

Comments on Surveillance

“The general conspiracy has become so dense that it is almost out in the open, each of its branches starts to hinder or trouble the others, because all these professional conspirators are spying on each other without exactly knowing why, or encounter each other by chance, yet without recognizing each other with certainty. Who is observing whom?”

The NSA has become a fine section of situationists, while the ‘situationists’ of today have become fine data analysts. Echoes of the reality that, in our times, secret agents have been made into revolutionists while revolutionists have been made into secret agents could not be made more salient by recent current events surrounding this matter.

The NSA was recently revealed, via official media sources, to have managed a massive program of data collection applied through most every leading company in the field of communication and inquiry, including every model of such interaction from the cell-based text to the google email client chat. It was revealed, however, that these programs have been in place for well over a decade. Given the already lengthy history which the spectacular has of comparable surveillance, and the already widespread knowledge of the probable installation of these mechanisms, one might ask, why the surprise? This question ignores certain notable facets of life in the spectacular, however, such is its foundation. Every imaginable media outlet has run significant stories on the affair, talk of state surveillance now graces the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*, the question is not, *why the surprise*, this is all too predictable given the focus of the spectacular on the event, but rather, *why has it appeared?* With enough manipulation in the field of appearance and repetition, any story is known to be open to widely distributed public comment; all modern discourse is hinged on the notion of the value to this all-inclusive prompt. If one wants to have conversation material, if one desires relevance, the news of the day is carefully observed, the public reactions weighed and assessed, etc, without regard being paid to the value of these widely worthless dichotomies. Thus, the former question may handedly be made irrelevant, the scandal of NSA surveillance, may, with the correct movements by the forces of ruling power today, be made into one which appeared solely for the sake of its disappearance.

In the same manner that all new films and goods are promoted in the spectrum of modern advertising, it was alluded to in the shadows of a false secrecy for long enough, suspense was built, comments were made but perpetually treated as unconfirmed in the main currents of the spectacle, until its announcement made the final deposit on all these previously semi-concealed expressions of truth. Most all knew of the presence of such widespread observation by the modern state, but this understanding was predominantly unsaid; the integrated spectacle continued to develop its forces to new heights of increasingly public internal contradiction. Now, talk and outrage at the NSA is entering into a widely public domain, something which can be turned into an incredible coup in power for the ruling class, should they capitalize on it with enough care, but which currently remains a sign of the system's declining rates of profit in and around the perpetuation of its innumerable networks of surveillance. Ignoring it was never an option for the ruling class, so conversation was demanded of it, but the conversation has not been as brief as it should- the ruling class has been too honest with its public, while deceiving itself of the potential inherent to this development.

It was bound to occur, at some point or another, allusions have been scattered throughout the modern history of such actions since the Italian state was revealed to be responsible for the 'red brigade' terror campaigns, since the intelligence community began to truly buy into its cold war myths of espionage and counter espionage, tracking its own socially dreamed antagonists- the entrance of this integrated reality of all-pervasive, yet still nominally diffuse, consciousness of constant governmental voyeurism into a stratum of acceptance was bound to be an unconscious reaction to and by the spectacular. Invariably, the modern bourgeois state has gone to great excesses in its developments within the field of surveillance, they haven't anywhere near the amount of dead labor to throw at the task of analyzing all of the material they have accumulated, but, more importantly, *they haven't the need*. All the amassed data in the world of the modern spectator will only tell a properly informed ruling class of what it has produced for itself- the revelations they've unearthed are merely acts of self confirmation in the effectiveness of the ideology that once served their ends. Despite this otherwise reassuring fact of spectacular power, it would now seem that the modern bourgeois has become beholden to his dreams. What has come of recent expansions in these networks has primarily been a marked increase in potential channels of leaked information, with the room for advantageous advance in this model of power long since having run aground. "Surveillance would be much more dangerous had it not been pushed along the path of absolute control of everyone, to the point where it encounters difficulties created by its own progress." (Debord, Comments). Society today indeed displays a preference towards its status of being feared over loved, but the extent of this preference is bordering on the line of now visible absurdity with regard to its own faring within the future.

Petty surveillance, the occasional display of secretive policing in thought, publicly esoteric but accepted safeguards for 'the public safety', all have their uses, but only when used with precision in limitation. When the entire function of what passes as the covert is revealed to the public in terms too blunt, the ideology which once justified it begins to unravel while the concentrated begins to overcome the diffuse in the balance of integrated class dominance. What is unraveling in this current affair of now publicly recognized information was predictable, though unpredictable by those behind its now entirely incomprehensible arrival into the spectacle. Instead of making the usual concessions to liberty, to moderate political activism, to liberal ideals of privacy, all while secretly recognizing the worthless qualities to such appeals, the state apparatus today seems to be lost in its myth of absolutism in ideology. Surveillance simply has no use to the modern bourgeoisie, its development was at first a necessary side effect of maintaining certain ideological ruses. The CIA and the KGB being caught in constant feud helped to keep the myth of the cold war alive with enough vigor, always present yet always invisible, but the surveillance of anti-terrorism has failed where these previous successes were had, *they've begun to take themselves too seriously*. Invariably, some hard conflict is necessary in material reality for any good image to succeed, some drone strikes need to be undertaken for all the spectators of public life to have some molecule of serious conversation to engage in, but the actual intelligence behind such actions was never a relevant factor, the end results were all that was ever demanded of the spectacle. Only the appearance that some effort of intelligent and conscious thought was demanded of these maneuvers. Thus, we are left with a peculiar effect from the development, and overdevelopment, of the spectacle; it has begun to batter down its own Chinese walls of ideology purely by an excessive insistence on the reality of its own productions. The doubt has vanished from the myth, and the opportunity for this affair to be properly recuperated is vanishing with an ever increasing haste. Every televised conversation

Obama conducts with himself over the balances of liberty and security only brings the spectacle so much closer to revealing too much of its foundation, while a scenario wherein this affair could have been quickly relegated to second tier news, reporting to be forgotten in the course of a day, is continually kept in conversation. The spectacle has, as a result of its lax policy in strategic decorum, failed to keep track of all its pieces, by this point far overextended onto the board into places once desirable, but now open to far to counter-attacks. The war of maneuver has inadvertently outmaneuvered itself, purely out of haste and a poor consideration for basic tactical thought.

Thus, the NSA has conducted itself in a perfectly revolutionary fashion, revealing more myths in its foundation than any leftist could ever hope to do, while making no demands towards compromise. The standard model militant of 'revolutionary' ideology will, at best, demand an end to this surveillance, they will be placated if their 'grassroot' efforts can be plausibly said to have been accepted, if only in representation, by the function of modern class power, while the NSA has given the function of revolution a tremendous act of self-mutilation well beyond concession. It is already a case of regularity to see various different self-styled dissidents of the political style themselves as 'patriots', qualifying their critiques with further affirmation to the ideology of modern society; the effort required to allow their patriotism to flow forth would indeed be very little for the spectacular of today, while complete with nothing short of categorical victory.

Subjectively, revolution can hope for the best outcome in this scenario, wherein the moderate leftist bureaucrat is simply removed from this equation, wherein the working class may emerge as a force of negation against their unavoidably present desire to compromise with the state on this question of surveillance, this is the only outcome that may be ultimately pleasing to the realization of historical action yet. Until that point, the ineptitude of the modern ruling class can be observed in its continued state of dissolution, while the gains of such flailing idiocies are, with preference, exploited to the hilt of the impossible. This affair may be made secondary news in due time, without question, the spectacle still insists in the continuity of its power, but certain realities have yet been revealed that might better have been kept masked.

-R.M. Rogers

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