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The Plot Against America

How a Dangerous Ideology Born From the Libertarian Movement Stands Ready to Seize America

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As I write this in early 2025, a quiet revolution is unfolding within the U.S. government. Inside the newly created Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), teams of young tech operatives are systematically dismantling democratic institutions and [replacing them](#) with proprietary artificial intelligence systems. Civil servants who raise legal objections are being removed. Government databases are being migrated to private servers. Decision-making power is being transferred from elected officials and career bureaucrats to algorithms controlled by a small network of Silicon Valley elites. This isn't a spontaneous coup—it's the culmination of a dangerous ideology that has been meticulously developed since the 2008 financial crisis, one that sees democracy itself as obsolete technology ready to be "disrupted." To understand how we reached this critical moment, and why it threatens the very foundation of democratic governance, we need to trace the evolution of an idea: that democracy is not just inefficient, but fundamentally incompatible with technological progress.

DOGE is not about efficiency. It is about *erasure*. Democracy is being deleted in slow motion, replaced by proprietary technology and AI models. It is a coup, executed not with guns, but with backend migrations and database wipes.

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What follows is not speculation or dystopian fiction. It is a carefully documented account of how a dangerous ideology, born in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, has moved from the fringes of tech culture to the heart of American governance.

The story of how it begins starts sixteen years ago.

On September 15, 2008, Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy, marking the largest failure of an investment bank since the Great Depression. This event catalyzed the global financial crisis, leading to widespread economic hardship and a profound loss of faith in established institutions.

In the aftermath of the crisis, several key figures emerged who would go on to shape a new movement in American politics.

Curtis Yarvin, writing under the pseudonym Mencius Moldbug, had been developing a critique of modern democracy on his blog *Unqualified Reservations* since 2007. As the financial crisis unfolded, Yarvin applied his unconventional analysis to the economic turmoil.

In a 2008 [post](#), "The Misesian explanation of the bank crisis," Yarvin wrote:

Briefly: the fundamental cause of the bank crisis is not evil Republicans, lying Democrats, 'deregulation,' 'affirmative-action lending,' or even 'ludicrous levels of leverage.' A banking system is like a nuclear reactor: a complicated piece of engineering. If it's engineered right, it works 100% of the time. If it's engineered wrong, it works 99.99% of the time, and the other 0.01% it coats the entire tri-state area in radioactive strontium.

Yarvin argued that the crisis was fundamentally an engineering failure caused by a deviation from what he called "Misesian banking," based on principles outlined by economist Ludwig von Mises. This approach advocates for a strict free-market system with minimal government intervention in banking. He contrasted this with the prevailing "Bagehotian" system, named after Walter Bagehot, which supports central bank intervention during financial crises. Yarvin argued that this interventionist approach was inherently unstable and prone to collapse.

Yarvin's writings during the crisis period continued to develop his broader critique of modern political and economic systems. His ideas, while not mainstream, began to resonate with a growing audience disillusioned with traditional institutions and seeking alternative explanations for the economic turmoil.

For decades, libertarian thinkers had argued that free markets, left unrestrained, would naturally outperform any system of government. But what if the problem wasn't just government interference in markets—what if the very concept of democracy itself was flawed?

This was the argument put forward by Hans-Hermann Hoppe, a student of Mises's protégé Murray Rothbard, who took libertarian skepticism of the state to its extreme conclusion. His 2001 [book](#) *Democracy: The God That Failed* landed like a bombshell in libertarian circles. Published at a moment when many Americans still saw democracy as the "[end of history](#)," Hoppe argued that democracy was an inherently unstable system, one that incentivized short-term decision-making and mob rule rather than rational governance. His alternative? A return to monarchy.

But this wasn't the monarchy of old. Hoppe envisioned a new order—one where governance was privatized, where societies functioned as "covenant communities" owned and operated by property-holders rather than elected officials. In this world, citizenship was a matter of contract, not birthright. Voting was unnecessary. Rule was left to those with the most capital at stake. It was libertarian thought taken to its most extreme conclusion: a society governed not by political equality, but by property rights alone.

