become clear, it enabled the economy of 'flexibility', of isolation and precarity. The atomisation and erosion of working class resistance to capitalism promoted by information technologies is an example of the way that technologies serves the fundamental logic of the system that generates them. Information Technology intensifies and accelerates the megamachine that is our society, resulting not in post-Fordism, but hyper-Fordism. Another process occurring throughout this period, for which information technology was essential, was corporate globalisation, requiring computers to manage the data management and communication needs of expanding transnational corporations.

Information technologies opened vast new markets of consumer gadgetry, fuelling a new engine of capital accumulation. They gave new impetus to the ongoing process of capital intensification (replacing labour costs with machinery). This has already had a massive impact on the employment market, with a series of 'jobless recoveries' from recessions being a major element in the creation of the 'squeezed middle'. At present this trend is accelerating, with Artificial Intelligence and robotics already impacting on professional jobs, for example, the proliferation of stock trading by computer algorithms.

The establishment of an utterly transparent communication regime in which surveillance of the population can be automated has also been a major advantage to the state/corporate system. The ubiquity of surveillance was characterised by Michel Foucault as a panopticon, named for a prison system first proposed by Enlightenment philosopher Jeremy Bentham, in which every inmate knows that they are under constant surveillance and so discipline themselves. We need only highlight the widespread acceptance that one's Facebook data is being mined by corporations, and the general abandonment of the concept of privacy to see its effects.

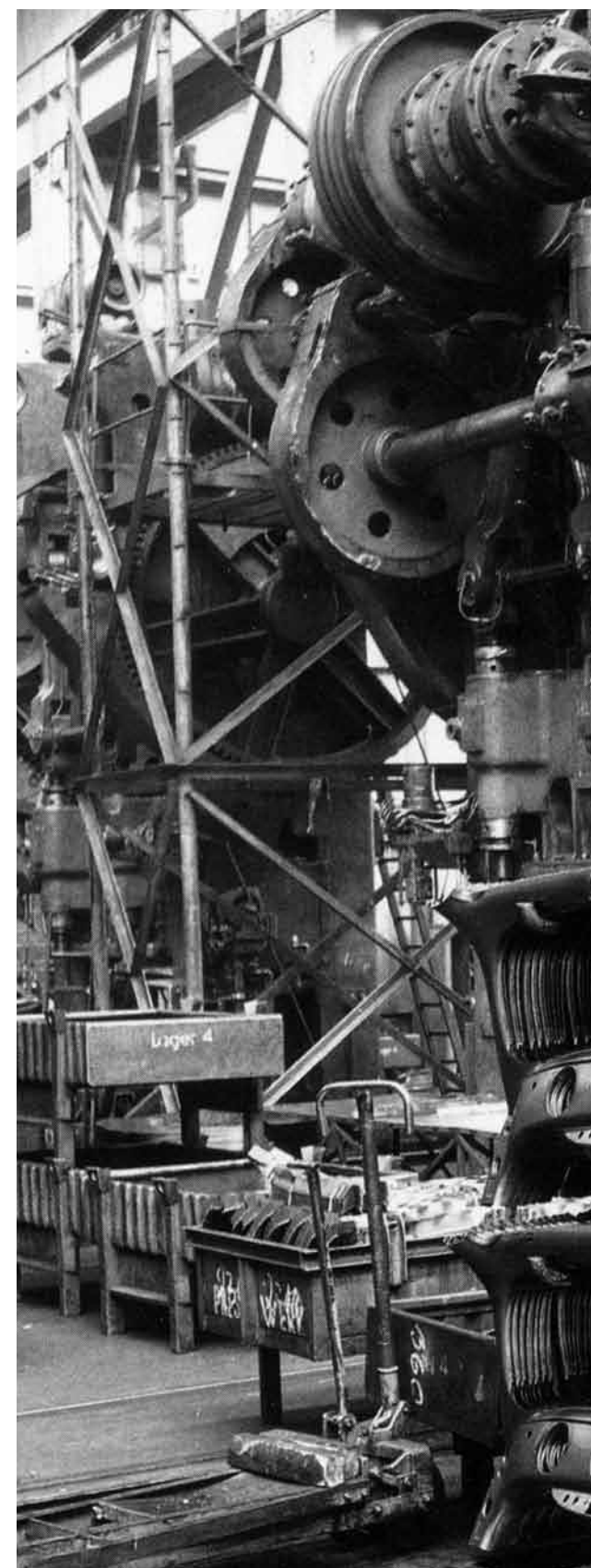
CONCLUSION

The development of information technology is a response to the needs of the three main powers of technocratic capitalism: private capital, the state and the military. Information is the necessary technology,

the core technology of technocratic capitalism, in contrast to nuclear, nano or biotechnologies, which are simply nice accessories. Information technology springs from the central logic of technocracy - the creation of control and order through systematic knowledge, and of capitalism - the domination of physical labour by intellectual labour, embodied as capital. Information is the lifeblood of systems, and it is capital.

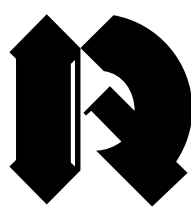
Obviously, this does not mean that these technologies have no benefits. Neither is it that they are tainted to the point of uselessness by their basic functions in the system. We just need to be clear about what that basic function is. It may be that in post-capitalist, post-technocratic society some use may be found for information technology. In the meantime, the best we can do is follow the advice offered by General Ludd in his recent communique: OFF YOUR COMPUTERS AND ONTO THE STREETS!

Dave King is the coordinator of the Luddites200, a group that has been organising celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Luddite uprisings to honour the Luddites' struggle and challenge the myths about them.



LEAVING THE 21ST CENTURY

McKenzie Wark



nobody could now match those thumbnail portraits of the big picture that Marx could write, but one has to try. Let's start

with the sun, with its energy, stroking the planet, and the warmth of its light, trapped by the atmosphere - the greenhouse effect. A sun whose energy fuels so much of life, past and present. A life which we now know changed the atmosphere itself, its composition, and its heat-trapping capacity. A life which changes geology itself. Those fossil fuels are memory of sun.

Fast-forward to the moment. Here we are, tearing through the backlog of those combustible fossils like there is no tomorrow. They fuel, among other things, three kinds of surplus. Those of time, of information, of life itself; and three kinds of struggle, over who controls those

surpluses, and to what end.

