



# Study Guide with Links

# Grassroots Solutions

# & Corporate Power

By Jim Tarbell

## \$ & Democracy

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Integrity  
Policy Making  
Lobbying  
Think Tanks  
Revolving Door  
Courts  
Rights  
Citizens United

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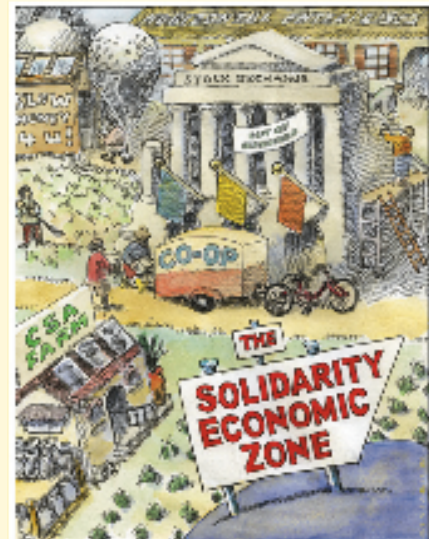
## Grassroots Institute

&  
Alliance for  
Democracy

### Corporations, Democracy, & The Rise Of Grassroots Popular Power



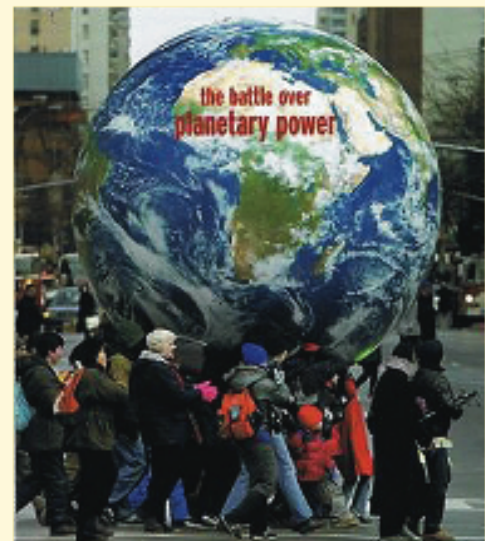
### Economic Democracy or Corporate Hegemony



### Saving The Environment From Corporate Destruction



### Global Governance: Who Or What Will Rule The World?



*"The issue is not the issues; the issue is the system." — Ronnie Dugger*

Study Guide: Grassroots Solutions & Corporate Power  
By Jim Tarbell

Grassroots Institute  
15168 Caspar Road, #14  
Caspar, CA 95420  
[rtp@mcn.org](mailto:rtp@mcn.org)  
707-964-1323

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## INTRODUCTION: Why We Created the Study Guide and Who We Are



We created this course to explore the historic and current causes of our economic, political, environmental and social crises. It focuses on the systemic aspects of our political and economic processes that facilitate the owners of money to create and carry out our public policies. Those public policies cause our worst human problems.

Since the problems are systemic, there is no reason to look at this issue with an “us versus them” perspective. The human actors creating and carrying out our public policy are chosen and driven by our money-laden economic and political systems. As Daniel Tygel of the Brazilian Social Solidarity Economy points out, “We all get our hands dirty,” to survive in the capitalist sea.

Our responsibility as engaged citizens is to understand the systemic problems and develop long-term, sustainable solutions. Many grassroots solutions are explored in this course and tools are provided to help you develop more solutions.

This course focuses on corporations because corporations concentrate money within hierarchical corporate structures that place the bulk of financial power in a few hands that are devoted to an amoral corporate agenda of growth, resource depletion, low wages, and environmental carelessness. Corporations have made beneficial contributions to our world. In their present form, however, they have outlived their usefulness. Initially in this country, laws mandated corporations to amalgamate capital to complete projects for the common good — i.e. to build roads, bridges, and canals. By 1919, however, corporate lawyers had twisted legal thinking to the point that courts decided, “A business corporation is organized and carried on primarily for the profit of the stockholders.” A century later, the largest corporations in the land have invested heavily in campaign finance, lobbying, and public policy think tanks. Their goal has been to make all public policy serve the profits of the stockholders. The value of this corporate form no longer serves our common good and threatens life, as we know it.

We initially brought people together to talk about “corporations and democracy” in 1997 after participating in a Program on Corporations Law and Democracy (POCLAD) workshop entitled *Rethinking Corporations, Rethinking Democracy*. POCLAD corporate anthropologist Jane Anne Morris introduced the topic by pointing out that, “A corporation, like a toilet, is a thing. You do not consult with a toilet about the decisions you make in your life. Why should our democratic government consult with corporations about public policy?”