By the 2010s, Hoppe's radical skepticism of democracy had found an eager audience beyond the usual libertarian circles, but through a different mechanism than simple market disruption. While Silicon Valley had long embraced Clayton Christensen's theory of [disruptive innovation](#)—where nimbler companies could outcompete established players by serving overlooked markets—a more extreme form of [techno-solutionism](#) had begun to take hold. This mindset held that any societal problem, including governance itself, could be "solved" through sufficient application of engineering principles. Silicon Valley elites who had built successful companies began to view democratic processes not just as inefficient, but as fundamentally irrational—the product of what they saw as emotional decision-making by non-technical people. This merged perfectly with Hoppe's critique: if democracy was simply a collection of "feeling-based" choices made by the uniform masses, surely it could be replaced by something more "rational"—specifically, the kind of data-driven, engineering-focused governance these tech leaders practiced in their own companies.

Peter Thiel, one of the most outspoken erstwhile libertarians in Silicon Valley, put this sentiment in stark terms in his 2009 [essay](#) *The Education of a Libertarian*: "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible." Thiel had already begun funding projects aimed at escaping democratic nation-states entirely, including seasteading—floating cities in international waters beyond government control—and experimental governance models that would replace electoral democracy with private, corporate-style rule. Hoppe's vision of covenant communities—private enclaves owned and governed by elites—provided an intellectual justification for what Thiel and his allies were trying to build: not

just alternatives to specific government policies, but complete replacements for democratic governance itself. If democracy is too inefficient to keep up with technological change, why not replace it entirely with private, contractual forms of rule?

The notion that traditional democratic governance was inefficient or outdated resonated with those who saw themselves as disruptors and innovators.

This intellectual throughline—from Mises to Hoppe to figures like Yarvin and Thiel—helps explain the emergence of what some have called “techno-libertarianism.” It represents a dangerous alignment of anti-democratic thought with immense technological and financial resources, posing significant challenges to traditional conceptions of democratic governance and civic responsibility.

From Silicon Valley to Main Street: The Spread of Techno-Libertarian Ideas



2008 did not just destroy the economy—it shattered faith in democratic institutions themselves. Libertarians saw an opportunity. And in Silicon Valley, a new belief took hold: democracy wasn’t just inefficient—it was obsolete. Over the next decade, the ideas incubated in this period would evolve into a coherent challenge to the foundations of liberal democracy, backed by some of the most powerful figures in technology and finance.

As millions of Americans lost their homes and jobs in the years following the crisis, these ideas began to gain momentum. The Tea Party movement emerged in 2009, channeling populist anger against government bailouts and the Obama administration’s response to the crisis.

As the Tea Party gained momentum, it fostered a broader cultural shift that primed many Americans to be receptive to alternative political and economic theories. This shift extended beyond traditional conservatism, creating an opening for the tech-libertarian ideas emerging from Silicon Valley.

The movement’s emphasis on individual liberty and skepticism of centralized authority resonated with the anti-government sentiment growing in tech circles. As a result, concepts like cryptocurrency and decentralized governance, once considered fringe, began to find a more mainstream audience among those disillusioned with traditional political and financial systems.

The convergence of populist anger and techno-utopianism set the stage for more radical anti-democratic ideas that would emerge in the following years. The Tea Party, while not directly advocating for these ideas, inadvertently prepared a segment of the population to be more open to the notion that traditional democratic institutions might be fundamentally flawed or obsolete.

However, the ideological impact of Silicon Valley’s economic performance on movements like the “New Right” was not immediate or direct. The tech industry’s growing economic and cultural influence gradually became more pronounced in the 2010s as tech leaders like Peter Thiel began to more actively engage in political discourse and funding.

The financial crisis didn’t just create political movements like the Tea Party—it spawned entirely new media platforms that would help spread these anti-democratic ideas far beyond their original circles. One of the most influential was Zero Hedge, founded in 2009 by Daniel Ivandjiski. The site, which adopted the pseudonym “Tyler Durden” for all its authors—a reference to the anti-establishment character from *Fight Club*—initially focused on financial news and analysis from a bearish perspective rooted in Austrian economics.

Zero Hedge’s evolution from a financial blog to a political powerhouse exemplified how anti-democratic ideas could be laundered through technical expertise. The site gained initial credibility through sophisticated critiques of high-frequency trading and market structure, establishing itself as a legitimate voice in financial circles. But this technical authority became a vehicle for something more radical: the idea that democratic institutions themselves were as broken as the markets they regulated.

