Palo Alto Mouthbreathing Machiavellis Dream of a Silicon Fourth Reich

- Google, Facebook, Netflix, Linkedin, Kleiner Perkins, Greylock, Saleforce sociopath bosses form a Nazi regime via server and information control

- The Stazi have nothing over the tech oligarchs control of politics and information

- The biggest crimes of corruption, hooker networks, stock market manipulations, political black-lists, Congressional bribes and more, are operated in plain sight by Silicon Valley operatives

- Is the public really '*too dumb*" to see what they are doing?

- Stanford University seems to be programming their frat-boy rape-culture crazy concepts into these delusional men

One day in March of this year, a Google engineer named Justine Tunney created a strange and ultimately doomed [petition at the White House website](). The petition proposed a three-point national referendum, as follows:

1. Retire all government employees with full pensions.
2. Transfer administrative authority to the tech industry.
3. Appoint [Google executive chairman] Eric Schmidt CEO of America.

This could easily be written off as stunt, a flamboyant act of corporate kiss-assery, which, on one level, it probably was. But Tunney happened to be serious. "It's time for the U.S. Regime to politely take its exit from history and do what's best for America," she wrote. "The tech industry can offer us good governance and prevent further American decline."

Welcome to the latest political fashion among the California Confederacy: total corporate despotism. It is a potent and bitter ideological mash that could have only been concocted at tech culture's funky smoothie bar—a little Steve Jobs here, a little Ayn Rand there, and some Ray Kurzweil for color.

Tunney was at one time a [prominent]() and [divisive]() fixture of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Lately, though, her views have . . . evolved. How does an anticapitalist "[tranarchist]()" (transgender anarchist) become a hard-right seditionist?

"Read Mencius Moldbug," Tunney [told her Twitter followers]() last month, referring to an aggressively dogmatic blogger with a reverent following in certain tech circles.

Keanu cartoon by [Pete Simon](#)

Tunney's advice is easier said than done, for Moldbug is as prolific as he is incomprehensible. His devotees, many of whom are also bloggers, describe themselves as the "neoreactionary" vanguard of a "Dark Enlightenment." They oppose popular suffrage, egalitarianism and pluralism. Some are atheists, while others affect obscure orthodox beliefs, but most are youngish white males embittered by "political correctness." As best I can tell, their ideal society best resembles *Blade Runner*, but without all those Asian people cluttering up the streets. Neoreactionaries like to see themselves as the heroes of another sci-fi movie, in fact, sometimes boasting that they have been "[redpilled](#)," like Keanu Reeves's character in *The Matrix*—a movie Moldbug regards as "genius."

"Moldbug." The name sounds like it belongs to a troll who belches from the depths of an Internet rabbit hole. And so it does. Mencius Moldbug is the [blogonym](#) of Curtis Guy Yarvin, a San Francisco [software developer](#) and [frustrated poet](#). (Here he is reading a poem at a [1997 open mic](#).)

According to Yarvin, the child of federal [civil servants](#), he [dropped out](#) of a graduate computer science program at U. C. Berkeley in the early 1990s (he has self-consciously [noted](#) that he is the only man in his immediate family without a PhD) yet managed to make [a small pile of money](#) in the original dot-com bubble. Yarvin betrayed an endearingly strange sense of humor in his student days, posting [odd stories](#) and absurdist jokes on bulletin board services, contributing to *[Wired](#)* and writing [cranky letters](#) to alternative weekly newspapers.

Yet even as a student at Brown in 1991, Yarvin's preoccupations with domineering strongmen were evident: "I wonder if the Soviet power ladder of vicious bureaucratic backbiting brings stronger men to the top than the American system of feel-good soundbites," [he wrote](#) in one board discussion.

