



Andreea
@diemkay

1h

I came across a Romanian Reddit thread today that left me confused and feeling mixed feelings.

Someone asked if anyone uses Mastodon, and most responses were neutral or mildly curious. One commenter dismissed it immediately: "much too left-wing". They complained about decentralization, the fediverse concept, calling it too complex for average users, with declining engagement.

The OP asked a simple question: "in what sense too left-wing?" And got no response, just several downvotes.

I sat with that for a bit.

Yes, federation does mean anyone can run a server. Users control their data. No single corporation owns the network. If you think about it through the lens of "seize the means of production" - and I am kinda joking but also not - it IS seizing the means of production for social media. The opposite of corporate control.

But this person rejected it as "too left" while presumably continuing to use platforms owned by billionaires who can read sell their data, train AI and manipulate their feed. The irony would be almost funny if it wasn't sad.



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Part of me thinks in Romania it's a healthy dose of post-communist trauma that runs deep. Communism has been made illegal in some parts of Europe, and they think that's *surely* how you fix it. Problem solved.

In Romania, anything that smells collective or distributed or community-oriented triggers visceral rejection and mistrust and brings up talk about soy salami rations. Cooperatives today can hardly get off the ground again because of this. If you try to suggest that what happened was North Korea style authoritarian dictatorship for half a century, and maybe that was the problem, people jump at your throat.

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The word “decentralized” might as well be “Bolshevik” in some circles. Maybe they hear “federation” and think Soviets, not servers they can run social media on.

Or maybe it IS the complexity. If they can’t understand how it

Back



“central, that’s how I understand this and that makes me uncomfortable.” Maybe people don’t want to see the power structures they grew up in, like fish in water.

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Andreea

@diemkay@hachyderm.io

ICE, techno fascism, Musk/Neuralink Mengele-level horror

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Andreea

@diemkay

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“First they came for... and I did not speak up because I wasn’t one”

Don’t we know how this poem ends? We’ve known for eighty years but it feels like we’re back watching it in real time.

And the tools that could help us, like decentralized platforms, federated networks, community-owned infrastructure are rejected because “too left-wing”.

Arguably maybe we don’t want those people here. But also, they are around us in real life.

How do you get people to use tools that could protect them from centralized authoritarian control when their mere existence triggers knee jerk reactions? How do you even break through when “too left-wing” is a thought-terminating cliche, a way to avoid engagement and discomfort?



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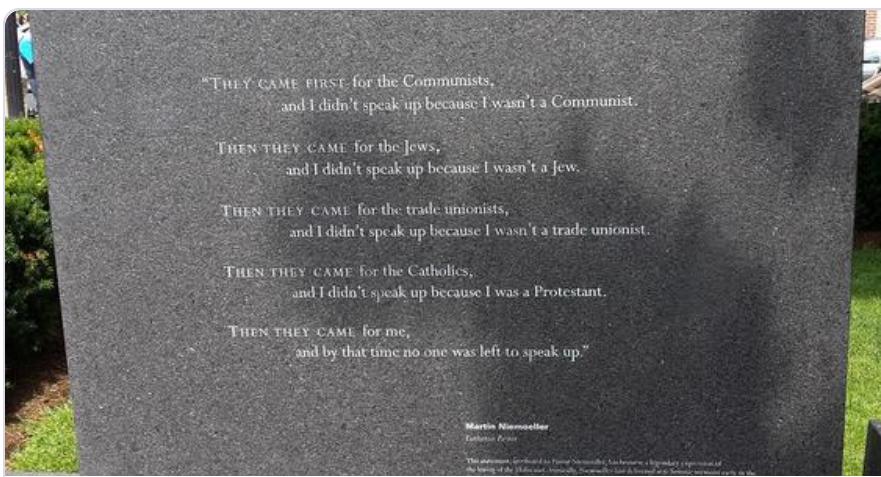
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The Romanian commenter got their answer, sort of. Nothing but downvotes. As if to say, they should have known better than to ask. How naive of you to challenge consensus with curiosity.

Better to choose the billionaire-owned platforms we know over the unfamiliar alternative that might help us regain a sense of agency.

Sarcasm aside, I don't have an answer, I'm also just posting into the void. I have this low grade anxiety building up, feeling like things are getting ugly. The infrastructure of digital authoritarianism is already here, and in some cases, literally inside people's heads. They even welcome it, because progress or something.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Thing



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