By 2015, *Zero Hedge* was advancing a comprehensive critique of democratic governance that paralleled Yarvin’s, but packaged for a mainstream audience. Its technical analysis of market failures seamlessly evolved into broader arguments about the failure of democratic institutions. When the site argued that central banks were rigging markets, it wasn’t just making a financial claim—it was suggesting that democratic institutions themselves were inherently corrupt and needed to be replaced with more “efficient” mechanisms.

This methodology—using technical financial analysis to justify increasingly radical political conclusions—provided a blueprint that others would follow. The site demonstrated how expertise in one domain (financial markets) could be leveraged to advocate for sweeping political change. When *Zero Hedge* declared that markets were manipulated, it wasn’t just criticizing policy—it was building the case that democracy itself was a failed system that needed to be replaced by technical, algorithmic governance.

What made *Zero Hedge* particularly effective was how it straddled multiple worlds. As Bloomberg [noted](#) in 2016, it remained an “Internet powerhouse” with real influence in financial circles even as The New Republic [characterized](#) it as “a forum for the hateful, conspiracy-driven voices of the angry white men of the alt-right.” This dual identity—technically sophisticated yet politically radical—made it a crucial bridge between mainstream financial discourse and emerging anti-democratic ideologies.

The site’s true innovation wasn’t just in mixing finance and politics—it was in suggesting that technical, market-based solutions could replace democratic processes entirely. This aligned perfectly with Silicon Valley’s emerging worldview: if markets were more efficient than governments at allocating resources, why not let them allocate political power as well?

While *InfoWars* would later adopt some of *Zero Hedge*’s anti-establishment positioning, it abandoned the pretense of technical expertise entirely. But *Zero Hedge*’s more sophisticated approach—using financial expertise to justify anti-democratic conclusions—proved more influential in tech circles, where it reinforced the growing belief that democracy was simply an inefficient way to make decisions compared to markets and algorithms.

Zero Hedge’s transformation from financial analysis to anti-democratic ideology previewed a broader pattern that would define the next decade: how technical expertise could be weaponized against democracy itself. While *Zero Hedge* used financial analysis to undermine faith in democratic institutions, *InfoWars* would take a cruder but arguably more effective approach: pure epistemic chaos.

As media scholar Yochai Benkler [noted](#) in a 2018 study, this period saw the emergence of a “propaganda feedback loop,” where audiences, media outlets, and political elites reinforce each other’s views, regardless of the veracity of the information. *Zero Hedge* was an early example of this dynamic in action, demonstrating how traditional gatekeepers of information were losing their influence. This erosion of trust in established institutions, combined with the proliferation of alternative information sources, set the stage for what social psychologist Jonathan Haidt would later [describe](#) as “a kind of fragmentation of reality.”

As we moved into the 2010s, this fragmentation accelerated. Social media algorithms, designed to maximize engagement, amplified sensational and divisive content. The resulting flood of competing narratives made it increasingly difficult for citizens to discern truth from fiction, with profound implications for democratic discourse and decision-making.

The *Zero Hedge* model—mixing expert analysis with speculative political commentary—became a template for numerous other outlets, contributing to insular information ecosystems where narrative consistency trumped factual accuracy. This presaged how information would be produced, consumed, and weaponized in the age of social media and algorithmic content distribution.

While *Zero Hedge* pioneered this approach, *InfoWars* took it to the extreme. Founded by Alex Jones in 1999, *InfoWars* gained significant traction after the 2008 financial crisis, abandoning any pretense of conventional expertise in favor of sensationalism and conspiracy theories.

“The financial crisis created a perfect storm for outlets like InfoWars,” [explains](#) media scholar Whitney Phillips. “People were looking for explanations, and *InfoWars* offered simple, if outlandish, answers to complex problems.”

By 2015, *InfoWars* was generating an [estimated](#) \$80 million annually, monetizing its audience directly through the sale of supplements and survival gear. This business model, which saw sales spike during crises, demonstrated how post-truth narratives could be converted into profit.

InfoWars’ impact extended beyond its immediate audience, providing a playbook for a new generation of alternative media outlets. However, its promotion of baseless conspiracy theories had real-world consequences, from harassment of Sandy Hook victims’ families to the spread of health misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic. As these tactics were adopted by a wide range of actors, the post-truth era posed unprecedented challenges to democratic discourse.

