'These are dark days. It's black over here, very black. I'd say this is the darkest time I've ever seen' USA, December 2003

George Bush, it has been widely documented, believes that God has chosen him to run the country. The only problem for Mr Bush is getting the American voters to agree with him. Al Gore, it should be remembered, ‘lost’ the last election by 570 votes: extensive investigation established that around 70,000 voters had been scrubbed off the final tally by Republicans. The self-proclaimed current President has no legal mandate to be in the White House. But that doesn’t, it seems, stop him from wanting to stay there.

The 2004 elections are guaranteed to be interesting. America’s economy is on the verge of collapse, social deprivation is on the rise, and the ‘war’ is increasingly unpopular. To the problem of how Mr Bush and his cohorts ensure themselves another term, election fraud seems to be one tried, tested and popular answer. These, let’s not forget, are people running on divine conviction. What would one vote matter, compared to the will of the Almighty? Or two? Or three? Or 20,000,000?

So, what do he and his cohorts do, with another election coming up? Election fraud is a tried, tested and obvious solution, and before you think ‘they couldn’t be that evil’; remember that these are people running on conviction. What does one puny vote matter, if it comes down to a choice between it, or the will of the Almighty? Or two? Or three? Or 20,000,000?

Next year our de-facto leader (and here a pause to reflect, UK citizens) will probably be running against Democrat nominee Howard Dean. It would be rather charming if Mr Dean were to insist that God has chosen him too. But somehow, in American politics, the god card can only be played by the person who got it first, and no-reshuffling. Despite that, quite a few people who believe in tolerance, and liberty, and justice, and all those other Christian-type things, will want to believe that Mr Dean can produce them; hence the latest American-style vote scandal.

And it is a scandal. Typing ‘voting machines USA’ into the net will bring you up a shed-load of exhaustive research, all of it backed up to the teeth, but still curiously toothless. It’s as if the scandal is too big to really tackle; a giant tsunami of a scandal, which makes people just stand
there helplessly waving, before they drown. The American people, reads the semaphore, are
going to get George Bush in the next election, like it or not, because he is going to cheat.

Cheat, though, sounds like a fairly harmless word. People ‘cheat’ in pointless school tests.
This is not cheating as we know it. This cheating is the mechanical equivalent of jackbooted
thugs breaking down people’s doors and making them vote. This cheating is the imposition of
a President the electorate doesn’t want: the genius of it, though, is that they’ll be persuaded to
think they wanted him. Out with the physical violence; in with the mental.

Here’s how it works. Republican-sponsoring corporations install computerised voting
machines in polling booths across the country. The voters go in. To vote, they press a touch-
sensitive screen. Then they go away again. See, no need for paper, or pens, or any of that old
stuff. Just computers. Computers where you can’t see the software. Computers which give
you no receipt, so there’s no way of telling if your vote’s been counted, or who it’s been
counted for. Computers which give you, for example, a totally unexpected Republican victory
over an incumbent Democrat in Georgia - unexpected in the sense that a six foot high ant is
unexpected. Computers owned, programmed, installed, checked and maintained by the
Republican corporations themselves.

You own the system and it votes you in? Good luck, America.

THE TWO MAIN CORPORATIONS BEHIND THE MACHINES

DIEBOLD SYSTEMS INC:

CEO: Walden O'Dell. Republican fundraiser. Has written to wealthy Bush contributors vowing
to “deliver” his state’s electoral votes to the Bush campaign (apparently was not talking about
his machines). Hosts campaign meetings at his house. Member of Bush’s “Rangers and
Pioneers” club (each member of whom must contribute at least $100,000 to the 2004 re-
election campaign).

Diebold supplies 50,000 voting machines nationwide. It points out that its software is
inspected and
tested by election officials before it is certified. However, Diebold engineers can make
changes to the software after it has been certified. A Wired article quoted a Diebold engineer
as saying that his team made no fewer than three rounds of software changes to the
machines in Georgia’s 2002 election for governor ? after the machines had been certified, but
before the election began. This was the election which ended in a major upset that defied all
polls and put a Republican in the governor’s seat for the first time in more than 130 years.

ELECTION SYSTEMS & SOFTWARE (ES&S).

CEO: Aldo Tesi

Supplies nearly half the voting machines used in the United States. ES&S is a subsidiary of
McCarthy Group Inc., which is jointly held by the holding firm and the Omaha World-Herald
Co., which publishes the state’s largest newspaper.

Former conservative radio talk-show host and now Republican U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel
was the head of, and continues to own part interest in, ES&S (then AIS), who installed, programmed, and largely ran the voting machines that were used by most of the citizens of Nebraska, in elections where Hagel won very unexpected landslide victories. Senator Hagel is a key advocate for the Bush campaign, and with his experience on the Senate Commerce Committee focusing on telecommunications and trade, was once considered as a Vice Presidential running mate for George Walker Bush.

An official at Nebraska’s Election Administration estimated that ES&S machines tallied 85 percent of the votes cast in Chuck Hagel’s 2002 and 1996 election races.


In a disclosure form filed in 1996, covering the previous year, Chuck Hagel, then a Senate candidate, did not report that he was still chairman of AIS for the first 10 weeks of the year, as he was required to do.

Hagel’s unrecorded stake in the voting systems company poses an apparent conflict of interest on election reform issues. Three companies, including ES&S, stand to make a large profits from election reform legislation enacted last year by Congress.

SOURCES, CAMPAIGNS AND FURTHER READING

http://timesheraldonline.com/articles/2003/10/02/front/news01.txt [1]


www.commondreams.org/views03/0131-01.htm [5]


UPDATE: Californian lawyers and campaigners have succeeded in making it mandatory for voting machines to be retrofitted to produce paper receipts, but not until 2006. Nationwide, lawyers, academics, Democrats and concerned citizens continue to fight to protect the 2004 election. 61 Democrats in the U.S. House have co-sponsored a bill requiring voter-verifiable paper printouts, but not a single Republican has signed on ? and the bill is buried in committee.

Source URL: https://corporatewatch.org/content/newsletter-16-voting-future

Links: