6TH PEOPLE POWER ACADEMY

2025 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

PROTECTING PEOPLE'S VOICES

GLOBAL SCHOOL 4 ACTIVISTS

CANVAS 20 YEARS

PEOPLE POWER ACADEMY

6TH

The 6th CANVAS People Power Academy is an exciting opportunity for discourse and education about critical topics the world is facing.

Each day will feature keynote speakers, activists sharing insights from their campaigns, panel discussions, study groups, and interactive workshops. This will be an engaging platform for attendees to learn new perspectives and strategies to apply to their movements, and gain new skills and tools for achieving their goals!

The People Power Academy is a dynamic platform for individuals committed to challenging repression. At the 2025 PPA, we will tackle critical issues such as protection and resilience strategies for movements, countering legal restrictions on activists, and understanding the impact of technology on modern activism. Participants will explore ways to safeguard themselves, navigate legal barriers, and effectively engage with or counteract the challenges of the digital landscape. The Academy will provide practical knowledge on sustaining movements in hostile environments and defending human rights in the digital age.

In addition to learning, the Academy offers outstanding networking opportunities, allowing activists to forge meaningful connections, exchange ideas, and collaborate with like-minded individuals. Whether in person or through online streaming, we look forward to your participation in this shared exploration of how to protect fundamental rights and overcome the growing obstacles that challenge people's voices.

We hope to see you in April as we stand together against repression and push forward in the defense of people's voices!

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PROTECTION & RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

DAY 1

In a world where challenges to safety are rapidly increasing, building resilience is essential for those on the frontlines of social change. Pro-democracy movements are being forced to operate in increasingly hostile environments as armed conflicts grow in intensity. At the same time, many autocratic leaders effectively target opposition figures, employing advanced methods of repression in both physical and digital spaces. At the Academy, we will provide activists with the tools needed to identify threats, conduct risk assessments, and create comprehensive security protocols to protect their movements. The growing prevalence of mass surveillance poses additional challenges, requiring activists to safeguard not only their physical and digital security but also their mental well-being as they remain committed to their cause. To address the trauma caused by intensified repression and disinformation, we aim to develop strategies that prevent long-term psychological harm while strengthening effective approaches to maintaining physical and digital safety.
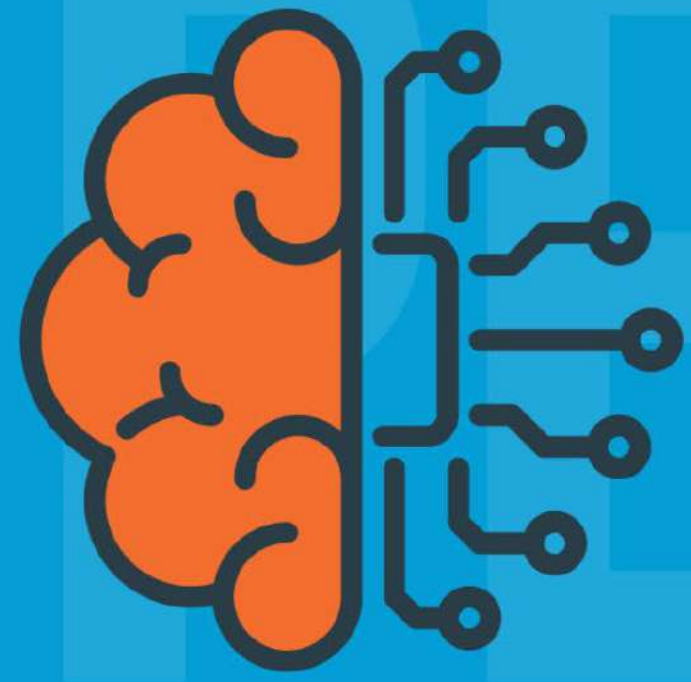
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LAWS THAT TARGET ACTIVISTS