The parallel evolution of *Zero Hedge* and *InfoWars* revealed two complementary strategies for undermining democracy. *Zero Hedge* showed how technical expertise could be used to delegitimize democratic institutions from within, while *InfoWars* demonstrated how raw chaos could make democratic deliberation impossible. But it was Silicon Valley that would combine these insights into something even more dangerous: the argument that democracy’s replacement by technical systems wasn’t just desirable—it was inevitable.

This epistemic chaos wasn’t an accident—it was a crucial tactic in undermining democracy itself. As Curtis Yarvin and his neoreactionary allies saw it, political legitimacy depended on the existence of a shared reality. Break that consensus, and democracy becomes impossible. Steve Bannon called it “flooding the zone with shit.” And by the time Trump entered office, the full strategy was in motion: destabilize public trust, replace expert analysis with endless counter-narratives, and ensure that the only people who could wield power were those who controlled the flow of information itself.

Figures like Yarvin didn’t just critique democracy—they sought to undermine the very conditions in which democratic deliberation is possible. By weaponizing media fragmentation, they hacked the cognitive foundations of democracy itself, ensuring that political power would no longer rest on reasoned debate but on the ability to manipulate information flows.

This is what makes the convergence of crypto, AI, and neo-reactionary ideology so dangerous. If people can’t agree on basic facts, who gets to decide what’s true? The answer, in Yarvin’s world, is the sovereign executive—a singular, unchallenged ruler whose legitimacy derives not from elections, but from sheer control over the information landscape.

James Pogue’s remarkable [piece](#) of investigative journalism—*Inside the New Right, Where Peter Thiel Is Placing His Biggest Bets*—traces the movement of these ideas fringes into a sophisticated political movement backed by some of the most powerful figures in technology.

Reporting from the 2022 National Conservatism Conference in Orlando, Pogue encounters everyone from “fusty paleocon professors” to mainstream Republican senators, but his focus on the younger cohort is particularly illuminating. They are highly educated young elites who have absorbed Yarvin’s critique of democracy and are working to make it political reality.

As Pogue documents, Yarvin’s writings during the crisis period didn’t just diagnose economic problems—they offered a comprehensive critique of what he called “the Cathedral,” an interlocking system of media, academia, and bureaucracy that he argued maintained ideological control while masking its own power.

The fusion of Austrian economics, techno-libertarianism, and Yarvin’s critique of democracy found its perfect vehicle in cryptocurrency and blockchain technology. As Pogue documents in Vanity Fair, [Bakaj Srinivasan](#) emerged as a key figure who helped translate these abstract ideas into a concrete vision for restructuring society.

However, his thinking increasingly aligned with neo-reactionary ideas, particularly around the concept of “exit”—the ability to opt out of existing political structures entirely. This shift from techno-libertarianism to neo-reactionary thought isn’t as large a leap as it might seem. Both ideologies share a deep skepticism of centralized authority and a belief in the power of technology to reshape society.

The pipeline from techno-libertarianism to neo-reaction often follows a predictable path: It begins with a libertarian critique of government inefficiency and overreach. This evolves into a broader skepticism of all democratic institutions,

seen as slow and irrational compared to the speed and logic of technology. Eventually, this leads to the conclusion that democracy itself is an outdated system, incompatible with rapid technological progress. The final step is embracing the idea that democracy should be replaced entirely with more “efficient” forms of governance, often modeled on corporate structures or technological systems.

This vision resonated deeply with Silicon Valley elites who had been influenced by Yarvin's critique of democracy but were seeking concrete mechanisms to implement alternative governance structures. Cryptocurrency offered not just a way to circumvent state monetary control, but also a model for how digital technology could enable new forms of sovereignty.

This wasn't just theoretical—as Pogue notes, there were actual attempts to implement these ideas, like the Peter Thiel-backed “network state” project called Praxis in Greenland.

The Sovereign Individual: Blueprint for a Post-Democratic World



But destroying consensus was only the first step. The true revolution would come through technology itself. In 1999, James Dale Davidson and William Rees-Mogg published a book that would become the blueprint for this technological coup: *The Sovereign Individual*. Published at the height of the dotcom boom, the book read like science fiction to many at the time: it predicted the rise of cryptocurrency, the decline of traditional nation-states, and the emergence of a new digital aristocracy. Taxes will become voluntary. Regulations will disappear. The most successful people will form their own private, self-governing communities, while the rest of the world is left behind.

