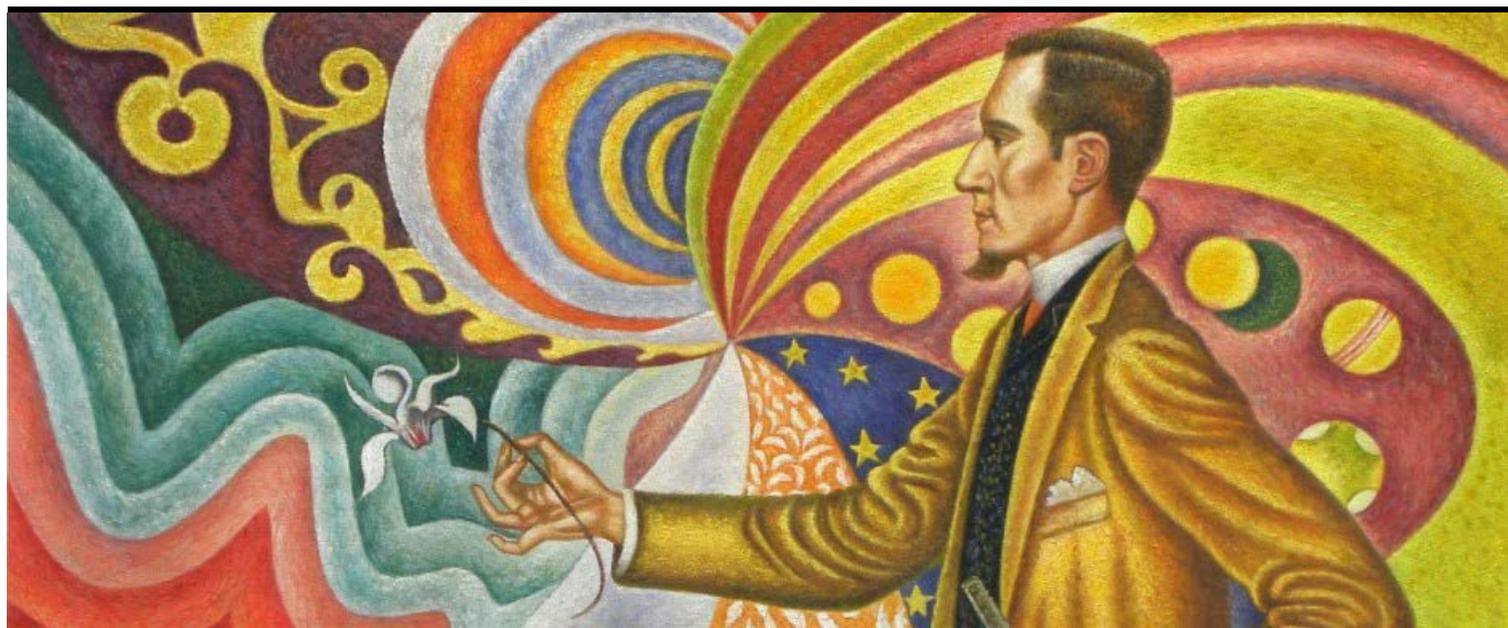


slackbastard

Anarchy and apathy battle it out on @ndy's blog.



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← Trot Guide 2003: #0.0

Man Vs Nature →

Tricky ASIO wants the nasssty anarchissts

Posted on June 26, 2007 by @ndy

They're all from New Zealand I tells ya!

[Police spy agencies target Australian universities](#)

Laura Tiernan

wsws.org

June 26, 2007

Last week's [revelation](#) that police intelligence sought to recruit [University of Sydney Students Representative Council \(SRC\)](#) leader Daniel Jones to spy on fellow students points to increasing state surveillance of political activity on university campuses.

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A [front-page report](#) in the Sydney Morning Herald revealed that 20-year-old Jones was approached by an undercover agent on June 6. The intelligence officer—who introduced himself as 'Ahmed'—offered to "make arrangements" in relation to [charges against Jones](#) following last year's [G20](#) protests in Melbourne.