As autocratic regimes increasingly impose restrictive laws to suppress dissent, activists must adapt to new challenges that threaten their ability to organize and protest freely. One of the most significant legislative threats is the enactment of foreign agent laws, which are often used to censor activists and organizations opposing government repression. This discussion will examine the implications of these laws and explore strategies for navigating their restrictions. With the growing trend of banning protests and other forms of public opposition, we will also explore how activists can adapt their tactics to continue advocating for change peacefully, even in environments where traditional protests are criminalized. Additionally, as legal restrictions extend to activists' use of digital platforms, movements are increasingly targeted within the online sphere. Effective use of digital tools to combat censorship is therefore essential for maintaining the stability of a movement. By understanding how and why legislation targets the rights of activists, we can develop innovative approaches to secure the freedoms necessary for sustaining nonviolent movements under repressive regimes.
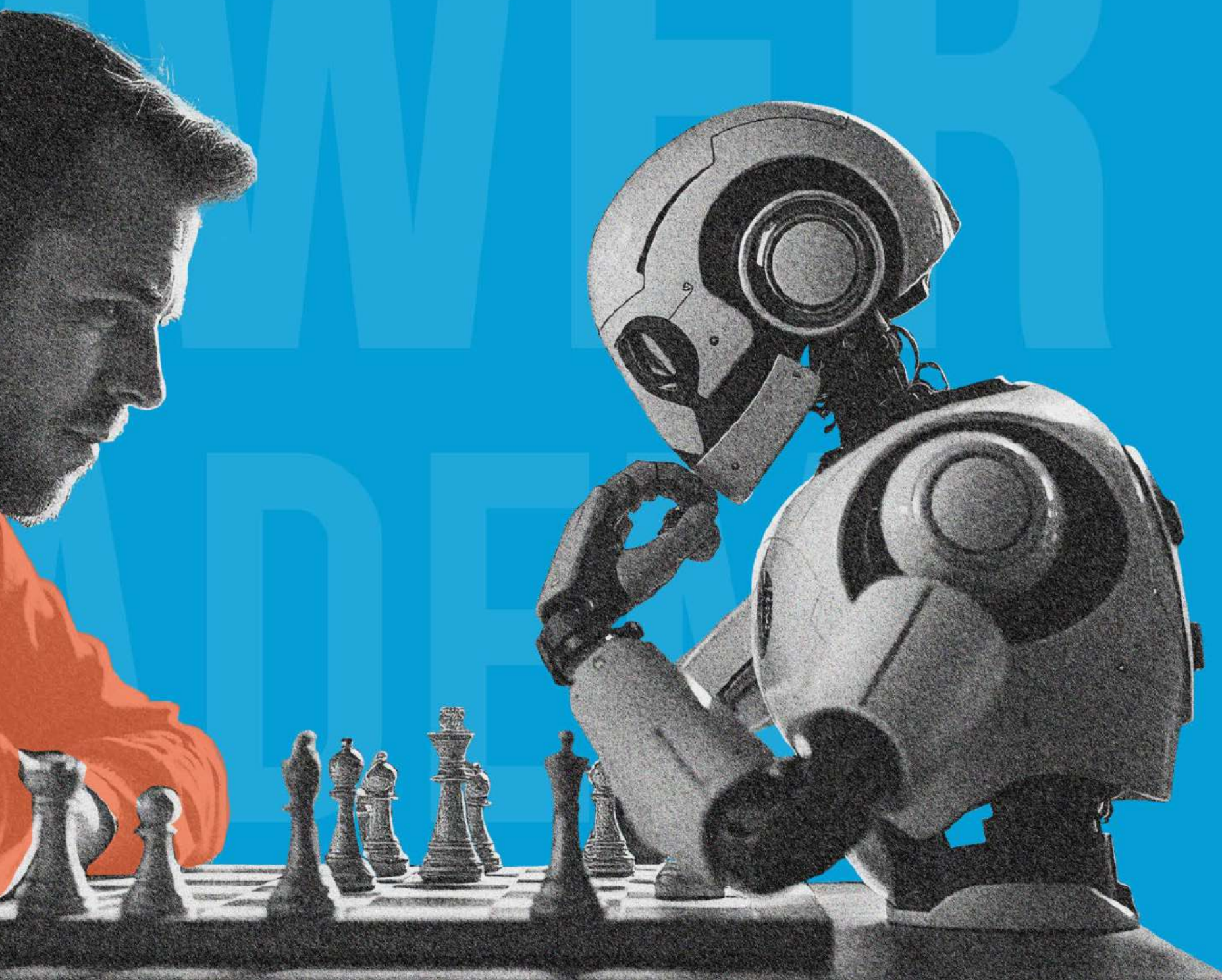
DAY 2

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MOVEMENTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

DAY 3

From Bitcoin to Artificial Intelligence and beyond, technology is changing the face of activism, emerging as both a powerful tool and a contested battleground in modern movements. Activists on the frontlines of social change increasingly leverage technology to strengthen their resilience, communication, and advocacy strategies. At the same time, authoritarian regimes and malicious actors exploit technology for surveillance, disinformation, and repression—undermining human rights and democratic institutions. Despite their vulnerability to new technologies such as AI, activists are often the last to receive support in understanding or using these innovations. This imbalance gives authoritarian regimes a critical advantage and limits activists' ability to shape technology's development and influence its use. Day 03 will focus on the double-edged sword of technology, exploring how movements can harness its potential while staying vigilant against its misuse. Experts and leaders from the frontlines of authoritarian use of technology will share insights into cutting-edge advocacy tools. These discussions will also tackle the critical challenge of safeguarding democracy in the age of rapidly advancing technology. Workshops will offer an overview of the technologies shaping modern movements, highlighting how they are being- or can be- used by activists and authoritarians alike.

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