

Correction -- I appear to be mistaken in asserting that part of the rent for the Seattle Liberation Center may have come from a Chinese millionaire. I was assured that funding for the center comes from workers. I regret the error. Also, I am committed to posting all public replies to this essay. -- Ben, Dec 6

Transparency will lead us from confusion to clarity

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My experience in an anti-Zionist study group

At the October 18 "No Kings" protest, a pro-Palestinian activist handed me a flyer for a study group on the history of Zionism. The study group involved six weekly sessions on Friday nights from 6 pm to 9 pm. It was not clear to me which group was running it--but my assumption was that it would be a group with "campist" politics. Since the study group appeared substantive--I decided to go.

My responsibilities

About 30 people attended each session. Most were in their twenties--and relatively new to radical politics. The sessions were, indeed, largely based on campist politics, but that was acceptable to me as long as I had the democratic right to speak up, on an equal basis with others, if or when campist politics intruded in some clear way. My responsibilities in this situation are threefold:

- (1) acknowledge what the study group is doing that is right--while also
- (2) clarifying, for the many young people present, who are new to activism, the **negative role** played by campist politics--and
- (3) concisely outline the **way forward** out of the bankruptcy, confusion and paralysis of the "left" as it exists today--by means of a **public information platform** that will allow activists to **sweep away** a century of accumulated illusions and denial and **create democratic organization** with the ability to raise the consciousness of the working class and oppressed, pull the plug on the Zionist project and overthrow imperialism and the rule of capital.

Overall, I was quite impressed with how the study group has been organized. There was a lot of information presented. I have been following this story for more than 50 years and I learned a lot of things that I had never known. There was also a video of a group of Palestinian activists and journalists talking and singing--before being murdered by the IDF. The study group also had many opportunities for people (many of whom have little to no experience with political discussion at depth) to talk about these things. And I had opportunities to contest sections of the presentation that were wrong or one-sided.

This needs to be acknowledged. But I cannot ignore the campist politics either. I owe everyone involved the bitter truth in simple language.

What is "campism"?

The term "campism" (itself) is relatively recent, and (probably) emerged about the time that Putin and his client, the **butcher Assad**, attempted to drown the Syrian revolution in mass graves and the blood of more than **600,000 people**. But the same basic idea was called "third world nationalism" (or bourgeois nationalism) in the late 1960's. It amounts to (basically) supporting the **ruling regime** of any country that US imperialism is attempting to dominate or crush.

This meant that misguided or naive activists would sometimes prettify all kinds of tin-pot dictators, from Qaddafi in Libya to the feudal Kim dynasty in North Korea. The essence of campist politics is to glorify and **look to salvation** from whichever **imperialist monsters** are standing on the **smaller piles of skulls**.

How does this relate to today?

It is **indisputable** that the world is divided into two main geopolitical camps. On the one hand--there is "the West" (ie: US imperialism and its NATO and Asian allies in the cold war against the Soviet Union: Britain, Germany, Japan, South Korea, etc). On the other hand--is the emerging camp closer to China (including Russia, North Korea, Iran, and lesser regimes such as Venezuela and Cuba).

What is our **attitude** toward this division? Must we rely on one camp to fight the other? Or can we make use of **independent class politics**?

Campist politics tend to look to the camp around China and Russia as the main source of humanity's salvation. Campist politics have tended to **support the butcher Assad in Syria, Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the fascist theocracy in Iran**, and turn a blind eye towards China's repression of its Uyghur minority. Campist politics (unfortunately) saturate at least half of the "left". Campist politics are also sometimes found in **social democratic** (ie: reformist) circles--such as New York's and Seattle's new "socialist" mayors Zohran Mamdani and Katie Wilson. In turn--social democratic politics are often found in campist circles. And campist politics even have a bit of a foothold (commonly known as the "**red-brown alliance**") in sections of right-wing politics which are friendly to Putin.

Non-campist politics (which represent the lesser half of the left) recognize the significance of the geopolitical division between the US-led and Chinese-Russian camps--but consider the most important division in the world to be the division between the oppressors and the oppressed--**bourgeoisie vs. proletariat**. On the one hand--there are the ruling classes of the world (and their innumerable flunkies) who serve **capital**. On the other hand--is the **working class** and **oppressed nationalities** and **minorities** of all kinds.

