



Curt Blog

NeoProg Politics, Philosophy, and Culture

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ILLECTION REFLECTION

Never underestimate the lowest common denominator as it spirals sharply downward.

I recall my first time voting in 1972. To me it seemed “perfectly clear” that Nixon was a liar and a crook. I was so surprised when he won re-election by a landslide, that it really lowered my estimation of the public’s overall level of intellect. How could they not see by then that the Vietnam War was wrong and the Administration was a threat to our civil liberties? After all that the country had been through leading up to and during the first Nixon term, somehow it still was not enough to convince the voters to change leadership in wartime.

In 1968, I was attending college in Northridge, California. Bobby Kennedy came there for a rally. You had to be 21 to vote then, but it was still totally inspiring and exciting! He really seemed to be a leader that would promote the continued evolving progressive growth of humankind that the sixties was exploring. Shortly thereafter he was struck down in LA by assassination. Later, I attended some events in the free speech zone of the college to protest the war. Sometimes a busload of police would show up and approach the free speech area with their batons - ready to arrest any protestor who would not leave. I began to notice that the reports in the newspapers and on the television were often quite different from what

really happened. Sometimes I saw the police provoke action by denying civil liberties while the press blamed the citizens that were exercising free speech. That was when I realized that media manipulation was a large part of the reason for ignorant citizenry. When you combine fear, knee jerk macho tendencies to hawkishness, and widespread public disinformation - you get a second Nixon term. It ended up to be Administration arrogance and carelessness, plus some investigative journalists actually doing their job, that finally woke the general public up to how bad things really were. The war ended a wasteful loss, Nixon resigned in disgrace and placeholder Ford was installed.

In my second presidential election I voted for the winner. Carter would turn out to be one of only two winning candidates whom I have ever voted for president. For a few years after Watergate, The Media seemed to do more serious investigative journalism. When Reagan got elected twice, so-called deregulation started up endlessly and I kind of gave up on politicians. I voted for the Democrats and hoped that they would keep things in balance and that the Judicial Branch would help keep things in check. I went to work and payed my taxes while going about my own pursuit of happiness. The Media began a slide in quest of that lowest common denominator with increased consolidation of MegaCorp control bestowed by the politicians they support with campaign donations to both sides of the aisle. Those politicians who really deliver often later get juicy job offers to lobby Congress. The last 25 years have mostly been a battle to maintain what social progress was made in the 20th century. When the radical right got control of the Republican Party then hijacked the US Constitution to investigate then impeach President Clinton, I started paying a lot more attention to what they are up to.

Again, in 2004, I really thought that this time the voters would "get it" . The Iraq War is wrong and based on lies, The Patriot Act is a huge threat to our civil liberties, and the President is incompetently bankrupting the country while harming the environment. So many arrogant Administration policies are hurting our international reputation in so many ways - especially human torture. For the first time in my life, I sent money to a politician to support a political campaign - first to Howard Dean. When the DemPros stifled him and John Kerry got the nod, I sent more money to him.

Surely the Democrats would win this time and do a better job. Boy was I wrong - somehow, by hook and by crook, Bush won. Apparently slightly over half the voters decided he had unfinished business in Iraq and was more ruthless on terrorism than Kerry. When you combine fear, knee jerk macho tendencies to hawkishness, and widespread public disinformation - you get a second Bush term. Damn! Seeing as how W and the Wingnuts make Nixon look noble and Reagon look reasonable, I was hoping that we would be saved the 2007 impeachment.

ILlection Reflection - are We the People collectively intelligent enough to even be voters?

The circumstantial evidence does not look good. Historically, some of the the Founding Fathers had their doubts about non-white non-male not-rich people voting, so they left the Constitution ammendable - to evolve. Today, it has been the Congressional Black Caucus that has been the best guardians of democracy - for the past two elections. Quite ironic, since the Republicans seem to do all they can to prohibit blacks from voting. Throughout history it has often been noted how easy it is to manipulate and control public opinion. The Nazi's were masters at it. Today, more than ever, the MegaCorp Media keeps the American populace ignorant with disinformation and lack of coverage about the corruption and incompetence of our politicians - so they deserve a good portion of the blame. Still, the truth is out there and available - if you look for it.

Especially in wartime,

We the People are definitely not very collectively quick thinking - especially when it comes to recognizing misleadership. We do collectively have a near instant emotional reaction to a disgraceful situation like Abu Ghraib or a huge disaster like the Indian Ocean Tsunami tragedy. So public opinion can take years to evolve or it can turn on a dime at any time - though we do seem to be coming to our collective senses about Iraq War 2 a lot sooner than we did about Vietnam. When you consider the fact that in election 2004 we basically had an ambiguous choice between the Empathetic War Party and the Wingnut War Party, the difference them becomes even less clear. Kerry would be a much better president but, then again, who knows - maybe the voter Collective Wisdom is right after all. Leaving W to deal with his mess - eventually finally being held accountable for once - would really make obvious just how broken our system really is - and discredit permanently the NeoCon and Wingnut factions of the Republican party. Unfortunately, a huge amount of damage can be done in two to four years by an even more incompetent Bush team second term and a radical Congress ready to vote against any concept of ethics or duty to the citizenry.

There is no doubt that we have been in a "fool most of the people all of the time" phase for quite awhile now. We the People can be collectively manipulated quite easily by The Government and The Media - who each ARE the MegaCorps now. Corporations make the voting machines and count the votes - with systems they call a trade secret The US voting process they fund rewards a political advisor that cynically uses deceptive and ruthless campaign tactics while everyone grudgingly admires him because his negative politics of destruction work. The President and his cabinet and surrogates lie and spin with impunity - unchallenged by the press in any meaningful way - while tax dollars as payola to pundits illegally spread partisan political propoganda. One of two major political parties wants to suppress votes and the other wants to suppress progressive candidates.

In spite of the palpable feeling of momentum for Kerry going into the election, it looks like the Republican rightwing has seized control and stolen two presidential elections in a row. W and the Wingnuts got what they wanted. Election fraud of all types was widespread, but only reported on the alternative media outlets and the internet. Going into 2005, the Ohio electoral college slate was challenged in Congress and - thanks to my Senator Barbara Boxer, Representative John Conyers and thirty other House members - the problem is now a part of the Congressional Record. This should serve as the basis from which to reform our entire Federal Election process - no more excuses are acceptable.

So are We the People collectively intelligent enough to "get it" in time? We shall see - I still have hope. George W Bush doesn't think so. He thinks that he is going to spin us into gutting Social Security while locking in tax cuts to the rich and shifting more future tax burden from corporations to the working class while making it harder to sue anyone - as the American healthcare system melts down and prices soar. If we agree we believe in democracy, we must trust all the people to vote - then count all of those votes. We the People can only be informed voters if freedom of the press is fair, truthful and vigorously independent. When politicians become accountable to informed public opinion, we can get the country on the right track. This process cannot be trusted to corporations or partisans, so the whole system must be reformed and made uniformly transparent. It will be a difficult and complex task, but real democracy would be worth it.

In my next essay, I will outline my take on how to fix the Federal Election System.

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