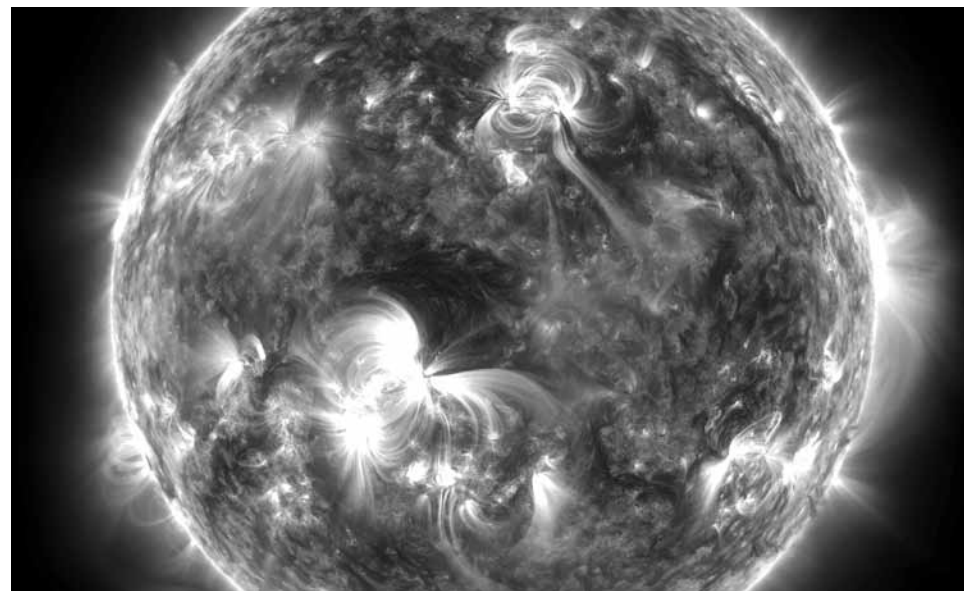
Labour unions: the folks who brought you the weekend! Labour struggled to wrest free time from capital, and won - at least for a while. But what made that victory possible besides labour's resolve was that surplus, of the sun, trapped in fuels, applied to industry, augmenting labour. Capital's counterstrike was the culture industry, and the capture of that free time, most effectively by television, and now by the myriad screens of a disparate spectacle, which together with work and sleep consumed the largest share of day and night.

It looked for a while as if the Internet might free that chunk of surplus time, that television time, from the consumption of spectacle, and deliver it over to the free, non-alienated production of social life. But it was not to be. In place of the culture industries, we have the vulture industries, which

feed off the free labour of net time and commodify it again. But the struggle is not over, and one of the resources of the moment with which to struggle against metabolic rift and mode of production that produce it is a certain margin of surplus time.

A parallel story might recount the struggle over surplus information. The digital makes the relation between information and its material form arbitrary, freeing it from the property form, enabling a far greater distribution and cross-referencing than was ever imaginable with mere mechanical reproducibility. With information, everything can belong to everyone, and every bit of it can link to every other bit.

If it was the workers who freed time, it was the hackers who freed information, or at least some of it. By 'hackers' I mean that class of scientific, technical and aesthetic creators whose industry is converted into 'intellectual property' that



in most cases they themselves no longer own or control. Not owning the means of production, they like workers have to sell the capacities. Unlike labour, their output is more of a qualitative than a quantifiable nature. Hackers make new arrangements of information rather than additional units of a commodity. They give form to the commodity rather than stamp out new units of that form.

The ruling class counter-attack uses the digital against itself, artificially restraining the free flow of information, binding it to even more restrictive property forms. The struggle then is between the new commons of the hackers or a new fief of the ruling class, a 'cloud' for which we have to pay for the privilege of retrieving fragments of our own knowledge and culture. Either way, the digital domain is also a product of surplus, of the sun, its legacy of stored energy, powering those server farms.

After the struggle over the surplus of time and the surplus of information comes another, which like them is undergirded by a surplus of energy, but in some respects it changes the game: the struggle over surplus life. The goal is to extract a rent from the life sciences rather than sciences like chemistry, and not from owning the industrial apparatus of molecular transformation, such as the fertiliser industry, but from owning the design of productive organisms as intellectual property. Not that there aren't scientists who struggle against the extraction of surplus directly from life, but the means are in place to make life itself productive within the commodity form.

Again, as with the surplus of time in everyday life, of information within cultural creation, the surplus of life extracted from the life sciences runs on the same fuels. At the end of the day it all comes back to the sun, which Andrey Platonov called the "worldwide proletarian," and that stored sun that is fossilised carbon. It's the base for all our superstructures. Our general economy is solar. We live on the energy of surplus sunlight.

There is a lively debate on whether extraction of stored sunlight from the oil and gas fields and coal mines has peaked or not. It's bad news either way. If it has, the era of easy energy is over, and with it the surplus and the struggles over it.

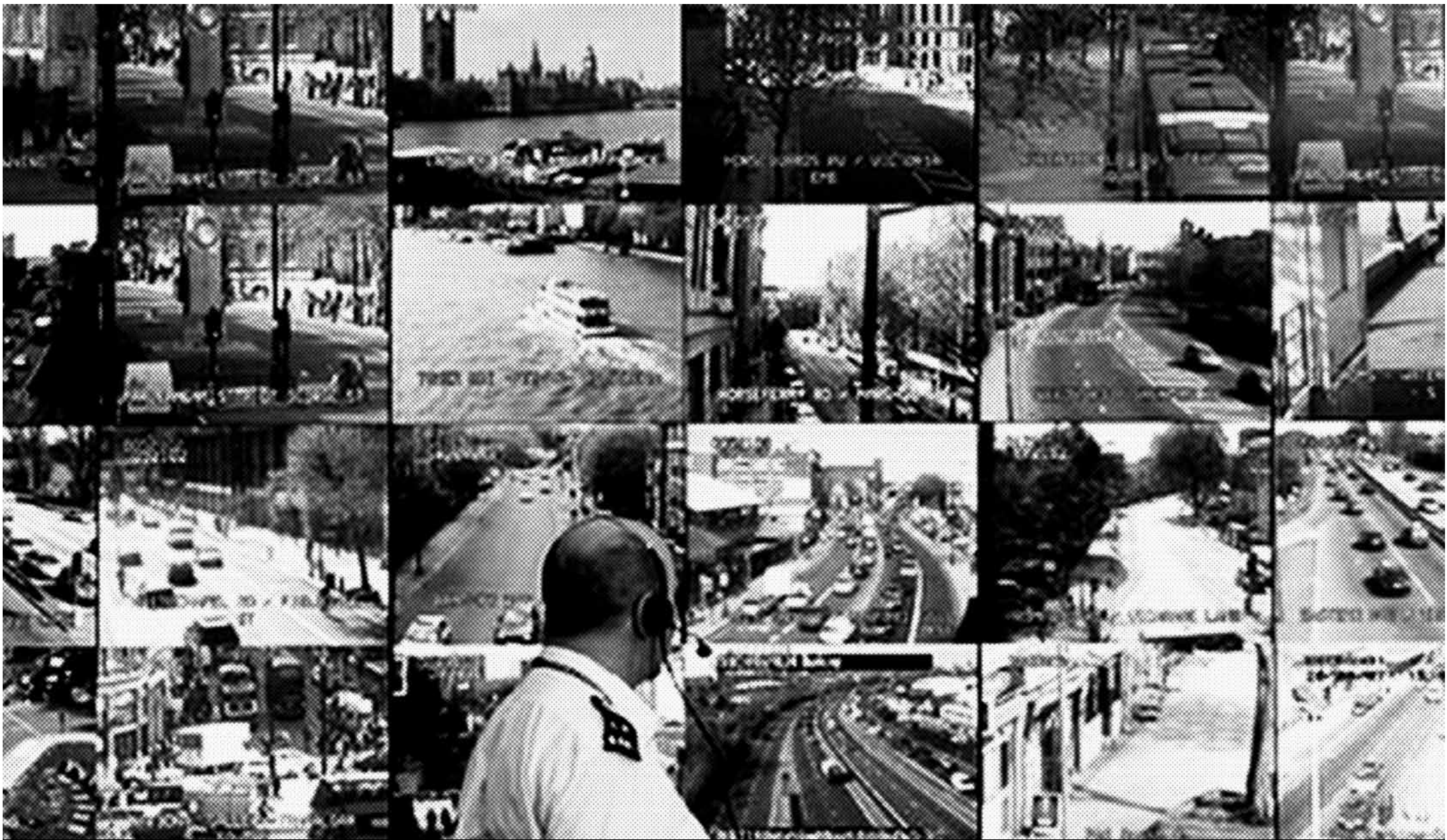
If it hasn't, the metabolic rift opening up through the release of carbon into the atmosphere might crash the totality of the climate system. And yet this mode of production - is it still even capitalist? - goes on as if there were no limit.

