

DEMOCRACY

MEANS SURVEILLANCE



Our forebears overthrew kings and dictators, but they didn't abolish the institutions by which kings and dictators ruled: they *democratized* them. Yet whoever operates these institutions—whether it's a king, a president, or an electorate—the experience on the receiving end is roughly the same. Laws, bureaucracy, and police came before democracy; they function the same way in a democracy as in a dictatorship. The only difference is that, because we can cast ballots about how they should be applied, we're supposed to regard them as *ours* even when they're used against us.

Democracy presumes transparency: a marketplace of ideas, in which decisions are made in the open. Of course, in an unequal society, transparency puts some people at risk—the employee who could be fired for expressing the wrong opinion, the immigrant who fears deportation—while the powerful can feign transparency as they make back-room deals. In practice, political transparency simply equips intelligence agencies to monitor the populace, preparing reprisals for when dissidents get out of hand—and what government could maintain its authority without intelligence agencies?

Without surveillance, there would be *anarchy*: people would say and do what they really believe in. Those who defend centralized power fear nothing more than privacy—the keeping of secrets—which they call *conspiracy*.

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