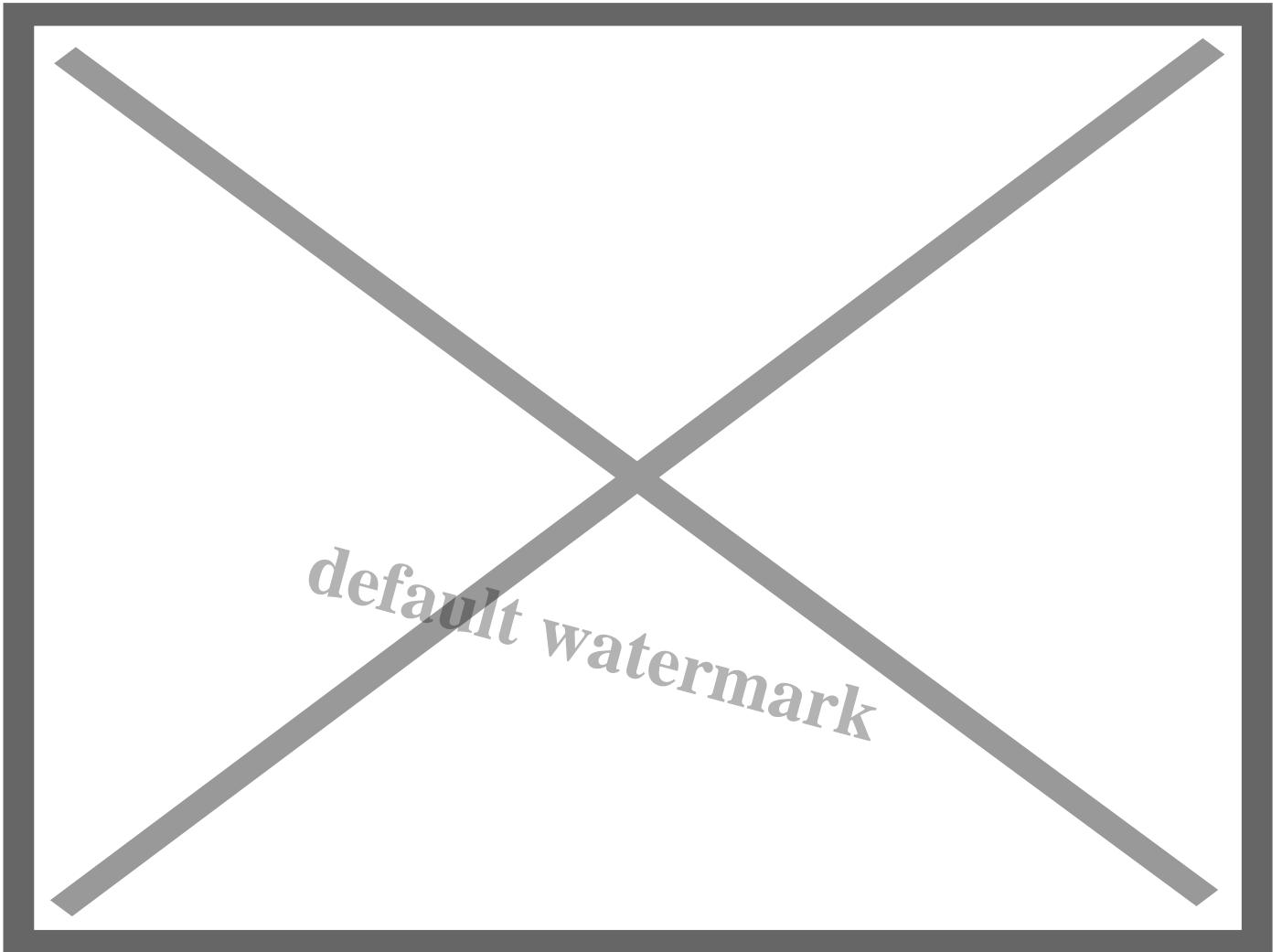


Fighting Tech or Technofascism

Description

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Technology has never been the enemy of [the working class](#) in and of itself. By its very definition, technology is simply the deployment of tools and advancements designed to improve tasks, ease the burdens of life, and drive progress. In the modern era, this has evolved from mechanical automation to digital advances and, most recently, [artificial intelligence](#) (AI) systems.