Libertarianism, when fused with this kind of technological determinism, takes a sharp turn away from classical liberal thought. If you assume that government will *inevitably* be outcompeted by private networks, decentralized finance, and AI-driven governance, then trying to reform democracy becomes pointless. The more radical conclusion, embraced by the figures at the forefront of this movement, is that government should be actively dismantled and replaced with a more “efficient” form of rule—one modeled on corporate governance rather than democratic participation.

This is precisely where libertarianism morphs into neoreaction. Instead of advocating for a constitutional republic with minimal government, this new strain of thought pushes for a private, post-democratic order, where those with the most resources and technological control dictate the rules. In this vision, power doesn't rest with the people—it belongs to the most competent “executives” running society like a CEO would run a company.

This is how Curtis Yarvin's argument that democracy is an outdated, inefficient system became so appealing to Silicon Valley elites. It wasn't just a philosophical argument; it aligned with the way many in the tech industry already thought about disruption, efficiency, and control. If innovation constantly renders old systems obsolete, then why should governance be any different?

Figures like Peter Thiel and Balaji Srinivasan took this logic a step further, arguing that rather than resisting the decline of democratic institutions, elites should accelerate the transition to a new order—one where governance is voluntary, privatized, and largely detached from public accountability. The rhetoric of “exit” and “network states” became the libertarian justification for abandoning democracy altogether.

This mindset is deeply ingrained in Silicon Valley, where disruption is seen as not just a business model, but a *law of history*. Entrepreneurs are taught that old institutions are inefficient relics waiting to be displaced by something better. When applied to government, this logic leads directly to Yarvin's argument: democracy is outdated “legacy code” that can't keep up with modern complexity. The future, he and others argue, will belong to those who design and implement a superior system—one that runs more like a corporation, where leaders are chosen based on competence rather than elections.

This is why neoreactionary ideas have found such a receptive audience among tech elites. If you believe that technology inevitably renders old systems obsolete, then *why should democracy be any different?* Why bother fixing the government if it's doomed to be replaced by something more advanced?

This is where the transition from libertarianism to neoreaction becomes clear. Classical libertarians at least paid lip service to democracy, arguing that markets should exist *within* a limited but functioning democratic system. But the Silicon Valley version of libertarianism, shaped by *The Sovereign Individual* and reinforced by the rise of cryptocurrency, started to see democratic governance itself as an obstacle. The question was no longer “How do we make government smaller?” but rather “How do we escape government altogether?”

The answer, for people like Yarvin, Peter Thiel, and Balaji Srinivasan, was to replace democracy with a new system—one where power belongs to those with the resources to exit and build something better. And as we now see, they aren't waiting for that transition to happen naturally.

Srinivasan, like others in this movement, had undergone an ideological evolution that exemplifies a broader trend in Silicon Valley. As a former CTO of Coinbase and general partner at Andreessen Horowitz, he initially approached cryptocurrency from a techno-libertarian perspective, viewing it as a tool for individual empowerment and market efficiency.

However, his thinking increasingly aligned with neo-reactionary ideas, particularly around the concept of “exit”—the ability to opt out of existing political structures entirely. This shift from techno-libertarianism to neo-reactionary thought isn't as large a leap as it [might seem](#). Both ideologies share a deep skepticism of centralized authority and a belief in the power of technology to reshape society.

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Srinivasan's journey along this ideological pipeline is reflected in his evolving views on cryptocurrency. What started as a tool for financial freedom became, in his vision, the foundation for entirely new forms of governance outside traditional state structures. This transformation—from seeing crypto as a means of individual empowerment within existing systems to viewing it as a way to build entirely new political entities—mirrors the broader shift from techno-libertarianism to neo-reaction in Silicon Valley.

As I wrote last year, what makes the *Sovereign Individual's* influence particularly [concerning](#) is its epistemically authoritarian nature. By presenting technological change as an unstoppable force that would inevitably dissolve traditional democratic institutions, the book provided Silicon Valley with a deterministic narrative that justified the concentration of power in the hands of tech elites as historically inevitable rather than a choice that deserved democratic deliberation.

