

RUNNYMEDE

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EDITORIAL

ORGANISING WITHOUT ILLUSIONS

Eric Blair's item on Secret Freedom Fighters, is included with a hypothetical question mark. Although interesting in itself, is it (as the article itself acknowledges) no more than one of these pieces of optimistic self delusion which crop up from time to time.

That there are more or less secret networks within networks is wholly plausible. For example, Opus Dei constructed an extensive network through the high echelons of the Spanish elite during Franco's time, in order to create a Spain fit for European membership following the dictator's death. But, there again, Opus Dei, were already part of the power establishment.

The danger with the Blair item is twofold. Firstly, it implies that the 'Secret Freedom Fighters' have it all in hand, and there is nothing very much for the rest of us to do other than to sit back and wait on events. Secondly if these supposed 'Secret Freedom Fighters' are already inserted and present in sufficiently high positions within the global hydra, then they themselves may fall prey to the temptations of great power. It is often the case that when oligarchies and ruling elites divide against themselves, that the 'rebel' side may adopt ... at least for a while ... the rhetoric of liberty but with less benign intentions and results.

There is nothing like making sure. Nothing in the Blair article should divert from the necessity of we, the Great Unwashed, getting properly organised. This necessity has been a recurrent theme in these editorials.

At long last there are signs that dissidents are starting to take seriously the need for sound, durable, in-depth organisation seriously. We have Zeitgeist organising into local chapters, Positive Money and WeRChange with local meet-ups, and the formation of the NatCan network.

The Runnymede Project will have some publicity of its own along these lines, coming out shortly. What is now needed is a conference to get as many dissident activist campaigns

under one roof and 'holding hands in mutual co-operation'. The time is very ripe indeed. Any volunteers to assist, please get in touch.

Frank Taylor

HOW TO SEND AN EMAIL WITHOUT DETECTION?

Barry Tighe; via Dave Barnby

Are you a criminal or terrorist wishing to send an email without detection?

'Write your email in the normal way but save it as a draft [Mail waiting to be sent - on AOL].

'Your cohort, with whom you share your internet identity [you can log in as a guest on another computer], opens the same email account, then reads the draft email before deleting it.

'The mail has never been 'sent' and will not be detected by GCHQ.

'The proposal is to spy on emails is not only a dangerous attack on our liberty, but is a waste of money.

I suppose that GCHQ would have to get round this by requiring all internet providers to store all drafts and have them forwarded to them, some big task.

Any thoughts?

HOW TO HIDE EMAILS FROM GOVERNMENT SNOOPING

Jack Schofield; Guardian.co.uk,; via Nathan Allonby

Despite coalition proposals to monitor public email, there remain numerous free or low-cost methods to keep messages private. Email snooping can be avoided by solutions from encryption to anonymous remailing services.

You already know how to keep messages private: you just encrypt the contents using a password. But although this kind of technology has been freely available to PC users since Phil Zimmermann launched PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) in 1991, hardly anyone uses it. The benefits of email and online messaging are that they are fast and relatively frictionless – you don't need to address an envelope, find a stamp, walk to a post box and so on – and encryption becomes an annoyance.

The problem with the latest government attempts at snooping is that they are not concerned with the content of messages, but their existence. If you have found some suspected criminals or terrorists, then you will want to know who their friends are: the people they email or message most frequently. Each of these people can probably be identified by their internet protocol (IP) address: the number assigned by their ISP (internet service provider). Even an encrypted email will usually include the addresses of the sender and the recipient in its headers.

The general solution to privacy concerns is to use a non-UK "proxy server" to relay web pages, messages, anonymous email accounts and other content anonymously. Hackers who really want to hide their origins will use several proxy servers, including ones that are acting as proxies without their owner's knowledge. Many websites publish lists of free proxy servers, which are updated continuously.

Of course, these servers may offer less privacy than your ISP, and some may be traps or "honeypots". However, there are some trusted anonymous servers available either free or for modest payments.

Examples include hidemyass.com, anonymouse.org, Guardster, Proxify, IDzap and

Megaproxy. Such servers usually have terms of service to prevent abusive or criminal behaviour. They will probably record your IP address and may report you if you breach them, so they're not completely beyond government reach. However, they're probably beyond government fishing expeditions.

There are also some really anonymous remailer services, which use networks such as Cypherpunk and Mixmaster to ensure privacy. The drawback is that if you send an email anonymously, the recipient cannot simply hit Reply. QuickSilver software for 32-bit Microsoft Windows makes it relatively simple to route an email through 45 or more remailers using Mixmaster. But like the Tor anonymous network, this kind of thing is mostly used by programmers and geeks.

There are simpler ways to send private and/or anonymous emails. For example, anonymouse.org offers a simple form for AnonEmail, as does the sendanonymousemail.net website. There's also Mailinator, which provides free disposable email addresses, and Hushmail, which works like an ordinary email service but encrypts all your email.

For encrypted instant messaging, you could try BitWiseIM or ProjectSCIM (for Secure Cryptographic Instant Messenger). Facebook's internal messaging is reasonably private because it's not visible on the net, though it could be vulnerable to a court order.

In the end, the simplest way to increase your privacy and security is to restrict your internet use to sites and services that have SSL connections. These are already standard for banks and shopping sites, and are increasingly used for email and other purposes. You can recognise them by the s for secure in their https: addresses, and a padlock visible in the browser. The next step is to use the InPrivate, Incognito or Private Browsing feature of your web browser to use anonymous online services.

However, it's worth trying proxy servers and services, if only to provide a nice illustration of the law of unintended consequences. In other words, government attempts to snoop can help to create an internet culture where snooping becomes impossible.

SECRET FREEDOM FIGHTERS WORKING TO UNSEAT THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Eric Blair; Activist Post

There have been recent reports in the underground alternative media that a secret group of well-placed, high-ranking freedom fighters are working tirelessly to free humanity from the clutches of the evil cabal that goes by many names: the Illuminati, the New World Order or, simply, the international bankers.

On the surface, the average conspiracy researcher may feel that this seemingly all powerful cabal has nearly reached their endgame goal of full spectrum dominance of the planet. After all, the past decade has seen a massive consolidation of power for this cabal through endless aggressive wars, financial bailouts, legislation to destroy personal freedom, and so on.

However, according to reporting by David Wilcock and Benjamin Fulford, there is an equally powerful force of good working behind the scenes to combat this cabal. These freedom fighters, sometimes referred to as "white hats" or "gnostic Illuminati", are said to occupy positions in banking and finance, military, law enforcement, media, and government at all levels, as well as other key posts in corporations and institutions.

In a new article on Wilcock's website DivineCosmos.com he writes:

A highly secretive, highly coordinated operation -- working for the good of humanity -- is about to make its move.

The Pentagon 'good guys' are now in full political and logistical cooperation with a remarkable 134-nation alliance -- to bring the perpetrators to justice and free our planet.

The security around this enormous operation has been vast. Even those who will be affected by it

-- and arrested -- have no idea of the staggering scope of what is about to be revealed before the eyes of the public.

To many this scenario may seem like wishful thinking. But the fact is, in nature, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Additionally, since there are far more good people in the world than the few sociopaths who run the cabal, it's not a stretch to believe there are many good people also in influential positions.

Yet, because "good" people aren't ruthless, they were reportedly prevented from forcefully stopping this cabal until their chess pieces were in place to conquer them with the least amount of disruption and violence possible. Well, apparently, the good guys now have enough tactical positioning to begin a global transformation plan, starting with cleansing the current system of the bad guys.

Wilcock's recent article points to many indicators that this cleansing has already started. Events like mass resignations of executive-level people in the finance industry which Activist Post has covered. He points to J.P Morgan's divorce from Vatican bank accounts due to fraud; Goldman Sachs' market cap plunge after an executive blew the whistle on "Muppetgate;" the absolute collapse of Rupert Murdoch's media empire in the U.K. and the resignation of its chairman James Murdoch (Rupert's son), and many more examples of hidden knowledge being exposed at an increasingly quickening pace.

This plan of redemption, according to Wilcock, will be swift and may seem shocking to the general public, especially for those who have been asleep. He lays out what we can expect to see:

Mass arrests of cabal members.

Personal freedom restored around the world. A return to Constitutional government in America or, in other words, a return to common law.

New plans and technology for energy, agriculture, and the economy that will also free humanity from resource control and manipulation.

Change from the dollar (Federal Reserve Note) as a "debt instrument" to a new currency that will be an "equity instrument."

Most of this seems like a dream come true for humanity, but it may come at a price of temporary disruption. Although the insiders "authorized" to disclose elements of this plan say that it will be done with extreme care not to cause disruption or chaos, the cabal's reaction will be somewhat unpredictable.

Therefore, this secret group playing for the good team are reportedly taking many precautions and using military and law enforcement in a coordinated effort to guard critical facilities and round up the criminals.

Wilcock admits that it's only natural for conspiracy researchers to be cynical about this news, but assures his readers that these forces will indeed be arresting the proper criminals and accountability will finally take place.

