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SURVEILLANCE AND INTERNET CONTROL: TOWARD GLOBAL TOTALITARIANISM?

Abstract: The paper discusses a question of whether we are entering a new era of global totalitarianism with recent power changes related to mass global communications via the Internet and modern technologies, and with an existence of the (global) ability of their massive control and misuse. The text consists of theoretical elaboration of the mere term „totalitarianism“ and of an empirical review of the development of a modern surveillance state. Also, current findings in surveillance studies are exposed, as well as most recent global surveillance revelations. The author draws conclusions on current totalitarian tendencies in a „post-Orwellian“ global surveillance state.

Key words: totalitarianism, surveillance, Internet, power, privacy.

Introduction

Whether we are entering a new era of global totalitarianism with recent power challenges related to mass global communication via modern technology, in the first place the Internet? The ability to survey everyone on the planet is almost there, convincingly argues these days Julian Assange from an asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London.² Like other prominent public figures and intellectuals, he warns that it has been led to a huge transfer of power from the people who are surveyed upon to those who control the surveillance complex, and that the purpose of the Internet, perceived as perhaps the greatest tool of human creation, now is being transformed toward the the creation of the most aggressive form of state surveillance the world has ever seen. Before we focus on this interesting, postmodern version of a power theory,

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² Julian Assange, “US annexed the whole world through global spying”, *Russia Today*, April 07, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/us-global-spying-assange-761>; 10.04.2014.

we consider the term “totalitarianism”, and an empirical development of a modern surveillance state. Besides, current findings in surveillance studies are exposed, as well as most recent global surveillance revelations.

Totalitarianism

The term “totalitarianism” has derived from the Latin word *totus*, which means whole, entire, complete. *Completeness* related to a degree of dominance or control over society established in a particular type of political system. That means the complete domination, or subordination of society to state or another organization. A totalitarian state is a comprehensive one, because every human action, ultimately, is the state’s action.³

The term “totalitarianism” has been used for the first time in 1922 by the opponents of Benito Mussolini as a goal of the Italian Fascists. The movement related the term “totalitarianism” not only to a particular type of political system or government, but also to certain political party or ideology. The opponents of fascism have underlined with the term “totalitarian”, its distinctiveness in comparison to previously existing political philosophies particularly liberal one and related political institutions. Totalitarianism includes an idea of totalitarian state, based on anti-liberal principles of unity and totality.⁴ In a similar way, the term has been used by Spanish fascists and by fascist movements in France, Romania, Japan and Germany. In this regard, the concept of “total state” was most developed by Carl Schmitt, one of the most important figures in 20th century legal and political theory associated with Nazism. For him a total state was necessary for correction of major shortcomings in liberalism and parliamentarism, and hence he supported an emergence of totalitarian power structures.⁵

The term “totalitarianism” is as a synonym for a type of political system contrary to democracy, distinguished by a comprehensive subordination and subjugation of society to state (or other organizations, i.e. political parties, religious movements, etc). Lacking a broader explanation, the meaning of the term has negative value for it implies a negation of the basic principles of liberal democracy (rule of law, respect for fundamental human and political rights and freedoms, separation of powers and a principle that power is limited, controlled and replaceable).⁶

³ Cf. Jovica Teokarevic, “Totalitarizam”, in *Enciklopedija politicke kulture*, Savremena administracija, Beograd, 1993, pp. 1195-6.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.* Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, MIT Press, 1988 (german original: Carl Schmitt, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, Kapitel I-II, Auflage Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 1926).