In a clear case of police blackmail, 'Ahmed' asked Jones to provide regular information about student protest activities in the lead-up to this September's [APEC](#) meeting in Sydney. "He was saying that police needed

~jk~

Two Greek anarchists are making molotov cocktails. One says to the other: "So who will we throw these at then?" The other replies: "What are you, some kind of fucking intellectual?"

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some help in the lead-up to APEC and of course they could help me. He said 'have you got charges against you? We can help with that.'

Five days later Jones received a call from 'Ahmed' on his mobile phone: "Look Daniel, the necessary arrangements have been put in place in Melbourne."

*"I was in a dangerous situation," Daniel told the **World Socialist Web Site**. "I was put in a position where to turn down the offer I was effectively choosing to be charged." The undercover cop also offered Jones money in return for regular briefings.*

The agent—who claimed he was from [NSW Police intelligence](#)—already knew many details about student protest activities. During a twenty-minute discussion with Jones, 'Ahmed' spoke of a newly-formed anarchist collective called [Mutiny](#), and referred to the [International Socialist Organisation](#), and [Solidarity](#), saying he was aware of their conflict with another group, [Resistance](#), over pre-publicity for the APEC protests.

The agent also made clear his familiarity with Jones's own political views and affiliations: "He knew about my attitude to other socialist groups ... he used exactly the same words to describe them as I have."

Jones, who is SRC Education Officer at the University of Sydney, said the above information could only have been uncovered via surveillance of an online "e-list" (similar to a bulletin board) used by student activists like himself, or through state infiltration of student gatherings.

The attempt to recruit Jones comes just 12 weeks after anti-terrorist police coordinated [pre-dawn raids](#) on the homes of five University of Sydney protestors. Jones's Newtown home was one of those ransacked. Students were dragged from their beds, strip-searched and interrogated, while police seized and photographed personal belongings, including political leaflets, flyers and other material. The five were subsequently charged with serious offences including riot, affray, dangerous conduct and unlawful assembly.

That anti-terror police are now targeting student politicians is no aberration. The real but unstated purpose of the battery of anti-democratic laws enacted by state and federal governments since 2001—including provisions for secret detention, and the stripping of habeas corpus—is the criminalisation of political dissent.

The University of Sydney SRC reports that undercover police have threatened several activists in recent months:

On February 22, undercover officers followed and then chased a group of student protest organisers as they walked through Victoria Park. One of the students was subsequently cornered in a nearby back lane. A plain clothes officer named a long list of protestors in a threatening manner.

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On the evening of March 14, following the pre-dawn raids earlier that day, a young female activist was confronted by two suited detectives as she left choir practice. They told her to stop going to rallies, and to “watch out” or the “same thing would happen” to her.

Also in March, at least two plainclothes officers were present at a public forum convened to protest the opening of a controversial US Studies Centre at the university. Students allege that a man taking close-up photographs of audience members was working for police and that such surveillance is now routine.

SRC President Angus McFarland said some fellow activists now proceed on the assumption that the SRC’s activities, including email correspondence and phone calls, are monitored.

“I think a lot of people would be really disturbed by what’s happening. People have this rose-coloured view of Australia as a democratic country. But we are seeing measures which have more in common with the Stasi or a police state. University is a time when people traditionally question things and open up and learn about the world. That spirit of inquiry is now under threat.”

Escalating attacks

[Recent media reports](#) have made unsubstantiated claims that Mutiny and other anarchist groups are planning “violent action” at protests called to coincide with the APEC meeting of world leaders in Sydney on September 7-8. These reports, combined with the activity of undercover agents, raises the danger that [police stooges](#) are infiltrating left-wing organisations with the express aim of instigating violence and thereby legitimising sweeping police suppression of the right to demonstrate.

During the recent [G8](#) protests in Rostock, Germany, agents provocateurs were identified amid riots that triggered a police-military crackdown. Measures prepared more than a year in advance—the lockdown of entire suburbs, mass detention of demonstrators without charge or trial, the erection of prison-camp facilities and unprovoked violence against government opponents—were suddenly enacted.

Police surveillance at the University of Sydney is at least partly connected to government preparations for APEC. The Iemma Labor government has legislated unprecedented police measures for the duration of the APEC leaders’ summit, effectively outlawing the right to protest. The latest of these, introduced early in June, empowers police to establish checkpoints, randomly search citizens, seal off the city and surrounding suburbs and prevent entry of designated persons (and items) into the central business district.