"If the rumors I am hearing are true, we will soon see mass arrests of many key conspirators in government, military, finance companies, defense contractors, media, pharmaceutical corporations and so on. The evidence that will be presented will leave no conceivable room for doubt -- except, perhaps, for those most addicted to 'fear porn', who automatically assume whatever they see, hear and read must be the opposite of the truth -- regardless of the evidence."

Wilcock interviewed a new insider last that confirmed these plans are underway. I encourage you to listen to the entire testimony of this warrior-for-good.

The insider from the above interview, Drake, admits that there is potential for disruption of supplies and perhaps even some sabotage committed on the part of the desperate criminal elite. They recommend to stay calm during this cleansing period while these thugs are arrested, but to be vigilant in having 30-180 days of basic supplies to stave off any hardship that may be caused during this transition.

Wilcock reassures the understandably-paranoid truth movement that this coming avalanche of change will all be for the best: The people who are about to do this are well aware of every concern you have -- as an informed reader of truth websites and materials. Martial law will NOT be declared when this happens. The military will NOT take control of the government. Innocent civilians will NOT be imprisoned or harmed in any way. Any troops who attempt to carry out unlawful orders of this sort, on behalf of the 'bad guys,' will be outnumbered and resisted. Every effort will be made to focus on eliminating the problem -- and immediately returning the power to the people in an orderly fashion. New elections will need to be organized, considering that many, if not most politicians in the United States could be found culpable -- either directly or through failure to have taken action. his alliance intends to

break out free energy and many other technologies that were stolen from us. The fossil fuel economy ensured that occult global control and the systematic killing of our planet would continue. Although there certainly are some signposts that the victories are beginning to pile up for humanity, this level and speed of coordination to bring down the seemingly all-powerful elite cabal appears unrealistic. That said, I encourage you to read through all of Wilcock's recent work and listen to the whistleblower testimony mentioned above before you jump to conclusions.

Please visit David Wilcock at DivineCosmos.com.

You can support this article by voting on Reddit:

http://www.reddit.com/r/conspiracy/comments/rphng/secret_freedom_fighters_working_to_unseat_the_new/

21 SIGNS THAT THE UK IS BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A HELLISH BIG BROTHER SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

Michael Snyder; Activist Post and Inquiring Minds

Why would anyone want to live in the UK at this point? Well, if you enjoy having every little detail of your life dictated to you by elitist control freaks then you might like living there. But most of the rest of the world is absolutely horrified that the UK is being transformed into a hellish Big Brother surveillance society.

The UK truly is on the "cutting edge" when it comes to implementing liberty-killing rules and regulations. Many have pointed out that the United States is becoming a Big Brother police state, but the truth is that the UK is even worse.

The madness going on in the UK is where the rest of the world is headed. Right now, there are more surveillance cameras per capita in the UK than anywhere else in the world. If you accidentally drop a couple of potato chips in public, or if you whisper a phrase that is not politically correct in a restaurant there is a good chance that you will be hauled into court. In the UK, the public has been sold the lie that society will be better off if everything and everyone is constantly monitored. But instead of improving society, what all of this surveillance is really doing is turning the entire nation into a very frightening version of George Orwell's 1984.

Sadly, most of the rest of the globe is going down the exact same path that the UK has gone. The UK is several years ahead of most of the rest of us, but eventually almost every nation on earth will be just like them.

The following are 21 signs that the UK is being transformed into a hellish Big Brother surveillance society....

#1 A new UK law will allow the government "listening agency" to openly monitor all phone calls, all emails, all website visits, all Facebook status updates and all text messages.

The following is from a recent article in the Telegraph....

'Under legislation expected in next month's Queen's Speech, internet companies will be instructed to install hardware enabling GCHQ – the Government's electronic "listening" agency – to examine "on demand" any phone call made, text message and email sent, and website accessed in "real time",

#2 Police in the UK use advanced software that enables them to track the "digital footprints" of virtually anyone that they want to investigate. The following is how one news report in the UK described this software....

'The Metropolitan Police has bought Geotime, a security programme used by the U.S. military which tracks suspects' movements and communications and displays them on a three-dimensional graphic.

The software aggregates information gathered from social networking sites, GPS devices like the iPhone, mobile phones, financial transactions and IP network logs to build a detailed picture of an individual's movements.'

#3 In the UK there is a "three strikes" rule that allows your entire family to be cut off from the Internet if

anyone who lives in your house is accused of copyright infringement three times.

#4 In the UK, free speech on the Internet is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. A recent UK government report calls for Internet service providers to remove as much "extremist material" from the Internet as possible. The following is an excerpt from that report....

'The Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit does limited but valuable work in challenging internet service providers to remove violent extremist material where it contravenes the law. We suggest that the Government work with internet service providers in the UK to develop a Code of Conduct committing them to removing violent extremist material, as defined for the purposes of section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2006. Many relevant websites are hosted abroad: the Government should also therefore strive towards greater international cooperation to tackle this issue.'

#5 In the UK, citizens are instructed that those that hold "anti-government beliefs" are potential terrorists and that they should be reported to the authorities immediately.

#6 In the UK there are more surveillance cameras per capita than anywhere else on the entire planet. It has been estimated that there are at least 4.8 million surveillance cameras constantly watching every move that citizens make.

#7 Under new government plans, cameras at UK gas stations will automatically stop any vehicles that do not have insurance or that are not up to date on taxes from being filled with fuel.

#8 In the UK, it is legal for local governments to assign agents to follow citizens secretly without any judicial oversight whatsoever.

#9 There are thousands upon thousands of "dysfunctional families" in the UK that are being subjected to intensive 24-hour video surveillance to make sure that their children attend school, go to bed on time and eat proper meals.

#10 In the UK, police can demand to see your identification at any time for any reason that they want.

#11 Did you think that "future crime" was just something Tom Cruise had to worry about in the movies? Well, police in the UK are reportedly very interested in implementing "predictive policing" techniques in an attempt to get a better handle on crime.

#12 Tens of thousands of parents who homeschool their own children in the UK have been forced to undergo criminal background checks before being allowed to do so.

#13 Parents at one school in the UK were forced to undergo criminal background checks to prove that they were not pedophiles before they were allowed to accompany their own children to school Christmas events.

#14 In the UK, if you preach against sin in public there is a good chance that you will be convicted of a hate crime.

#15 Christian ministers in the UK have been told that trying to preach Christianity in an area that is primarily Muslim is essentially a "hate crime".

#16 Simply playing the Bible in public is enough to get you into trouble with the law in the UK. For example, police once threatened a cafe owner with arrest for silently playing a Bible DVD on a small television on the back wall of his cafe. The following is an excerpt from a Daily Mail article about this incident....

Mr Murray, 31, was left shocked after he was questioned for nearly an hour by the officers, who arrived unannounced at the premises. He said he had turned off the Bible DVD after an 'aggressive inquisition' during which he thought he was going to be arrested and 'frog-marched out of the cafe like a criminal'.

#17 In the UK, it is now illegal to photograph the police for any reason whatsoever.

#18 In the UK, if you do not dispose of your trash correctly, or if you do not recycle properly, you can be hit with huge fines. In fact, right now millions of UK citizens actually have microchips in their garbage bins which track their disposal activities.

#19 One 79-year-old retiree in the UK was told that she would be required to have "three warning signs, a 'lookout' and a fluorescent safety jacket" if she wanted to continue to work on her garden.

#20 Government officials in the UK seem absolutely obsessed with gathering information on young children. The following example is from an article in the Register....

The government obsession with collecting data has now extended to five-year-olds, as local Community Health Services get ready to arm-twist parents into revealing the most intimate details of their own and their child's personal, behavioural and eating habits.

The questionnaire – or 'School Entry Wellbeing Review' – is a four-page tick-box opus, at present being piloted in Lincolnshire, requiring parents to supply over 100 different data points about their own

and their offspring's health. Previously, parents received a 'Health Record' on the birth of a child, which contained around eight questions which needed to be answered when that child started school.

#21 Tens of thousands of kids in the UK are being branded as "racist" or "homophobic" and are being put into permanent databases just for using common playground insults. The following comes from an article by Paul Joseph Watson....

Over 30,000 British schoolchildren, some as young as three, have had their names registered on a government database and branded 'racist' or 'homophobic' for using playground insults, infractions that could impact their future careers.

In the old days, we were all taught that totalitarian police states such as North Korea, Nazi Germany and the USSR were bad. But now we are being taught that totalitarian police states are good.

These days we are told that society works better when control freaks are watching, tracking, monitoring and recording virtually everything that we do.

Sadly, advances in technology now make it possible for governments to track and control all of us to a far greater degree than dictators in the past ever dreamed was possible. With each passing year, the control grids get tighter and we lose even more liberty and freedom.

If we do not stand up for liberty and freedom while we still can, eventually it will be too late.

Please speak out and let your voice be heard. We simply cannot afford to let the control freaks win.