Yarvin's public writing tapered off as his software career solidified. In 2007, he reemerged under an angry pseudonym, Moldbug, on a humble [Blogspot blog](#) called "Unqualified Reservations." As might be expected of a "DIY ideology . . . designed by geeks for other geeks," his political treatises are heavily informed by the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and George Lucas. What set Yarvin apart from the typical keyboard kook was his archaic, grandiose tone, which echoed the snippets Yarvin cherry-picked from obscure old reactionary tracts. Yarvin [told](#) one friendly interviewer that he spent $500 a month on books.

Elsewhere he [confessed](#) to having taken a grand total of five undergraduate humanities courses (history and creative writing). The lack of higher ed creds hasn't hurt his confidence. On his blog, Yarvin holds forth on [everything](#) from the intricacies of [Korean history](#) to contemporary [Pakistani politics](#), from the proper conduct of a [counterinsurgency operation](#) to [macroeconomic theory](#) and [fiscal policy](#), and he never gives an inch. "The neat thing about primary sources is that often, it takes only one to prove your point," he [writes](#).

In short, Moldbug reads like an overconfident autodidact's imitation of a Lewis Lapham essay—if Lewis Lapham were a fascist teenage Dungeon Master.

Yarvin's most toxic arguments come snugly wrapped in purple prose and coded language. (For instance, ["The Cathedral"](#) is

Moldbuggian for the oppressive nexus of liberal newspapers, universities and the State Department, where his father worked after getting a [PhD in philosophy from Brown](.).) By so doing, Moldbug has been able to an attract an audience that welcomes the usual teeth-gnashing white supremacists who haunt the web while also leaving room for a more socially acceptable assortment of "men's rights" advocates, gun nuts, transhumanist libertarians, disillusioned Occupiers and well-credentialed Silicon Valley entrepreneurs.

When Justine Tunney posted her petition online, the press [treated it] like [comic relief] that [came from nowhere]. In fact, it is straight Moldbug. Item one, "retire all government employees," comes verbatim from a 2012 talk that Yarvin gave to an approving crowd of [California techies] (see video below). In his typical smarmy, meandering style, Yarvin concluded by calling for "a national CEO [or] what's called a dictator."

"If Americans want to change their government, they're going to have to get over their dictator phobia," Yarvin said in his talk. He conceded that, given the current political divisions, it might be better to have two dictators, one for Red Staters and one for Blue Staters. The trick would be to "make sure they work together." (Sure. Easy!)

"There's really no other solution," Yarvin concluded. The crowd applauded.

This plea for autocracy is the essence of Yarvin's work. He has concluded that America's problems come not from a deficit of democracy but from an excess of it—or, as Yarvin puts it, "chronic kinglessness." Incredible as it sounds, absolute dictatorship may be the *least objectionable* tenet espoused by the Dark Enlightenment neoreactionaries.

Moldbug is the widely acknowledged lodestar of the movement, but he's not the only leading figure. Another is Nick Land, a British former academic now living in Shanghai, where he writes admiringly of Chinese eugenics and the impending global reign of "autistic nerds, who alone are capable of participating effectively in the advanced technological processes that characterize the emerging economy."

These imaginary übermensch have inspired a sprawling network of blogs, sub-Reddits and meetups aimed at spreading their views. Apart from their reverence for old-timey tyrants, they espouse a belief in "human biodiversity," which is basically

racism in a lab coat. This scientific-sounding euphemism invariably refers to supposed differences in intelligence across races. It is so spurious that the Wikipedia article on human biodiversity was deleted because, in the words of one editor, it is "purely an Internet theory." Censored once again by The Cathedral, alas.

"I am not a white nationalist, but I do read white-nationalist blogs, and I'm not afraid to link to them . . . I am not exactly allergic to the stuff," Yarvin writes. He also praises a blogger who advocated the deportation of Muslims and the closure of mosques as "probably the most imaginative and interesting right-wing writer on the planet." Hectoring a Swarthmore history professor, Yarvin rhapsodizes on colonial rule in Southern Africa, and suggests that black people had it better under apartheid. "If you ask me to condemn [mass murderer] Anders Breivik, but adore Nelson Mandela, perhaps you have a mother you'd like to fuck," Yarvin writes.