It is as if the 'real' Platonic form that was capital had detached itself from appearances, from the hard matter of everyday life, and revealed their falsity. These worldly things, this whole Earth, falls short of the one that capital imagines as its plaything. It has commanded already, and in advance, more Earths than this one. There is not enough base for its gleaming superstructures, not even if capital were to annex Mars as well. Hypocritical theory was at least half right: capital imagines that the superstructures are all that matter, but from the point of view of labour, that which lies beneath it and provides the surplus on which it feeds is emerging in our time as somewhat more worthy of attention.

But let's not depress ourselves too much. Rather, let's ask: how might the surplus of time, of information, of life itself, be organised differently? That might be a task for a no longer quite so hypocritical theory. There might still be a role for the things it teaches, such as the arts of reading, even if a more constructive rather than suspicious mode of reading might be what the times require, and as a way to read a different kind of text. Ones more about metabolic rifts than theories of the subject; more about the culture of self-organisation of working people than about the bourgeois classics; more about molecular flows, of water and grain and shit, than of great political dramas; one simply more base in its tastes, more stinky even than that artisanal cheese.

Let's use the time and information and everyday life still available to us to begin the task, quietly but in good cheer, of thinking otherwise, of working and experimenting, for when the going gets weird. Let's begin with a close (or close enough) reading of texts that come like messages in a bottle, across the sandy seas, from another time when the going got weird, a century ago. If we are to leave the twenty-first century before it takes leave of us, then perhaps we might learn a thing or two from the great attempt at leaving the twentieth century, and before it had hardly begun.





Signal Interference

Jack Dean

‘The Stasi had a file on everybody’ was once a common trope used to favourably compare the ‘free’ West to oppressive Soviet societies. It has since become an emblem of the threat to privacy that an overreaching security state will embody. When Edward Snowden exposed the surveillance apparatus maintained by the US and its partners, it made the Stasi look like rank amateurs. East German spies had only managed to fill filing cabinets in one small office building in Berlin. The amount of floorspace required to hold the NSA data (if stored in like-for-like printed files) would cover mainland Europe.

News cycles obscure history, creating isolated media ‘events’ from which our reactions can be guided for carefully designated periods

PRISM

PRISM is a vast data-mining program the NSA use to search email and internet traffic data for “foreign intelligence purposes”. It could not function without the compliance of various tech companies. Documents released by Snowden show participants in PRISM include Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, AOL and Apple. PRISM appears primarily to be used to build a comprehensive digital ‘picture’ of a person of interest. It is not known exactly what kind of data is included in this database, but it is alleged that the NSA has real-time access to e-mail, chat services, videos, photos, stored data, and file transfers from companies who collaborate with them. Put simply, the NSA has the capability to surveil all foreign online communications.

Subsequent disclosures highlighted that organisations such as GCHQ also undertook mass interception and tracking of internet and communications data.

of time. The most advanced and, let’s remember, ongoing system of surveillance in history becomes forgotten, only to be referenced in an occasional throwaway final sentence whenever an article about US relations is published.

The proliferation of surveillance has operated in tandem with technological development. In 1945, Project SHAMROCK was developed, collecting all data which was entering or leaving the US via telegraph. Major communication companies actively aided the project. Between 1967-73 Project MINARET spied on US citizens; many protesting the Vietnam War were placed on a ‘watch list’ at the US Army’s request. In 1988, Project ECHELON, a signals intelligence

TEMPORA

Run by the UK’s GCHQ, TEMPORA uses two principal components: “Mastering the Internet” and “Global Telecoms Exploitation”. The aim is to collate online and telephone traffic. The data is acquired by physically ‘tapping’ transatlantic fibre-optic cables. The signals were intercepted under secret agreements with major telecommunications companies including BT and Vodafone, who now face legal action. It is also alleged that some companies have been paid for their co-operation. Extracted data is preserved for three days whilst metadata (put simply, data about data i.e. if the data is a photograph, the metadata would include the time and location it was taken and the camera settings used and so on) is kept for 30 days.

Once extracted at the intercept point, data is processed using search algorithms which highlight material

project which intercepted satellite telecommunications on a huge scale, became public knowledge. Today’s intricate web of intelligence gathering involves many overlapping pieces of software and hardware, operated by numerous state intelligence services.

The latest revelations were, to put it very mildly, complicated and would require far more space to unpack than is available in a single article. What follows is a very brief breakdown of some of the most important operations run by various intelligence organisations. There are many, many more databases, applications, algorithms and instruments which are not described here (Boundless Informant, XKeyscore and Stellar Wind to name but a few).

conforming to purposes authorised by warrants. Promising results are logged for further examination. Data gathered from random individuals is treated exactly the same as that gathered from targeted suspects. It is claimed that TEMPORA utilises actual data including recorded telephone calls, the content of emails, Facebook postings and internet users’ browsing history (in defending certain techniques the US government highlighted that their surveillance only logs metadata.) It is impossible to know the total number of those targeted by TEMPORA.

Companies aiding GCHQ are forbidden from revealing warrants that compel them to allow access to cables. By the end of 2011, GCHQ had probes attached to more than 200 internet links, each of which was capable of carrying 10 gigabits of data a second - the equivalent of gathering the whole of Wikipedia every four seconds on each link.

MAINWAY

MAINWAY is an NSA database which stores the metadata of hundreds of billions of phone calls. The database records a variety of data on each phone call: caller, receiver, date/time/length of call, location of the phone during the call and other ‘identifying information’. The calls themselves are not recorded, but vast amounts of behaviour and private information can be gleaned from examining the database.