This article first appeared here at the American Dream. Michael Snyder is a writer, speaker and activist who writes and edits his own blogs The American Dream and Economic Collapse Blog. Follow him on Twitter.

SCAN BEFORE YOU TAN IN BRIGHTON

Big Brother Watch

In Brighton, maximum security tanning is hitting the streets - and we don't think it's really about stopping people tanning too much. It is an absurd use of technology that is intended to track people's behaviour. With schools, hospitals and businesses turning more and more to biometric technologies as a way of recording what people are doing, often under the guise of security or convenience, Big Brother Watch will continue to highlight the real intention behind these schemes and the serious privacy issues these technologies entail.

Who decides what you can see online? The Government, of course.

This week's report from Claire Perry MP recommends that, within 12 months, the Government should mandate network-level filtering by ISPs, although exactly what they are supposed to be filtering is unclear. The proposals are made without any qualification or apparently consideration of either the technical impact or the likelihood of avoidance measures. It bears all the hallmarks of a policy proposal that is trying to fix a problem without understanding the solution, or even acknowledging there may be unintended consequences.

For anyone who doubts the risk that Government plans to monitor web use will not lead to calls for controls on what we can browse, this is a stark warning. Technology is not a substitute for parenting or a quick fix for social problems and as long as what you're looking at is not illegal, it is not for the state to stop you.

Another NHS data blunder

The latest data protection issue in the NHS saw medical details of 600,000 patients 'over collected' by GE Healthcare and then sent back to the US, despite the Data Protection Act clearly highlighting the need to keep data within the European Economic Area unless robust safeguards are in place. The data included clinical data and records of weight, age and height and while the company became aware of the fault last year, the Information Commissioner's Office was only notified last month.

Fighting for a free, open and private internet

The past two days have seen international debate about the Government's plans to monitor every person's internet activity, phone calls and emails. national 'Email Theresa May Day' was founded, while Twitter users - including the Home Office's account - took on their responsibility to #telltaveeverything.

Big Brother Watch has been at the forefront of the campaign to defend privacy online, appearing on BBC News, ITN, on the front page of The Independent, Metro, Daily Mail and City AM and many more.

We will be updating you on the detail of the plans and what it means, and providing materials for you to write to your MP with, but our action can start now by signing the Downing Street petition.

A step towards victory in Oxford

Following our visit to Oxford, local MP Nicola Blackwood joined us in calling for the policy of audio CCTV in taxis to be suspended, pending an investigation by the Information Commissioner. Today the Council has announced that it will suspend the policy, a step towards victory after months of campaigning.

Of course this is not the end of the policy, and we will keep fighting to ensure that the policy does not go ahead, recording the conversations of every single passenger in one of the town's taxis.

How to make a subject access request

Under the Data Protection Act you are entitled to make a 'Subject Access Request' to the 'Data Controller', which allows you to receive all the information that is held about you by the organisation. We have recently had a series of queries about how to go about making this kind of request, and so we have put together a template letter than can be amended to suit your personal request. We have also included some helpful tips to guide you through the process.

Smart Meters The Future of Spying?

Back in 2009 we warned of the dangers around smart meters and how they could give prying eyes an unprecedented look inside our homes. We welcomed the Energy Minister's commitment that they would not be compulsory but it is clear that serious issues still exist. And we're not the only ones aware of the clandestine value of smart meters connected to smart appliances throughout your home – so is the CIA. Speaking at an event organised by In-Q-Tel, the CIA's venture capital firm, CIA Director David Petraeus said they offered new opportunities in clandestine tradecraft.

Can you help us with some data crunching?

Thanks to everyone who has already spared some time to help with our next big project to map the location of every local authority CCTV camera in Britain. We still need help with the data entry of all the cameras so if you can spare an hour or two (you can help from home) to type up a few FOI responses, let us know.

Ways to help Big Brother Watch

Donate to the campaign
Keep us posted on any stories you see that we might be interested in
Forward this newsletter to a friend or suggest they sign up
Like our Facebook page
Follow our Twitter feed

BIG BROTHER PETITION

Thirty Eight Degrees

(It is very rare for the Runnymede Gazette to promote petitions. In the main these are little more than futile exercises in gesture politics. We fire peashooters at Panzers and then con ourselves into believing that we are making a difference. However the petition from Thirty Eight Degrees opposing full spectrum snooping by the Government is mounting up rapidly, with over 170,000 signatures at the last count. That just might stand an outside chance of getting noticed, so please pass this item on to your own contacts - Ed)

In just 48 hours over 85,000 of us have signed the petition against government plans to spy on who we email, call and text. Together we're taking a stand against this Big Brother invasion of our privacy. We're saying it's simply not right for the government to be allowed to spy on every single one of us - without any kind of warrant or reason.

Our petition is causing a stir. It's being reported in front page news stories and MPs are starting to speak out. But there's a risk the government will still press ahead. If we're going to stop these Big Brother plans, we

need to get the petition past 100,000 signatures and fast.

The more people who sign the petition, the stronger the pressure on David Cameron to drop the plans. Please can you forward this email to your friends and family to sign the petition by clicking here:
<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/stop-the-snooping-plan>

David Cameron claims these plans will make us safer. But this is about spying on all of us, not just serious criminals. Human rights experts, academics and even backbench government MPs are expressing serious concerns.

One concerned Conservative MP, David Davis, has been in touch with the 38 Degrees office to say: "These plans would give the state huge new powers to snoop on ordinary people. They'd be expensive, unnecessary, and a huge invasion of everybody's privacy. If they are to be stopped, public pressure will be critical – including from 38 Degrees members".

You've already signed the petition, but now can you help increase the pressure further by asking your friends to sign too? That way you can help make sure the government sees the petition grow past 100,000 signatures. Together we can show the government that British citizens up and down the country simply won't put up with their snooping plans.

Please forward this email and ask your friends to sign by clicking here:

<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/stop-the-snooping-plan>

If you use Facebook, please also share the petition on your profile by clicking here:

<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/stop-government-snooping-facebook>

If you use Twitter, please also send a Tweet about the petition by clicking here:

<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/stop-government-snooping-twitter>

THE DEVELOPMENT OF "PRIVACY KILLING TECHNOLOGIES": A LINK TO THE MURDOCH SCANDAL? BLACK OPS FOR MAJOR U.S. BANKS AND CORPORATIONS

By Tom Burghardt; Global Research

URL of this article: www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25764

Following revelations earlier this year by The Tech Herald that security firms with close ties to the Pentagon ran black ops for major U.S. banks and corporations, it became clear that proprietary software developed for the military and U.S. intelligence was being used to target Americans.

Those firms, including now-defunct HBGary Federal, parent company HBGary, Palantir (a start-up flush with cash from the CIA's venture capital arm In-Q-Tel) and Berico Technologies had partnered-up with the Bank of America's law firm Hunton & Williams and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and devised a sub rosa plan of attack against WikiLeaks and Chamber critics.

And when the cyber-guerrilla collective Anonymous published some 70,000 emails and documents filched from HBGary servers, it was off to the races.

In the intervening months since that story first broke, journalists and researchers have turned their attention to a dark web of security firms developing surveillance software for law enforcement, the Pentagon, and repressive foreign governments.

Last week, Wired revealed that one such firm, TruePosition, "a holding of the Liberty Media giant that owns Sirius XM and the Atlanta Braves," is marketing "something it calls 'location intelligence,' or LOCINT, to intelligence and law enforcement agencies," investigative journalist Spencer Ackerman disclosed.

The Pennsylvania-based company has sold their location services system to NSA surveillance partner AT&T and T-Mobile, allowing those carriers to pinpoint "over 60 million 911 calls annually."

"For the better part of decade," Ackerman writes, "TruePosition has had contracts to provide E-911 services with AT&T (signed originally with Cingular in 2001, which AT&T acquired) and T-Mobile

(2003)."

Known as "geofencing," the firm explains that location tech "collects, analyzes, stores and displays real-time and historical wireless events and locations of targeted mobile users."

Bloomberg BusinessWeek reported that amongst the services TruePosition offers clients are "products for safety and security applications, including family monitoring, personal medical alert, emergency number service, and criminal tracking."

Additionally, BusinessWeek reports, the company tailors its "enterprise applications" to corporations interested in "workforce management, asset tracking, and location-based advertising; consumer applications, including local search, traffic, and navigation."

But what should concern readers is the firm's "government applications" market which includes everything from "homeland security" and "military intelligence" to "force tracking." According to a press release posted on the firm's web site, the "TruePosition Location Intelligence Management System (LIMS)" is a "a multi-dimensional database, which uses probes within mobile networks to capture and store all mobile phone network events—including the time and the location of events. Mobile phone events are items like calls made and received, text messages sent and received, a phone powered on and off, and other rich mobile phone intelligence."