⁶ *Ibid.*

In the West, a birthplace of liberal democracy, the term “totalitarianism” has been used for a description of not only Fascist and Nazi regimes, but also for the Soviet communist regime under Stalin.⁷ Anyway, almost all authors who wrote on totalitarianism have considered the political system for a new and unique phenomenon relating to the 20th century. After World War II, prominent Western thinker *Hannah Arendt* offered one of the first systematic analysis of totalitarianism (1951).⁸ She singled out the *terror*, which was practiced by authoritarian regimes, as a characteristic feature of the totalitarianism. Its difference in comparison with the earlier despotism and totalitarianism of the 20th century she saw in a qualitatively higher domination over subordinated by the new regimes. In both cases, subordinated are equal in being powerless, but in other types of nondemocratic systems some non-political relationships still survive (family, cultural relations, etc), while totalitarianism ruled out any autonomous activity of the people. A total control and domination over people was provided, in Arendt’s words, by an application of the terror in conditions of modern mass society. Thus, mass society was a precondition, and terror was the core of a totalitarian domination. These two factors compounded resulted in totalitarianism as a new historical phenomenon.⁹

Very similar meaning of a totalitarian regime, and almost at the same time (1949), has been exposed in *George Orwell’s* dystopian fable, a novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.¹⁰ The British writer presented a dystopia of future, which is actually a hyperbole of totalitarianism as a mixture of Nazism and Stalinism. The main feature of the futuristic projection was laid down in complete control of totalitarian regime over people. Orwell also offered an image of the modern state in which *privacy* – as a civil virtue and a crucial liberal right, was “no longer valued as a measure of the robust strength of a healthy and thriving democracy”. Orwell was clear that the right to privacy in liberal democracy had come “under egregious assault”, in an “an emerging totalitarian state”.¹¹ The book had a strong and long-lasting influence and importance as warning on the horrors of the mid-20th century totalitarianism and the endless regimes of state spying imposed on citizens. The text serves “as a brilliant but limited metaphor for mapping the expansive trajectory of global surveillance and authoritarianism now characteristic of the first decades of the new millennium.”¹²

⁷ The three political regimes became ideal types of totalitarianism also in East-European countries, after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1951.

⁹ Cf. Jovica Teokarevic, “Totalitarizam”, op. cit., p. 1197.

¹⁰ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, Penguin Group, 1949.

¹¹ Henry A. Giroux, “Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State”, *Truthout*, 10. 02. 2014, Internet: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/21656-totalitarian-paranoia-in-the-post-orwellian-surveillance-state>; 20. 02. 2014.

¹² Ibid.

Aldous Huxley, a creator of one other dystopia, noted that the Orwell's image did not in general apply. The creator of one other dystopia, Huxley, wrote (in 1948) that within the next generation "the world's rulers" will discover that "the nightmare of 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' is destined to modulate into the nightmare of a world having more resemblance to that imagined in 'Brave New World'", in which "infant conditioning and narco-hypnosis are more efficient, as instruments of government, than clubs and prisons, and that the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting people into loving their servitude as by flogging and kicking them into obedience."¹³

These changes have been brought about as a result of a felt need for increased efficiency. What was going on from the mid-1980s was the arrival of ever more powerful and "seemingly omniscient, omnipresent knowledge machines": video cameras; drug testing; computer documentation, discoveries, predictions and networks; location and communication monitoring; DNA analysis, etc. This increased an importance of non-violent forms of social control. Threats to privacy and liberty are not limited to the use of force, or to state power, and indeed they may appear in the service of benign ends. "Over recent decades subtle, seemingly less coercive, forms of control have emerged within societies that have not become less democratic and in which the state makes less use of domestic violence."¹⁴

The new millenium was foreshadowed by another popular dystopia, Wachowski brothers' film, *The Matrix*. The film is about the rapidly proliferating surveillance capabilities of our "Thought Police", watching telescreens fed by images accumulated from millions of closed-circuit cameras, that eavesdrop on hundreds of millions of phone calls, and who pore over billions of electronic transactions on a daily basis. *The Matrix* addresses "a classical liberal conundrum, the tensions between 'liberty' and 'security', between freedom and safety (...)"¹⁵

¹³ Huxley letter to Orwell 1949, <http://www.lettersofnote.com/2012/03/1984-v-brave-new-world.html>, 6 March 2012. *Brave New World* is a novel written in 1931 and published in 1932. set in London of AD 2540 (632 A.F. – "After Ford" – in the book), the novel anticipates developments in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation, and classical conditioning that combine profoundly to change society. Huxley answered this book with a reassessment in an essay, and his final novel. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Harper Perennial, New York, 1998 (first published 1932); Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited*, Harper Perennial, New York, 2006 (first published 1958); Aldous Huxley, *Island*, Harper Perennial, 2002 (first published 1962).