BULLRUN / EDGEHILL

BULLRUN is a decryption program run by the NSA (Edgehill is GCHQ’s equivalent) which pulls data from various sensitive sources. The program is able to penetrate various online protocols, including HTTPS, voice-over-IP and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL). These protocols are fundamental to the security of online banking, shopping and secure communication online.

When brute force attacks to breach secured communications fail, intelligence agencies collaborate with technology companies and ISPs to include vulnerabilities into encryption software allowing access to encrypted channels through what are known as ‘backdoors’ or ‘trapdoors’.

The documents leaked by Edward Snowden reveal a clear picture of total surveillance in an intangible global empire of surveillance and ‘security’. This is no clandestine organisation ‘gone rogue’, nor the kind of abuses of power that happen within the outer reaches of a bloated state. The surveillance mechanisms are front and centre in a political order which justified and built all the legal instruments they required to allow the networked society to be tapped, stored and analysed. The

spectre of ‘national security’ is wheeled out, where the ‘protection of citizens’ is instrumentalised to mask the state’s desire to protect its own power. Our search for justice will not be found in the same courts which granted permission for the largest invasion of privacy that the ‘free democracies’ of the world have ever seen.

The reaction from the surveilled has been, at best, muted. Due to the often abstract nature of social relationships in a networked society, it can be harder to place a value judgement on the many social interactions we now share. The intrusion has been almost total but for a variety of reasons the reaction has been anything but. Perhaps it’s because we’d all assumed it was probably happening, or because we don’t really recognise the kind of surveillance we’re all living under.

If every piece of mail you received had already been opened and clumsily sellotaped shut again. If every conversation you had with friends involved a suited stranger writing down everything said in a notepad. If someone peered at the keypad every time you entered your pin number. If someone looked through your shopping every time you were at the checkout. If someone sat next to you as you surfed the internet making a note of everything you were doing. If all of this was happening, would you accept the explanation that they weren’t interested in what *you* were doing because they were treating everyone in the same way? The Stasi used to secretly spray dissidents with radioactive chemicals so they could track their movement with Geiger counters. In a world where we all willingly carry tracking devices around with us, the surveillance state will behave differently. Is that something we’re willing to live with?

SURVEILLANCE

We shouldn't be surprised by the tactics a desperate political class use to retain control, courtesy of advances in technology and the creation of discursive threats (traitors, communists, drug cartels, terrorists, foreigners, workshy). Tantalising insights have always surfaced intermittently around surveillance in the US and the UK. Yet people were shocked as they watched the Snowden leaks unravel in the Guardian. The commentariat was waiting for a huge story to try to put surveillance culture in context, and they received it. After the first set of disclosures washed over us (PRISM and Tempora), further revelations sprung to life in the form of the BULLRUN project.

These revelations illustrate more than violations of the human rights framework 'democratic' states dispense to their populations. It's about identity and principle. We are increasingly producing and bleeding our subjectivities through communication networks in a constant feedback loop. The way we live now is through a networked society where data is omnipotent and necessary, but we should never forget the words of information theorist Claude Shannon: "The enemy knows the system".

In May 2013, Edward Snowden, a former employee of NSA contractor Booz Allen Hamilton, uncovered a series of programs - notably the telephone interception of metadata and details of the NSA's MAINWAY call database, as well as a variety of internet surveillance initiatives. The Guardian obtained and broke the story describing a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) order requiring Verizon to hand over all call data. Officials defended these actions by claiming that only metadata was sought and not the audio content, but suspicions over interception and wiretapping grew regardless - proof for which was already exposed in 2006 by former AT&T technician Mark Klein.

The legality of all this is difficult to judge because its execution is, by its nature, conducted in secrecy. Greater transparency was called for by senators and many campaigning groups, but given the scope of legal provisions for data collection by government (routinely justified by invoking the usual tropes of 'national security' and 'public safety') transparency is entirely at odds with intelligence services' *raison d'être*.

Under s.215 of the Patriot Act 2001, used by the US government in the Verizon case, if a request for business records is approved by the FISC, companies are obliged to hand them over. This provision permits government a very wide interpretation and, as the FISC has stated, there is very little oversight by the court. In light of PRISM, in which the NSA search email and internet traffic data supplied by ISPs for foreign intelligence purposes, the government cited s.702 of the FISA in support of its program. With the introduction of the FISA Amendments Act in 2008, large scale surveillance programs were fully authorised, but on the condition that they would 'only' make targets of persons overseas. The problem again, however, is that the provisions are open to broad interpretation without any meaningful supervision.

The UK authorities, although slightly more adept at keeping their practices quiet, are also embroiled in surveillance tactics. A 2008 report by Sir Paul Kennedy, the former Interception of Communications Commissioner, revealed that councils, police and intelligence services are tapping and intercepting the phone calls, emails and letters of hundreds of thousands of people every year. Despite this revelation, the mainstream media was reticent.

The Tempora program allows the GCHQ to collect personal data and share it with the NSA. Why the main focus has been on the NSA is questionable because Snowden himself referred to GCHQ as being far worse, with fewer safeguards in place to restrict its

such as bugging and intercepts, are requested for specific targets).

The law also permits the GCHQ to phish for broad categories of information on the condition that one end of the communication is outside the UK. The problem though, which emphasises just how out of touch (or cunning) the authorities are, is that massive amounts of UK traffic leaves the UK and comes back in again, meaning that large swathes of UK traffic is being monitored (a similar problem under s.702 of the FISA). By signing certificates under s.8 of the RIPA, the Foreign Secretary effectively overcomes the restriction that only foreign communications can be intercepted, arguing that there is no way of distinguishing which messages taken from the cables are domestic.



activities. The general attitude of the GCHQ also compounded people's ire. Masters of the internet? Indeed. The UK government was keen to gloss over the consternation that such dragnet surveillance elicited. David Cameron told us that we had nothing to fear: 'We have intelligence agencies that do a fantastic job to keep us safe and operate within the law', whilst William Hague disdainfully rebuffed the reasonable claim that the GCHQ uses its relationship with the NSA to get around British law as "baseless".

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) regulates the activities of the intelligence services and provides for communication interception and public authority powers for investigation and surveillance. Under the RIPA, UK government agencies can intercept, record and monitor communications with authorisation (usually from a senior member of the authority in question or via a warrant from the Home Secretary where intrusive surveillance,

Naturally, the parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee, an MP 'oversight committee' created by the Intelligence Services Act 1994, found that the GCHQ has not circumvented UK law by using the NSA's Prism program, but relying on the state to investigate its own strategies is always questionable. And, assuming government agencies do not bypass the formal British legal process, major issues undoubtedly arise under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Before the leaks, the First Tier Tribunal in Southampton City Council v The Information Commissioner, decided that the council's decision to equip its licensed taxis with digital cameras was in breach of the DPA and disproportionate under Article 8 of the ECHR. An additional concern stemmed from 'function creep' in that the use of the information for other purposes (perhaps improper) by, for example, the police, could not be ruled out.