Deploying technology dubbed Uplink Time Difference of Arrival (U-TDOA), the system, installed on cell phone towers, identifies a phone's approximate location—within 30 meters—even if the handset isn't equipped with GPS. Undoubtedly the system can save lives. "In one case," Ackerman reports, "a corrections officer ... was abducted by a recent parolee. But because her cellphone was turned on and her carrier used TruePosition's location tech, police were able to locate the phone along a Kentucky highway. They set up a roadblock, freed the officer and arrested her captor."

All well and good. However, in the hands of repressive governments or privacy-invading corporations, say Rupert Murdoch's media empire, there just might be far different outcomes.

A Link to the Murdoch Scandal?

The relevance of location intelligence in general and more pointedly, TruePosition's LIMS cellphone surveillance products which may, or may not, have been sold to London's Metropolitan Police and what role they may have played in the Murdoch News of the World (NoW) phone hacking scandal have not been explored by corporate media.

While the "who, what, where" aspects of the scandal are now coming sharply into focus, the "how," that is, the high-tech wizardry behind invasive privacy breaches, and which firms developed and profited from their sale, have been ignored. Such questions, and related business entanglements, should be of interest to investigators on both sides of the Atlantic.

After all, TruePosition's parent company, the giant conglomerate Liberty Media currently holds an 18 percent stake in News Corporation.

With corporate tentacles stretching from investments in TimeWarner Cable to Expedia and from QVC to Starz and beyond, Liberty Media is a multi-billion dollar media behemoth with some \$10.9 billion in revenue in 2010, according to an SEC filing by the firm. With deep pockets and political clout in Washington the company is "juiced."

In 2011, Liberty's CEO, John C. Malone, surpassed Ted Turner as the largest private landowner in the United States, controlling some 2.1 million acres according to The New York Times. Dubbed "Darth Vader" by The Independent, Malone acquired a 20 percent stake in News Corp. back in 2000 and "was one of the main investors who rode to the rescue of Mr Murdoch in the early 1990s when News Corp was on its knees."

The New York Times reported back in 2005 that Malone's firm was "unlikely to unwind its investment in the News Corporation" because he considered "the stake in the News Corporation a long-term investment, meaning that the relationship between him and Rupert Murdoch, the chairman of the News Corporation, was not likely to be dissolved any time soon."

After acrimonious mid-decade negotiations that stretched out over two years, the media giants cobbled together a deal in 2006 resulting in a \$11 billion asset swap, one that gave Liberty control of the DirectTV Group whilst helping Murdoch "tighten his grip" on News Corp., according to The New York Times. Interestingly enough during those negotiations, investment banking firms Goldman Sachs and J.P. Morgan Chase along with the white shoe law firm Hogan & Hartson advised News Corp., while Liberty was represented by Bear Stearns and the Baker Botts law firm, long time Bush family consiglieres.

All this can be chalked-up to an interesting set of coincidences. However, the high stakes involved and the relationships and connections forged over decades, including those amongst players who figured prominently in capitalism's 2008 global economic crisis and Bush family corruption, cannot be

ignored.

A Suspicious Death

Last week's suspicious death of former NoW whistleblower Sean Hoare should set alarm bells ringing. When the scandal broke, it was Hoare who told The New York Times last year that senior editors at NoW and another Murdoch tabloid, The Sun, actively encouraged staff to spy on celebrities and others, including victims of the London terror attacks, British soldiers killed in Afghanistan and Iraq and the murdered teenager Milly Dowler; all in pursuit of "exclusives."

The Guardian reported that Hoare said that "reporters at the NoW were able to use police technology to locate people using their mobile phone signals, in exchange for payments to police officers."

"He said journalists were able to use 'pinging', which measured the distance between a mobile handset and a number of phone masts to pinpoint its location," The Guardian revealed.

Hoare described "how reporters would ask a news desk executive to obtain the location of a target: "Within 15 to 30 minutes someone on the news desk would come back and say 'Right, that's where they are.'"

Quite naturally, this raises the question which "police technology" was used to massage NoW exclusives and which firms made a pretty penny selling their wares to police, allegedly for purposes of "fighting crime" and "counterterrorism"?

It was Hoare after all who told The New York Times just days before his death that when he worked for NoW "pinging cost the paper nearly \$500 on each occasion."

According to the Times, Hoare found out how the practice worked "when he was scrambling to find someone and was told that one of the news desk editors, Greg Miskiw, could help."

The Times reports that Miskiw "asked for the person's cellphone number, and returned later with information showing the person's precise location in Scotland."

An unnamed "former Scotland Yard officer" interviewed by the Times said "the individual" who provided confidential information to NoW and other Murdoch holdings "could have been one of a small group entitled to authorize ping requests," that is a senior counterterrorism officer charged with keeping the British public "safe."

Hoare told the Times "the fact that it was a police officer was clear from his exchange with Mr. Miskiw."

"I thought it was remarkable and asked him how he did it, and he said, 'It's the Old Bill, isn't it?'"

"At that point, you don't ask questions," Hoare said.

Yet despite the relevance of the reporter's death to the scandal, police claimed Hoare's sudden demise was "unexplained but not thought to be suspicious." Really? As the World Socialist Web Site points out: "The statement is at the very least extraordinary, and at worst sinister in its implications."

Left-wing journalist Chris Marsden wrote that "Hoare is the man who broke silence on the corrupt practices at the News of the World and, most specifically, alleged that former editor Andy Coulson, who later became Prime Minister David Cameron's director of communications, was fully aware of phone hacking that took place on an 'industrial scale'."

Aside from the secret state, what other entities are capable of intercepting phone and other electronic communications on "an industrial scale"? Given Rupert Murdoch's close ties to the political establishment on both sides of the Atlantic, is it a stretch to speculate that a "sympathetic" intelligence service wouldn't do all they could to help a "friend," particularly if cash payments were involved?

How could Hoare's death not be viewed suspiciously?

Indeed, "the morning after Hoare's body was found," Marsden writes, "former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson and his former deputy, John Yates, were to give evidence before a home affairs select committee. Stephenson had tendered his resignation Sunday and Yates Monday."

Conveniently, for those with much to hide, including police, "the death of Hoare means that his testimony will never be heard by any such inquiry or, more importantly, by any criminal investigation that may arise." Yet, despite a pending coroner's inquest into the exact cause of the reporter's death, corporate media have rushed to judgement, labeling anyone who raise suspicions as being, what else, "conspiracy theorists." This despite the fact, as the World Socialist Web Site reported Saturday that information has surfaced "regarding the extent of News International links to known criminals."

Indeed, on July 6 left-wing journalist Robert Stevens reported that "Labour MP Tom Watson told Parliament that News International chief executive and former News of the World editor Rebekah Brooks 'was present at a meeting with Scotland Yard when police officers pursuing a murder investigation provided her with evidence that her newspaper was interfering with the pursuit of justice'."

"She was told of actions by people she paid to expose and discredit David Cook [a Detective

Superintendent] and his wife Jackie Haines so that Mr. Cook would be prevented from completing an investigation into a murder'.

"Watson added," Stevens writes, that "'News International was paying people to interfere with police officers and were doing so on behalf of known criminals. We know now that News International had entered the criminal underworld'."

Although Hoare had suffered from years of alcohol and cocaine abuse, he was in rehab and by all accounts on the road to recovery. Hoare could have died from natural causes but this has not yet been established. Pending histology and toxicology tests which will take weeks, and a coroner's inquest was adjourned July 21 until said test results were in, short of a definitive finding, nothing can nor should be ruled out, including murder, by a party or parties unknown.

While it would be a fatal exercise in rank stupidity for News Corp. to rub out Sean Hoare, would others, including police or organized crime figures caught up in the scandal and known to have been paid by News Corp. "people to interfere with police officers" and to have done so "on behalf of known criminals," have such qualms?

An Open Question

We do not know if TruePosition sold LIMS to London's Metropolitan Police, key players in the Murdoch hacking scandal, and the firm won't say who they sell to. However, whether they did or did not is a relevant question. That security firms develop and sell privacy-killing products and then wash their hands of responsibility how and by whom their products are used--for good or ill--is hardly irrelevant to victims of police repression or private corruption by entities such as News Corp.

The issue here are the actions taken by our corporate and political minders who believe that everything in terms of smashing down walls between public and private life is up for grabs, a commodity auctioned off to the highest bidder. While we are told by high-tech firms out to feather their nests and politicians that "law enforcement" require we turn over all our data to police to "keep us safe," the Murdoch scandal reveals precisely that it was police agencies corrupted by giant corporations which had allowed such criminal behavior to go unchecked for years.

And with Congress and Obama Justice Department officials pursuing legislation that will require mobile carriers to store and disclose cell-tower data to police and secret state agencies--all without benefit of a warrant, mind you--as well as encryption back doors built into the internet, we are reaching a point where a perfect storm threatens privacy well into the future, if not permanently.

A Looming Threat

Since LIMS 2008 introduction some 75,000 mobile towers in the U.S. have been equipped with the system, FoxNews, ironically enough, reported two years ago. That same report informed us that "LOCINT continues to operate in Middle Eastern and Asia-Pacific nations where no legal restrictions exist for tracking cell phone signals."