But overt police intimidation of student activists has a far wider meaning.

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September 2015

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*A creeping assault on freedom of speech and political activity on universities has occurred throughout the past decade. In 1995, at the initiative of federal Labor's Higher Education Minister Simon Crean, charges were laid in the state of Victoria against the editors of La Trobe University's student magazine Rabelais after publication of a satirical article entitled 'The Art of Shoplifting'. Then, as opposition among students to government policy deepened, the Howard government moved to disband student unions with the introduction of **Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU)**, eliminating funding for a range of cultural activities including clubs and societies and student newspapers.*

As a new generation of young people becomes radicalised, state authorities in every country are responding with methods of surveillance, censorship and repression. Last week the WSWS carried a report detailing FBI spying and recruitment activity at universities in New England (see "[FBI targets universities in new scheme to recruit informers](#)"). Similar measures are underway in Europe.

*A comment by right-wing British commentator Ross Clark, re-reprinted in Murdoch's The Australian newspaper over the weekend, reveals something of the discussion underway in ruling circles [see '[Hatred of the rich is back in fashion](#)', The Spectator, June 9]. Clark warns that anti-capitalist sentiment, which grew steadily in the late 1990s, is now re-emerging after a five year eclipse that was ushered in by the terror strikes of 9-11. He equates the thousands of G8 protestors in Rostock with the leaders of the [Marxist-Leninist] terrorist [Baader]-Meinhof Group [a/k/a **Red Army Faction**] in the early 1970s and warns that "the rich haters are back on the march". As Clark's diatribe makes clear, increasingly, those deemed a threat to public order and safety are not terrorists but the growing mass of the population protesting war and global social inequality.*

Plus ça change...

Obviously, the fact that the state spies on its citizens isn't really 'news'; well, at least not to anyone who's been paying the slightest attention. Further, **ASIO** and other agencies have been maintaining a watching brief on anarchist and left-wing student political activities for some time (in fact, since the emergence of a modern student movement in [the 1960s](#)).* And those engaged in anti-summit protest, in particular, have been subjected to monitoring since **S11** (September 2000), if not [before](#).

While the specific nature of such activity may indeed be secret — ie, the exact number of individuals employed to infiltrate groups is undeclared; exactly which individuals and groups are placed under surveillance and for what periods remains unknown; precisely whose emails, telephone calls and conversations are recorded, and what forms of communication are analysed most closely — the fact of its occurrence has been admitted to by the authorities engaging in it quite openly, and repeatedly. So too, the fact that local, regional and national monitoring takes place within a global context, and that information, analyses, experiences and techniques are routinely shared by relevant agencies the world over.

- Christie Books
- CrimethInc.
- Daniel Guérin (1904-1988)
- Dead Anarchists
- flag.blackened.net
- Freedom Press
- Google Book Search : 'Anarchism'
- infoshop.org
- Institute for Anarchist Studies
- Jura Books
- Kate Sharpley Library
- Katipo Books
- libcom.org
- Love & Rage Archive
- Marxism contra Anarchism
- PM Press
- Research on Anarchism
- The Anarchist Encyclopedia
- The Anarchist Library
- The Nestor Makhno Archive

Anarchist Blogs / Sites

- a-films
- After the Greek Riots
- Anarchia
- Anarchist Writers
- Anarchists Against the Wall
- Anarchy Alive
- angry news from around the world
- Angry White Kid
- Aragorn!
- avtonom.org
- ¡Amor Y Resistencia! [moribund]
- Black Flame: the revolutionary class politics of anarchism and syndicalism
- Bombs and Shields
- CrimethInc. Far East Blog
- Cruz Negra Anarquista de Venezuela [moribund]
- Fire To The Prisons
- Fires never extinguished
- John Kinsella
- Mickey Z.: Cool Observer
- Mike Boda
- Molly's Blog
- Mujeres Creando [Women Creating]
- Old Punks Never Die!
- Orthodox Anarchist
- Our War
- Punamust [Red & Black]
- Rad Geek People's Daily
- RAG
- Revolution by the Book
- Riot Porn [moribund]
- Robert Graham
- schizoanarcho
- Sketchy Thoughts
- subMedia
- The Boulevardier
- the Disillusioned kid
- This Is Our Job
- three way fight
- Truth, Reason & Liberty
- uncarved