Campist and non-campist politics come in many forms and tendencies. But they represent **two antagonistic poles of thinking** in society and in the progressive movements. They sometimes converge (for example in support of the struggle of the Palestinian people) but they are fundamentally different in a thousand ways.

What did Mao say about this?

In the 2nd session of the study group--we were told that **Mao Zedong** (China's leader) told **Yassir Arafat** (the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization) that the **main contradiction** impacting the Palestinian people was the **national contradiction** between imperialism's Zionist project and the Arab and Palestinian peoples. It is possible that Mao was correct about this--at that time. For example, Israel's dominance in the region has required US imperialism to deliberately **hold back the economic and political development** of the surrounding countries in the Arab world--as well as Iran--representing nearly **half a billion people**.

But we need to be careful about taking this idea too far. Even if this idea was correct more than 50 years ago--that would not necessarily mean that it is correct today--after more than half a century of development. Everything is in continuous development. A man cannot step in the same river twice--because after he steps in it the first time--it will not be the same river--and he will not be the same man.

I used to be a Maoist (prior to 1978) and have studied a lot of Mao. Mao was not infallible. Mao was responsible for what was probably the largest famine in human history (1959-61) that killed 20 or 30 million people, and was wrong or confused on a whole series of questions.

More to the point--it seems to me to be a mistake of the first magnitude to focus on the national contradiction to the extent of downplaying the **class contradiction**--in the Middle East (or anywhere else for that matter). All the national leaders of the Arab countries are deeply reactionary, are allied with Israel, and (with good reason) fear being overthrown by their angry and downtrodden populations.

The Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL)

The main groups that have the experience to put the study group together are the **Party of Socialism and Liberation** and the associated **People's Forum**. I will simply refer to them as the PSL [1].

The PSL has been attacked by the mouthpieces of our ruling class (in the New York Times) because it opposes Zionism.

But the PSL has also been heavily criticised from non-campist sections of the left--for supporting the bloodthirsty Assad regime and for being funded (at least in part) by **Roy Singham** and the **Tricontinental** Institute. Roy Singham appears to be closely connected with the Communist Party of China (which I call the "Capitalist Party of China"--because China is capitalist--and the people who run the ruling party are nearly all **billionaires**).

For example--the PSL helps maintain a meeting place (ie: the "Seattle Liberation Center" where the study group was held). The implication of the criticism of the PSL from the left is that (for example) some part of the rent on the Seattle Liberation Center ultimately comes from the exploitation of Chinese workers. How much of this criticism is accurate? I do not have time to read all of the articles--but I provide some links (see footnotes [2] and [3] below) and from what I have seen

by quickly scanning them--it appears (to quote a popular proverb) that "where there is smoke, there is fire".

At the same time--the most important thing for me is not whether the PSL gets some money from a Chinese multi-millionaire. What is more important is simply how campist politics (in general) end up **undermining a class struggle perspective** in relation to the struggles here in the US as well as Palestine. After all--there are plenty of people and groups promoting campist politics which are *not* getting funded by Chinese millionaires. We need to focus on the politics.

What is important is the **recovery** of our movement.

The people I met in or around the PSL and/or the People's Forum all struck me as intelligent, hardworking, dedicated and sincere. They are volunteering their time and sacrificing their life-energy for the purpose (as they see it) of building the movement and building an organization with the ability to lead the working class. I know how they feel because I have walked in their shoes. I was a member and supporter of the Marxist-Leninist Party [4] -- which dissolved itself in 1993 as the inevitable consequence of being built on a **foundation of sand**.

If the PSL is on the **wrong road** (as people like me claim) then its members and supporters will eventually be faced with the need to **correct its path** and turn their organization in a **healthy direction**. The alternative would be **eventual demoralization** and passivity. And if the organization is **not capable** of correcting its errors (as people like me also claim) then it becomes **my responsibility** to recommend some path forward that is **better**.

Transparency will lead from confusion to clarity

I assert that a **public information platform** can (and will) be used to:

- (1) overcome the bankruptcy and **confusion** that has **paralyzed** the left
- (2) accelerate the spread of the **truth** about **Palestine** everywhere
- (3) create **clarity** on the need for the **working class** to run **society**
- (4) lead to the emergence of a **democratic mass organization** with the ability to lead the **working class** and **overthrow** the **rule of capital**

A public information platform (to which all activists have **the right to contribute** and can access using **algorithms of their choice**) would greatly accelerate the growth of what our movement needs like oxygen: **transparency**.