TruePosition's marketing vice president Dominic Li told Fox "when you establish a geofence, anytime a mobile device enters the territory, our system will be alerted and provide a message to the customer." Li went on to say, "we realize that this has a lot of value to law enforcement agencies outside of search and rescue missions. It gives rise to a whole host of new solutions for national security."

In keeping with the firm's penchant for secrecy, risk averse when it comes to negative publicity over the civil liberties' implications of their products, "citing security concerns," Fox reported that "company officials declined to specify which countries currently use the technology."

TruePosition claims that while wireless technology "has revolutionized communication" it has a "dark side" as "terrorists and criminals" exploit vulnerabilities to create "serious new threats to the security of nations worldwide." Touting their ability to combine "location determination and network data mining technologies," TruePosition "offers government agencies, security experts and law enforcement officials powerful, carrier-grade security solutions with the power to defend against criminal and terrorist activity."

Never mind that most of the "serious new threats" to global citizens' rights come from unaccountable state security agencies and international financial cartels responsible for the greatest theft of resources in human history. For interested parties such as TruePosition, "actionable intelligence" in the form of "data mining to monitor activity and behavior over time in order to build detailed profiles and identify others that they associate with," will somehow, magically one might say, lead to the apprehension of "those who threaten the safety of citizens."

Unasked is the question: who will protect us from those who develop and sell such privacy killing technologies?

Certainly not Congress which has introduced legislation "that would force Internet companies to log data about their customers," CNET News reported earlier this month. "As a homeland security tool," Wired reported, LIMS is "enticing." Brian Varano, TruePosition's marketing director told Spencer Ackerman to "imagine an 'invisible barrier around sensitive sites like critical infrastructure,' such as oil refineries or power plants."

"The barrier contains a list of known phones belonging to people who work there, allowing them to pass freely through the covered radius. 'If any phone enters that is not on the authorized list, [authorities] are immediately notified,'" Varano told Wired.

While TruePosition's technology may be useful when it comes to protecting nuclear installations and other critical infrastructure from unauthorized breaches and may be an important tool for investigators tracking down drug gangs, human traffickers, kidnappers and stalkers, as we have learned from the Murdoch scandal and the illegal driftnet surveillance of Americans, the potential that governments and private entities will abuse such powerful tools is also likely.

According to Wired while "TruePosition sells to mobile carriers," the company is "cagey about whether the U.S. government uses its products." Abroad however, Ackerman writes, "it sells to governments, which it won't name. Ever since it came out with LOCINT in 2008," Varano said that "'Ministries of Defense and Interior from around the world began beating down our door'."

That technological "quick fixes" such as LOCINT can augment the power of secret state agencies to "easily identify and monitor networks of dissidents," doesn't seem to trouble the firm in the least.

In fact, such concerns don't even enter the equation. As Wired reported, the company "saw a growth market in a field" where such products would have extreme relevance: "the expanding, globalized field of homeland security."

"It really was recession-proof," Varano explained to Ackerman, "because in many parts of the world, the defense and security budgets have either maintained where they were or increased by a large percentage."

Small comfort to victims of globalized surveillance and repression that in many places, including so-called "Western democracies," are already an ubiquitous part of the political landscape. Consider the ease with which police can deploy LIMS for monitoring dissidents, say anticapitalist activists, union leaders or citizen organizers fighting against the wholesale theft of publicly-owned infrastructure to well-connected corporations (Greece, Ireland or Spain for example) by governments knuckling-under to IMF/ECB demands for so-called "deficit reduction" schemes.

As Stephen Graham points out in his seminal book *Cities Under Siege*, "as the everyday spaces and systems of urban everyday life are colonized by militarized control technologies" and "notions of policing and war, domestic and foreign, peace and war become less distinct, there emerges a massive boom in a convergent industrial complex encompassing security, surveillance, military technology, prisons, corrections, and electronic entertainment."

"It is no accident," Graham writes, "that security-industrial complexes blossom in parallel with the diffusion of market fundamentalist notions for organizing social, economic and political life."

Creating a climate of fear is key to those who seek to manage daily life. Thus the various media-driven panics surrounding nebulous, open-ended "wars" on "deficits," "drugs," "terror" and now "cyber-crime." That firms such as TruePosition and hundreds of others who step in to capitalize on the highly-profitable "homeland security" market, hope to continue flying under the radar, we would do well to recall U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis who strongly admonished us that "sunlight is the best disinfectant."

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RESEARCHERS DESIGN CHIP ALLOWING MOBILE DEVICES TO SEE THROUGH WALLS

Madison Ruppert; Activist Post

As unbelievable as it sounds, researchers at the University of Texas at Dallas have created an imager chip for mobile devices which would turn an ordinary cell phone into something which can see through walls, wood, plastics, paper, skin and other objects.

Using the terahertz (THz) band of the electromagnetic spectrum, the wavelengths of which fall between the microwave and infrared bands, the chip could signify a revolution in the surveillance capabilities of mobile phones along with new chips like Broadcom's BCM4752 which is capable of providing ultra-precise location data.

Combine this with citizen spying applications and the techniques which gently push people to conduct surveillance without them knowing what they're actually doing, patents from Google which would allow them to collect the data from such chips and the National Security Agency's (NSA's) new data center and you have the penultimate surveillance state.

The research team connected two separate advances in science: the mostly untapped terahertz frequency range of the electromagnetic spectrum, and cutting edge microchip technology.

For those who are unfamiliar or need a refresher, the electromagnetic spectrum makes up all wavelengths of electromagnetic energy from visible light to radio waves to microwaves to infrared to ultraviolet and everything in between.

Most consumer devices have yet to leverage the terahertz band, which means that this could be truly revolutionary technology, although some like myself might think that this revolution is not necessarily all that wonderful.

"We've created approaches that open a previously untapped portion of the electromagnetic spectrum for consumer use and life-saving medical applications," said Dr. Kenneth O, an electrical engineering professor at the University of Texas at Dallas as well as the director of the Texas Analog Center of Excellence.

"The terahertz range is full of unlimited potential that could benefit us all," he added, although I'm not quite sure how allowing cell phones to see through walls and thus erase what tiny shred of privacy we have left would benefit us all.

This technology would likely not even be as expensive as one might expect. This is because the new approach would allow images to be created with THz-range signals without the need for several lenses or other expensive equipment within the device.

This would not only reduce cost, but also size, making the technology something which we could realistically see in mobile phones in the future.

The University of Texas at Dallas press release notes that the techniques involved in the manufacturing of the microchip involved would also allow it to be applied to consumer devices.

Chips utilizing the Complimentary Metal-Oxide Semiconductor (CMOS) technology, which forms the basis of a great deal of consumer electronics like personal computers, mobile devices, high definition televisions, game consoles, etc. would make this technology even more affordable.

"CMOS is affordable and can be used to make lots of chips," Dr. O said. "The combination of CMOS and terahertz means you could put this chip and receiver on the back of a cell phone, turning it into a device carried in your pocket that can see through objects."

Thankfully, Dr. O seems to be, at least to a certain extent, concerned with privacy. This is evidenced by his team focusing on uses in distances of four inches or less, although this does not mean, by any means, that this technology could not be used at a greater distance when it is undoubtedly used by the government and military.

Some of the more innocuous potential applications could range from turning an ordinary phone into a stud finder or document authentication platform or even a counterfeit currency detector.

Manufacturing companies could potentially use it in process control and with more communication channels available in the THz range compared to the range currently used for wireless communications, data could be more rapidly transferred than the currently utilized frequency ranges allow.

There are even potential applications in healthcare fields, according to researchers.

It is possible that this type of imaging technology could be used to detect cancerous tumors, breath analysis for disease diagnosis and even air toxicity monitoring applications.

"There are all kinds of things you could be able to do that we just haven't yet thought about," said Dr. O, who also currently holds the Texas Instruments Distinguished Chair.

The research team's next move will be to create an entire functioning imaging system which is based on the THz frequency range leveraging CMOS chip technology.

This research is being supported by the Center for Circuit and Systems Solutions (C2S2 Center) and carried out at the Texas Analog Center of Excellence (TxACE).

TxACE is funded by the Semiconductor Research Corporation (SRC), Texas Instruments Inc., and the state of Texas through the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, the University of Texas system and the University of Texas at Dallas.

This research was presented at the most recent meeting of the International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC), according to Homeland Security News Wire.

While there are indeed some very promising, positive applications for this type of technology, there are also some grave concerns in terms of privacy, which is a commodity we are quickly losing in today's Big Brother society. I'd love to hear your opinion, take a look at your story tips, and even your original writing if you would like to get it published.

