

To Be Governed

Government Spying Didn't Begin With the NSA

anon.

2013

The old fashioned mail surveillance described on the opposite page is surprising since now most government snooping is done by modern technology. Apparently, however, the old-fashioned, J. Edgar Hoover-type is still around, although it too is being replaced by technology.

It's recently been exposed that every piece of U.S. mail which goes through the postal system is scanned and its exterior digitally retained just like the NSA files.

But government intrusion into private life and its efforts to disrupt its opponents is nothing new.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), the first person to call themselves an “anarchist,” and the first to use the word “capitalist” to designate a property-owner, made this observation in 1840:

To be GOVERNED is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so.

To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed,



Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned,
judged, condemned, shot, deported,
sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown
all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged,
dishonored.

That is government; that is its justice; that
is its morality.

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