It should be obvious (for example) how transparency would **puncture illusions** about campist politics. Wrong ideas of every sort can only survive by **isolating** believers from the truth. **Confrontations** and **debates** that would flow from a **common information platform** for activists--will make this kind of isolation increasingly impossible.

Democratic Algorithms will solve the signal-to-noise problem

Some argue that a common platform open to all activists would be **flooded with "noise"** that might drown out thoughtful discussion. Certainly this is what tends to happen on the large commercial platforms such as facebook and twitter. What many overlook, however, is that the "noise" on the commercial platforms is a product of **commercial algorithms engineered to keep users enraged** and engaged so that their attention minutes can be sold to advertizers.

On the other hand--a **public domain platform** would make it easy for users to use algorithms of their **choice** to create **self-organized trust networks to filter out** the ignorant and aggressively clueless.

Hamas and the online war of ideas

And transparency would clear up confusion on many other topics also.

Let us consider how transparency would provide **perspective** and **cut the gordian knot** on problems that have emerged on social media when discussing the crimes of Hamas.

I have observed **serious problems** in how supporters of Palestine have replied to questions on social media concerning the **failure** of Hamas to take measures to protect civilian non-combatants during their October 7 military actions outside Gaza.

Palestinians, of course, have every right to resist Zionist occupation and repression by military and non-military means. But the failure to take simple measures to protect civilian non-combatants represented a

betrayal of fundamental principle. In this way it was also a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. This failure was a **gift** to the most openly **fascist sections** of the Israeli ruling class--it strengthened these fascists because it **played into their hands**. The result is that probably **half a million** Palestinians have been murdered in the Gaza genocide.

And the effects of this failure are **amplified** when supporters of Palestine mistakenly believe that this failure cannot be criticized publicly. This abandons one of the most powerful (and easy to understand) principles: **it is wrong to murder civilians**.

We need to be able to tell people the truth. We do not support the killing of civilians by anyone. We don't need to leave this unclear. **Palestinians have the right to choose their own leadership**--and Hamas will only be pushed aside when Palestinians have **democratic rights** and the **democratic space** they need to **test** and **support** democratic trends which resist Zionist oppression in a way which conforms to their interests. And the **material interests** of Palestinians include **driving a wedge** between the Israeli ruling class and Israeli workers.

Similarly--supporters of Palestine must work to drive a wedge between the ruling class here in the U.S. and workers here. And this will be greatly helped by **transparency** on all questions.

Transparency will put an end to empty talk about "socialism"

Empty talk of "socialism" has become a **swindle**. The word means totally different things to different people. The word "socialism" originated at the time of the French Revolution--and was used to describe **a society run by the working class** and **oppressed**. Today this word has 3 different common meanings:

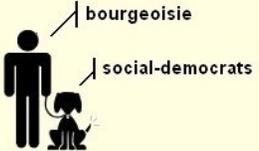
(1) **Social democracy** -- a "kinder, gentler" form of capitalism, also (sometimes) called "democratic socialism". This includes a spectrum of activists--from the left wing of the Democratic Party (ie: **Bernie** and **AOC**) to **Kshama Sawant** and "socialist" mayors such as **Zohran Mamdani** and **Katie Wilson**.

(2) A **police state** run by a **single party** where workers have no real rights. Depending on who you talk to--this can include China, North

Socialism

Socialism, currently, has three widely used definitions (all of which are wrong)

(1) Socialism (supposedly) means social democracy -- such as (in the U.S.) Bernie Sanders, Kshama Sawant or Chris Hedges or (in Europe) Syriza or Podemos.



(2) Socialism (supposedly) means the rule of a single-party state, with the ability to suppress the independent voice of the working class, as was seen in the last century in the Soviet Union and China.



(3) Socialism (supposedly) means that we don't need to think; we can instead (supposedly) turn off our brains and let activists in an imaginary future figure out what this better world will look like and how it will actually work.



Ben 2015-12-19

Korea, Cuba or other countries.

(3) **Don't think too hard** -- this word is also used to represent the idea of turning off your brain and imagining a better future without worrying about the details.