What *may* be considered ‘new’ is the [legal](#) and [political](#) context in which these activities are now taking place, and the attempt to align militant protest with terrorism — with all that implies for those deemed to be engaged in ‘politically-motivated violence’. Of course, repression has a class, ethnic, and racial dimension too: it’s no accident that the only person denied bail following his arrest on charges relating to G20 protest, [Akin Sari](#), was born elsewhere, or that dissident Kurds, Tamils and [Muslims](#) have been targeted for arrest and intimidation.

As for the specifics of this particular case of government agents getting up to monkey business:

1) Daniel is quoted as believing that information regarding differences between various local political organisations over the contents of anti-APEC propaganda, and his own views regarding these organisations, “could only have been uncovered via surveillance of an online e-list (similar to a bulletin board) used by student activists like himself, or through state infiltration of student gatherings”.

Debate over the content of agitprop is usually a matter of public record, and this case is no different. Further, public differences regarding what would otherwise be considered a relatively minor matter appeared in the corporate media on June 4 ([Anarchists ready for APEC violence](#), Shaun Davies, **ninemsn**), two days prior to Ahmed’s attempt to recruit Daniel as a paid informant. Finally, Davies’ article refers to a posting by Mutiny to a public list, @-Infos, on May 6.

As for the agent in question having knowledge of Daniel’s own views, it should simply be taken as read that any public discussion, whether online or at a meeting, is likely to be monitored. Further, as far as I’m aware, to do so requires no particular skill or prior legal examination, while obtaining permission to monitor emails and calls, especially in relation to the possible disruption of a major event such as the APEC summit, would be relatively straightforward.

2) Undercover agents are present at all major demonstrations, and generally speaking, their role is to identify potential sources of unrest; such information to be conveyed either immediately to those in charge of proceedings or to be utilised at a later date in the pursuit of arrests and/or prosecutions — such was the case at G20. The recent declaration by NSW Police Minister David Campbell that “those who have been involved in violent and disruptive protests in the past” will be included on a list of persons legally prohibited from entering restricted zones surrounding the upcoming summit, and that therefore “they won’t need to be informed — they know who they are”, is based upon the compilation of such information; a recent, very public example of which was provided by [The Age](#) photo gallery of really interesting people. (**News Corporation, Fairfax Corporation**’s chief rival in Melbourne and Sydney, provides a comic counterpoint in [‘Out of control’](#), Chris Tinkler, *Sunday Herald Sun*, March 18, 2007.)

3) The threat of legal retaliation and/or the promise of favourable treatment in court has been used by agencies previously, from the relatively minor (for example, in relation to **May Day** protests in [Sydney](#)) to probably the most notorious example of state-sponsored domestic terrorism in recent times, the [Hilton bombing of 1978](#).

4) As for the *Rabelais* prosecution, others may be in a better position to comment than I.

- [Void Network](#)
- [we are not afraid of ruins](#)

Antifa

- [AFA Ireland](#)
- [Anti-Racist Action Network](#)
- [Antifa Austria](#)
- [Antifa Czech Republic](#)
- [Antifa Denmark](#)
- [Antifa Germany](#)
- [Antifa Netherlands](#)
- [Antifa Sweden](#)
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- [January 19 Committee \(Russia\)](#)
- [Liverpool Antifascists](#)
- [Malatesta’s Blog](#)
- [One People’s Project](#)
- [Rose City Antifa](#)
- [Torch Antifa \[US\]](#)
- [Who Makes the Nazis?](#)

Art

- [Art Spiegelman](#)
- [Banksy](#)
- [benfrostsidead](#)
- [Camille Pissarro](#)
- [Chick Publications](#)
- [Critical Art Ensemble Defense Fund](#)
- [Die screaming with sharp things in your head!!!](#)
- [Doug Minkler](#)
- [drawn and quarterly](#)
- [Emile Zile](#)
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- [Marcsta](#)
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- [Platform Artists Group](#)
- [Radical X Stitch](#)
- [Scratch! Media](#)
- [SHOPDROPPING.NET](#)
- [shut up + shop](#)
- [Stencil Graffiti](#)
- [Surrealism-USA](#)
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- [The Art of Revolution : Political](#)

Suffice it to say that [the article in question](#) was a republication, the original version appearing a few years earlier in an anarchist zine outta Sydney called *Destroyer 267*.

