

Palantir is not just a tech company

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Robert Reich, at the age of 79 and just after retiring from university teaching, is one of the most outspoken critics of Trump in the USA right now.

His [newsletter sent](#) yesterday was very important. In it (and I am not apologising for the length of the quotes since I am using them to suggest you subscribe for free to what he has to say):

Sorry to intrude on your Friday for a second time, but I wanted to alert you to an important action taking place tomorrow, Saturday, August 23.

It's a protest against one of the worst corporations in America, called Palantir — a private corporation that's using billions of our tax dollars for surveillance and deportation software.

Tomorrow, we're going to demand that Palantir be defunded. Information about your local action can be found [here](#).

Assuming that you are not in the USA, you might wonder what this has to do with you. The answer is that in the UK, Palantir provides big data analytics software and services to government and defence sectors, including the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office for functions like defence strategy and border surveillance, whilst also having a significant presence in the NHS, which is deeply controversial, and in the Cabinet Office. Palantir has its tentacles throughout the UK government, in other words. And as Robert Reich notes:

As I have written, Palantir is at the nexus of several worrisome realities: artificial intelligence, Trump's use of the U.S. military on American civilians, his attack on immigrants, his collection of personal information on millions of Americans, and the parts of Silicon Valley dedicated to turning the U.S. from a democracy into a dictatorship led by tech bros.

Palantir sells an AI-based platform that allows its users — among them, military and law

enforcement agencies — to analyze personal data, including social media profiles, personal information, and physical characteristics. These are used to identify and surveil individuals.

The danger inherent in Palantir's AI-powered super-database on all Americans is connected to the vast wealth and power of those associated with the corporation, and their apparent disdain for democratic institutions. Musk is associated.

So too is JD Vance, who worked for Peter Thiel at one of his venture funds.

Peter Thiel, formerly of PayPal and now the major influence in Palantir, introduced Vance to Trump and later helped Vance become his vice-presidential pick.

And Thiel is not the sort of person anyone should wish to associate with. As Robert Reich notes, Thiel has written:

The 1920s were the last decade in American history during which one could be genuinely optimistic about politics. Since 1920, the vast increase in welfare beneficiaries and the extension of the franchise to women — two constituencies that are notoriously tough for libertarians — have rendered the notion of 'capitalist democracy' into an oxymoron.

As Reich then adds:

If "capitalist democracy" is becoming an oxymoron, it's not because of public assistance or because women got the right to vote. It's because billionaire capitalists like Musk and Thiel are intent on killing democracy.

Meanwhile, the CEO of Palantir is Alex Karp, who [said on an earnings call](#) earlier this year that the company wants:

to disrupt and make the institutions we partner with the very best in the world and, when it's necessary, to scare enemies and on occasion kill them.

The company is reported to have assisted Israel in identifying targets in Gaza. And for this approach, Reich notes:

Palantir recently disclosed that Karp received [\\$6.8 billion](#) in "compensation actually paid" in 2024 (you read that right) — making him the [highest-paid chief executive](#) of a publicly traded company in the United States.

And as he adds:

This group — including Thiel, Musk, Karp, and Vance — doesn't seem to want to conserve much of anything, at least not anything that occurred after the 1920s,

including Social Security, civil rights, and even women's right to vote.

Tyranny is being promoted. Democracy is creaking. Human rights are under threat, and the UK government is welcoming the agents managing that process into managing large parts of the UK. We, too, should be worried about Palantir.