

Fall 2026

AI-driven dystopia vs. our vision of collective care

Why we're blocking Big Tech and taking on Palantir

Dear friend,

I open my notebook and run my hand over its smooth pages. Turning it sideways to give myself more room, I uncap my pen and begin to write. It's a small ritual, one that signals to my mind that it's time to think.

You may have heard me say I'm a philosopher by training. This notebook, which I take everywhere I go, is where I wrestle with ideas. Sometimes I find clarity; more often, I uncover new questions. Whatever I'm writing, the glide of my hand across the page and the scratch of ink on paper spark my creative process. It's such a distinctly human experience; one that can't be replicated by computers or AI.

But, terrifyingly, some version of this IS actually being replicated by AI. A set of people are making decisions that put AI computing and decision-making over human activities like creation, analysis, and ethical deliberations. As always, greed and power are the motivating factors. And in the hands of authoritarians this technology allows for more harm and control—faster and at a more devastating scale.

Meeting the moment

No doubt: this is an overwhelming time to be human.

And yet, moments like this are clarifying. Because alongside the threats, we see powerful reminders of what's possible when people come together. From Minnesota to Makoko, people are defending their neighbors, resisting fear and oppression, and acting in courageous defiance.

Moments like this also force us to ask ourselves where we can have the greatest impact. What is the world asking of us right now? How do we collectively use our resources, skills, and tools to keep building a more just world for everyone? How do we do so with clarity, strategy, and a long-term vision?

When I stepped into the role of executive director of Corporate Accountability, one of my priorities was to ensure we were meeting this moment. Luckily, the organization's facility with strategic planning meant that we had practice answering such critical questions.

We set out to map the corporations that are propping up and profiting from the Trump regime's fascist agenda—in the U.S. and around the world. This initial research quickly led us to the intersection of Big Tech, surveillance, and detention.

Not that long ago, most of us didn't imagine we'd be living in a world where surveillance cameras lurk not just in bank entrances and government buildings but also our front doors and on mountain trails—capturing our images, license plates, and our trips across town. Nor that all our collected data could be weaponized so quickly—making possible the kidnapping of a father on his way to deliver someone's lunch or the bombing of schoolgirls in Iran. Nor perhaps, that these and other technological developments would require massive amounts of water and energy—driving up our utility costs and fueling an already worsening climate crisis.

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But here we are, under conditions where state and corporate surveillance have collapsed into each other—with horrifying consequences.

In response, we've kicked off our new campaign to block Big Tech. Our goal? To win victories that will have a material impact on people's lives under rising fascism, while challenging the corporation powering the growing surveillance state.

Challenging Palantir

Have you wondered how ICE tracks our neighbors to kidnap them when they're at church, headed to work, or dropping their kids off at school? The agency uses technology made by a shadowy corporation called Palantir to figure out who to target and to track people in near-real time.

Palantir's software and AI gathers and analyzes immense amounts of data—including personal data—into one place for its clients. This enables rapid, computer and data-driven decision-making and pushes human judgement into the back seat. The technology essentially throws flames on the fires of whatever harmful things its clients are doing—including the U.S. and Israeli military. This means: more destruction, more deaths, more quickly—as the wars on Iran and Gaza demonstrate.

Until recently most people hadn't heard of Palantir, and that was on purpose. It's embedded itself in the U.S. government—from ICE and Department of Homeland Security to the military—and has mostly flown under the public's radar.

The billionaire founders of Palantir, including Alex Karp and Peter Thiel, promote an explicitly anti-democratic and authoritarian vision of Western superiority and imperialism. CEO Karp advocates for building

AI weapons to dominate and denigrates what he deems as inferior cultures, while Thiel once proclaimed that extending voting rights to women in the 1920s was bad for the U.S.

