

# Faith in Revolution

Friendly Schizophrenia or Revolution for the 21st Century.

**What we lack now is not so much a plan for rapid social change - the famous REVOLUTION - but just the simple faith that anything much new can be accomplished.**

Years ago the Arthur Schlesinger Juniors began panting after the William Buckleys. It was the liberals who had overseen the birth of the **National Security State**. Truman accepted the paternity. He got the best bang by not passing the buck. But for his successor Adlai Stevenson it was not a baby but a hot potato. He prayed in public that the buck in fact be passed from him. Stevenson became the archetype for the liberal's dignified method of defeat. His name is first in an inglorious list of losers whose names glow phosphorescently - Mondale, Dukakis, Gore, Eagleton, Edwards, Carter, Humphrey, to name a few.

In their search for a stable ruling center to fob their power off upon, the liberals went **NEO**. In their Urge to Power, the conservatives went **TINA** (There Is No Alternative).

Rapid social change - **good old Revolution Now** - became the truly unthinkable. This was the best of all Darwinian worlds. The **Haves** and the **Have-mores** were happily red in tooth and claw and black in the bottom line. For the **have-nots** and **have-nevers**, evolution was a *slow, slower, slowest* Chinese water torture, a working class tortoise that never caught up with the capitalist hare.

The Movement of the sixties and seventies formulated the terms of the overthrow of the 4 Horsemen of Bourgeois Democracy: classism, sexism, racism and ageism. Eisenhower, the **polliot savant**, called the cancerous growth the **Military/Industrial/Political Complex**. The 1st Kennedy, who was at once the last liberal and the first neoliberal, died of the contradiction. The 2nd Kennedy was killed for representing a fusion of the Movement and political party. This became the McGovern reform party - loaded down with quotas, aspirations and entitlements. This was killed by party bosses. Rule fell safely into the hands of the **WORM'S** (White Old Rich Men) for whom a Strict Constitution and a Stricter God had made the world. Once the wave of rapid social change was flattened in the eighties, the **Movement** was dispersed and its remnants installed as the Left Behind of the Democratic Party.

**Leftist popular fronters** disappeared into the labor movement to stave off the **Fascists**. **Environmentalists** relentlessly lobbied for the final legislative fix. **Feminists** served the Democrats in the name of Presidential power to make Supreme Court appointments. **AfroAmericans** were integrated - on the Disney Channel. **The Peace Movement** was openly robbed of its dividend while the **Demomcrats** fluttered their hands in dignified hopelessness. And, in a timidity that summed up the era, the **Nader/Green Party** succumbed to the Any-buddy of **Bush DLC** fraud and on the national level went yellow to the kernel.

**The Vacuum is now. A new alliance will be born, something I hopefully call the 7th International: The Libertarian Labor Green Rainbow Alliance!?!**

The justification for art and revolution stem from the same source - **resistance to the straight jacket of the Regular World**. Crazy is defined as a challenge to the normal way of things whether it is the complex norms of a civilization or just the down home tribal way.

Art in the view of an **Albert Camus** was rebellious dissatisfaction with the world as it is - whether the work of God or The State. Anywhere my soul, said **Baudelaire**, so long as it's out of this world. While the Argentinian revolutionaries call for Anybody so long as it's no one we know.

Both Art and Revolution have been tainted with The Future, the false value worshipped in our Modern Age but both are actually about the Suppressed Present. We engage in freedom when we open the **Pandora's box** of sternly forbidden realities and actually begin to entertain these realities.

We live in a blooming buzzing present that we have been taught to repress and deny with all the force that the Regular World can bring to bear on us. As revolutionaries, we revolt against the false fate offered by the **Regular World** and seek the power to generate a revolutionary doubt about the world as an unalterable given. The State is that megalith that circumscribes human nature for all time and compels us to submit our own rebellious nature.

**As artists who have given full rein to our creativity**, we produce works that question the existing world as the only world there is. We ask instead how has this world come to be



what it is. We dare to measure the given of this Regular World by our own standard of perfection. Not a standard of ideal perfection formulated for us in advance but by a standard of perfection that has been latent within us and rendered unconscious by the Regular World.