Madison Ruppert is the Editor and Owner-Operator of the alternative news and analysis database End The Lie and has no affiliation with any NGO, political party, economic school, or other organization/cause. He is available for podcast and radio interviews. Madison also now has his own radio show on Orion Talk Radio from 8 pm -- 10 pm Pacific, which you can find [HERE](#). If you have questions, comments, or corrections feel free to contact him at admin@EndtheLie.com

CRIMINALIZATION OF THE NO BORDER NETWORK VIA EUROPOL

Andrej Hunko; via Nathan Allonby

More background in german: <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/36/36629/1.html>

Preface from Nathan Allonby; Europe's police are equating opposition to Trans-European Networks - Transport (TEN-T) with terrorism.

Will this include residents of Wendover, in the Chilterns, opposed to the HS2 rail line? Will this include motorists organisation opposed to road privatisation and road tolls (which seem to be part of the TEN-T strategy)?

Will this include opponents of other Trans-European Networks, such as the energy network (e.g. opposition to smart meters)?

We have seen previously that environmentalists became entangled in the European warning system for "threats to critical infrastructure".

Against the criminalization of the no border network via EUROPOL!

"The EU's police agency should not be allowed to get involved in political altercations between the EU Member States. Any attempt by Europol to concern itself with antimilitaristic, transport policy, environmental policy or antiracist campaigns is going beyond its mandate," said Bundestag Member Andrej Hunko in criticism of a related response from the Federal Government.

According to meeting minutes of the Council Working Party on "Terrorism", Europol is holding a conference on "anarchism" on 25 April. The focus of the conference is said to be on how to deal with attacks by the Italian anarchist federation FAI.

However, the agenda also foresees discussions on the no border network and the issue of "resistance to railway networks". When Andrej Hunko requested further details, the Federal Government specified that the conference was on "left-wing extremism and terrorism" and alleged "attacks on rail transportations".

Andrej Hunko went on to say:

"I am utterly opposed to the criminalisation of international activists. On the contrary, I am delighted that resistance to senseless large-scale projects like Stuttgart 21 and the TAV high-speed railway in Italy is increasingly being organised across national borders - especially since these projects

are supported by the European Union and incorporated into EU transport infrastructure planning.

As was the case with successful summit protests, international left-wing networking is criminalised. Last year, the Federal Ministry of the Interior used the sending of "letter bombs" to justify the international exchange of undercover police agents on the occasion of the G8 summit in Heiligendamm.

According to the Federal Government, the conference on "anarchism" is a workshop for delegates from those countries that participate in Europol's Dolphin analysis work files. These feature dossiers on individuals and objects concerning "extremist" and "terrorist" activities. The inclusion of left-wing activism in this category serves merely to defame left-wing activists and organisations.

This is particularly the case with regard to Europol's interest in the no border network, whose fight against racism and militarisation on the external borders of the EU is absolutely essential in the EU Member States.

I therefore call upon the Federal Government to actively oppose the equalisation of left-wing activism with "terrorism" and "extremism".

I also demand full information about contributions made to the conference by the police forces of EU Member States. International left-wing movements must be treated with respect and appreciation."

UK MONITORS SUSPECTED RADICALS AS PART OF EUROPEAN SURVEILLANCE PROJECT

Paul Lewis; Guardian; via Nathan Allonby

Police keep tabs on activists from across the political spectrum, documents obtained by EU civil liberties NGO reveal

Europol, a EU law enforcement agency, has been asked to produce a list of people involved in either promoting such groups, or in trying to recruit members.

The documents, obtained by Statewatch, the EU civil liberties monitoring NGO, set out a programme of "systematic data collection" ostensibly geared towards terrorism. But the inclusion of such a broad array of political interests will add to growing concerns that legitimate protest organisations are being subjected to state surveillance.

The scheme has a central database held by the national public order intelligence unit, a secretive body funded by the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo). Monitoring of political activists is a task filled by the terrorism and allied matters division of Acpo.

The advice lists "environmental extremists" alongside far-right activists, dissident Irish republicans, loyalist paramilitaries, and al-Qaida inspired extremists, as among those "currently categorised as extremist [that] may include those who have committed serious crime in pursuit of an ideology or cause".

This latest data-sharing agreement is the culmination of long-standing attempts to create a pan-European database of individuals whom police suspect could cause trouble at large demonstrations.

EU officials, principally led by Germany, have tried repeatedly to widen the shared data on suspected terrorists and serious criminals to include political activists, defined in documents as "troublemakers" who attend "large public gatherings".

The moves were stalled by objections from some member states, including the UK, concerned about civil liberties and data protection. But they reappeared as a firm commitment in the EU's five-year Stockholm programme.

The next point to make clear is that the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) will itself have a very heavy emphasis on data-gathering, both in terms of vehicles on roads, via Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), and passengers on public transport, via integrated ticketing. Monitoring seems to be central to every European policy, such as smart meters in the energy network, water meters in the water network, etc.

Both ITS and the Common Transport Policy CTP both stress monitoring all vehicles and transport. Part of this is for road charging. The net effect is that there will be no more anonymous transport - the movements of every person will be recorded.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/transport/eu-eyes-single-ticket-multi-transport-journey-news-497315>

THE EUROPEAN STABILIZATION MECHANISM, OR HOW GOLDMAN SACHS CAPTURED EUROPE

By Ellen Brown Global Research, Web of Debt

URL of this article: www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=30403

The Goldman Sachs coup that failed in America has nearly succeeded in Europe—a permanent, irrevocable, unchallengeable bailout for the banks underwritten by the taxpayers.

In September 2008, Henry Paulson, former CEO of Goldman Sachs, managed to extort a \$700 billion bank bailout from Congress. But to pull it off, he had to fall on his knees and threaten the collapse of the entire global financial system and the imposition of martial law; and the bailout was a one-time affair. Paulson's plea for a permanent bailout fund—the Troubled Asset Relief Program or TARP—was opposed by Congress and ultimately rejected.

By December 2011, European Central Bank president Mario Draghi, former vice president of Goldman Sachs Europe, was able to approve a 500 billion Euro bailout for European banks without asking anyone's permission. And in January 2012, a permanent rescue funding program called the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) was passed in the dead of night with barely even a mention in the press. The ESM imposes an open-ended debt on EU member governments, putting taxpayers on the hook for whatever the ESM's Eurocrat overseers demand.

The bankers' coup has triumphed in Europe seemingly without a fight. The ESM is cheered by Eurozone governments, their creditors, and "the market" alike, because it means investors will keep buying sovereign debt. All is sacrificed to the demands of the creditors, because where else can the money be had to float the crippling debts of the Eurozone governments?

There is another alternative to debt slavery to the banks. But first, a closer look at the nefarious underbelly of the ESM and Goldman's silent takeover of the ECB

The Dark Side of the ESM

The ESM is a permanent rescue facility slated to replace the temporary European Financial Stability Facility and European Financial Stabilization Mechanism as soon as Member States representing 90% of the capital commitments have ratified it, something that is expected to happen in July 2012. A December 2011 youtube video titled "The shocking truth of the pending EU collapse!," originally posted in German, gives such a revealing look at the ESM that it is worth quoting here at length. It states:

"The EU is planning a new treaty called the European Stability Mechanism, or ESM: a treaty of debt. . . . The authorized capital stock shall be 700 billion euros." Question: why 700 billion? [Probable answer: it simply mimicked the \$700 billion the U.S. Congress bought into in 2008.]

[Article 9]: ". . . ESM Members hereby irrevocably and unconditionally undertake to pay on demand any capital call made on them . . . within seven days of receipt of such demand." . . . If the ESM needs money, we have seven days to pay. . . . But what does "irrevocably and unconditionally" mean? What if we have a new parliament, one that does not want to transfer money to the ESM?

[Article 10]: "*The Board of Governors may decide to change the authorized capital and amend Article 8 . . . accordingly.*" Question: . . . 700 billion is just the beginning? The ESM can stock up the fund as much as it wants to, any time it wants to? And we would then be required under Article 9 to irrevocably and unconditionally pay up?

[Article 27, lines 2-3]: "*The ESM, its property, funding, and assets . . . shall enjoy immunity from every form of judicial process*" Question: So the ESM program can sue us, but we can't

challenge it in court?

[Article 27, line 4]: “*The property, funding and assets of the ESM shall . . . be immune from search, requisition, confiscation, expropriation, or any other form of seizure, taking or foreclosure by executive, judicial, administrative or legislative action.*” Question: . . . [T]his means that neither our governments, nor our legislatures, nor any of our democratic laws have any effect on the ESM organization? That’s a pretty powerful treaty!

[Article 30]: “*Governors, alternate Governors, Directors, alternate Directors, the Managing Director and staff members shall be immune from legal process with respect to acts performed by them . . . and shall enjoy inviolability in respect of their official papers and documents.*” Question: So anyone involved in the ESM is off the hook? They can’t be held accountable for anything? . . . The treaty establishes a new intergovernmental organization to which we are required to transfer unlimited assets within seven days if it so requests, an organization that can sue us but is immune from all forms of prosecution and whose managers enjoy the same immunity. There are no independent reviewers and no existing laws apply? Governments cannot take action against it? Europe’s national budgets in the hands of one single unelected intergovernmental organization? Is that the future of Europe? Is that the new EU – a Europe devoid of sovereign democracies?