When we brought local groups together to discuss this issue, initial reactions varied from, “What’s wrong with corporations? Without them, who is going to make our cars?” to “How are we going to get rid of corporate power without using bombs?” After a while the reaction morphed into “Shouldn’t it be Corporations or Democracy?” Twenty years later, “corporate power” is a well-understood concept with thousands of people across the country engaged in dealing with its problems.

In 1999, we enthusiastically started a radio program called *Corporations and Democracy* and soon discovered we could invite anybody we ever wanted to have a conversation with to be our guest. They would invariably respond with, “Corporations and Democracy? Yeah, I would love to talk about that.” Over the years we interviewed Howard Zinn, Ralph Nader, Francis Moore Lappé, and many others.

Early on, we excitedly interviewed Texas populist journalist Ronnie Dugger. Two years earlier, he helped expand awareness of corporate power by writing a letter to the *Nation* magazine pointing out, “Corporate money is wrecking popular government in the United States. The big corporations and the centimillionaires and billionaires have taken daily control of our work, our pay, our housing, our health, our pension funds, our bank and saving deposits, our public lands, our airwaves, our elections and our very government. It's as if American democracy has been bombed. Will we be able to recover ourselves and overcome the bombers? Or will they continue to divide us . . . until they have taken the country away from us for good?”

He joyfully received 6,000 responses and led people from 30 states to gather and form the Alliance for Democracy (AfD). A few weeks after our radio interview, Ronnie energized many of us on the Northern California Coast to jam into our library's community room and form a local AfD chapter. We organized regular Town Hall meetings featuring empowering speakers who took on corporate power. Code Pink and Global Exchange Founder Medea Benjamin; Harvard professor, international economic advisor, and author of *When Corporations Rule the World* David Korten; and many others addressed standing-room-only crowds.

Our effort successfully organized two Green Tortoise busloads of committed citizens to travel to Seattle in 1999 to join 50,000 others to shut down the World Trade Organization which had set itself up as the vanguard of global corporate rule. Our active citizenship ended their plan for corporate global tyranny.

In 2003, Ronnie Dugger asked me to take over the AfD's regular newsletter on corporate power. In 2005 we launched the AfD publication *Justice Rising, Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Rule*, a thematic journal on corporate power that has published the work of many auspicious writers over the years including Bill McKibben, Raj Patel and Chris Hedges.

I first wrote about corporate power in Washington, DC during the Vietnam War. In those years I worked for a Republican Congressman while earning an economics degree from American University. My experience at the Capitol taught me that money is power, and my professors talked about creating an economy that maximized “utils of happiness” rather than dollars of profit, and warned us of the threat to our democracy posed by the growth of corporate power.

I took these new understandings to Latin America where I witnessed the corporate global empire overthrow democracy in Chile and penetrate deep into the Ecuadorian jungle. Back on the Northern California Coast, I wrote *I Came Not Alone*, a series of short stories on the early impacts of corporate globalization in Latin America, and co-published our bio-regional publication *Ridge Review*, which looked at the cultural, social, and economic changes in our local communities caused by money power and changing demographics.

After many years of our local educational efforts via print, radio, and public forums in Mendocino County, local AfD participants helped promote County Measure F directing our state and federal politicians to “enact resolutions calling for an amendment to the United States Constitution to establish that 1) only human beings and not corporations are endowed with constitutional rights and 2) that money does not constitute speech and political contributions can be regulated.” It passed with 75% of the vote. Carrie Durkee, who has an MA in Education and oversaw much of the groundwork for that initiative, conducted a series of study groups to help people understand the reality of corporate power.

She invited me to address one of her groups about my work with *Justice Rising* and then suggested that I do a workshop based on *Justice Rising*. After that effort, Carrie and Michael St. John, who has a PhD. in economics from UC Berkeley, suggested we present the class at our local college campus. In the spring of 2015 we filled a classroom for our first class on *Grassroots Solutions and Corporate Power*. Margaret Koster, who has an MA in social work, had headed up the inland effort for Measure F and is deeply involved in the national Move to Amend movement, joined that class. Since then, Carrie, Michael, Margaret and I worked to present *Grassroots Solutions and Corporate Power* courses and their derivative, *Citizenship in an Age of Corporate Power* at Mendocino College's Coast and two inland campuses. In addition, Carrie taught a course entitled *The Common Good: Strategies and Solutions* in the spring of 2017 that included movement, music and more. Here is a [link](#) to an overview of that course.