Out of the nowhere of our suppressed Present, a mob of barbarians can emerge as a community of resistance. This is the child waking in us in the morning with **No School** and an open agenda. Suddenly you and yours define the day and all the Regular World can do is make threats and call in the police. The present is no longer an unalterable eternity.

This is not the moment for the imposition of a politically correct line. Despair or hope, both are reasonable starting points. There is no future in conserving the old values of some humanist or fundamentalist ayatollahs that survive by the monstrous exploitation of our nature. Utopia or dystopia, we want anything rather than validating our suppressed present

Then we can dissolve the illusions of permanence in the bulwarks of order and participate in a world of process and becoming. From being someone's creatures, we become creative. From being what's made, we become the makers of whatever.

**Artists and Revolutionaries.**

**The opening is here to become both if we so choose.**

**- Paul Encimer, 12/2005**

## Surveillance Capitalism Goes Rogue.

Capitalism has always evolved by claiming things that exist outside the market and then bringing them into the market for sale and purchase. This is how we turned making a living into "labor" and nature into "real estate." Surveillance capitalism now claims private human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral predictions that are bought and sold in a new kind of private marketplace. And it takes place almost completely without our knowledge.

Competition among surveillance capitalists has produced startling innovations that challenge the foundations of a democratic society.

This unprecedented economic logic was invented almost by accident during the financial emergency of the dot-com bust, when the founders of Google discovered that the "data exhaust" clogging their servers could be combined with powerful analytic capabilities to produce reliable predictions of user behavior. Originally, the key behavior of interest was whether a user might click on an online ad.

The young company's ability to turn these surplus data into reliable click-through predictions became the basis for a lucrative sales process known as ad targeting. With targeting, advertisers could buy Google predictions on what we would do now, soon and later. The idea was deployed beginning in 2001 in the strictest secrecy. Only when Google went public in 2004 did the world hear about it — and learn that partly on the strength of these operations, Google's revenue had increased by 3,590 percent.

Surveillance capitalism soon spread to Facebook and other Silicon Valley companies. But it is no longer the exclusive domain of the tech sector. It has now invaded every economic domain — automobiles, insurance, entertainment, finance, retail, health, real estate and more: anywhere a product or service begins with the word "smart" or "personalized." The reality is that we are shifting into a new surveillance-based economic order in which our private experience becomes the free raw material for markets that trade in predictions of our actions.

Surveillance capitalists soon discovered that they could use these data not only to know our behavior but also to shape it. This became an economic imperative. It was no longer enough to automate information flows *about* us; the goal became to *automate* us. As one data scientist explained it to me, "We can engineer the context around a particular behavior and force change that way. ... We are learning how to write the music, and then we let the music make them dance."

It works like this: Ads press teenagers on Friday nights to buy pimple cream, triggered by predictive analyses that show their social anxieties peaking as the weekend approaches. "Pokémon Go" players are herded to nearby bars, fast-food joints and shops that pay to play in its prediction markets, where "footfall" is the real-life equivalent of online clicks.

This digitally informed behavior modification is carefully designed to bypass our awareness. It robs us of autonomy, of the freedom to choose our actions and of the right to say

"no," eroding democracy from within. And it's a one-way mirror: These firms know everything about us, while their operations are unknowable to us. Their predictions are about us but not for us.

Democracy has slept while surveillance capitalism has flourished. Elected officials determined to rein in the digital titans must understand that surveillance capitalism is bigger than any single company. Regulation will require a new framework that strengthens our understanding of privacy rights. We will need to interrupt and in some cases outlaw (1) the unilateral claim to private human experience as a free source of raw material and its translation into data; (2) the exclusive concentrations of knowledge illegitimately gleaned from our behavior; (3) the manufacture of computational prediction products based on the secret capture of our experience; and (4) the sale of behavioral prediction products.

Our democracy has successfully confronted many excesses of unchecked capitalism, outlawing child labor, un-inspected food and unfair wages. Today we face a similar challenge in curbing the excesses of a rogue surveillance capitalism. It is not the work of a day or a year, but it is necessary work, and we must be up to the task, because the alternative promises dangerous consequences for human freedom and democracy.

**Shoshana Zuboff**  
[shoshanazuboff.com](http://shoshanazuboff.com)

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