

Industrializing Class War

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Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Have you noticed that it's no longer PC Dixon of Dock Green who mediates the relationship between the state and its citizens as he goes about his beat in your neighbourhood? Instead, it's a Kevlar-armoured, video-monitored, taser-equipped, drone-surveilled, spit-masked supplied soldier, straight out of Star Wars, who now staggers along under the weight of an industrialized capitalism, visibly physically disconnected from the citizens they monitor by their bullet-proof uniforms, that more resemble a rack of tools in your local hardware store than the Bobby on the beat.

In fact every aspect of our lives today are mediated by an industrial capitalism that serves two purposes: firstly it disconnects the servants of the state from its citizens and secondly it makes that relationship an extremely profitable one for capitalism. There is now virtually no aspect of life that is not mediated by privatised industrial technology in some form or other and technology that has made that relationship one based on extracting profit through the act of controlling and monitoring our actions and our behaviour.

Our streets are monitored by the now ubiquitous CCTV, millions of them, or the drones hovering invisible, high above, smart phones track our movements, our buying habits and who we hang out with, or as we drive, by the ANPR systems, all the way to our health system, it too is now a relationship mediated by privatised technology whether it be the pills manufactured by industrial chemical plants or the machines that monitor and mend us. Our hospitals now resemble the production line of a factory rather than places that are hospitable to the patient's recovery.

Our education system too, is now a supermarket for machines that monitor, miseducate and grade the students' work and of course, continually monitor the students' activity and behaviour, as well as extract valuable (to capitalism and the state) statistical data about the students' performance as they are prepared for life as an obedient worker and consumer (assuming they have a job to go to).

Our workforce has for the most part been reduced to the role of a go-between by industrial machines, from the computer-controlled (and monitored) cash register, to the ubiquitous work station that I [wrote about](#) over thirty years ago. And all the while our activities are surveilled and assessed, in real time by the networked computers that manage the capitalist system for the shareholders and for the state. They talk of a Service Industry, when a Servants Industry would be a more accurate description.

The legal system too has undergone the same transformation, whether it be the prison or the courtroom. The indicted are now prosecuted by video, it's so much more convenient and hence profitable, to cross-examine by video link rather than have the accused physically transported. And even when they are moved it's now by giant private security corporations like G4S or SERCO who perform the function on behalf of a privatised state, which is itself

now no more than a servant of capital.

Our social services, housing, the benefits system, indeed the entire system of social management and 'care' is now merely part of a supply chain for the extraction of surplus value from the citizen who is now enslaved by machines that monitor, grade and even punish the recalcitrant and the rebellious through the machine-monitored, 'tick-box' system of privatised assessment and punishment. The 'public servant' is now a servant to the system rather than to the citizen, reduced to being no more than a cog in a machine.

We see this at work in local and national government where civil servants no longer mediate the relationship between the state and its citizens. Instead the citizen is kept at arms length by the computer-mediated miscommunications system, all in the name of 'efficiency' of course. Service is now reduced to, 'Press 1 for this', 'Press 2 for that', 'Press 3 for the other', if your inquiry fits the needs of a computer-controlled bureaucracy. If not, well hang up why don't you! Spend more money phoning back once again, or do it online and be further monitored by the Panopticon called democracy.

What used to be called leisure, is now no more than an assembly line for the passive consumption of products. Video games, movies, 'sport', all are now part of the Entertainment Industry, no more than yet another means for extracting surplus value from us as we move from cradle to grave.

It's clear that there is now not a single facet of our lives that is not in some way subservient to the privatised Digital Panopticon, whose sole objective is firstly, to monitor our activities 24/7 and secondly, to maximise profits for some invisible, transnational financial entity located not here in the UK but in some far-flung location, be it Hong Kong or the Australian Outback!

How did this happen?

I have to ask this question: Why did we allow this creeping enslavement to happen to our lives? Why has it been so easy for capitalism to entrap us in this way? It's as if we sleep-walked into it, mesmerised in our automobiles on the way to the shopping mall, or whilst glued to the video game or football match or whatever diversion we have been taught to passively consume.

Undoubtedly it's the neoliberal rollback initiated by Thatcher with the privatisation of the state's role in our public services and the selloff of public assets, to the point that we have reached today, that made the creation of the corporate, security state all the more possible[1]. And undoubtedly, the demise of organised labour has been a major contributing factor in our inability to resist it, but that came pretty much at the end of a process that had been in the works for well over a century, back to the time when socialists and organised labour, rather than challenging capital, decided to become its partner and attempt to 'reform' it. A process that failed dramatically and worse, disempowered us, alienated us from each other, fragmenting and individualising our lives, that in turn gave the unholy alliance of the state and big capital total control over us.

1945 was the last gasp of some kind of alternative to the madness of unrestrained capitalism, with the election of the postwar Labour government, a madness that now is no longer just localised but that threatens the future of all humanity.

Is it now too late to reverse this catastrophe?

Those of you who know my writing will also know that I have very little faith in Jeremy Corbyn and even less in the Labour Party to call a halt to this disaster and I have enumerated many times why I think this is so. That successive Labour governments have contributed directly to making the current situation possible in the first place. That successive Labour MPs and governments stretching all the way back to the early 20th century have backed war, have backed the Empire, have backed the impoverishment of millions of ordinary, working people. Why should it be any different this time?

Yet millions have put their faith in the possibility of a revitalised Labour Party, a Labour Party that could be forced to change direction a full 180 degrees! I'd really like to think that there is just the glimmer of a possibility that *this* time it's different, that the situation is now so dire that Corbyn, with the support of the millions of people who voted for him (including me I might add), will turn things around before it's too late. That he will have the *cojones* to challenge Big Capital, to challenge his own imperialist Labour bureaucracy and its self-serving members of an entrenched political class. Or is this just nothing more than wishful thinking on my part?

After all, my local Labour MP is Kate Hoey, who frankly, I regard as a complete nut case, what on Earth possessed me to vote for her? Nothing short of sheer desperation is what! But it just shows what a desperate situation we are in, when that's all I could do. So instead of concentrating on the real issues that confront us as a class, as a nation, we find ourselves mired in the total, idiotic and pointless bullshit of Brexit! And if ever there was a diversion designed to do just that, it was the Brexit referendum!

What the Brexit vote reveals, more than anything else, is the total and utter lack of any semblance of democracy in this nation, when a handful of country squires who clearly inhabit some medieval, alternate universe, can dictate to the rest of us-whether we are *for* or *against* being in the EU!

So is it realistic to envisage realigning a Parliament that pretends that it's been here since 14th century or even earlier, to one that actually exists in the 21st and use it to transform our economy and our political culture? And what an irony that at one and the same time we live in the most spied upon, the most surveilled, the most monitored and the most controlled nation on the planet!

The British ruling class are the oldest, the most cunning, the most experienced, at retaining power, on the planet. Yet it's also a ruling class that is the most decrepit, the most backward, and the most reactionary, and the most entrenched. It has built institutions that have all the appearance of being forces of nature. Immovable objects firmly rooted in the earth. The very idea of challenging it is almost sacrilegious, yet this is what has to be done or all is lost. I ask you once more, is **Jeremy Corbyn** and the Labour Party fit to carry out this task?

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