This is an important decision for surveillance activities carried out by public bodies, but as we have witnessed, the theory and practice rarely correspond, and the surveillance practices of the GCHQ are very much a law unto themselves.

The BULLRUN project, a subsequent revelation in September 2013, revealed three important things: secret methods by the NSA over controlling and setting international encryption standards; the use of 'supercomputers' to break encryption; and collaboration between government agencies, software companies and ISPs to insert backdoors.

The collaboration point is potentially most significant because there is, so far, little evidence that the NSA (or GCHQ) has in fact successfully broken cryptographic protocols designed to provide security over the internet at the algorithm level. There is, however, documentation to show that the NSA can influence developers for a backdoor: Microsoft's cooperation with the NSA to circumvent encryption on the Outlook.com services. It is interesting to note that Microsoft and Google are now suing the US government because they feel that it has illegally hindered the release of more details about communications surveillance activities (they wish to publish data relating to FISA orders) which inevitably shows the companies in a bad light.

The GCHQ is particularly invested in decryption as its Tempora project was likely to fail as more and more internet companies encrypted their traffic in line with pressure from the public for them to guarantee their privacy. But inserting backdoors is fundamentally opposed to good security, so it is unlikely that public confidence in the main service providers (Google, Facebook, Yahoo! and Hotmail) will ever be the same again.

Something which is indubitable is that American and UK citizens can expect agencies to continue their practices of data mining and profiling, despite the new bills currently inundating congress, and calls to overhaul surveillance laws back in the UK. After all, the operations of the intelligence services are so covert, the legal gateways so broad, and sentiment towards these concepts so misguided, that they will continue to offer governments the ammunition they need to continue doing what they like.

The assault on our digital communications is not new. The Snowden leaks simply gave mainstream media the story and the face it needed to construct its Hollywoodesque novella. But, we must be careful not to allow Snowden to become the main character. It is the substance and reach of surveillance, the vast collection of data which relates to individual identities, and the collaboration of the intelligence agencies with private enterprise which matter most. Our surveillance and big data culture, fuelled by state paranoia, has theoretically made anonymity difficult, and although we cannot directly see the effect such initiatives have on our everyday lives, we should be conscious that privacy is a distorted and elusive concept.

PREOCCUPYING: ELEANOR SAITTA

Eleanor Saitta makes a living and a vocation of understanding how complex systems operate and redesigning them to work, or at least fail, better. Her focuses include the seamless integration of technology into the lived experience, the humanity of objects and the built environment, and systemic resilience and conviviality. Eleanor undertakes a number of roles across a variety of projects which aim to promote, produce and disseminate greater freedom of information. She regularly speaks at events and conferences, including the CCC Congress, SigInt, Uncivilization, ToorCon, Knutepunk, and Arse Elektronika.

Occupied Times: The story of the 'digitally networked society', mythologised by many of its users and owners as one in which people are more connected to each other's concerns and welcoming of free expression has in fact often been a tale of surveillance, marketing and the extraction of personal data to serve capital and empire. Is it possible to rewrite the story of this network - most notably manifest in the Internet - or does its current manifestation as an increasingly enclosed source of revenue hinder the possibility of ever reconfiguring it as a part of the commons?

Eleanor Saitta: It's important, when thinking about the future of network culture, to recognise that both sides of this story have always been true. The development of computing has been from the very beginning closely tied to surveillance - even Turing's original work was done under the direct auspices of GCHQ during WW2. That said, the culture of the Internet is already one of connection and free expression. It will be a fight, but it is entirely within our means to properly decentralise the Internet and free it in meaningful ways - to make it impossibly expensive to perform true mass surveillance and to make free communication a true default. It'll require a lot of different efforts to be coordinated, everything from peer production of open source hardware to give us machines that aren't built in slavery through municipal broadband collectives to liberate fibre plants from the hands of monopolists.

The software that runs on top of all of this is incredibly important - code is law - but it's still only part of the picture. The Internet is both virtual and very, very material; the optical fibre of our liberated, borderless space runs through Westphalian dirt to mortgaged

data centres. Software can buy us some freedom from all of this, but it is dependent on being able to somehow bring all of this into being, wherever it sits.

Centralised systems are somewhat easier to build now, but that's partially a question of our current technical culture and which branches we've chosen to explore. Snowden's revelations about the nature of the surveillance state may be a blessing here as they may provide us with the impetus to change that technical culture and to explore the new business models that we'll need to pay for this shift. Open source development is a prerequisite for any meaningfully free Internet, but software development, done well and to the standards of ease-of-use required for mass adoption, is stunningly expensive. The Internet is the most complicated thing the human race has ever built, by far.

Free and open source software projects like the Linux kernel are actually supported by the efforts of hundreds of companies which pay the full-time salaries of the engineers working on the kernel, because they use it for work. We need to figure out how to make this kind of model scale to entirely different categories of software.

Those projects are unlikely to give the kind of return that centralised value-extraction systems like Facebook provide, but the advertising model of revenue for the Internet was already starting to fall apart even before current events pointed a very sharp spotlight on privacy. The beauty of the network model is that we don't necessarily even need to make more money than the centralisers, just enough to pay for our own tools and infrastructure. However, we do need to be better than the centralisers - shock or not, to win over the world, our tools have to be the things that everyone wants to use.

OT: With the use of advanced technology often treated as a specialist concern, how can we hope to achieve a greater collective understanding whilst emphasising the importance of these issues to the 'layman'? Would you agree that sometimes those who already possess the technical skills have often been less than successful when it comes to sharing and disseminating that knowledge?

ES: The story of the logic of the network and of centralisation and decentralisation is not one that's been well told so far, when told explicitly. It's been pretty well lived though by plenty of ordinary folks who've either felt its promise online or participated in decentralised movements like Occupy. While I absolutely agree that the democratisation of technical knowledge is critical to the success of the project of decentralisation, that's really just a small part of the story.

In the end, centralisation is going to lose, because we have their children. The promise of decentralisation is taught through the tools, imperfect as they are, that make up our daily lives. Every leak, every failed promise that a centralised organisation makes repeats that story. We do need to reinforce those stories, to take that truth in the world and make it louder, make its reach broader, but it's already out there.

Sadly, centralisation losing isn't the same as decentralisation winning, because centralisation won't go down quietly. We need new narratives, new fictions, that give us all a positive vision of the future, give us a thing to build. Yes, we'll communicate the technical knowledge eventually, but first we need to share the dream.

OT: Propaganda against cyberactivism has been working overtime with ex-NSA chief, Michael Hayden, and others of his

ilk, describing hackers and transparency groups as "terrorists". This kind of cyber scaremongering - which has recently gained traction since the NSA and GCHQ surveillance revelations - has previously fed into the kind of no-nonsense prosecutions of the likes of Aaron Swartz and Andrew Auernheimer, to name just a couple. As a hacker, what do you make of this state of affairs, and can you see a way of protecting yourself and your work from such heavy-handed punishment?