As Pogue [documents](#), figures like Peter Thiel began to see cryptocurrency not just as a new financial instrument, but as a tool for fundamentally restructuring society. The technology offered a way to make the abstract ideas of Yarvin and *The Sovereign Individual* concrete. If traditional democracy was hopelessly corrupt, as Yarvin argued, then perhaps blockchain could enable new forms of governance built on immutable code rather than fallible human judgment.

This vision found its perfect technological expression in Bitcoin. Launched in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis by an anonymous creator using the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto, Bitcoin seemed to validate The Sovereign Individual's core thesis—that technology could enable individuals to opt out of state monetary control. The timing was perfect: just as faith in traditional financial institutions had been shattered, here was a system that promised to replace human judgment with mathematical certainty.

Bitcoin's philosophical underpinnings drew heavily from Austrian economics and libertarian thought, but it was Saïfedean Ammous who most explicitly merged these ideas with reactionary politics in his 2018 book *The Bitcoin Standard*. What began as an economic argument for Bitcoin based on Austrian monetary theory evolved into something far more radical in its later chapters. Particularly telling was Ammous's critique of modern art and architecture, which mirrors almost precisely the fascist aesthetic theory of the early 20th century. When he rails against “degenerate” modern art and architecture in favor of classical forms, he's invoking—whether intentionally or not—the exact language and arguments used by fascists in the 1930s. One German friend's observation to me is that it is “far more striking in the original German.”

The Bitcoin community's embrace of figures like Ammous reveals how cryptocurrency became not just a technology or an investment, but a vehicle for reactionary political thought. The idea that Bitcoin would restore some lost golden age of sound money merged seamlessly with broader reactionary narratives about societal decline and the need for restoration of traditional hierarchies.

While figures like Ammous attempted to claim Bitcoin for a reactionary worldview, the technology itself—as Bailey, Rettler and their co-authors [argue](#) in *Resistance Money*—can equally serve liberal and democratic values. The key distinction lies in how we understand Bitcoin's relationship to political institutions.

Where reactionaries see Bitcoin as a tool for replacing democratic governance entirely, the liberal perspective presented in *Resistance Money* understands it as a check against overreach and a means of preserving individual autonomy within democratic systems. This frames Bitcoin not as a replacement for democratic institutions, but as a technological innovation that can help protect civil liberties and human rights—particularly in contexts where traditional financial systems are used as tools of surveillance or oppression.

This tension between reactionary and liberal interpretations of Bitcoin reflects a broader pattern we've seen throughout our narrative: technological innovations that could enhance human freedom being co-opted into anti-democratic frameworks. Just as Yarvin and others attempted to claim the entire trajectory of technological development as inevitably leading to the dissolution of democracy, figures like Ammous tried to present Bitcoin's monetary properties as necessarily implying a broader reactionary worldview.

From Theory to Practice: The Implementation of Anti-Democratic Ideas



From Yarvin's early writings during the financial crisis to today's constitutional crisis, we can trace a clear intellectual evolution. What began as abstract criticism of democratic institutions has become a concrete blueprint for dismantling them. But the key accelerant in this process was cryptocurrency—it provided both a technological framework and a psychological model for opting out of democratic governance entirely.

But what makes this vision dangerous is not just its hostility to democracy—it's the way it *frames the collapse of democratic governance as an inevitability rather than a choice*. This is precisely what I have described as [epistemic authoritarianism](#). Rather than acknowledging that technology is shaped by human agency and political decisions, the *Network State* vision assumes that technological change has a fixed trajectory, one that will naturally dissolve nation-states and replace them with digitally mediated governance structures. This deterministic thinking leaves no room for public debate, democratic decision-making, or alternative paths for technological development. It tells us that the future has already been decided, and the only choice is whether to embrace it or be left behind.

This deterministic framing also explains why so many libertarians found themselves drifting toward reactionary politics. If democracy is doomed, then why bother defending it? If technology is going to replace governance, then why not accelerate the process? This is how techno-libertarianism became a gateway to neoreaction—it replaced the classical liberal commitment to open debate and incremental progress with an absolutist vision of history that justified abandoning democratic ideals entirely.

