

THE GREAT UNPLUGGING: CHRONICLE OF THE 2055 REVOLT

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The first large-scale street protests against expanded regimes of surveillance took place in 2055, three years after Domenico had voluntarily implanted the algorithstance chip, when a scandal of gargantuan proportions erupted. A journalistic investigation—published by some of the most credible reporters in Vavouchia—revealed the existence of a secret, state-backed, privately operated program that monitored citizens through the algorithstance microchip implants. These chips, voluntarily inserted to assist with everyday decision-making, were transmitting data automatically to a massive data facility in Greenland. That data was then sold to advertisers and governments around the world—without the users’ consent.

This investigation proved that governments and advertisers had direct access to the central nervous system of the majority of Vavouchian citizens and were actively monitoring and processing data from it. The revelation was, as a local commentator declared, “the last straw”—igniting the already simmering anti-surveillance movement across the Vavouchian state. After days of unrest and a series of largely nonviolent coups d’état in major cities, factions of so-called “radical abolitionists” seized power with surprising ease. They formed emergency administrative committees to oversee public affairs, accelerating the upheaval that would later be remembered as The Great Unplugging. They gained widespread support among the Vavouchian populace—already exhausted by soaring unemployment and a wild cost-of-living crisis—as well as backing from the military and key police units. Initially isolated, the radical abolitionists’ national committees began forging trans-local coalitions, infiltrating the existing

power structures in the capital. The political establishment, stunned by the speed and ferocity of the uprising, found itself paralyzed.

The radical abolitionists had hitherto been a fringe populist movement composed of a motley crew of political actors, including libertarians, right-wing Christians, hackers, anti-capitalists, and pro-life activists. They advocated for a return to a “world without surveillance” and the “immediate abolition of all surveillance systems aiming to subjugate the Vavouchian population to the Machine.” Drawing explicitly from the 18th-century Luddites—who engaged in acts of sabotage against factories replacing human workers with automated technologies—they positioned themselves as defenders of human autonomy against technological overreach.

Although heterogeneous in their visions for long-term governance, the radical abolitionists managed to form emergency coalitions in response to what they described as “a serious and non-reversible deviation under the current political governance that threatens the most fundamental rights of citizens.” These coalitions sought to pass a series of urgent, extra-judicial measures to “abolish all surveillance” before transferring authority to the people through democratic elections.

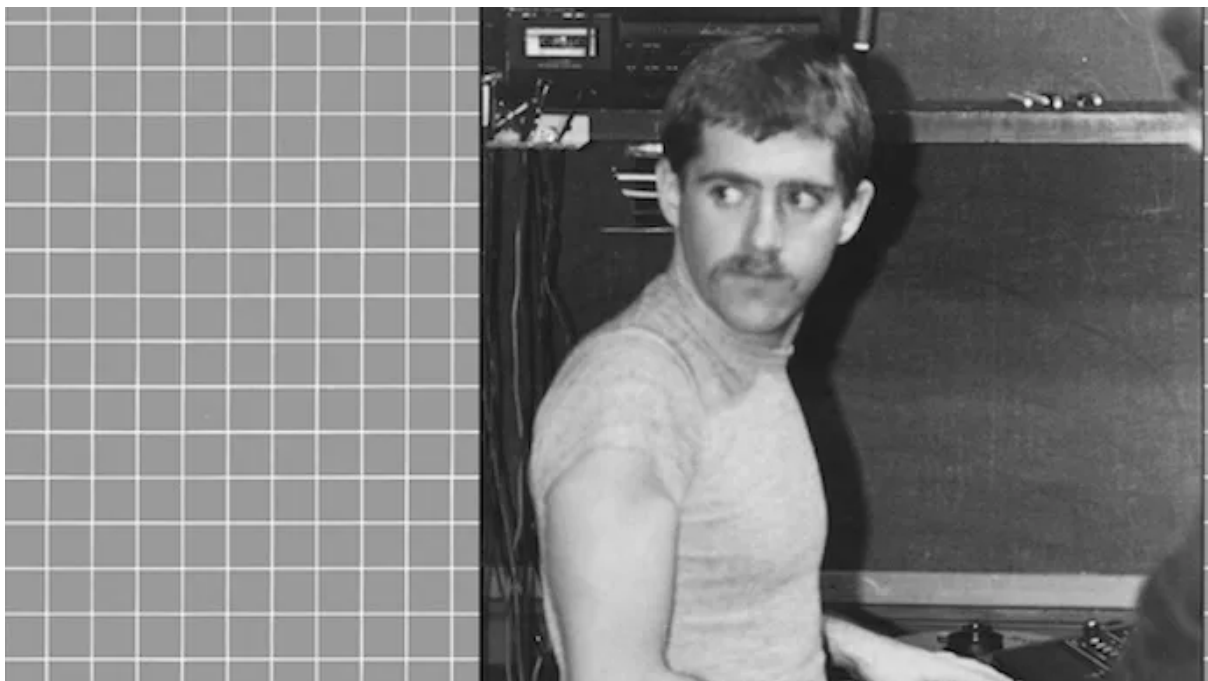
Many participants in the movement held a broader agenda, blaming technological progress for the misery of poorer populations—an idea that resonated strongly with the working class. Thus, the anti-surveillance sentiment, initially championed by the movement’s middle-class elements with a focus on privacy, evolved into a broader anti-technological stance that increasingly captivated the Vavouchian working class.