¹⁴ Gary T. Marx, "Your Papers please': personal and professional encounters with surveillance", *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, Kirstie Ball, Kevin D. Haggerty and David Lyon (eds); Routledge, 2012, Preface, pp. xxi, xiii.

¹⁵ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, What Comes after Liberalism?, More Liberalism!, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 2010, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. *Id.*, pp. 547-8.

This development has showed that democratic orders were “indeed fragile and abusive”, and that *surveillance* was “hardly restricted to authoritarian and totalitarian states”.¹⁶ At the very least, one can say that surveillance created with computerization and other new surveillance and communication tools “was neither good nor bad, but context and comporment made it so”. Using surveillance against “a suspected corrupt politician, fraudulent contractor, or rapist was very different from using it against nuns who were peace activists or blacks demanding the right to vote or sit at a lunch counter.” Surveillance by government could be, clearly, necessary when „legitimated and limited by policy, law and ethics“, and “it could be as irresponsible not to use it, as to use it wrongly – even as the obvious risk of government abuses remained.”¹⁷

Emergence of surveillance state

Information gathering and intelligence have long been part of the history and powerful instruments of the state. But it was not until industrialization that states began to collect information on their citizens with any regularity, and that process became more organized, structured, rational and centralized and evolved into what we recognize as the modern bureaucratic surveillance system.¹⁸ The process was developed out of necessity and requirement of Western industrialization, modern transportation and communication, and revolutions in economic, technological and processing control. As a response emerged modern bureaucracy which made much more efficient collection and ordering of information. Bureaucracy thus had become professionalized, with government officials dedicated to the collection and management of information on citizens. The very idea of the surveillance state is, for some authors, a defining characteristic of modernity itself, irrevocably linked with industrialization and the rise of the nation-state.¹⁹ A modern information state began routinely to develop and enforce bureaucracy, and created central repositories and formal

¹⁶ Gary T. Marx, “‘Your Papers please’: personal and professional encounters with surveillance”, op. cit., p. xii.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Cf. Toni Weller, “The information state: An historical perspective on surveillance”, in *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, op. cit., pp. 57-8.

¹⁹ Anthony Giddens argued that during the nineteenth century the emergence of the industrialized nation state necessitated a change in the way the central state considered its citizens, since “no pre-modern states were able even to approach the level of administrative co-ordination developed in the nation-state”, and “such administrative concentration depends in turn upon the development of surveillance capacities well beyond those characteristic of traditional civilisations”. Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity, 1990, p. 57.

procedures of centralized surveillance for the purposes of welfare provision. Bureaucracy had become “a major new control technology”.²⁰

State surveillance on citizens is justified as a means which benefits the citizen through the application of social welfare.²¹ The growth of bureaucrats and information collectors led to growing state collections of statistics (on citizens finances, personal income, jobs and family situation, social insurance, old age pensions, disability payments, fingerprinting, etc). The collection of information on citizens is not limited to the role of the central state but is increasingly a function of other bodies as well. The growth of modern capitalist and consumer society introduced a new form of rationalized surveillance on workers as well as on consumers’ behavior (for advertising and marketing purposes, for example). This created huge flows of information and the elaboration of ever more sophisticated and anonymous systems for their storage and manipulation.

This led to the emergence of the information, or surveillance, state, in which the degree of control is greatly enhanced. Thus, welfare surveillance was often a two-edged sword, where the second edge was motivated by a state desire to keep a check on potential deviants, i.e. to monitor and collect information on dissenting citizens and potential threats. This threat could come from an external force (an enemy country, overseas terrorism) or it could be internal (prisoners, law-breakers, domestic terrorism, domestic dissention). This phenomenon has been described as the “dual factors of welfare and warfare”, unique to the modern period.²² So surveillance, as a fundamental social process characteristic of all societies, became both functional and risky.²³

