

Great Refusal or Long March: How to Think About the Internet

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(Re)Inventing the Internet

Critical Case Studies

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Marx's Constructivism

- **Science "is the most powerful weapon for repressing strikes, those periodical revolts of the working class against the autocracy of capital." "It would be possible to write quite a history of inventions, made since 1830, for the sole purpose of supplying capital with weapons against the revolts of the working class."**

Capital, vol. 1, 425-6

The Contingency of the Concrete Object

- **"The concrete is concrete, because it is a combination of many objects with different destinations, i.e. a unity of diverse elements. In our thought, it therefore appears as a process of synthesis, as a result, and not as a starting point, although it is the real starting point and, therefore, also the starting point of observation and conception."**

***Contribution to the Critique of
Political Economy, 293***

Technologies and Human Capacities

- **The appropriation of productive forces by the individuals under socialism “is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves.”**

The German Ideology, 467

Function and Meaning

- **“A negro is a negro. He only becomes a slave in certain circumstances. A cotton-spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. Only in certain circumstances does it become capital. Torn from these circumstances it is no more capital than gold is money or sugar the price of sugar.”**

Wage Labor and Capital, 207

Summary of Marx's Constructivism

- **Deskilling generalized as technical code**
- **Concrete object as synthesis of layers**
- **Objectification of human capacities and technology as representative**
- **The correlation of function and meaning in a cultural as well as economic context**

Five Features of the Internet

- **Non-hierarchical structure**
- **Anonymity**
- **Broadcasting**
- **Data storage**
- **Online community**

Consumption Model

Layers

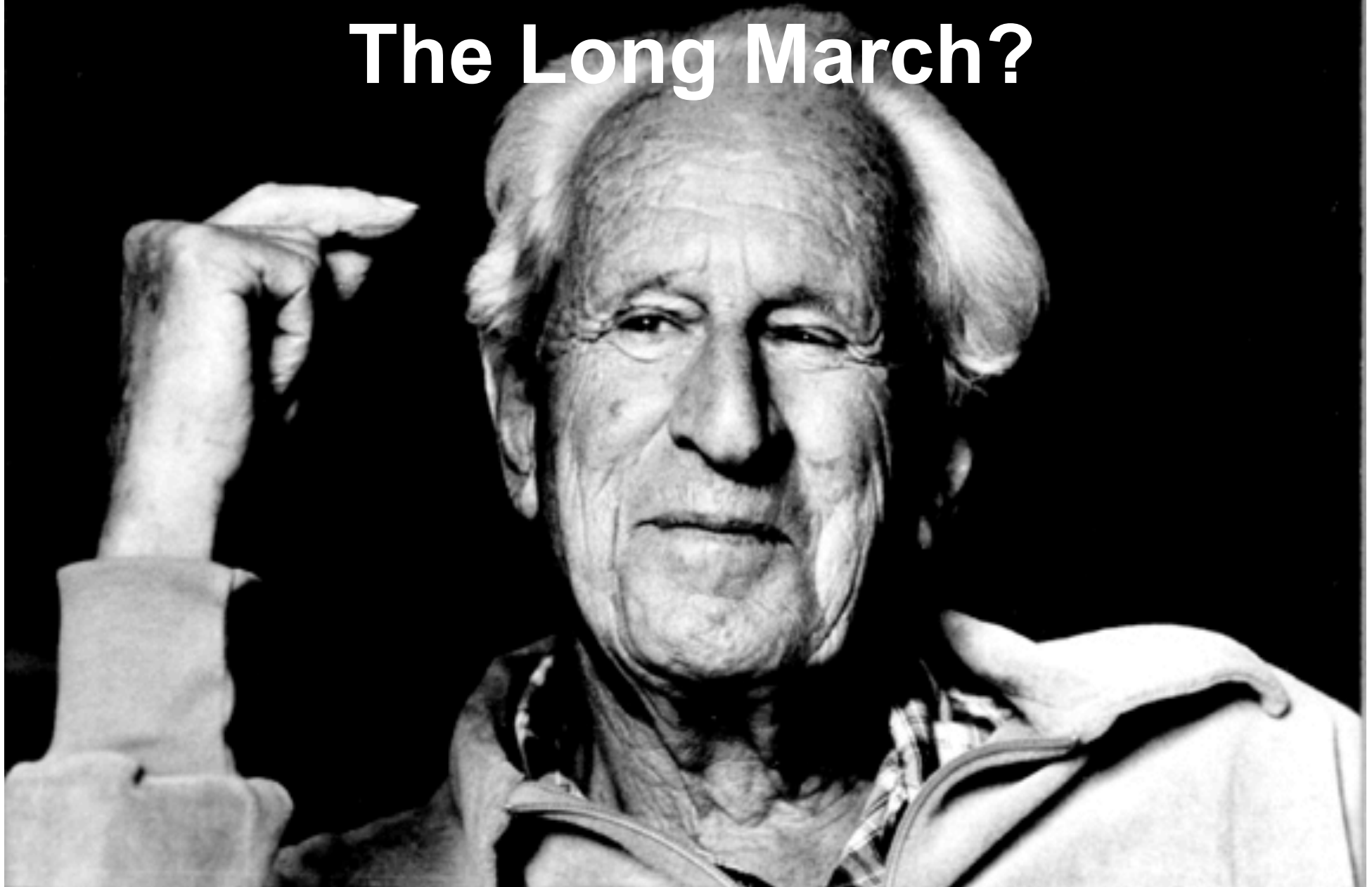
- non-hierarchical market
- broadcasting for delivery
- data storage for data mining
- online community as data source

Community Model

Layers

- non-hierarchical communication
- anonymity
- broadcasting for mobilization
- data storage for history
- online community

The Great Refusal or The Long March?



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