A common public information platform open to all activists--would **accelerate** motion towards sorting out all the difficult questions related to this--and **re-establishing the goal** of **a society run by the working class**.

Transparency will put an end to cults based on recruitment and "democratic centralism"

Many of the groups on the left (on both the campist and non-campist sides) protect their core values by means of a practice they call "democratic centralism". Originally (more than a century ago) this term referred to means by which the membership of an organization could prevent **centralized bureaucrats** from simply **hijacking** the organization. Today--this term has morphed into an opposite meaning--and this is why I often refer to it as "democratic centralism". It is used to **protect and conceal dysfunction** and opportunism in an organization. The result has been that many organizations have been **reduced** to little more than **recruitment machines**. Success is **measured** by the ability to recruit the warm bodies of activists who are new on the scene and looking for experienced forces to guide them.

These kinds of dysfunctional and anti-democratic practices will not **survive** transparency.

Transparency will be a weapon of the class struggle--and powerful beyond imagination

I am out of time--so I end here. I will post this on my website soon. I include (below) some graphics. My email and website are posted at the top of this essay. **I will post all replies marked "public" -- Ben**

A movement powerful enough to bring consciousness to the working class, topple the Zionist project, and overthrow the rule of capital--will require a common public database of news and opinion--to which all activists have access and the right to contribute.

Such a common public database will accelerate the puncturing of lies and illusions of all kinds, and serve as a pole of attraction for every healthy instinct in the class struggle. It will represent a level playing field in humankind's century of information war.

Footnotes:

Bonus Link--highly recommended: The death of Zionism -- Ilan Pappé

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSD6s61grck>

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_for_Socialism_and_Liberation

[2] **John Reimann** is a well-known progressive activist and blogger. As an activist, Reimann has his own problems and has sometimes (in my humble opinion) engaged in unprincipled behavior. But his articles are often quite useful. It is from activists such as Reimann (as well as **Michael Karadjis** and others) that I began to learn of the extent of the butchery of Assad in Syria. I have only had time to briefly skim one or two of these essays--but what I have seen strongly suggests that where there is smoke--there is fire:

Here is the blog of Michael Karadjis:

- <https://theirantiimperialismandours.com/2025/01/14/>

Here are articles from the blog of John Reimann:

- <https://oaklandsocialist.com/2023/08/15/who-is-roy-singham-what-does-his-web-consist-of/>
- <https://oaklandsocialist.com/2024/09/08/jill-stein-cornel-west-stalking-horses-for-trump-putin-and-assad-part-3-the-left-and-the-elections/>
- <https://oaklandsocialist.com/2024/03/18/how-putin-draws-the-left-into-the-far-right/>
- <https://oaklandsocialist.com/2022/12/20/medea-benjamin-the-pro-putin-left-and-the-far-right-in-america/>

Reimann's blog also links here:

- <https://fashbusters.wordpress.com/2021/11/02/does-goldman-sachs-fund-the-peoples-forum-psl-codepink-aipac-and-vijay-prashads-tricontinental/>

[3] Article on the study group and the Seattle Liberation Center:

- <https://iexaminer.org/seattle-liberation-center-opens-its-doors-in-the-cids-new-central-building/>

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxist%E2%80%93Leninist_Party,_USA

Likely stages in the development of a common public information platform

Democratic algorithms want to be free to organize information and bring transparency and consciousness to the class struggle

Stage
1

Discuss and understand basic principles



Timeframe:

Today

What it will do:

- ▶ Discuss and understand basic principles
- ▶ Learn the difference between algorithms used to keep us ignorant and algorithms we can use to find and organize the vital information we need to change the world
- ▶ Experiment with small-scale prototypes

How many users:

experimental platforms could have dozens of users

Stage
2

Public information platform for an open network of activists



Timeframe:

The next several years

How many users:

hundreds or thousands

What it will do:

- ▶ Share and digest the news
- ▶ Discuss and debate the path forward
- ▶ Build communities of struggle and connect them together
- ▶ EXPORT and IMPORT content to and from email, listservs and corporate social media
- ▶ Fight corporate and political censorship
- ▶ Transparency to help unfuck the "left"

Stage
3

Universal Public Information Platform



Timeframe:

The next several decades

How many users:

millions

What it will do:

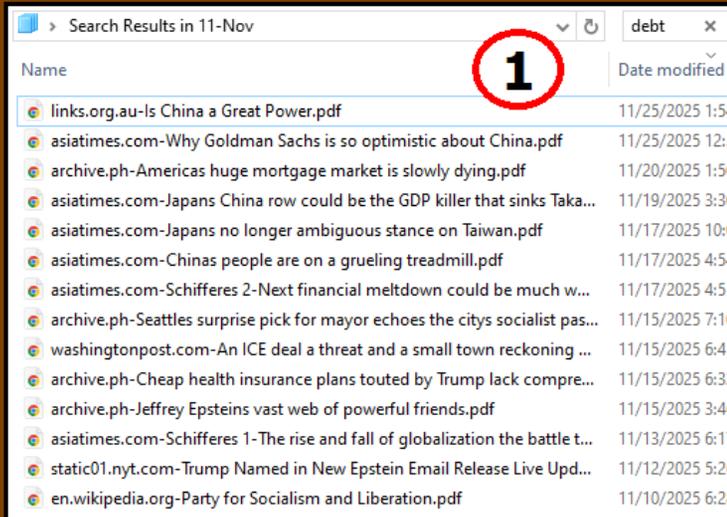
- ▶ Bring the truth to millions
- ▶ organize struggle at scale
- ▶ Win key victories in the online war of ideas

Political activists and tech activists will work together to bring transparency and the truth about everything to everyone

What would an article database look like?

Figure 1 -- What I have on my hard drive and use today

Figure 2A and 2B -- Mockup of an upgraded system that could be put on the internet and used by a small group of progressive journalists



Sources to include in search

Asia Times Foreign Policy Jacobin
 New York Times CounterPunch Global Times
 Economist Blog - John Reimann YouTube
 Atlantic Blog - Michael Karadjis Facebook thread
 Foreign Affairs Blog - Ben Seattle BlueSky post

Date Range

From: Month Year
 To: Month Year

Tags to include in search

financial crisis, debt crisis Trump
 Palestine, Gaza, Israel, genocide Epstein scandal
 Ukraine crisis of social media
 China

Rating

4 star or higher
 3 star or higher
 2 star or higher

Summary by

Ben
 Dan

Sort results by

Rating
 Date
 Source

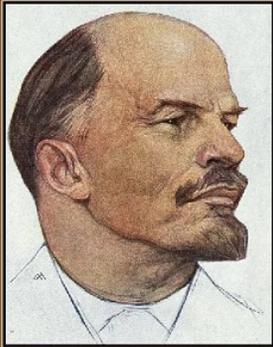
Index #	Source	Date	Title	Rating	Link	Tags	Summary
4023	AT / Schifferes	2025-11-13	(Part 1) The rise and fall of globalization and the battle to be topdog	***	Y	debt-crisis	fairly good (Ben)
4024	AT / Schifferes	2025-11-17	(Part 2) Next financial meltdown could be much worse with US on sidelines	***	Y	debt-crisis	fairly good (Ben)
4025	YouTube / Ray Dalio	x	How The Economic Machine Works	****	Y	debt-crisis	(Animated, with cute cartoons) (31 min) (Ben)
4026	YouTube / Ray Dalio	x	Principles for Dealing with the Changing World Order	****	Y	debt-crisis	(More animation, with more cute cartoons) (44 min) (Ben)
4027	Economist	2025-11-20	America's huge mortgage market is slowly dying -- Donald Trump's remedies threaten to inflame a housing crisis	**	Y	debt-crisis	Interesting (Dan)
4028	Economist	2025-10-17	Gita Gopinath on the crash that could torch \$35trn of wealth - The world has become dangerously dependent on American stocks, writes the former IMF chief economist	**	Y	debt-crisis	Interesting (Dan)
4029	facebook / Ben	x	blah, blah, blah ...	*	Y	x	x
4030	BlueSky / Ben	x	blah, blah, blah ...	*	Y	x	x
4031	WSJ / Liza Tobin	2025-10-22	How to escape China's rare earth chokehold	**	Y	rare-earths, China	Bigwig on Biden's NSC explains how to cleave the world into 2 vast spheres of influence (Ben)

Chart of
humanity's
future
Universal Public
Information
Platform

Ben's email:
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(I need your thoughtful questions and criticisms to improve my writing and understand key problems)
Essays by Ben at:
<http://communism.org/Ben>