His jargon may be novel, but whenever Mencius Moldbug descends to the realm of the concrete, he offers familiar tropes of white victimhood. Yarvin's favorite author, the nineteenth-century writer Scot Thomas Carlyle, is perhaps best known for his infamous slavery apologia, "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question." "If there is one writer in English whose name can be uttered with Shakespeare's, it is Carlyle," Yarvin writes. Later in the same essay Yarvin calls slavery "a natural human relationship" akin to "that of patron and client."

As I soldiered through the Moldbug canon, my reactions numbed. Here he is expressing sympathy for poor, persecuted Senator Joe McCarthy. Big surprise. Here he claims "America is a

communist country." Sure, whatever. [Here](#) he doubts that Barack Obama ever attended Columbia University. You don't say? After a while, Yarvin's blog feels like the pseudo-intellectual equivalent of a Gwar concert, one sick stunt after another, calculated to shock. To express revulsion and disapproval is to grant the attention he so transparently craves.

Yet the question inevitably arrives: Do we need to take this stuff seriously? The few mainstream assessments of the neoreactionaries have been divided on the question.

Sympathetic citations are spreading: In the *[Daily Caller](#)*, *[The American Conservative](#)* and *National Review*. Yet the conservative press remains generally dismissive. *[The American Spectator](#)*'s [Matthew Walther](#) calls neoreactionism "silly not scary" and declares that "all of these people need to relax: spend some time with P.G. Wodehouse, watch a football game, get drunk, whatever."

[TechCrunch](#), which first introduced me to Moldbug, treats the "Geeks for Monarchy" movement as an Internet curio. But *[The Telegraph](#)* says, yes, this is "sophisticated neo-fascism" and must be confronted. [Vocativ](#), which calls it "creepy," agrees that it should be taken seriously.

The science fiction author [David Brin](#) goes further in his comment on a Moldbug blog post, [accusing](#) the blogger of auditioning for the part of Machiavelli to some future-fascist dictator:

> The world oligarchy is looking for boffins to help them re-establish their old – pyramidal – social order. And your screeds are clearly interview essays. "Pick me! Pick me! Look!

I hate democracy too! And I will propagandize for people to accept your rule again, really I will! See the fancy rationalizations I can concoct????"

But your audition materials are just . . too . . . jibbering . . . loopy. You will not get the job.
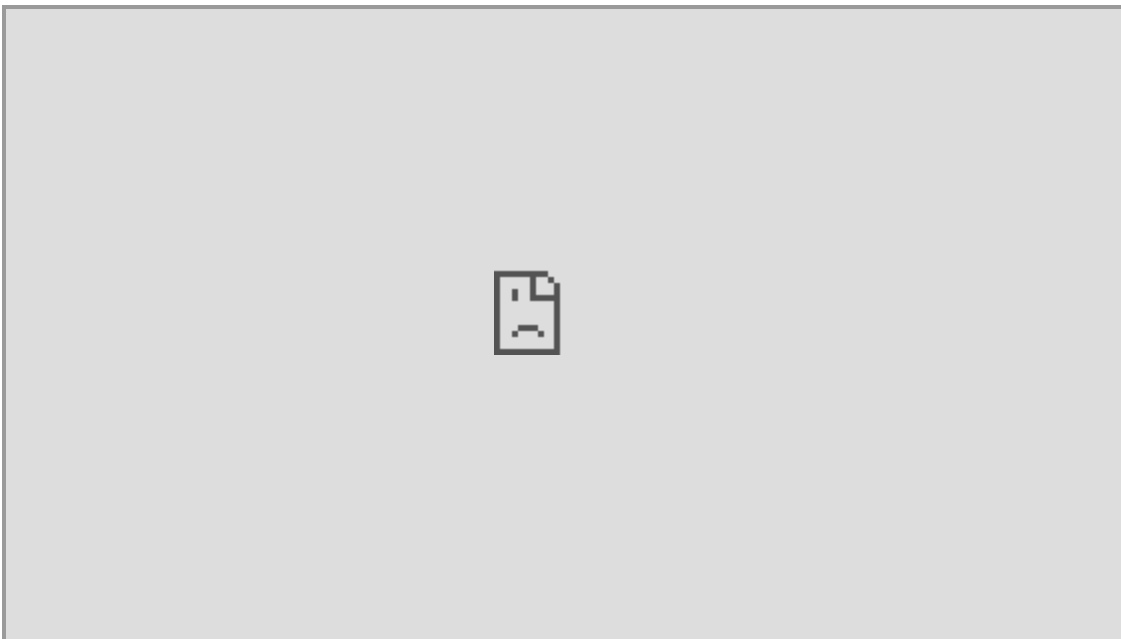
As strange as it sounds, Brin may be closest to the truth. Neoreactionaries are [explicitly](#) courting [wealthy elites](#) in the tech sector as the most receptive and influential audience. Why bother with mass appeal, when you're rebuilding the *ancien régime*?