ES: I don't think the "cyber scaremongering" is gaining ground with Snowden's leaks - the opposite, I think. It's showing the world that the folks who are rattling their sabres are cowards who can't be trusted. We have a very good idea of what a monomaniacal "cyber-terrorist" who destroys the fabric of nation states and compromises critical civilian infrastructure with no regard for ethics, human lives, or the rule of law looks like now - his name is General Keith Brian Alexander, DIRNSA.

That said, yes, this is a real problem and will continue to be one. The powerful aren't real fond of anyone whose work runs counter to their plans, unsurprisingly. The propaganda war will continue, with both sides spinning out their narratives. In the end, they're going to lose, because they're going to lose the larger fight, but it's not clear if that means we're going to win.

When the full force of the state decides that you're a threat and comes down on you, there's not necessarily a lot to be done. Jurisdictional arbitrage only goes so far, as does keeping your hands clean - neither Aaron nor Weev committed any crime (or rather, in the latter case, any crimes he might have committed were unrelated to what he was tried for). Being a public figure helps a little bit, but not that much. Wars have casualties.

OT: Open Source software development, with its refusal of enclosure and its emphasis on sharing, is regularly highlighted as an example of a model of development which could be applied to a broader context in society. How practical do you think it could be to apply the open source method, or other forms of software development (such as the agile approach) to the development of grassroots democratic practices?

ES: It's already happening, to some degree -- look at the notion of delegatory democracy, where anyone can propose a law and everyone votes on every issue, with the situation being made tractable by a system of topic- and time-limited delegations. This is democracy as made tractable by a digital intermediary, a democratic structure much less subject

to the kind of legal and illegal bribery that plagues representative democracy.

OT: Along a similar vein: how applicable, if at all, do you think the institutional model provided by Communication Protocols is for providing a framework with which to develop a more universal and community-driven democratic structure, such as through their implementation in decision-making bodies? Could a comprehensive system of governance be developed along similar lines and do you think it would have a beneficial capacity?

ES: Protocols, and protocol-driven governance structures, are not institutions. That said, one of the two functions of an institution of governance, that of executing some process in the world, can generally be replaced by a protocol -- for instance, transmuting the water board of a community into a set of sensor systems, reporters, approvers, fixers, and verifiers, a combination of human and programmatic elements working together to perform a task. There is still a role for institutional structures in a system like this (and, likewise, market structures), in that networks operate in the present tense -- they're not good at introspecting on their own history -- stop passing packets and you're no longer online. Institutions are much better than networks at preserving tacit knowledge over time.

We're still figuring out what post-institutional governance systems will look like, and we don't know where all of the pitfalls are yet. The invention of the election was the invention of the rigged vote and the invention of the political party was the invention of machine politics; we will find new disasters within the protoceletariat. Hopefully, they'll be better ones we're more able to deal with.

Of specific note here is the problem of justice. There is nothing inherent in the nature of network politics that makes it just. It has the potential to be radically liberating, but this is no guarantee. We must be very careful about the politics that emerge from the systems we build. For instance, many of the delegatory democracy systems currently implemented suffer from the lack of any kind of secret ballot, meaning that those with a minority identity or minority opinions may find themselves with more agency but less freedom to use that agency in accordance with their true desires.

OT: In the wake of Internet surveillance revelations, some communities have been reported to have created private, parallel internets. In Greece, a small group of people have set up a 'mesh'

which can pass along data and signals by linking up rooftop wifi antennas; encouraging local community sharing of information and offering a cheap way to access the wider internet. These initiatives demonstrate one creative way of taking back control of digital social spaces, but do you believe a gulf exists between those who have the technology and are capable of implementing these types of practices and those in so-called 'developing' countries who don't have access to these resources? How can we bridge the gap - in both knowledge and capability - between communities with the capacity to explore new, liberatory uses of technology, and those without?

ES: Mesh networks are interesting -- they're great for certain kinds of last-mile problems, for building out some specific kinds of infrastructure more cheaply and in a more democratic way, but they do not in any way provide a replacement for real fibre, nor do they make it practical for large groups to communicate in a dense area directly via mobile devices, or even to practically share a single gateway that only a subset of the devices can see -- we'd love it if they did this kind of thing, but the math simply does not (and likely will never) work.

That said, those last-mile problems are not trivial and the political shift that even a system of limited infrastructural viability can produce is enormous. A few changes to the devices that are already being shipped in large numbers (enabling ad-hoc wifi in the firmware of smartphones and tablets) would make a huge difference, especially as smartphones start to spread in majority-world communities. If the hardware's there, we can do a lot with free software, within the limits of what's possible.

The knowledge gap in part needs to be spoken to on the software side. Storymaker is an Android application intended for news gathering on phones and tablets that teaches you how to use the media capabilities of the phone and how to frame a reasonable story as you do the work -- situated learning. It's also well-designed and has a much shallower learning curve than many other toolkits for similar work. The "there's an easy app for that" approach has a limit though -- we need to make

sure that the systems we build and teach with let people under the covers, let people take them apart, see how they work, change them, and explore, because this is how people learn. For all its flaws, the beauty of GNU/Linux in a desktop system is that you've got everything you need right there to build the system that you're using. It may not make it easy, but you can just dive right in. This isn't true on your phone or tablet, and efforts like Apple's Mac App store are trying to bring that same narrow-minded, closed, exploration-hostile experience to the desktop.