The Goldman Squid Captures the ECB

Last November, without fanfare and barely noticed in the press, former Goldman exec Mario Draghi replaced Jean-Claude Trichet as head of the ECB. Draghi wasted no time doing for the banks what the ECB has refused to do for its member governments—lavish money on them at very cheap rates. French blogger Simon Thorpe reports:

On the 21st of December, the ECB “lent” 489 billion euros to European Banks at the extremely generous rate of just 1% over 3 years. I say “lent”, but in reality, they just ran the printing presses. The ECB doesn’t have the money to lend. It’s Quantitative Easing again.

The money was gobbled up virtually instantaneously by a total of 523 banks. It’s complete madness. The ECB hopes that the banks will do something useful with it – like lending the money to the Greeks, who are currently paying 18% to the bond markets to get money. But there are absolutely no strings attached. If the banks decide to pay bonuses with the money, that’s fine. Or they might just shift all the money to tax havens.

At 18% interest, debt doubles in just four years. It is this onerous interest burden, not the debt itself, that is crippling Greece and other debtor nations. Thorpe proposes the obvious solution:

Why not lend the money to the Greek government directly? Or to the Portuguese government, currently having to borrow money at 11.9%? Or the Hungarian government, currently paying 8.53%. Or the Irish government, currently paying 8.51%? Or the Italian government, who are having to pay 7.06%?

The stock objection to that alternative is that Article 123 of the Lisbon Treaty prevents the ECB from lending to governments. But Thorpe reasons:

My understanding is that Article 123 is there to prevent elected governments from abusing Central Banks by ordering them to print money to finance excessive spending. That, we are told, is why the ECB has to be independent from governments. OK. But what we have now is a million times worse. The ECB is now completely in the hands of the banking sector. “We want half a billion of really cheap money!!” they say. OK, no problem. Mario is here to fix that. And no need to consult anyone. By the time the ECB makes the announcement, the money has already disappeared.

At least if the ECB was working under the supervision of elected governments, we would have some influence when we elect those governments. But the bunch that now has their grubby hands on the instruments of power are now totally out of control.

Goldman Sachs and the financial technocrats have taken over the European ship. Democracy has gone out the window, all in the name of keeping the central bank independent from the “abuses” of government. Yet the government is the people—or it should be. A democratically elected government represents the people. Europeans are being hoodwinked into relinquishing their cherished democracy to a rogue band of financial pirates, and the rest of the world is not far behind.

Rather than ratifying the draconian ESM treaty, Europeans would be better advised to reverse article 123 of the Lisbon treaty. Then the ECB could issue credit directly to its member governments. Alternatively, Eurozone governments could re-establish their economic sovereignty by reviving their publicly-owned central banks and using them to issue the credit of the nation for the benefit of the nation, effectively interest-free. This is not a new idea but has been used historically to very good effect, e.g. in Australia through the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and in Canada through the Bank of Canada.

Today the issuance of money and credit has become the private right of vampire rentiers, who are using it to squeeze the lifeblood out of economies. This right needs to be returned to sovereign governments. Credit should be a public utility, dispensed and managed for the benefit of the people.

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WHAT'S ALL THE FUZZ ABOUT MONEY?

Michel Bauwens; Aljazeera; via Positive Money

Debt-free money may well be the solution to restoring a sane monetary system.

The internet played a big role in teaching us a new truth - "money is designed and that design matters" [EPA]

Chiang Mai, Thailand - In response to the 2008 global meltdown, there are really two arguments for what needs to happen next. One is fairly straightforward: We need to change the financial system through which money flows - though of course, the debate is on what precisely needs to be changed.

But there is a more fundamental debate growing throughout the world of autonomous media and its productive publics: What if money itself needed to be changed? This is not a debate about the financial system per se, but actually an argument about the intrinsic "design" of money.

But, isn't money just money? No, it isn't, and paradoxically, though the debates precedes its emergence, the internet played a big role in teaching us a new truth: Money is designed, and that design matters.

We've learned this because in distributed networks such as the internet and on social media platforms where everyone can connect to each other, there is nevertheless an invisible architecture. That architecture consists of thresholds, which makes certain activities easy (making friends on Facebook), and others difficult (protecting your privacy on Facebook).

In a distributed network, where there is no "us and them" that is readily identifiable, this invisible design has nevertheless a tremendous influence on the rules of the system and how we actually behave. And this is what we have come to understand about money: It is not a neutral means of payment, but a tool that is designed to benefit some people, and inevitably hurts others. Call it an expression of protocollary power, or call it value-sensitive design - it matters!

Remember, every traditional society and religion, as Islam still does today, considered lending at interest a grave sin. Why was that? For a very simple reason. If you ask for interest in a static pre-modern society and you need to repay more than you have borrowed, then you can only take it from someone else, thereby destroying the social fabric of non-growing societies.

This is why interest is forbidden in Islam and why the Jewish people had the Jubilee at the core of Mosaic Law, in which debt was cleaned from the slates (the so-called Clean Slate Edicts), and debt-slaves were freed. Capitalism has abolished these interdictions and has "solved" the social crisis through growth. Indeed, the only way you can pay back more than that you borrow without taking it directly from others, is by endlessly growing the economy.

This is why capitalism has to grow. There is no standing still for any firm or individual that has debts, which is really all of us. Growth therefore becomes a categorical imperative. Nevertheless, compound interest remains a phenomenon that violates physical and mathematical law, meaning that unpayable debts must be cleared periodically through major systemic breakdowns and deleveraging on a massive scale.

But what happens when society is in ecological overshoot, using 1.5 times more than the earth's generative capacity already? Then the problem of compound interest becomes a dramatic impediment to the survival of the human race where interest-based money is directly responsible for the destruction of the biosphere. The existence of capitalism, debt and interest-based money are intimately intertwined. What needs to be understood is that "interest" is not a natural, trans-historical feature of money.

Negative interest

Indeed, traditional "pre-modern" societies were marked by the use of negative interest money, whose loss of value reflected the ongoing decay of natural resources (and the "physical" nature of the money was itself subject to decay). In Bernard Lietaer's excellent new book, *New Money for a New World*, of which I read part in the manuscript version, has a very interesting section on medieval Europe before the 14th century, where the European population doubled in just three centuries.

In the "Brakteaten" system of the European Middle Ages, Lietaer writes, people had to give their coins back every four to six years, for example, five coins in exchange for four. The result was that accumulation of money was not very profitable, meaning that those with money had very good reason to invest it into productive resources or to lend it out, which was itself a core reason for the economic wellbeing of that time.

In this period, Lietaer writes, farmers enjoyed a five day working week, which included not just the day of the Lord, but Blue Monday, the day of the family, as well as more than 100 religious festival days. Female skeletons in the cemeteries of the time showed them to be quite tall, a sign of excellent health. However, after the defeat of the Cathar heresy, the French king re-introduced centralised royal money and interest. According to Lietaer, the results soon proved to be catastrophic and the 14th century was plain horrible.

Lietaer offers an interesting hypothesis - that it was not the plague which destroyed the High Middle Ages, but actually the dislocation through centralised money, which decimated the social fabric and allowed the plague to make easy inroads. By that time, the social pressure of the banking and merchant sectors became such that the Church slowly abandoned its opposition to usury. As the historian Jacques Le Goff has argued, it even introduced the idea of Purgatory, so that bankers could pay off their sins and shorten their punishments.

The decision by the French king shows another aspect of the design of money: The importance of who can issue it. For the budding nation-states, which eventually would become the Westphalian system, local money had to be destroyed and the state had to become the sole issuer of currency.

Today though, money creation has become a largely private affair. Not only is government money created through debt, but most money in circulation is also created through the leveraging of banks. Most of the money is lent into existence and thus essentially created by private banks in a system of generalised compound interest.

Credit has become one of the primary means of reverse wealth distribution, a tax on the 99 per cent by the 1 per cent; financial expert Margrit Kennedy has calculated that 45 per cent of the price of goods reflects this cost of capital. As economists such as Steve Keen and Michael Hudson have demonstrated, the systemic breakdown in 2008 is essentially a crisis of debt - a generalised incapacity of governments, corporations and households to repay their debts. Without wiping out the debt, we cannot restart the economy.

A monetary revolt?

Successful negative interest experiments are by no means confined to ancient times, when they were the norm. A famous "modern" case is the introduction of the Worgl Shillings in the crisis-ridden economy and hyper-inflation marking Austria in the thirties.

When burgomaster Michael Unterguggenberger created "labour certificates" that depreciated one per cent in value every month, his town became an island of prosperity and dramatically reduced unemployment; it subsequently became the town became a centre of pilgrimage for European and American macro-economists. (The successful experiment was killed by the Austrian National Bank, who feared the loss of control of its national currency monopoly.)