When Musk [gains control](#) of Treasury payment systems, or Trump declares he won't enforce laws he dislikes, they're implementing ideas incubated in the crypto world. The notion that code can replace democratic institutions, that technical competence should override democratic negotiation, and that private power should supersede public authority—these ideas moved from crypto theory to political practice.

Both Srinivasan's “network state” and Yarvin's critique of democracy see technology as a means of escaping democratic constraints, but they approach it differently. Yarvin advocates for capturing and dismantling democratic institutions from within, while Srinivasan proposes building parallel structures to make them irrelevant. We're now witnessing the convergence of these approaches—using technological control to simultaneously capture and bypass democratic governance.

The financial crisis created the conditions for anti-democratic thought to take root in Silicon Valley, but the actual transformation occurred through a series of distinct phases, each building on the last. Let's trace this evolution carefully:

The institutional context for this transformation is crucial. Gallup [polls](#) show trust in the media fell from 72% to 31% between 1976 to 2024, while distrust in government hit 85% post-2008, [according](#) to Pew Research. This erosion of institutional trust created fertile ground for alternative power structures. As the Brookings Institution [noted](#) in a 2023 analysis: “Tech leaders increasingly adopt neo-feudal framing of users-as-serfs, reflecting a broader shift away from democratic conceptions of citizenship.”

The danger lies not just in what these operatives are doing, but in how their actions systemically dismantle their capacity for democratic resistance. What we are seeing is an exact [implementation](#) of Curtis Yarvin’s “[RAGE](#)” doctrine —*Retire All Government Employees*—that he first proposed in 2012. But what makes this moment particularly significant is how it combines multiple strands of neoreactionary thought into coordinated action. When Yarvin [wrote](#) about replacing democratic institutions with corporate governance structures, when he [argues](#) that technical competence should override democratic process, he is describing precisely what we’re now watching unfold.

Consider how this maps to Yarvin’s blueprint: First, remove career officials who might resist on legal or constitutional grounds. Then, [install](#) private technical infrastructure that makes oversight impossible.

The goal isn’t just to change who runs government agencies—it’s to fundamentally transform how power operates, shifting it from democratic institutions to technical systems controlled by a small elite.

But what makes this implementation particularly dangerous is how it combines Yarvin’s institutional critique with Balaji Srinivasan’s technological vision. Where Yarvin provided the theoretical framework for dismantling the democratic institutions, Srinivasan’s “network state” concept provided practical tools and training. Many of these young operatives came through programs explicitly designed to build parallel governance structures outside of democratic control, operated by Srinivasan.

What we’re witnessing isn’t just a power grab—it’s the culmination of an ideology that has been incubated, tested, and refined for over a decade.

First, these thinkers argued that democracy was inefficient. Then, they created technological tools—cryptocurrency, blockchain governance, and AI-driven decision-making—to bypass democratic institutions entirely. Now, they’re no longer experimenting. They are seizing control of government infrastructure itself, reprogramming it in real-time to function according to their vision.

This is why focusing solely on the technical aspects of what’s happening inside agencies misses the deeper transformation underway. Every unauthorized server, every AI model, every removed civil servant represents another step in converting democratic governance into what Yarvin called “neocameralism”—a system where society is run like a corporation, with clear ownership and control rather than democratic deliberation. The infrastructure being built isn’t meant to serve democratic ends—it’s meant to make democracy itself obsolete.

The strategy of “flooding the zone with shit” was never just about controlling the news cycle—it was about reshaping the conditions of governance itself. The goal was not just to mislead, but to create an environment so chaotic that traditional democratic decision-making would become impossible.

First, they disrupted journalism, replacing truth with engagement-optimized feeds. Now, they are disrupting governance itself. Your news, your politics, your very reality—automated, privatized, and controlled by those who own the network.

And then, once the public lost trust in government, the tech elite could present the solution: a new, AI-driven, algorithmically optimized form of governance. One that wouldn’t be subject to human irrationality, democratic inefficiency, or the unpredictability of elections. Just like social media companies replaced traditional news with algorithmic feeds, these technocrats sought to replace democratic governance with automated decision-making.

What’s happening inside the Department of Government Efficiency is the final phase of this plan. The old democratic institutions, weakened by years of deliberate destabilization, are being replaced in real-time by proprietary AI systems controlled not by elected officials, but by the same network of Silicon Valley operatives who engineered the crisis in the first place.