There may be identified one historical paradox: Whilst from the mid-nineteenth century citizens began to demand greater state assistance, accountability and reform, they also resented and often feared what was perceived as intrusive, centralized and increasingly commonplace surveillance practices. This has raised citizen’s concerns over the acceptability of central information collection. The fact is that information was not always accurate and often was disseminated with uncorrected mistakes. The issue of misrepresentation and inaccuracy has been one of the most powerful factors in the development of late twentieth-century legislation in privacy, data protection and freedom of information.²⁴

²⁰ Cf. Toni Weller, “The information state”, op. cit., pp. 57-8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²³ Gary T. Marx, “‘Your Papers please’: personal and professional encounters with surveillance”, op. cit., p. xxi.

²⁴ Toni Weller, “The information state”, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

The development intensified debates that had already been ongoing for two centuries, and indeed the accessibility of digital media meant that the debates have fully entered the public consciousness, particularly in relation to social surveillance through digital technologies themselves. Digital technologies and the internet have dramatically accelerated the role of state surveillance during the late 20th and early 21st century making the sharing and dissemination of information instantaneous and without restriction across geographical borders.²⁵ The described development was accompanied by theoretical attempts to explain the process of surveillance and control, and its significance for politics, power and society, from which eventually have been developed so called surveillance studies.

Surveillance studies

Surveillance studies developed as “a transdisciplinary field that draws from sociology, psychology, organization studies, science and technology studies, information science, criminology, law, political science and geography”.²⁶ The dominant founding father of surveillance studies is a French philosopher Michel Foucault, and other relevant sociologists and philosophers are Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard, Antony Giddens, etc. Further in the background of studies of surveillance, as a forerunner was considered an English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, the original creator of the so called panopticon model, which has overwhelmingly served as a common theoretical and polemical point of departure for surveillance studies.²⁷ Important insights for surveillance studies were found in works of many other classical philosophers (Weber, Nietzsche, Marx, Rousseau, Hobbes). Today the studies of surveillance represent a “growing epistemic community”.²⁸

Jeremy Bentham's Victorian panopticon

The panopticon is a derivative concept stemming from letters of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), and it often served as an introductory footnote for surveillance studies.²⁹ The panopticon is a name given to a design of the prison

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

²⁶ David Murkami Wood, “Beyond Panopticon? Foucault and Surveillance Studies”, in *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, Jeremy W. Crampton and Stuart Elden (eds), Ashgate, 2007, p. 245.

²⁷ Toni Weller, “The information state”, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

²⁸ Gary T. Marx, “‘Your Papers please’: personal and professional encounters with surveillance”, *op. cit.*, p. xxviii.

²⁹ Bentham's panoptic writings were developed and subsequently published as a series of letters written from Russia in 1787, and two Postscripts written in 1790 and 1791, printed in 1791. Bentham, Jeremy, *The Panopticon Writings*, Miran Bozovic (ed.), London: Verso, 1995.

consisting of a circular structure, in which a supervisor (or a manager or staff of the institution) sits in a central place – an “inspection house”, able to potentially observe every individual in their cells, who are stationed around the perimeter and cannot see each other nor the central supervisor. It is physically impossible for the single watchman to observe all cells at once, but the fact that inmates cannot know when they are being watched – means that they all must act as though are being watched at all times, effectively controlling their own behaviour. Bentham considered the panopticon as nothing more than “a simple idea in architecture”, never realized, describing “a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example” – the possessor of which is “the inspector” with his invisible omnipresence, “an utterly dark spot” in the all-transparent, light-flooded universe of the panopticon.³⁰

In short, Bentham elaborated “a patriarchal regime of surveillance at the center of his panopticon, one that emphasized the intransigence and immobility of the inspector and his family, as much if not more than that of the prisoners themselves. In Bentham’s panopticon the inspector and family are themselves effectively isolated, segregated or, ironically, jailed. For the family in the tower there is seemingly little else to do but watch. Watching for Bentham is automated.”³¹