Yet, since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, workers have understandably feared technological leaps. When your very survival depends on the sale of your labour, the threat of being replaced by a machine is existential.

From Luddites to Saboteurs

History is rife with examples of workers hitting back against the mechanisation of their livelihoods. British [Luddites](#) raided textile factories at night to smash the frames that threatened their trade. French workers threw their wooden shoes ([sabots](#)) into the moving gears of factory machinery to halt production, giving birth to the term "saboteur" as a synonym for workers opposing new industrial technology.

But the machines were here to stay. By focusing their rage entirely on the technology, workers failed to seize control of these advancements. Instead, they were left subject to further exploitation by the capitalists who owned the new means of production. [Sweatshops](#) emerged and persist to this day, while the textile industry has evolved into [one of the most notoriously exploitative](#) and environmentally damaging sectors on the planet.

Now, in the digital age, history is repeating itself.

The AI Frontier: Misdirected Rage

Huge, [environmentally disastrous](#) data centres are rapidly expanding to power the AI boom. In response, we are seeing [focused pockets of resistance](#) to these complexes and to AI as a whole. Once again, workers fear replacement. Only this time, it is those whose labour lies in intellectual and creative pursuits who are at the greatest risk. But have we learned nothing from the past?

We on the left are quick to point to the right, to centrists, and even to the lumpenproletariat, decrying their short memories when [comparatives](#) entice them. *“Have they learned nothing from history?”* we ask. Yet, the [contemporary left](#) and the [trade union movement](#) are making the exact same mistake. We are focusing our crosshairs on technology itself, rather than organising to seize the means of production, which in this case is the very [means of intellectual production](#).

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Confronting the Technofascists

While we waste energy resisting the inevitable implementation of AI, the [tech bros](#) and [technofascists](#) who exert control over these systems grow more powerful by the day. They are training their algorithms on our [collective data](#) using it to amass worrying [political influence](#) and [exponential wealth](#).

Meanwhile, workers are left playing catch-up, wasting valuable time trying to upskill or adapt to a rigged system. True resistance means building dedicated efforts toward the democratisation of technology. It means building in-house, closed-loop systems that are entirely independent of oligarchic technocrats.

Just as the factory workers of old could have used technological advances to enhance production, reduce their workloads, and improve working conditions by owning the machinery, today’s intellectual workers can leverage AI to achieve the exact same goals.

Furthermore, while it is undeniably true that the data centres powering AI are [an environmental disaster](#), this crisis represents a crucial leverage point. It is yet another opportunity for workers to mobilise, intervene, and demand a monopoly on [Green energy transition](#), ensuring that the infrastructure of the future serves public good and planetary survival rather than billionaire profit.

Seize the Future: The Case for AI Co-operatives

Technological advances should exist to serve human needs and promote ecological sustainability. But we cannot rely on oligarchic technocrats to deliver that future for us. History has taught us a brutal,

repetitive lesson: the wealthy move swiftly to capture and exploit new technologies to maximise their own profits.

To break this cycle, [trade unions](#) must lead the charge. [Labour movements](#) must champion the development of ethical, sustainable AI, while actively training workers to deploy these systems to reduce workloads and radically improve quality of life.

Ultimately, we must realise that true alternative models cannot exist under capitalist ownership. If we want a democratic digital future, the equation is simple. We cannot afford to smash the machines of the 21st century; we have to take them over. Ultimately, the most genuinely co-operative form of AI lies in establishing worker-owned AI co-operatives.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Thanasi Hassoulas](#)

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