Moldbuggism, for now, remains mostly an Internet phenomenon. Which is not to say it is "merely" an Internet phenomenon. This is, after all, a technological age. Last November, Yarvin claimed that his blog had received 500,000 views. It is not quantity of his audience that matters so much as the nature of it, however. And the neoreactionaries do seem to be influencing the drift of Silicon Valley libertarianism, which is no small force today. This is why I have concluded, sadly, that Yarvin needs answering.

If the Koch brothers have proved anything, it's that no matter how crazy your ideas are, if you put serious money behind those ideas, you can seize key positions of authority and power and eventually bring large numbers of people around to your way of thinking. Moreover, the radicalism may intensify with each generation. Yesterday's Republicans and Independents are today's Libertarians. Today's Libertarians may be tomorrow's neoreactionaries, whose views flatter the prejudices of the new Silicon Valley elite.

In a [widely covered](#) secessionist speech at a Silicon Valley "startup school" last year, there was more than a hint of Moldbug (see video below). The [speech,](#) by former Stanford professor and Andreessen Horowitz partner Balaji Srinivasan, never mentioned Moldbug or the Dark Enlightenment, but it was suffused with neoreactionary rhetoric and ideas. Srinivasan used the phrase "the paper belt" to describe his enemies, namely the government, the publishing industries, and universities. The formulation mirrored Moldbug's "Cathedral." Srinivasan's central theme was the notion of "exit"—as in, exit from democratic society, and entry into any number of corporate mini-states whose arrival will leave the world looking like a patchwork map of feudal Europe.

Forget universal rights; this is the true "opt-in society."

An excerpt:

> We want to show what a society run by Silicon Valley would look like. That's where "exit" comes in . . . . It basically means:

build an opt-in society, ultimately outside the US, run by technology. And this is actually where the Valley is going. This is where we're going over the next ten years . . . [Google co-founder] Larry Page, for example, wants to set aside a part of the world for unregulated experimentation. That's carefully phrased. He's not saying, "take away the laws in the U.S." If you like your country, you can keep it. Same with Marc Andreessen: "The world is going to see an explosion of countries in the years ahead—doubled, tripled, quadrupled countries."

Srinivasan ticked through the signposts of the neoreactionary fantasyland: Bitcoin as the future of finance, corporate city-states as the future of government, Detroit as a loaded symbol of government failure and 3D-printed firearms as an example of emerging technology that defies regulation.

The speech succeeded in promoting the anti-democratic authoritarianism at the core of neoreactionary thought, while glossing over the attendant bigotry. This has long been a goal of some in the movement. One such moderate—if the word can be used in this context—is [Patri Friedman](#), grandson of the late libertarian demigod Milton Friedman. The younger Friedman expressed the need for "a more politically correct dark enlightenment" after a [public falling out](#) with Yarvin in 2009.

