# Common Sense

**Paul Jacob**
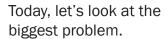
## Threat/ No Threat

*May 7, 2021*

Last week, I asked whether the social media companies that mine our data — which they obtain from our posts — might not expend a little more attention to allowing us to mine our own data with more ease and sophistication.



Today, let's look at the biggest problem.

Politics.

Facebook and Twitter initially gloried in enabling users to easily communicate political ideas and activism.

Then they realized that people don't all agree, and that platform headmen Zuckerberg's and Dorsey's friends got upset when they lost, blaming Facebook and Twitter for allowing "democracy" to be compromised.

> ## "Twitter and Facebook are Fascist companies" that we should be "slowly migrating away from. . . ."

Now, *that* was overblown. Democracy wins when people use communication technology to convince others — just so long as they do not opt out of democracy's integral respect for minority rights.

Which is what Democrats accused Republicans — Trump was "obviously" *authoritarian*.

Which is what Republicans also accused Democrats — and throwing people off a supposedly non-partisan platform for partisan reasons sure *looks* anti-democratic.

Robby Soave, arguing to the contrary at *Reason*, says that "Both the Left and the Right Are Exaggerating the Threat Posed by Facebook." His article's blurb boasts his thesis: "Facebook can't kill, jail, or tax you. It can only stop you from posting on Facebook."

True — but is it true enough? The political ramifications of Facebook's de-platforming strike me as a great breach of contract — *not* just a matter of no physical threat. Plus, as mentioned Monday and previously, big tech is not immune to Washington's political pressure and massive financial clout.

Meanwhile, Mr. Soave quotes Candace Owens, whose advice seems apt to me: "Twitter and Facebook are Fascist companies" that we should be "slowly migrating away from. . . ."

Soave is spot-on to highlight the limits to Facebook's clout, reminding that we can stop feeding their data mining operations.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.