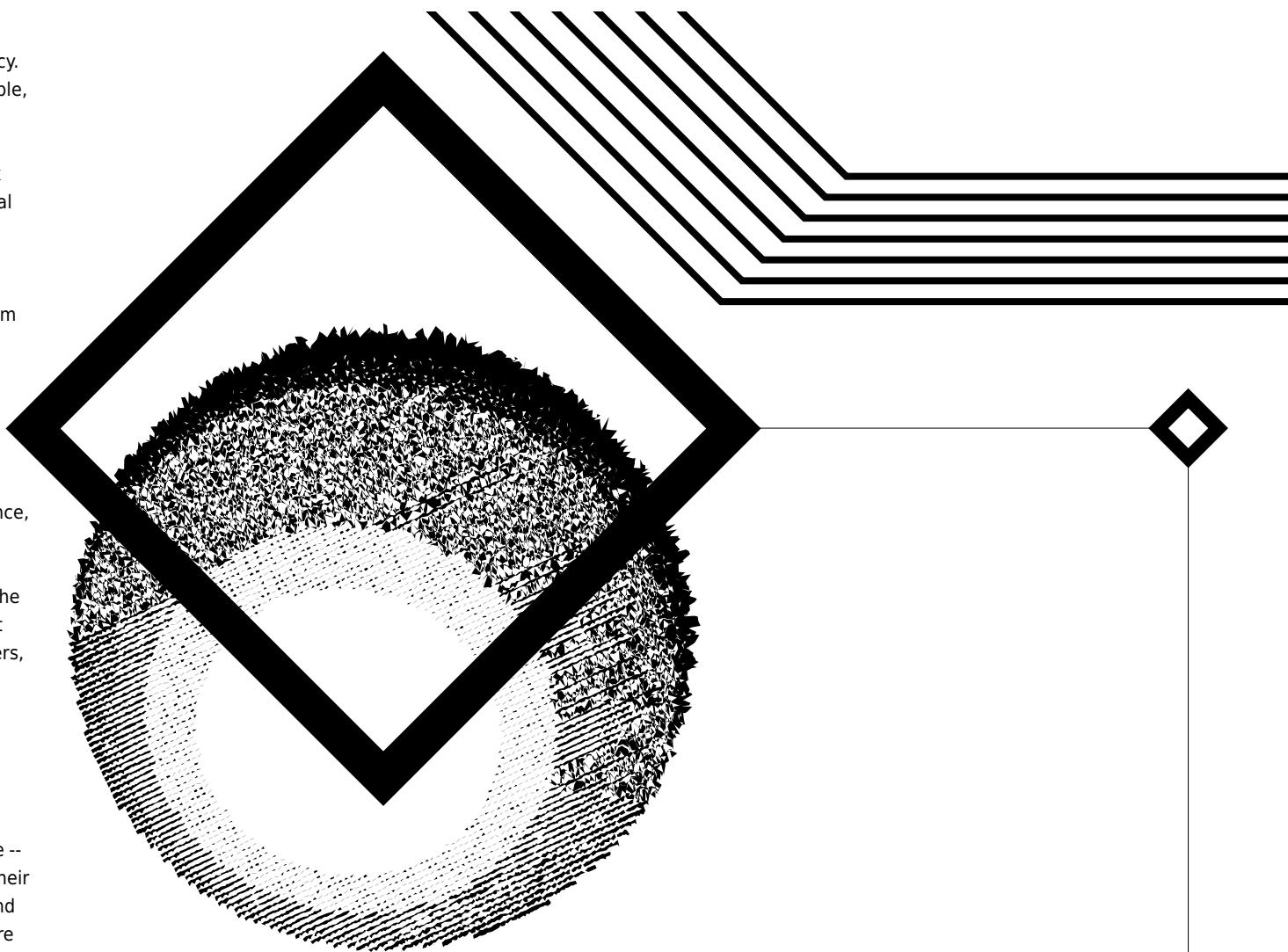
OT: It may still be a novelty to some that women can successfully work in historically sexist environments, such as within the tech / computer industry. There can be an element of 'quota' and 'tokenism' in many professions, and attitudes and practices still exist which continue to challenge a woman's place in many industries, especially in the more established sections of their professions. What have your experiences been in getting to where you are, and how would you say that your path, if taken by a man, would have been different?

ES: While there are clearly still problems with sexism in tech, I think your question, especially the implication of the degree to which things like tokenism drive hiring and promotion, is a little problematic. Moreover, it's extremely problematic to ask a woman to justify

her presence or tell "her unique story of adversity" when it's completely irrelevant to the topic at hand. The fact that this question is in this interview (even here) is a symptom of the problem.

OT: We were led to believe that the development of more advanced technology would free us all from work, as gleaming robots performed the monotonous tasks that reproduce a society. Instead we face a kind of paradox, with technology increasingly automating both fordist and post-fordist production whilst simultaneously re-aligning work as an omnipresent condition. Can we snap out of this situation and truly unleash the liberatory potential that technology could offer? Do you believe that technological development alone has this capacity?

ES: There is no such thing as technological development alone. The concept is nonsensical. Society creates technology and technology shapes society. In almost all cases, the liberation or lack thereof is not actually in the machine, it's in the society that constructed and emerged from the machine. Yes, we can change things, we can move in a liberatory direction, but to do so we need to explicitly build technology with different politics and also practice different politics outside of it. There are no magic bullets, only a very long slog. These days, I'll be happy if we can manage survival as a species.



Maya Oppenheim

NETWORKED CAPITALISM

A WORLD OF CYBER-CELLS

The impact social media has had on our daily lives - we now record where we go, what we do and what we think for the world to see - has radically changed the way we relate to ourselves and each other. As the proliferation of social media has become increasingly seamless and habitual, we have become unwittingly accustomed to our mass migration into cyberspace. For this reason, it is vital that we give significance to what is routinely considered insignificant and explore the psycho-social complexities at work. As online communities have become key motors of self-image, social media has exacerbated our fast-growing fixation with personal image and status. As individuals obsess over Twitter retweets, Instagram likes or Facebook comments, inane narcissism has become commonplace. What may have begun as an innocent desire for personal recognition has rapidly descended into an unhealthy fixation with ourselves and our lives.

At face value, online performances and micro-endorsements might appear inconsequential but together they help to create a culture of competitive egotism. Our perpetual urge to share our experiences via micro-blogging sites can be likened to a form of self-promotion. As the competitive spirit of late capitalism has permeated social media, we have been encouraged to rebrand our identity for the consumption of an external audience. Like human commodities, we are encouraged to design, trademark and showcase our online identities. As a result, the line between 'human capital' and actual capital has become increasingly blurred. In turn, the individualistic and competitive edge of social media has become representative of a deep-seated pressure to conform to capitalism's narrow definition of success.

As genuine social interaction has been subsumed by social networking and 'contact building', we have encountered an era of networked capitalism. Although this quantified form of social connection might be emotionally deficient, it provides a welcome distraction from anonymous market relations. Nevertheless, social media cannot fulfil our yearning for the immaterial - friendship, leisure, play and creativity - with its fleeting distractions. Whilst it might offer placating diversions from the other ills of late capitalism, it remains inherently unsatisfying. In the end, the micro-fame of social media offers us image without substance, connection without communication and talk without meaning. For this reason, we must recognise and scrutinise the faux fulfilment on offer.

As social media has contributed to the commodification of ourselves and our interactions, it has radically changed the way we relate to others. Our growing obsession with image and networking has led to increasing social isolation. Social media's core preoccupation with the individual has pushed emphasis away from the collective. Despite the fact our network of connections has grown wider, it has simultaneously grown shallower. Enmeshed in a spiral of transient, virtual encounters, many of us have turned inwards

