

French intelligence collects all data of France Telecom/Orange

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Documents revealed by Edward Snowden and analyzed by the daily *Le Monde* reveal the role of French Telecom/Orange in the collection of data by the French intelligence services over a period of decades. France's General Directorate of the External Security (DGSE) freely obtains the data of all Orange's customers, apparently in a totally illegal manner.

Le Monde relied upon British signals intelligence spy network (GCHQ) documents extracted from the American National Security Agency (NSA) by Snowden. They show, according to the newspaper, that the co-operation between the DGSE and Orange was "maintained by people cleared for defence secrets, at the heart of the company, and ongoing for at least thirty years, by engineers who liaise between the two institutions."

In an article titled "The DGSE reportedly has total access to the Orange network," Reuters stresses that intercepts were carried out within the framework of the July 10 1991 law, which concerns only cases related to the fight against terrorism and organised crime. This procedure operates on the prime minister's authorisation, after being checked by the National Commission for Security Intercepts (CNIS), for a period of four months on the basis of a documented request.

Through Orange, the French state put into place a system of data gathering which escaped any control, as *Le Monde* explained: "One of the DGSE's advantages lies in the fact that it did not content itself with authorisations granted by the legislation to access the data of France Telecom-Orange customers. It has at its disposal above all, outside any control, a free and total access to their networks and the flow of transiting data."

Such uncontrolled data collection concerns both

French and foreign customers of Orange. The data "are shared with foreign allies such as GCHQ," which transmits them to the NSA.

These revelations once again underline the bad faith of the reactionary maneuvers of the Socialist Party (PS) in the Snowden affair. Following Snowden's revelations, the French parliament, with its PS majority, adopted the Military Appropriations Bill in November 2013, rendering legal the exchange of information between companies and the DGSE. This law authorizes telephone and internet communications surveillance in real time without the intervention of a judge.

In fact, this practise was already carried out, with the complicity of the state and trade union bureaucracy, without the dubious retroactive cover provided by the PS' reactionary law.

Sébastien Crozier, president of the CFE-CGC managers union at France Telecom-Orange confirmed *Le Monde's* revelations: "The massive collection of data by different states obeys no laws. Telecommunications firms, whatever their size, have no means to resist. To be an operator is more than anything a function of national sovereignty. And that is so for all countries."

Neither Orange, nor the unions have tried to defend the democratic rights of Orange's customers. As Crozier explains, "this issue is not grasped" among workers, which shows the silent complicity of the trade union bureaucracy and pseudo left forces which are allied to them, such as the New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA).

It has become easier to understand why petty-bourgeois pseudo-left organisations have mounted no defence of Snowden following his revelations on the NSA's activities. These organisations knew of the police measures of the state and by remaining silent, as

they wanted to avoid having their complicity with the intelligence agencies put under scrutiny.

Crozier justified the inaction of the operators and union bureaucracy by the pretext of the all powerful state. The union bureaucrat continued, “the rule of law makes the difference: in one case, your cable can be cut; in another your costs can be made unbearable through modifications in the regulations.”

These declarations of Crozier above all underline the fact that Orange and the unions at Orange have neither attempted to defend their customers, nor mounted a legal defence in their own interests against eventual reprisals by the state. In line with the whole political establishment, they are accomplices in a vast spying operation directed against the working class.



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