So let me be clear. We're not against technological innovation. It's possible to have technology that helps us solve complex issues in just, equitable, and life-affirming ways. But Palantir's technology is not that. Instead, it's powering a surveillance state that aims to advance an authoritarian agenda, silence dissent, and crush people-power.

Palantir has spent decades creating a niche market for itself, which it is now dominating. No other corporation is well-positioned to compete with it. So, the more we can stop the growth of its life-threatening business, and the sooner we can do it, the better.

Targeting expansion plans

Right now, Palantir's single biggest source of revenue is contracts with the U.S. government. But like any publicly traded corporation, it needs to diversify in order to grow. So now it's going after corporate contracts.

To get those contracts, Palantir needs a good reputation. At the very least, it needs to be seen as more than just the corporation that helps governments bomb and kidnap people. This is especially true in the healthcare sector, where the corporation is seeking to gain a foothold.

That's why, in collaboration with the Purge Palantir collective, we're organizing to move healthcare facilities to end or not enter into contracts with the corporation. We're demonstrating how Palantir's deadly impacts elsewhere are fundamentally incompatible with the lifesaving mission of healthcare institutions. By exposing its track record for the world to see, we'll make Palantir's reputation toxic in the healthcare industry and the private sector more broadly.

And when enough healthcare facilities give Palantir the cold shoulder, it will be clear that contracting with violent entities like ICE is a direct threat to the corporation's ability to grow in the healthcare industry and beyond.

You might remember we took a similar approach in our campaign challenging General Electric for its role in creating nuclear weapons at the height of the Cold War. We organized healthcare workers and nuns in Catholic hospitals to pledge not to buy GE's equipment. This had a huge impact on the corporation and was part of how we moved it out of the nuclear-weapons-making business.

Competing visions of the future

Big Tech execs have a truly dystopian vision of the future: extracting every last resource from the Earth to fuel their profits, with no regard for environmental destruction, while consolidating control over entire populations. When the planet is unlivable, the ultra-wealthy have plans to retreat into luxurious, high-tech bunkers—or escape to Mars—leaving everyone else to suffer on a dying planet.

We—and, frankly, most of the people in this world—want a different future. A world where neighbors watch out and care for one another, honoring each other's dignity and integrity—no matter what we look like, who

we love, or how we worship (or don't). A world where ecosystems are restored and honored, where forests and fields, farms and fauna flourish in abundance. A world where all can thrive.

I think, instinctively, people know that this is the choice we're facing.

I say this because of how people are reacting to our new campaign. This summer, our members and organizers—including myself—took to the streets. At farmers markets and outside train stations, people would see our signs (like "America's Got Surveillance"), pause, and come over to find out more. Once they heard what Palantir was up to, and what we were doing about it, almost everyone said, "Yes! Sign me up!"

Many people feel beaten down by the scale and complexity of the problems we face, but they know that this isn't the world they want to live in. They're hungry for meaningful ways to participate in creating change, and we're helping them to do just that—whether they're newly waking up to their agency, or simply harnessing their activism in a new direction. When people join with us, they become part of a larger movement toward the world that we know is possible—while fighting back against the dystopian dreams of billionaire tech bros.

I believe that helping people understand both the source of the problem and their role in the solution may be one of the most important contributions we can make as an organization.

Why we will win

After an invigorating tabling shift one afternoon talking with Bostonians and tourists about our work to block Big Tech, I sat in a shady spot and got out my notebook and pen. "There are infinite possibilities of how we can come together as people in solidarity, in care, in dignity," I wrote. "And that is something that no AI model, no Big Tech corporation will ever be able to compute. This is why we will win."

There is no technological substitute for creating heart-led connections across differences. Computers don't make the hardest issues a little more bearable with humor. AI cannot organize people-power the way we do: having one human conversation after the next.

And organized people-power is how we create change in systems that seem—but are never—infallible. This is what we've always done, and I'm inspired to be in this new phase and campaign now, with members like you.



Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ari Belathar".

Ari Belathar
Executive Director



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