

CAIRO AS A MASTERPIECE OF MONITORY DEMOCRACY

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Egypt has disappointed many people. It was expected that the young democracy would emerge from social networks, as children popping up from the bushes shouting 'Down, everybody's dead!'. Enthusiasts were upset by the lack of cohesion of the street forces, which the authorities have used to close gaps using their military vehicle. The saucepans worn by fellaheen like hats do not protect them from the combined effect of TV, Islamists, and military counter-intelligence forces. It is unpleasant to accept the social authority held by the Muslim Brothers. So instead, the journalists have chosen something simple and clear, for instance, like Facebook. And the crowd is flattered as if it has become a **smart crowd**. People keep saying that the 'ocean of information and freedom' is flooding the domains of tyranny, and that Twitter is giving birth to power. Oh, yes, but exactly whose power is this?

They say that, in porno cinemas, it is much more interesting to watch the audience. The revolution in Cairo is a feast of viewers. While they are raging in the squares and writing updates on Twitter, the Islamists and the Egyptian military counter-intelligence are imperturbably watching what is happening. John Kean, democratic history researcher, predicted that **monitory democracy would be the new democracy of the future**, indistinguishable from the crowd. The Egyptian military counter-intelligence is handling itself in this way. While the

citizens have become enthralled with watching the government, the authorities are watching them too, as well as adjusting their tactics and TV programming. By letting the people in the street become enraged and 'bite off their paws' so to speak, the military realists can manage to chase the beast back to its hole. As expected, the real force of Cairo is not Twitter. It is popular TV centres (such as *Al Jazeera*) and power centres, including those that are financial, regional and global in scope. The results are not being produced by new technologies, but rather by the combined effect of the machines equipped with such tools.

Everybody seemingly are in favour of the crowd, and propagandist of autocracies look like incompetents. The person with an electronic communication device in his pocket is demanding vigorous experience — fast, lively, and inexpensive. Mobility, the cheapness associated with assembling groups, and emotionality are all on his side. But people want such emotions to be not only 'lively' but also secure. Who is going to provide them with a secure chat and an 'unlimited selection'? **Those who are able to offer this represent the new power.**

The game is going to be won not by an amateurs with such communication devices, but by those persons who watch the field and plan their moves, for they cannot lose. It is only in computer games where one can be defeated in comfort, but not in the kind of real-life games unfolding in the East where **the winner holds the power. The new power.** To outplay their opponents, the authorities will have to change. The military counter-intelligence is not going to offer 'narrative' to the streets. The rioters will be the ones to teach the authorities to use narrative when they end up returning from the squares, full of blood, shit, and crushed glass.

Network revolutions tend to widen the field for competitive forces, but the authorities will again find itself on the most powerful side. The authorities are capable of

learning. The Egyptian military has had good teachers, including Soviet and Chinese advisors, then the Americans and Israelites. Now they are trained in the context of the Twitter revolution, assembled in a political mechanism together with the global media. The new **'military socio-vehicles' of power** are essentially resistant to new technologies. If they can manage to prove this, the revolution in Egypt is going to become a global case of a new way to rule.

The street forces are not going to give birth to power, but the street will teach the authorities how to rule in a new way. By arranging new tools and pieces, painting impressive pictures with bright paints from social networks, the authorities will give more choice to the people than a revolution can manage to do. But it is not going to be the kind of choice that is known from the theory of democracy. It will be like surfing on a stream of images and messages, an emotional fever that blows one's mind. The new power of 'one thousand and one narratives' will provide people with a new dose of emotions, which will be delivered cheaply and conveniently. This kind of power will embark on the sea of communications bravely, like a Russian tourist entering the waters teeming with sharks in Sharm el-Sheikh. ■



The term 'monitory democracy' was for the first time coined by John Keane in his work 'The life and death of democracy'