

Challenging Corporate Rule



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Sources include :

"A Hidden History of
Corporate Rule"

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Democracy Unlimited of
Humboldt County
found at : <http://www.duhc.org/>

Paradigm Wars
by Jerry Mander and
Victoria Tauli-Corpuz
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We The People-Eugene

At our July 27th talk,
*"Global Economics
and the Threat to
Democracy"*

Presented by Stan
Taylor, this talk will focus
on the global economic
structures established at
Bretton Woods in 1944, the
transformation of these
structures into instruments
of finance capital in the
1970's, and the attack on the
ability of government to
legislate on behalf of their
citizens.

Gordon Lafer will
also speak about Free Trade
Agreements, in particular
focusing on investor-state
dispute resolution rights.

A Hidden History, Modern Reflections

"The present global economic system, and the global corporations and bureaucracies that are its driving force, cannot survive without an ever-increasing supply of natural resources: forests, minerals, oil and natural gas, fish, wildlife, freshwater, and arable land, among others" (Mander 3).

This is familiar news to us, maybe even painfully old news, but as a nation, few of us know exactly how this came about! As Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County discusses in their handout, "The Hidden History of Corporate Rule," the roots of these institutions driven by exploitation lie in the colonial governments of the age of European imperialism.

DUHC tells us how the first corporations of the British monarchy "expanded empire and made the aristocracy wealthy. These early crown corporations were given the right to levy taxes, wage war, and imprison people all while enjoying a monopoly over trade in the regions where they operated"

(DUHC). Each system of governance, or corporation, was created explicitly to rapidly exploit resources, to oppress the people living on the land, and to generate profit for the distant 'owners'.

Today we find our government

has claimed the ability to wage war without approval of congress, to detain people without due process, to torture 'terrorists' who have never faced trial, and to levy taxes against the poor while dissolving taxes for the wealthy. It seems the original colonial model persists in our government today.

The original corrupt, big-business centered configuration of our own colonial governance, the thirteen British corporations of the Americas, provoked a first revolution for independence which was quickly overturned in what Stan Taylor calls "a revolution against the revolution."

In 1781 the Articles of Confederation created a weak central government driven by the needs of the states, but only 8 years later the US Constitution replaced it. This new document strengthened the federal government and, according to the needs of its authors, it enshrined private property and the rights of the wealthy.

As DUHC so eloquently writes, "sovereign power was allegedly transferred from a monarch to "We the people." The move to give power to the people would be a noble one, but at that time, only about 10% of the population counted as 'people' with full citizenship

A Hidden History, Modern Reflections



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The mission of We the People-Eugene is to create democracy by building social movements dedicated to: Ending the excessive influence of corporations and other moneyed interests over our political and economic systems, and Building peoples based democratic communities founded on the natural rights of humans and the environment.

Stan Taylor is a board member of the Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC) and an active member of Progressive Responses, a project of Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC). He chairs the Lane Community College Peace Center, which focuses on peace education for working class students, based upon social, economic, gender and environmental justice. He also teaches Civil Rights and Liberties, Environmental Politics, and a yearlong sequence on Peace and Conflict at Lane Community College.

Gordon Lafer, currently a faculty member of the UO Labor Education and Research Center, served as Senior Labor Policy Advisor for the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Labor from 2009 to 2010. His work focuses on strategic planning, strategic research, and labor and employment policy issues.

To get involved in your local movement to end corporate personhood, email us at wethepeopleeugene@gmail.com

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rights. Those who were not white male property owners were not legally considered 'people!'

Over the next two hundred years, groups legally excluded from personhood status have struggled to be legally defined as 'persons.' Freed male slaves were the first to claim personhood legally, as men 'born or naturalized in the United States.'

Sadly, while thousands of white people actively prevented African American individuals from claiming the right to be regarded as a person, granted certain unalienable rights, corporations quietly hijacked this movement and used that legal premise of being 'born and naturalized in the US' to claim legal personhood for themselves.

In the United States, this status grants corporations the 'right' to sell toxic, unlabeled products, to move into communities who want them out, and to treat the human workforce as a never-ending pool of expendable energy. Today we find one of the least popular methods of resource extraction, fracking, to be taking place across the midwest, the plains of the Rockies, and parts of New England despite the *passionate* opposition of those who are aware of its consequences. It would seem the intent

behind claiming corporate personhood was not at all to make corporations equal to the people.

Presenting our government as a colonial government presents one vital question - who owns the United States? One method to discover the answer is to ask where the money goes. The most wealthy entities in the US include a handful of people and hundreds of corporations. A second method would be to ask who has the power? When corporations have rights that trump those of individuals, of local communities, and even the right of national political structures to maintain their integrity, we see where power lies.

Yet today we see a new, even larger power structure unheard of 100 years ago. We see the multinational, who under the umbrella organizations of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), holds the rights to trade any economy dry.

We see now a global system of governance where all nations with a viable market or 'commodity' are treated as colonies and the WTO serves as its enforcing body.

For more info, see IFG.org and globalissues.org. To see resistance in action, watch *This is What Democracy Looks Like*.