That much is clear. The failings of not just the financial system, but also of its mainstream money mechanism is becoming public knowledge, leading to an unprecedented wave of alternative practices on a local-regional, national and global scale.

People are no longer waiting for financial reform from the top down, but are busily creating a monetary bio-diversity.

Local complementary currencies are already well-known, in the form of LETS and Time Banks, but

they are now experiencing a real boom, even in emerging countries such as Brazil. Fortified by studies that show how local currencies insulate the local economy from boom and bust cycles and from "leakage", many communities are starting new ones since 2008.

In a recent study on their economic effects, Bielorussian researcher Ivan Tsikota concluded that "all complements provide wider employment opportunities, growth of welfare, and richer access to credit facilities. Analysis of interest-free banks suggests that this type of financial institutions can foster more efficient allocation of resources".

New softwares

There are now several digital and internet packages that facilitate the management of such schemes. A problem, though, is their difficulty in scaling, which is one of the reasons they are now instituted right away on a regional scale, such as the German Regiogeld experiment.

One of the more successful and often cited examples is the WIR, an 80-year-old mutual credit system that unites 90,000 small businesses in Switzerland and has a proven counter-cyclical effect. When the mainstream economy gets tough, its members increase the weight of the WIR-denominated IOU's in their internal dealings, keeping the local Swiss economy moving.

As monetary expert Thomas Greco writes, "WIR has proven over a long period of time the effectiveness of direct clearing of credits between buyers and sellers as an alternative to conventional bank-created debt-money."

The late Richard Douthwait of FEASTA concluded in his own study, "Overall, the WIR avoids the two main defects of national currencies: It should never be in short supply, and because no interest is charged for its use it does not create the growth compulsion. In addition, it does not have to be earned or borrowed from outsiders before it can be used."

There is also movement on the national scale, through economic mavericks such as public banking advocate Ellen Brown and the proponents of Modern Monetary Theory, which counts James Galbraith, Steve Keen and Michael Hudson amongst its adherents. Essentially, they argue that public authorities should abandon the debt-based creation of money and spent money into circulation for productive rather than speculative.

There is an extensive historical record to show that such money creation does not create inflation and that such policies were instrumental in getting countries out of crisis situations (most recently Argentina). The refusal to bailout their banks is also at the root of the revival of the Icelandic economy. If only the Greeks would follow suit!

Debt-free currency

However, the biggest development may in fact be the creation of a workable, socially sovereign, debt-free currency called Bitcoin.

Started on January 4, 2009, it already has developed an impressive ecology of operational support infrastructures and services. At this point, it is already working as a small-scale global reserve currency. Bitcoin draws its value from peer-to-peer network dynamics and mints new currency not through debt but raw computational activity. You can buy many different goods and services with Bitcoin, exchange it with other currencies, pay salaries, etc.

It works without any difficulty on a global scale and solves the scaling issues that plagued local complementary currencies. Hence, it is symbolic of the shift of our world system to a "post-Westphalian" phase that goes not only beyond the dominance of the nation-states, but also beyond the private global powers that have hijacked global governance, such as the financial system of the 1 per cent.

It is a true p2p monetary system - perhaps even a shadow banking system for civil society - and exists by virtue of its social creation and the social trust of the global hacker community. It protects their elective communities from global financial storms.

If debt-free money is indeed the problem, then we can now embark on the journey to return to a sane monetary system that requires neither infinite growth nor the impoverishment of many, not by waiting for the agreement of the 1 per cent and their institutions, but by creating the conditions for change on the different scales where citizens can act right now.

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POSITIVE MONEY BULLETIN

Positive Money Team

After nearly two years of hard work, there's some real momentum building in the movement to democratise money and reform our privatised, debt-based money system. The next couple of months will see the launch of a new UK-focussed documentary about money (see below), the release of our report on the shift of power from Parliament to the big banks, the release of James Robertson's latest book, entitled 'Future Money', and the birth of a sister to Positive Money in Ireland (below).

We're also seeing more economists talk about the ability that banks have to create money. At the Institute for New Economic Thinking conference in Berlin last weekend, even the Chairman of the FSA was talking about 'credit creation' (the economist jargon for banks creating money).

For now, here's the latest news:

97% Owned - the New UK Documentary about Money on 1st May

The first UK-focused documentary about money, money creation and the privatised, debt-based money system will be released on 1st May! The documentary features interviews with Ben Dyson of Positive Money, Josh-Ryan Collins of the New Economics Foundation, Ann Pettifor, the Jubilee Debt Campaign and other people involved in monetary reform.

The documentary will be available free online or on DVDs in two versions (60 minute version focused on money creation and potential reforms and full, extended 2 hour 20minute version). You'll be able to get DVDs from Positive Money - watch this space. There'll also be a screening in London towards the end of May, and hopefully screenings around the country. More on that soon...

New book 'Future Money - Breakdown or Breakthrough'

James Robertson is the author of the excellent book 'Creating New Money', which served as the basis for much of our work on reforming the monetary system. His new book has been published TODAY and is highly recommended.

"...the money system now is like the result of someone "seeking to build a substantial house by working spasmodically on odd portions of the structure on quite isolated plans, fashioning minute details of some upper parts, when he has not set up, nor indeed even planned out, the substructure which is their sole foundation..."

If you'd like to order a printed version, you can do so via Green Books (and support an independent publisher as well, rather than Amazon!)

New video - Banking behind Housing Crisis – Toby Lloyd

Watch Toby Lloyd, from housing charity Shelter, who was speaking at Positive Money conference about the consequences of the current system of money creation by banks on rising house prices, redistribution of wealth upwards, higher inequality and a culture of unearned wealth.

TEDx Talk – Changing The Rules of Banking

This is worth watching! Excellent TEDx talk by Simon Dixon on why changing the rules of banking is so important.

Sensible Money' in Ireland

A sister campaign has been launched in Ireland. Paul Ferguson and James McKumiskey would like to hear from anyone else in Ireland who would like to get involved in growing this initiative. You can contact them at info@sensiblemoney.ie, and check out the growing website at <http://www.sensiblemoney.ie/>

Help needed: Translators

We need people who can help to transcribe (i.e. type up) and translate the new documentary 97% Owned (see above) so that we can provide subtitles for the hard of hearing or non-English speakers on YouTube (and get this message out to the rest of the world).

For transcription, you simply need to type out what is said for a 15 minute segment of the film (which would take about 1 hours' work, depending on how fast you type). If you want to do this you'll also get to view the film earlier than anyone else!

For translation, we'll give you a full transcript of the film and you simply need to translate the text into your home language. If you want to help, please let us know via email on info@positivemoney.org.uk

Latest from the Blog

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Aljazeera: Debt-free Money May Well Be the Solution
Mainstream Economist Discovers that Banks Create Money
Krugman vs. People Who Understand How Banks Work
Greek Hospital Workers Understand the Core of the Debt Problem
Green Party 'gets it' on Monetary Policy
"What is Money?" on BBC Radio 4
The Budget 2012: Let's rearrange those deckchairs boys!

Welsh Assembly Briefing on Reforming Money

On March 27th 2012 Ben Dyson of Positive Money and Josh Ryan-Collins of the New Economics Foundation gave a briefing to the Welsh Assembly on the problems with our current debt-based monetary system, and proposed ideas for implementing complementary currencies in Wales without waiting for action from Westminster. Darren Millar AM agreed to initiate an all-party group on the issue of money to discuss these ideas.

Mainstream Economists taken to task for not understanding money

Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman has been taken to task by the excellent Steve Keen (and his supporters) for not understanding that banks create money. This is a big step forward; these economists would normally get away with completely ignoring the fact that 97% of money is created by banks. An insight into the way these economists think comes from the bizarre statement below:

KRUGMAN: [Steve Keen] asserts that putting banks in the story is essential. Now, I'm all for including the banking sector in stories where it's relevant; but why is it so crucial to a story about debt and leverage? Why? Positive Money's Andrew Jackson has blogged about this step forward in the debate.

Bank of England: Creating Money Gives you "Value for Nothing"

Here's a quote from Paul Fisher (Executive Director of the BoE and member of the MPC) broadcast on Sunday (in a programme called "What is Money?" in the Radio 4 series "Analysis"):

Presenter: Would you mind if I printed my own money - it wouldn't look anything like yours from the Bank of England.

Paul Fisher (Bank of England): Yes we would mind. When you start printing money, you create value for yourself. If you could issue one thousand pounds worth of IOUs, you've got a thousand pounds for nothing. And so we do restrict people's ability to create their own notes in that way.

Presenter: You're protecting us against ourselves.

Fisher: We're protecting you from charlatans.

So if someone can create money out of nothing, they get value for nothing? And are charlatans? Does this only apply if you're printing paper money, or does it also apply to the banks that have created over £2trillion of money out of nothing electronically? Did they get £2trillion of value for nothing? Something for us all (and especially the Bank of England) to ponder!

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