The logic of panopticon is a simple explanation for the most important effect of gazing a behavior of people in a society that is under surveillance: the entire society is transformed into an invisible prison in which all citizens are actually suspected as potential offenders. The main purpose of such an object is that prisoners create an awareness about a constant surveillance. Knowing that at any time someone may watch on them, prisoners in the panopticon, ie. citizens in a society are forced to “inhibit, normalized and uniform their behavior”, and, metaphorically speaking, “that sticking a last nail in the coffin in which the ideal of a free society was laid down.”³²

Michel Foucault modern “panoptic” surveillance

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) takes, much later, the panopticon as a metaphor for disciplining repression of modern society against individuals. He wrote about the historical rise of a distinctively modern form of “panoptic” surveillance, in which the panopticon is a machine which rationalizes, classifies and homogenizes – “terminology which sits comfortably with the discourse of bureaucratic growth

³⁰ Miran Bozovic, “An utterly dark spot”, in Bentham, Jeremy, *The Panopticon Writings*, Introduction, p. I.

³¹ Greg Elmer, “Panopticon – discipline – control”, in *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, op. cit., p. 23.

³² Filip Ejodus, “I Bog stvori građanska prava: Srpski otpor uvođenju biometrijske lične karte”, *Bezbednost Zapadnog Balkana*, br. 4, januar/mart 2007, str. 66-7.

and administrative rationality”.³³ Foucault uses Bentham’s panopticon as a metaphor for a modern “disciplinary society”, demonstrating how it separated right from wrong, good from bad, sick from healthy through surveillance and regulation.³⁴ What distinguishes Foucault’s and Bentham’s definition of the panopticon is perspective, meaning that the view outward from the residence, the tower – in Bentham’s terms is a site and mode of “seeing without being seen”; conversely, for Foucault the panopticon could not be reduced or framed by an unidirectional gaze from the centre, tower or singular managerial gaze. Conceptually, for Foucault, the prisoners, not the tower, are at the centre of the panopticon. Contra Bentham, it was not to be coupled with – or reliant upon – the very act of watching, it was to be viewed as a logic and process. Foucault employed a definition of surveillance that extended right to the “top” of Bentham’s hierarchy with the inspector also under surveillance.³⁵ Foucauldian inverted panopticon “sought to establish the potential political effects of a ubiquitous form of institutional power, not an all-seeing or all-registering eye, but a landscape that could at any time impart in an individual a likelihood of surveillance”.³⁶

Foucauldian “disciplinary society” raises important question of subtle power – discipline relationship. A discipline may be identified “neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets, it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology”.³⁷ Foucault dubbed the panopticon a “laboratory of power”, “diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form.” For Foucault, the panoptic prison “first and foremost served to explicate a logic that could be seen at work in the spatial design of a series of key social, medical, educational and psychological institutions.”³⁸

Foucault’s work introduces a rich array of various ideas pertaining to history, relations of governing, rationales of government, but also of “the possibility of resistance, which might help think through complex notions of security and insecurity.”³⁹ Foucault’s central theses on disciplinary power consist of implicitly

³³ Toni Weller, “The information state”, op. cit., p. 58. See Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin, 1991 (first published 1977).

³⁴ Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op. cit., p. 198.

³⁵ Greg Elmer, “Panopticon – discipline – control”, op. cit., pp. 22-3. (See Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op. cit., p. 204.)

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁷ Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op. cit., p. 215.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-5.

³⁹ Inga Kroener and Daniel Neyland, “New technologies, security and surveillance”, in *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies*, op. cit., p. 141.

important critiques of liberalism, and Foucaultian-inspired critiques of contemporary forms of liberalism (or neo-liberalism) have particular importance in the context of a governmental regime and set of policies that have sought to “liberalize” markets, societies and individuals in an effort to increase efficiencies.⁴⁰

A concept like “panopticon” has continued popularity and utility, although it has raised considerable controversy and has been questioned by specialists. The model of power and surveillance had a huge impact on how we, as (post)modernists, tend to understand the notions of control, in particular social control. The idea of being constantly observed “constrain[s] the convict to good behaviour (...), the worker to work, (...), the patient to the observation of the regulations, (...) he who is subjected to a field of visibility ... becomes the principle of his own subjection”.⁴¹ The newest literature on video surveillance argues that “the increasing number and sophistication of cameras acts as an example of the expansion of disciplinary mechanisms”, confirming a role of the “panopticon” prison within modernity.⁴²