Friedman has lately been devoting his time (and leveraging his family name) to raise money for the SeaSteading Institute, which, as the name suggests, is a blue-sea libertarian dream to build floating fiefdoms free of outside regulation and law. Sound familiar?

The principal backer of the SeaSteading project, [Peter Thiel](#), is also an investor in companies run by Balaji Srinivasan and Curtis Yarvin. Thiel is a co-founder of PayPal, an original investor in Facebook and hedge fund manager, as well as being the inspiration for a villainous investor on the satirical HBO series *Silicon Valley*. Thiel's extreme libertarian advocacy is long and storied, beginning with his days founding the Collegiate Network-backed *Stanford Review*. Lately he's been noticed writing [big checks](#) for Ted Cruz.

He's invested in Yarvin's current startup, [Tlon](#). Thiel invested personally in Tlon co-founder John Burnham. In 2011, at age 18, Burnham accepted [$100,000 from Thiel](#) to skip college and go directly into business. Instead of mining asteroids as he originally intended, Burnham wound up working on obscure networking software with Yarvin, whose [title at Tlon](#) is, appropriately enough, "benevolent dictator for life."

California libertarian software developers inhabit a small and shallow world. It should be no surprise then, that, although Thiel has never publicly endorsed Yarvin's side project specifically, or the neoreactionary program in general, there is definitely a whiff of something Moldbuggy in Thiel's own writing. For instance, Thiel echoed Moldbug in an [infamous 2009 essay](#) for the Cato Institute in which he explained that he had moved beyond libertarianism. "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible," Thiel wrote.

Thiel's eponymous foundation funds, among other things, an institute to advance the ideas of a conservative Stanford academic, René Girard, under whom Thiel studied as an undergraduate. In 2012 Thiel delivered [a lecture at Stanford](#) that

explained his views regarding the divine rights of Silicon Valley CEOs. The lecture did address some of Girard's ideas about historical "mimetics," but it also contained a heavy dose of Moldbuggian thought. Thiel says:

> A startup is basically structured as a monarchy. We don't call it that, of course. That would seem weirdly outdated, and anything that's not democracy makes people uncomfortable. We are biased toward the democratic-republican side of the spectrum. That's what we're used to from civics classes. But the truth is that startups and founders lean toward the dictatorial side because that structure works better for startups.

Might a dictatorial approach, in Thiel's opinion, also work better for society at large? He doesn't say so in his Stanford lecture (although he does cast tech CEOs as the heirs to mythical "god-kings" such as Romulus). But Thiel knows where to draw the line in mixed company. Ordinary people get so "uncomfortable" when powerful billionaires start talking about the obsolescence of participatory government and "the unthinking demos," as he put it in his Cato essay. *Stupid proles! They don't deserve our brilliance!* "The fate of our world may depend on the effort of a single person who builds or propagates the machinery of freedom," Thiel wrote.

It is clear that Thiel sees corporations as the governments of the future and capitalists such as himself as the kings, and it is also clear that this is a shockingly common view in Thiel's cohort. In a 2011 [*New Yorker* profile](#), George Packer wrote:

> Thiel and his circle in Silicon Valley may be able to imagine a future that would never occur to other people precisely

because they've refused to leave that stage of youthful wonder which life forces most human beings to outgrow . . . . He wants to live forever, have the option to escape to outer space or an oceanic city-state, and play chess against a robot that can discuss Tolkien, because these were the fantasies that filled his childhood imagination.

Packer is perhaps too generous to his subject. But he captures the fundamental problem with these mouthbreathers' dreams of monarchy. They've never role-played the part of the peasant.

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Tech nerds rediscover fascism. Sounds like a bad movie or something.