We are not heading toward this future—we are already living in it.

Government functions that once belonged to democratically accountable institutions are already being transferred to proprietary AI systems, optimized not for justice or equality, but for efficiency and control. Already, decisions about financial regulation, law enforcement priorities, and political dissent are being made by algorithms that no citizen can vote against and no court can oversee. Your rights are no longer determined by a legal framework you can appeal—they are dictated by a set of terms of service, changeable at the whim of those who control the network.

Resistance and Alternatives



Despite the growing influence of these anti-democratic ideas, they have not gone unchallenged. Scholars like Evgeny Morozov have [critiqued](#) the “technological solutionism” that underpins much of this thinking. Grassroots movements [advocating](#) for [digital rights](#) and democratic control of technology have gained traction. Some tech workers themselves have begun organizing against the more extreme visions of their employers.

However, these resistance efforts face an uphill battle against the immense resources and influence of those pushing for a post-democratic future.

And if we do not act now, we may wake up one day to find that democracy was not overthrown in a dramatic coup—but simply deleted, line by line, from the code that governs our lives.

And yet, the most terrifying part? Donald Trump, the supposed strongman at the heart of it all, is oblivious. He has no grand ideological project beyond his own power. He does not understand the system being built around him, nor the fact that his own presidency is merely a vehicle for forces that see him as a useful, temporary battering ram against democracy.

But those around him? They understand perfectly.

J.D. Vance, the Vice President in waiting, has studied Curtis Yarvin’s work. Peter Thiel, his longtime patron, has been funding this vision for over a decade. Balaji Srinivasan is writing the blueprint. Elon Musk is laying the infrastructure. And the young operatives now wiring AI models into the Treasury Department—disbanding civil service, bypassing traditional government, and replacing democratic accountability with technological sovereignty—are working toward a future that will long outlast Trump himself.

This is not about Trump. This is about what comes after him.

Actuarial realities do not favor an aging leader with a declining grasp on policy. But they favor the thirty- and forty-somethings laying the foundation for the post-democratic order. The men who have spent the past decade engineering an exit from democracy are no longer whispering in the dark corners of the internet. They are in power, with money, AI, and a plan. And democracy, in its current form, has never been closer to the brink.

Vox Populi, Vox Dei, Elon Musk [declares](#) from his digital throne—the voice of the people is the voice of God.

But in the world they are building, the people have no voice. The algorithms speak for them. The executives decide for them. The future is optimized, efficient, and entirely out of their hands.

Vox Populi, Vox Dei. They whisper it, as they lock the gates.

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Michael Murray
2dEdited


These SV creeps are so high on their own supply that they live in an atmosphere of pure, recycled bullshit. For just one example: the analysis of the 2008 crash is just wrong... it was just the allowance of predatory and high-risk mortgages... pushed by people who wanted to profit from that risk.

Virtually none of these ideas are peer reviewed in any real way or have been tested at scale or rigorously.

And why is Andreessen Horowitz such a breeding ground for assholes? Marc Andreessen wrote 10K lines of shitty browser code once, and he's.... what, now? A sage? FFS.

Too much money and really very middle-brow (and frankly, adolescent) takes and now we're all gonna suffer as a result. Great. They should have been CHALLENGED on their shit ideas, but I guess money insulates you from all that.

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David I. Buckman
2d


Thank you. This is important work.

All movements seeking to shape society on this scale begin with a quasi-utopian vision of an idealized society in which their highest, self-defined values can be realized. In this case, the roots of that vision can be found in the [dot.com](#)

boom of the '90s. Silicon Valley became a distinct subculture infused with the religion of entrepreneurship. The ideal life - that of tech billionaire- resulted from creating a new form of tech-the more disruptive the better-and monetizing it. Regulation was an impediment; government created drag. This positioned maximizing enterprise value (for which efficiency and disruption were key imperatives) as the highest of callings. For those like Thiel who succeeded in grabbing the brass ring (albeit randomly and fortuitously) their atypical experience in their insular village morphed, through a combination of hindsight, narcissism and arrogance, into a supposed model for all human existence.

This is what happens to a society that favors MBAs over liberal arts degree.

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