[Marcus Clayton](#): When the controversy came to public attention, Mr John Laws of 2UE fame in Sydney had Simon Crean, the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, on his radio program on the 8th August. Mr Laws criticised Mr Crean for the Federal Government's inaction in relation to the Rabelais article. We've done a Freedom of Information request to the Department, and it's clear that in the 24 hours following Mr Laws' interview of Mr Crean, that there was a great deal of activity in DEET, the Department, in which public servants were seen to be very busy trying to find some sort of provision that would make these students liable to prosecution. And within 24 hours, on the 9th August, Mr Crean wrote to the Victorian Attorney-General, Jan Wade, drawing her attention to the provision of this Censorship Scheme which the public servants had located.

On the same day, on the 9th August, he wrote to Mr Laws in a letter which hasn't yet been released to us, but we know the content of it from other things Mr Laws has said, and extraordinarily, Mr Crean sent Mr Laws a copy of his letter to Mrs Wade. Mr Laws was on the radio the next day, on the 10th August, saying that he took back everything he said about Mr Crean, and that in fact Mr Crean was a great bloke because he'd written to Mrs Wade in this form. Three days later, Mr Laws was also saying similar things in his regular column in the Sunday Telegraph in Sydney.

On the 16th and 17th August, my clients were interviewed by the police in Melbourne in relation to alleged offences under this Censorship Scheme. In other words, in relation to the matters that the public servants had found a few days earlier. And then on the 25th August, the last item of the jigsaw is that the Melbourne Herald-Sun published an article which reported that the student editors had been questioned and it quoted a Sergeant of the Preston Police, saying that they faced charges under this Act, this Classification of Film and Publications Act.

On the DEET file there is a copy of that Herald-Sun clipping, and there is a line highlighting the Sergeant's comments that they'd face charges under this Act, and there was a handwritten notation down the bottom to two public servants, one of whom is a senior person in the Legal Branch of DEET, and the other one is a senior person in the Higher Education Division with the handwritten note 'Well done!' And the initials are there, which appear to be it seems are the initials of a very high-ranking public servant in DEET.

All of that, I think, raises the concern of the use of the public service in matters such as this, and I must say the great power of the media.

Jeff Sparrow, "Times change: Who's on the APEC security blacklist?", **Cr!key**, June 20:

In a 1977 report into South Australia's old Special Branch, Justice White

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- [TurtleKiss.com](#)
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- [Winston Smith](#)
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Elsewhere

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- [aduki](#)
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- [Anarchist Studies](#)
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- [Anarchy](#)
- [Arena Magazine & Journal](#)
- [Aufheben](#)
- [Black * Review](#)
- [borderlands](#)
- [Breakdown Press](#)
- [Chain Reaction](#)
- [Clamor Magazine](#)
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- [Dissident Voice](#)
- [Do or Die](#)
- [dollars & sense](#)
- [Earth First! Journal](#)
- [Eat the State!](#)
- [El Libertario](#)
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- [Fire To The Prisons](#)
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- [Killing King Abacus](#)
- [Last Hours](#)

noted the political police's intense interest in Labor politicians. "All elected state Labor Leaders became," he said, "the subject of index cards, and sometimes of subject sheets and files."

How times change! Today, it's the elected state Labor leaders in NSW drawing up, in preparation for APEC, the kind of list on which they once would have featured.

Explaining his extraordinary proposal to exclude people from parts of Sydney during the summit, a spokesman for Police Minister David Campbell said: "Those who have been involved in violent and disruptive protests in the past will most likely be on this list. They won't need to be informed — they know who they are."

Really? Certainly, those on the 1997 list leaked from Victoria's political police to The Age might have appreciated a heads-up — the spooks in Melbourne were monitoring a giddy array of unsuspecting organisations, including such unusual suspects as the Gay Electoral Lobby, Pensioners for Peace and the Teddy Bears' Picnic of the Victorian Child Care Action Group.

