

SOCIAL NETWORKERS WILL RULE THE WORLD FROM NOW ON

Alexander Bard



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■ *A new elite is emerging in the modern world, which justifies its status by its possession of new communication technologies. Does the new 'netocracy' so-to-speak change the nature of these elites and their configuration?*

The new elite or the 'netocracy' is a brand new class that was never before seen in history. The netocrats are the people whose talents perfectly match the requirements of the new age of the internet: they are highly socially intelligent and trained experts at social networking, and they know how to get ahead in the online world. They are also, by nature, pluralistic and extremely tolerant, which are requirements for being successful in the rapidly expanding, globalised and transparent online world. Virtual reality has become our new reality; the old physical reality is essentially subor-

minated to the virtual reality of the online world. **Social networkers will rule the world from now on.**

■ *New communication technologies simultaneously bring forth two opposite processes: on the one hand, new technologies contribute to a better informational openness, and they can serve as the means for emancipating the masses. However, on the other hand, this is a wonderful tool for manipulating the masses and democratic procedures. In your opinion, which of those two processes prevails nowadays?*

It is impossible to manipulate the masses simply using online tools. Manipulation of the masses is and will always be an activity that is suitable only for the old forms of mass media, such as newspapers, radio, and television. But it is impossible to manipulate the masses with the Internet since people turn away and go somewhere else when they are not being listened to. **We are leaving behind the world where people were dictated to and instead entering an age where people must be listened to and interacted with.** This is exactly why dictators around the world hate the Internet, they try to censor and control it, and constantly try to shut it down. But this approach will not work in the long run. The Internet will ultimately force us to accept a new stronger transparency and democracy.

■ *Observers provide different assessments of the actions taken by 'network exposers', such as Wikileaks for instance. If what they are doing is considered to be a crime, what should we call it and how should such activity be punished? If this is a heroic deed, how should it be rewarded?*

Wikileaks operates just like a classical newspaper. You cannot punish Wikileaks any more than you can punish a newspaper or a radio station for speaking the truth. Of course, governments and big corporations will go after the people with-

in their organisation who are responsible for the leaking of information. However, this will be increasingly difficult to do. Soon we will have hundreds of different organisations like Wikileaks and they will continue to churn out truths that were previously held in the dark. What we must understand is that Wikileaks is a netocratic phenomenon, that Julian Assange is himself the netocrat par excellence, and that **the people who Wikileaks is fighting against, such as corrupt politicians, diplomats, corporations, etc. are the old bourgeoisie.** Ten years ago, I predicted that these people would eventually *lose their hold on power* to the new rising netocrats. This is precisely what is happening now: a dramatic shift of power from the bourgeoisie to the netocracy.

■ *Contrary to the previous cases, nobody is questioning the authenticity of the documents published by Wikileaks. How shall society be protected against such scandals? Will they be hushed or will the value of the exposed facts be degraded? Or do you think that some other means will be employed?*

The only reason why states are not denying the truth of the leaked documents that are currently being exposed is precisely because they cannot deny that these documents are authentic. They wish that they could deny these documents are real, but they cannot, since the truthfulness entailed in these documents is so obvious. Once again, this is why the netocrats are managing to win over the bourgeoisie: the truth is on their side and the truth can no longer be hidden. Truth can no longer be *dictated*, as it is the audience, the voters, the consumers, *the people*, who will now be judging and deciding what is truth and what is falsity. ■

Alexander Bard was speaking with Yulia Netesova