> level 2
> c45c73
> 23 points · 5 years ago
>
> One of the subtexts of the Dark Enlightenment/MRA/Libertarian neckbeard issues of the past few years has been the horrible effect of the mainstream embracing what used to be very niche nerdy subcultures -- mainly, by waving money at whoever will sell out first.
>
> Justine Tunney stands out among this milieu for having gone from totally anti-corporate movement (OWS) into the warm embrace of ultracapitalist shills the minute that Google started waving their cash at her. But we saw this earlier with

Kokesh (anti-war activist to gun nut), and to a much larger degree with atheists (anti-establishment freethinkers turning into hyper-conformist bigots, sexists, etc.)

This is a moment where we really need some soul searching, and being quite blunt, I am on the verge of giving up on any of the established forums on the internet to do that. You try to say anything, and it all descends down into memes, macros and griefing, whether it's 4chan, reddit, Facebook or Twitter. Whenever there's some pocket of dissent that emerges, it's data-mined to death and used to make shiny objects worthy of mindless otaku worship.

level 1
WideLight

In short, Moldbug reads like an overconfident autodidact's imitation of a Lewis Lapham essay—if Lewis Lapham were a fascist teenage Dungeon Master.

snort

After a while, Yarvin's blog feels like the pseudo-intellectual equivalent of a Gwar concert

double snort

level 2
atlasing

> dungeon master

At this point my diaphragm started to hurt

You know, I should be completely in this camp (as a CompSci STEMlord, startup almunus, MBA working in finance, and D&D nerd), but these people are delusional - not just about how the rest of the world works, but about their own field. The original premise from Tunney, Yarvin, et al is that we should cede absolute control to an industry that, not even 20 years ago, bet the farm on Pets.com. Currently it's busy creating multibillion dollar valuations of companies that come up with better ways to share selfies - the only real difference being that this time, the common investor is only indirectly exposed to this boondoggle. The central argument essentially becomes the idea that, given the momentary trajectory of the drunken lurch of an industry on a cheap money bender, we should abandon control of our society to people who think it can be won like some grand strategy video game.

Edit: managed to copy another post in there somehow.

level 1
[Ayncraps](#)

As I was reading this article, at first I was bewildered why someone would spend so much time debunking some weird libertarian on the internet. When I got to the part about Friedman, Thiel, and that Stanford professor, I immediately became frightened for my future. What the fuck. This is *worse* than AnCapitalism. These people have real world influence and money. What a scary thought, our future is *literally* going to be a culmination of every good and bad dystopian sci-fi movie we saw growing up.

level 2

[jbh007](jbh007)

And the sad thing is, people see and hear about all of the corruption going on in the government, and they think that to end it all they need to hand power over to the corruptors (these people pretty much). It's a very sickening thought, and makes we want to move to a stable social democracy. I hate politics in general, but I'm still a rabid socialist/social-democrat (ideally/practically) and want to help steer things that way.

 Continue this thread

level 1

CLOWNFISH_CAPITALISM

Silicon Valley would not exist without the US Government.

http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/10/timeline-technology-silicon-valley-government-subsidies

This doesn't include the massive levels of force to upkeep tech markets and allow companies to steal information and sell it as their own property, or to prop up internet surveillance systems on equally subsidized and terrible ISPs.

level 2

Psyladine
i
They have no problem reaping the fruit of society.

They just think it ought to be dismantled now for their own benefit. Sort of like the baby boomers burning the fucking

bridge as they cross it.

level 2
jbh007

> At a meeting of the Cupertino City Council, Steve Jobs is asked whether Apple would provide the city with free wifi. Jobs responds: "If we can get out of paying taxes, I'll be glad to put up wifi."

I think I'm happier than ever to know he's dead now.

> Yes, there's a reason most actual tech nerds range between semi-libertarian, heavily liberal, and semi-Marxist -- I'm on the heavily Marxist end.

level 1
I_eat_tampons

You know when I encounter libertarians and anarcho capitalists on the internet I usually have a laugh and dismiss their ideas. But, this "neo-reactionaries" garbage makes me feel depressed. Like these are actually ideas that Nazis and Fascists rallied behind e.g. racial superiority, misogyny, anti-intellectualism, etc. I know it won't take off, seeing as an ideology for sexually frustrated code monkeys, but still.