But secret lists are like student cookery — everything you've got goes into them.

As The Age's informant explained at the time: "The pressure was always mounting to get more and more information [on] particular individuals, who the members of organisations were, their associates... The files were always growing..."

Naturally, such documents last forever. In Victoria, the then state government ordered Special Branch files destroyed — but the secret police simply refused to comply.

What will happen with Campbell's list? Who else will get access to it? To what other purposes will it be put? No one knows. No one can know. It's secret, innit!

Protestor Daniel Jones's story about a mysterious agent called 'Ahmed' offering to drop G20 demo charges in return for spying on his friends provides a further indication that the old Special Branch methods persist.

After the bombing during the 1979 [sic] Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (the APEC of its day), the secret police centred their investigation on information extracted from this kind of blackmail. Desperate to please their masters, informers like Ray Denning and Evan Pederick dutifully fingered Tim Anderson — and an innocent man spent years in a maximum security jail.

Of course, as in 1977, the concern for 'Laura Norder' only goes one way. The secret police are concentrating entirely on monitoring those demonstrating

[Le Monde Diplomatique \(English\)](#)

- [Linchpin](#)
- [Links](#)
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Know Your Rights

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Melbourne

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at APEC. But it's not the protesters who were responsible for a war that left hundreds of thousands of people dead, a war that [even Richard Perle acknowledged as entirely illegal](#). A tip for whoever's compiling Campbell's list: the main guy calls himself Bush.

Cam Smith, riot reporter, 'Hey APEC revellers, ever heard of technology?', **Cr!key**, June 20:

The APEC meeting in Sydney is not going to be cheap.

Security costs (to protect our dear leaders from nasty terrorists and protesters) are expected to run upwards of \$170 million. According to the NSW Business Council, the public holiday on Friday, 7 September, will cost NSW business more than \$325 million. Then there's the accommodation, the travel (all carbon-neutral, one hopes, but one doubts), the food, the booze, the ho-kers, the coke ... It all adds up to a huge bill at the end of the day.

Hey APEC! The '80s called! They want to introduce you to this crazy new thing called "video conferencing". Imagine a crazy futuristic cyberworld where people in different countries could discuss matters of global importance via the twin mediums of "video" and "the worldwide web". Imagine no more! The future is today, today is yesterday, and yesterday is last week.

A video conferencing expert at Rutledge Engineering, a leading Australian VC firm, advises that a 21-point international VC could initially cost between \$15-40,000 per endpoint (depending on how many people would be participating at each endpoint) and approximately \$2-300,000 to tie all the endpoints.

After the initial set-up, the system would be incredibly cost-effective to run in future years. In addition, the system would have to be connected by a Wide Area Network (WAN). Telstra's VC department advises that to run a 384k VC would cost \$6-700 per hour for international sites (plus a \$27.50 15-minute set-up fee).

All up, you could crank this thing 24 hours a day for a week and you'd still get change from \$4 million. This system would be secure from foreign interference and rogue elements. And, barring a natural disaster, it would operate uninterrupted.

Of course, all of these numbers mean little when you consider that every APEC government already has this technology in place — but why bother implementing it when you can have a zany \$500 million photo-op every year?

More later...

*The first such agency was the **Counter Espionage Bureau**, effectively a foreign

- [Latin American Solidarity Network \(LASNET\)](#)
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Other

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branch of M15, established by the Australian Federal Government in 1916. (A useful history is provided by Frank Cain, *The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia*, Angus & Robertson, London, 1983.) At this time, major targets of repression were the revolutionary industrial unionist **IWW** and Irish/Australian Republicans. Following the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik coup d'état of 1917, communists, especially members of the **CPA**, became Public Enemy Number One. Then as now, monitoring the activities of [fascists and the far right](#) generally has been given very low priority (for obvious reasons).



About @ndy

I live in Melbourne, Australia. I like anarchy. I don't like nazis. I enjoy eating pizza and drinking beer. I barrack for the greatest football team on Earth: Collingwood Magpies. The 2015 premiership's a cakewalk for the good old Collingwood.

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