Postmodern totalitarian surveillance

Under the previous headings we discussed the emergence of the modern, bureaucratic state, and its transformation into an information state, or a surveillance state. We also considered classical theoretical explanations of dangers accompanied with this process, i.e. the panopticon model of prison, where individual freedom was limited by subtle, non-violent methods changing individual behavior. Now it is time to look back on the most recent events related to surveillance revelations and to draw conclusions on resulting global totalitarian tendencies.

The current wave of global surveillance disclosures by Edward Snowden, a former CIA officer and whistleblower, as of June 2013, consists of thousands of leaked classified documents from the US National Security Agency (NSA). The documents have revealed many global surveillance programs, mostly run by the NSA with the cooperation of European governments and telecommunication companies.⁴³ The Snowden disclosures have exposed practices of mass surveillance of internet networks, emails and phone calls of

⁴⁰ Greg Elmer, “Panopticon – discipline – control”, op. cit., p. 28.

⁴¹ Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op. cit. Quoted in: Inga Kroener and Daniel Neyland, *New technologies, security and surveillance*, op. cit., p. 144.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴³ See: Chandra Steele, *The 10 Most Disturbing Snowden Revelations*, *PC Magazine*, February 11, 2014; <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2453128,00.asp>, 15. 04. 2014; Trevor Timm, *Four ways Edward Snowden changed the world – and why the fight’s not over*, *The Guardian*, Thursday 5 June 2014; <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/05/what-snowden-revealed-changed-nsa-reform>, 10. 06. 2014.

millions of ordinary citizens and political leaders around the world. Thanks to Snowden, we know that unknown volumes of information are being extracted from Internet and computer companies, including Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, AOL, Skype, YouTube and Apple. All that triggered a new debate over mass surveillance, government secrecy, national security and information privacy.⁴⁴

The revelations of USA “government lawlessness and corporate spying provide a new meaning if not a revitalized urgency and relevance” to George Orwell: “Orwell never could have imagined that the National Security Agency (NSA) would amass metadata on billions of our phone calls and 200 million of our text messages every day. Orwell could not have foreseen that our government would read the content of our emails, file transfers, and live chats from the social media we use.”⁴⁵ The current global internet surveillance stretches over the whole world, but from the perspective of American citizens it looks as described in the next paragraph:

“The first thing to note about these data is that a mere generation ago, they did not exist. They are a new power in our midst, flowing from new technology, waiting to be picked up; and power, as always, creates temptation, especially for the already powerful. Our cellphones track our whereabouts. Our communications pass through centralized servers and are saved and kept for a potential eternity in storage banks, from which they can be recovered and examined. Our purchases and contacts and illnesses and entertainments are tracked and agglomerated. If we are arrested, even our DNA can be taken and stored by the state. Today, alongside each one of us, there exists a second, electronic self, created in part by us, in part by others. This other self has become *de facto* public property, owned chiefly by immense data-crunching corporations, which use it for commercial purposes. Now government is reaching its hand into those corporations for its own purposes, creating a brand-new domain of the state-corporate complex.”⁴⁶

On totalitarianism in a form of the Internet providing technology to spy speaks Julian Assange, Australian journalist and the founder of “WikiLeaks”, a website

⁴⁴ See: Glenn Greenwald, “Should Twitter, Facebook and Google Executives be the Arbiters of What We See and Read?”, *The Intercept*, August 23, 2014, http://www.opednews.com/articles/Should-Twitter-Facebook-a-by-Glenn-Greenwald-Censorship_Executive-Privilege_Facebook_Google-140823-175.html, 25. 08. 2014. Glen Greenwald, “Collect It All”: Glenn Greenwald on NSA Bugging Tech Hardware, Economic Espionage & Spying on U.N.”, *Democracy Now!*, May 13, 2014, http://www.democracynow.org/2014/5/13/collect_it_all_glenn_greenwald_on