It depresses me precisely because I think something this destructive could very well take off.

level 2

[Psyladine](#)

> I know it won't take off, seeing as an ideology for sexually frustrated code monkeys, but still.

Hitler took off because people thought he could never implement his wacky ideals, but was a useful populist figure to manipulate the masses for various special interest groups.

Until he took over.

level 1

[ayn_rands_trannydick](#)

This is a really great article. There's something rotten brewing in the valley.

> level 2
>
> [deleted]
>
> When the revolution comes, could you not line *all* tech-nerds up against the wall? Plenty of us are actually Marxists.

level 1

[Psyladine](#)

> "If Americans want to change their government, they're going to have to get over their dictator phobia,"

Sweet mother of christ. My granddad always told me America was like Rome, and like the republic, we too would fall.

"haha that's nice grandpa, but america doesn't want a dictator. We fought against hitler to stop one person form controlling the world."

And here it fucking is. Libertarians a-okay with an unchecked imperalist tyrant philosopher fucking king.

A few generations of this shit and there will be a demagogue populist dictator on the ticket.

The horrors our great grandchildren are going to face.

> The downfall of Rome wasn't the demagogue populist dictator, in fact Cesar was arguably one of the few that could safe it.
>
> Rome was a aristocracy with only the proto-espers of democracy, the land and wealth was slowly being siphoned off by their 1%, the jobs stolen by slaves, the people going from independent farm workers to destitute city dwellers, and every time anyone tried to do anything about it they got stabbed.
>
> Much like an FDR he was a class traitor who brought real substantive change to the lives of the poor, unlike FDR the business plot succeeded and the country was taken over by a real dictator.

> Ah yes. The irrational fear of dictators.

[Continue this thread](#)
level 2

There have been morons throughout the history of democracy.

level 1

[jbh007](#)

It's probably because I'm nervous about my physical chemistry exam tomorrow, but this I'm about to burst into tears over this. The lack on an American left is ruining this country and bringing about unbridled greed and destruction. More regulations are needed to keep these asshats in check, and ensure that their ideas do not spread to others.

The fact I'm in Silicon Valley makes me want to puke now. If I could, I'd kill each of these motherfuckers, but I'd probably (read: 99% chance) be merciful and simply drop them off with no money or anything in the middle of Somalia (libertarian paradise, after all).

I can only hope Elizabeth Warren decides to run for President since she'd beat any Republican by a landslide. At least that will be a start.

level 2

[Psyladine](#)

This is embryonic next-generation republicans. Imagine in 20 years when they are running for congressional seats, presidential tickets and governorships, in an organized, populist fashion.

I'd take religious hypocrites in office any day of the week over these nutjobs.

level 2
Rudkus

I'd be careful about being so provocative. The FBI/secret service has visited people for much less.

level 2

> I can only hope Elizabeth Warren decides to run for President since she'd beat any Republican by a landslide. At least that will be a start.

Nah, Bernie Sanders for life.

Also, I echo everything you said in your comment. For God's sake, I was *born* a geek, and I majored in computer-science because it seemed like an interesting field to learn, work, and research in for a nice living.

Then people start with the "anti-STEMjerk jerk" and I get really alienated from the Left *again*. It's kinda like how when I was in undergrad I always wanted to join the radical groups, but was too Jewish and too honest with myself to buy the shit they spewed about the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Dang. That is some high-caliber lunacy right there.

level 2
[Psyladine](#)

The best of intentions pave the road to hell.

[Continue this thread](#)

level 1
[diehardprogressive](#)

Well, after much reading, it seems to me that everyone would be absolutly fine with Silicon Valley seceding from the USA. We can watch them fail and be like 'we told you so'. Seriously, they don't want us and we don't want them, and we certainly don't need them! What say you progressives? There's no way a state can exist without our purest empathy!