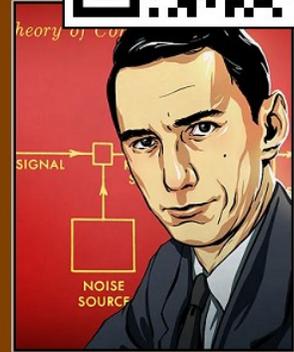
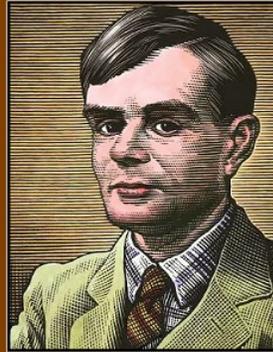
The Long-Term Future of Social Media
Our ruling class uses social media to keep us ignorant and fighting one another. But in the long term--we will use it to liberate our minds and organize the overthrow of our capitalist oppressors.
The Second Sino-American War
The United States and China appear to be headed towards a collision that has been a long-time coming

The Palestinian Media Army will liberate the world
We need a proletarian party for the information age
The independent organization the working class needs will emerge from the work to create an independent, public and democratic information platform



The Universal Public Information Platform

will bring transparency and the truth about everything to millions and become an invincible weapon in the hands of Proletarians and Palestinians in humanity's century of information war

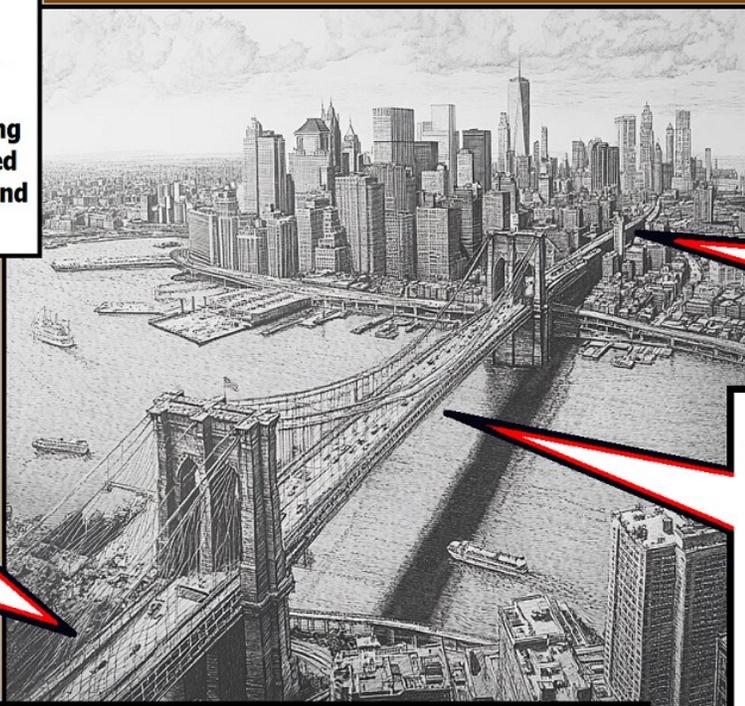


Marx
Gave us the solid theoretical foundation of humanity's need to overcome commodity production and the rule of capital and for the working class to run the world

Lenin
Led the first large-scale attempt to liberate the working class and oppressed from colonialism and the rule of capital

Turing
"Turing machines" are today called computers

Shannon
Gave us the digital world of "bits" and "signal-to-noise ratio"



Democratic Algorithms
tech activists -- information activists
movements for free software, free information and liberated algorithms

Class Struggle
Left activists, workers and trade union activists
examples of struggles:
▶ Defending immigrants
▶ Higher wages
▶ Black Lives Matter
▶ We are all Palestinians

Ben -- Feb 2025

Two amazing and powerful traditions are destined to combine their forces to defeat every form of reaction and liberate humanity from the rule of capital

The bridge between democratic algorithms and class struggle
Left activists and tech activists will work together to create a universal public information platform beyond the control of greedy corporations and repressive governments.
Activists and ordinary people will be able to make public posts and comments and find whatever they want by using algorithms of their own creation or choice. This will change the balance of power in every struggle and emerge as a pole of attraction that helps all the best activists find one another.