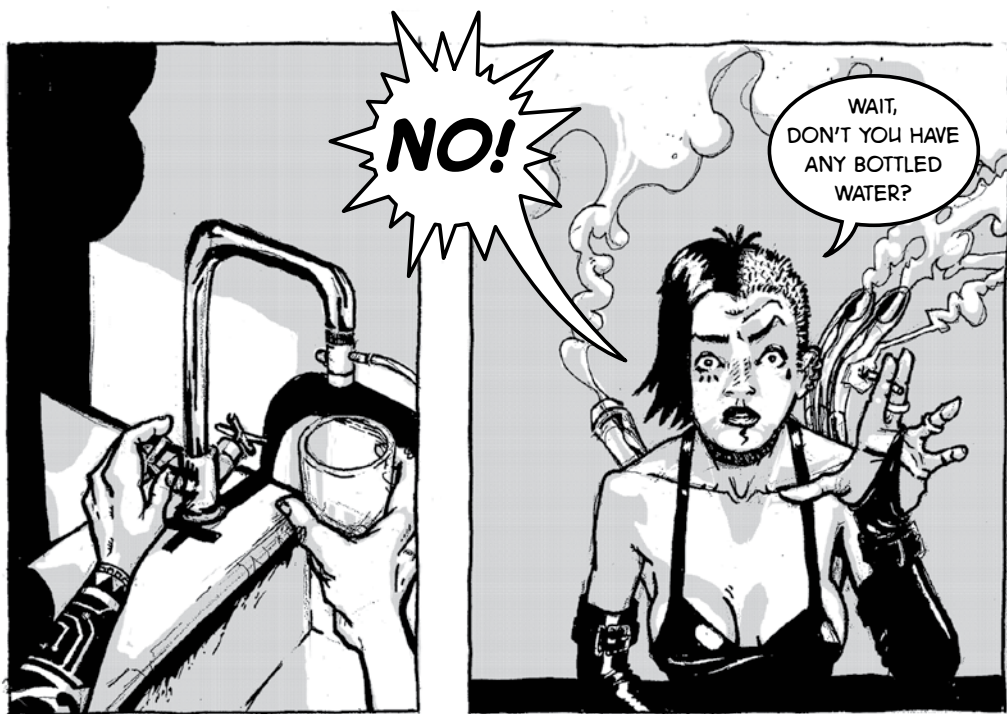
on ourselves and now lead increasingly atomised lives. Although we are now able to instantly communicate with one another, unrestrained by the bounds of space or time, we have become increasingly disconnected from the intersubjectivity.

Without wanting to launch a nostalgic attack on modern life, it appears clear that social media has radically changed the way we communicate. A great deal of our leisure time is now consumed by the humming diversions of social media. This is not to say that friendship has been directly substituted for social media but as the ease of instant communication has grown, the information you would have once learnt over a pint and a catch up session can be speedily observed on a friend's Facebook page. Facebook has provided the semblance of friendship without the intimacies or the demands of a real relationship. Whilst social media communities can obviously provide great sources of mutual comfort for individuals, enhanced technological connection does not decrease the need for real-time interaction. Becoming an atomised point in a cyber network will never replace being part of a genuine community.

As tight-knit neighbourhood connections have lessened in recent years, specialists argue that we are now lonelier than ever before. Regardless of whether this is true or not, it is interesting to explore social media's impact on social interaction. What's more, whilst the feeling of loneliness is obviously not a modern phenomenon - individuals have felt alone in a crowd since the beginning of civilisation - social media has arguably brought more of these feelings to light. For this reason, it is important that we extend our analysis of late capitalism to the micro-structures of everyday life and explore the link between our increasingly atomised lifestyles and the proliferation of social network sites.

The factors which explain growing levels of isolation are both complex and wide-ranging. For example, the growth in working hours and the distances which people commute to work mean that we are compelled to spend more of our free-time on social media sites. What's more, the need to record and share events as they happen in real time mean that we are often alone together. This leads to a prevailing sense of distraction and unease with the present moment. Ironically, it also becomes increasingly difficult to gain genuine solitude when we are constantly surrounded by the buzzing social distractions of our connected devices.

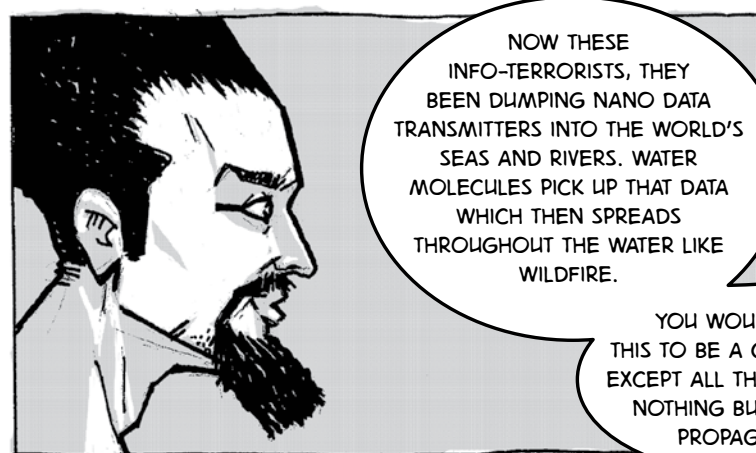
As social media has made us increasingly obsessed with ourselves and our image it has also affected the way we relate to others. In essence, social media has contributed to a concurrent rise in individualism, self-image, social isolation and collective disconnection. Although there are other key structural factors at work, social media provides a critical lens into the social alienation of networked capitalism. Rather than resign social media to the non-ideological, it is vital that we analyse the seemingly ordinary and banal features of late capitalism.



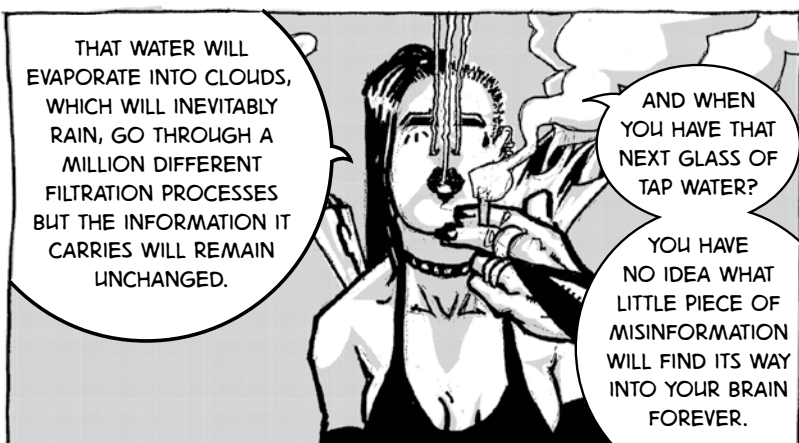
THAT'S HOW WATER TURNS INTO TEA, SEE?

YOU PUT A TEA BAG INTO A CUP OF HOT WATER, AND THEN ALL THE LITTLE WATER MOLECULES MIRACULOUSLY PICK UP ALL THAT TEA INFORMATION FROM THE TEA BAG AND BECOMES THE TEA THAT WE DRINK.

AND WHEN WE DO, OUR BODIES IN TURN PICK UP ON ALL THAT TEA INFORMATION. OUR BODIES DECODE AND PROCESS ALL THE CAFFEINE AND ANTIOXIDANTS AND THEOBROMINE AND WHATEVER THE FUCK.



YOU WOULD THINK THIS TO BE A GOOD THING, EXCEPT ALL THAT DATA AIN'T NOTHING BUT LIES AND PROPAGANDA.



BY GANZEER