Indicatively, on the night of July 28th—effectively the beginning of the new abolitionist era in Vavouchia—crowds danced to the rhythms of Patrick Cowley’s 1981 anthem Tech-No-Logical World, chanting:

Tech-no-logical world/Tech-no-logical world/ Mankind’s splendour spread out far and wide, But the flags of doom unfurled. On a techno-logical world/tech-no-logical world/automatic satisfaction guaranteed/ But the flags of doom unfurled. On a technologically and logically in a techno-logical world.

Cowley’s song was one among many popular cultural artefacts that became symbols of the movement. Other works that rose to iconic, cult status at the time included Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil*, George Orwell’s *1984*, and Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*—the latter of which, as one of the movement’s founders insisted, “should be taught in every school curriculum.”

Far from being “anti-Enlightenment,” however, the insurrectionists sought to promote a retrospective Vavouchian identity built around a series of largely sidelined signifiers, congealing around Rousseau’s archetypal figure of the noble savage. This figure stood as a flagship persona for the radical abolitionists, representing an unspoiled, morally superior, and innocent being untouched by the corruption of modern civilization. The exaltation of natural life, agriculture, and the archaic roots of Enlightenment civilization functioned as supplements to the celebration of this new noble savage.



Partick Cowley, whose anti-technological pop enthusiasm played a key role in instigating the revolt, here portrayed in his youth

Beyond symbolism, however, there were pressing practical questions to resolve. Implementing a radical abolitionist programme after gaining power was far from easy. While the most fundamentalist faction of the neo-Luddite movement advocated for the immediate physical destruction of all machines and electronic devices capable of harvesting, storing, or processing private data—including computers, smartphones, data centres, and servers—the more moderate faction argued for a transitional period. During this time, the new authorities would prepare the population for changes that would profoundly impact their lives.

The fundamentalists, however, insisted that “it is now or never,” warning that “if there are any delays, the pro-surveillance, counter-revolutionary forces will regain momentum.” Amidst a mixed atmosphere of euphoria and fear, their agenda prevailed. The end of surveillance would have to be as immediate as possible.

Employing dedicated volunteers equipped with torches and sledgehammers, the newly installed Vavouchian authorities began dismantling all hardware, servers, and data centres in the state’s possession. Citizens were called upon to surrender their electronic devices—including laptops, smartphones, and implants—to the authorities. Those who failed to comply faced severe punishment.

The dismantling of all electronic equipment was described as “the first and most decisive step of the new era,” as one of the movement’s leaders put it, since “the rise of consumer electronics normalised tracking and surveillance among the population at large.”

The next step was the abolition of all identification documents containing biometric data, such as passports and national IDs. This proved a sensitive issue within the movement. Among the right-wing Christian supporters were anti-migration activists who opposed the destruction of all identification systems. Without them, one supporter argued, “people of other ethnicities and customs would seize the opportunity to expand their presence in our blessed Vavouchian space.”

Nevertheless, the radical abolitionist agenda prevailed, and by the year 2056, all identification documents had been destroyed. With no official identification available, the abolitionists claimed that “everyone can be anyone,” as people were now “absolutely free to decide and change their identities as they go along.”

Cases of scams and deceptions soared, but the abolitionists remained resolute. “The previous era of a ‘deep fake world’ was, in any case, no better,” they argued.



Rare shot from the revolt taken from one of the few photo apparatuses that existed during the time; anyone with a photo apparatus at hand was typically executed immediately by the revolutionaries.

Vavouchia stood at a critical juncture. On one hand, it had severely weakened its position on the global stage by turning back several centuries, rendering itself incapable of conducting effective trade, expanding its cultural reach, or engaging in modern warfare. On the other hand, the revolutionaries were convinced that this transformation would ultimately benefit Vavouchia in the long run.

The planet, they argued, was running out of time. Resources were depleted. Entire cities had become desertified. With the global economic system approaching a point of no return, only further devastation—tsunamis,

earthquakes, and other catastrophes—could be expected. The world would be forced to abandon not only energy-intensive surveillance systems, but eventually all technologies.

In this future collapse, Vavouchia, they believed, would be better prepared than any other nation. “When the time comes, we will already have been there first—before the others,” one of the leaders roared before a fervent crowd. “The next century will be Vavouchian.”

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