⁴⁵ Marjorie Cohn, “Beyond Orwell’s Worst Nightmare”, *Marjorie Cohn’s Blog*, January 31, 2014; Quoted in: Henry A. Giroux, “Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State”, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Schell, “America’s Surveillance Net”, *The Nation*, June 19, 2013; Quoted in: Henry A. Giroux, “Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State”, op. cit.

specialized for publishing of leaked U.S. military and diplomatic documents. From the political asylum in Ecuadorian Embassy in London, Assange demonstrates that totalitarian threat today really does exist. He warns on the current system “totalitarian dystopia” – meaning that “surveillance is total, so that no one exists outside the state”.⁴⁷ He defines the change in power over the last couple of years as “a huge transfer of power from the people who are surveyed upon to those who control the surveillance complex”. Assange says that the United States “annexed” the whole world as a result of “annexing the computer systems and communications technology that is used to run the modern world”. He warned that the ability to survey everyone on the planet is almost there, and arguably will be there in a few years.⁴⁸ Assange advocates a need for independent internet infrastructure for countries to maintain sovereignty to resist US control over the majority of communications:

“To a degree this is a matter of national sovereignty. If there is not at least some national network that can be maintained in a moment of economic or political conflict with the United States, then there is simply too much leverage on nation states to be able to effectively defend the interests of their peoples.”⁴⁹

Assange’s interesting postmodern version of power theory has raised a serious question of how the Internet, upon which everyone looked as perhaps the greatest tool of human creation that ever existed, has in fact been “co-opted” and is now involved in the “most aggressive form of state surveillance the world has ever seen”.⁵⁰ Some opponents have pejoratively called his theory “a leftist paranoia”,⁵¹ but evidences presented by Snowden cannot be ignored. Indeed, evidences have shown that it is more appropriate to call the actual state of affairs as a “totalitarian paranoia in the post-Orwellian surveillance state”.⁵²

Thus this situation cannot be disregarded in relation to the ruling neoliberal ideology, as explained by radical theories on its current crisis and its need “to ensure the security of the economy, and the threats posed to the social order by individuals with potentially threatening capabilities”, that requires “more and more surveillance of our everyday lives and more and more of our participation

⁴⁷ Julian Assange, “US annexed the whole world through global spying”, op. cit. Victoria Wagner Ross, Julian Assange speaks at SXSW about the new definition of power, March 9, 2014, <http://www.examiner.com/article/julian-assange-speaks-at-sxsw-about-the-new-definition-of-power>.

⁴⁸ Ibid. The US and the NSA will soon have the ability to spy on the entire planet, as their capabilities double every 18 months. said Assange.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Cf. Nick Cohen, “Definition of paranoia: supporters of Julian Assange”, *The Guardian*, Comments, 24 June 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jun/24/nick-cohen-julian-assange-paranoia>, 30. 07. 2012.

⁵² Henry A. Giroux, “Totalitarian Paranoia in the Post-Orwellian Surveillance State”, op. cit.

in those processes of ‘keeping an eye out’ for anonymous parcels, suspicious behaviours, provocative speech and dangerous thoughts. We will all be enlisted in the Army of Observation, free to choose but self-regulating in our choices. Everyone will watch everyone, and the new age of opto-liberalism will have dawned.”⁵³

The specific relationship between totalitarian regimes and their ideologies was observed earlier in mid-20th century. A French philosopher Raymond Aron wrote that an ideology is not the tool of totalitarianism, but rather totalitarianism is a political consequence, or an embodiment of an ideology in social life, in regimes that he called “ideocracies”.⁵⁴ The relationship between neoliberalism and totalitarian surveillance, in form of “opto-liberalism”, has yet to be well explained, but evidences on global totalitarian tendencies are well exposed by most recent revelations. Their harmfulness for individual freedom, societies and power relations is, as it seems, so far well explained.

⁵³ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, “What Comes after Liberalism?”, op. cit., p. 545.

⁵⁴ Raymond Aron, *Democratie et totalitarisme*, Gallimard, Paris, 1965.