To centralize these classes and efforts in one entity, we created the Grassroots Institute: Progressive Solutions for the Common Good. Lillian Cartwright joined us in establishing the Institute and has functioned as an advisor for our classes, providing a deep knowledge of the academic world to our organization. Lillian graduated summa cum laude from Queens College and received an MA from the University of Illinois and PhD. in Psychology from the University of California, Berkeley.

We are publishing this study guide for *Grassroots Solutions and Corporate Power* to help people across the country and around the world offer this course in their local communities. It is presented here as fourteen two-or-three-hour classes. We have also presented it as five four-hour courses. You could also do it as a study group or an online course that you do on your own. If you are working on a related issue locally, you could download the classes on that issue. This could help you educate each other on the history, solutions, and resources to use relevant to that issue. However you do it, we are happy to

help. We would also love to get your feedback about what works and what does not work for you with this course and study guide.

This course is designed as an introduction to a many-faceted topic. I often compare talking about corporations and democracy to the way people must have spoken about kings and democracy several centuries ago. "Aren't kings appointed by God?" people must have asked then, just as they now inquire, "Should we really be biting the hand that feeds us?" If life as we know it is going to survive, we have to take on this issue. Nobody else is going to do it.

Thanks for being involved.

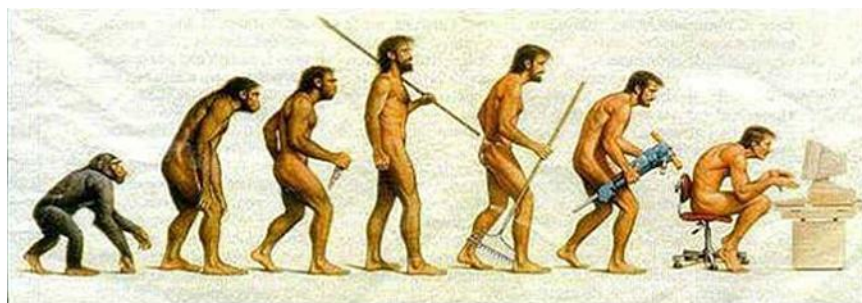
Jim Tarbell

Caspar, California

February 6, 2018

## GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS & CORPORATE POWER

### Giving Communities Tools to Strengthen Self-Governance and Control Corporate Power



#### Course Orientation

**Purpose:** Orient the facilitators to the purposes of the course and important preparations to make the course a success.

**Paradigm:** In this burgeoning age of money as power, with corporate billionaires directing public policy for their self-interest from the heights of our political system, it is increasingly important for all citizens to engage in our political process to ensure that public policy favors the common good rather than the monied few. The Grassroots Institute recognizes that our current political and economic systems, built by the power of money and obsolete economic theories, have created public policies that fail to protect the common good while fostering the destruction of nature and the demise of human happiness. We must create systemic solutions that maximize the public good.

**Context:** Since the spring of 2015, the Grassroots Institute has facilitated classes and workshops to address the systemic problems of money power in our democracy. Our course *Grassroots Solutions and Corporate Power* helps people:

- Understand the historical context in which these systems developed;
- Comprehend the destruction these systems are imposing on our lives;
- Explore the many systemic solutions currently under development to ensure a vibrant future for our planet and us;
- Concentrate on systemic change from both a local and a global perspective.

This study guide outlines the 14-class model for this course, but you can use it for individual research, a study group, or a local citizen involvement group working on a particular issue. We start with an introductory class that familiarizes the participants with each other and the systems that govern our lives. The remaining classes concentrate on our:

- Political system;
- Our economic system;
- Our environment;
- Our emerging system of global policy making.

Each of these four themes is divided into three subject areas that examine the origin of the system, the reality of the system today, and systemic changes that need to occur in each system to maximize the health and well being of all. Background for each class is provided by readings from *Justice Rising: Grassroots Solutions to Corporate Power*, published by the Alliance for Democracy, as well as additional readings relevant to each class. Each class also uses outside speakers who bring local or global perspective to the topic and videos that elucidate various aspects of each issue. The heart of the class, however, comes from the class discussion stimulated by a series of questions for that particular class.

There are multiple goals and outcomes for class participants. The course provides people with talking points to carry on vital conversations with both allies and foes. The class also provides entry points for active citizens to intervene in public policy-making. Most importantly, the class can build community — perhaps the most significant tool for changing the destructive aspects of our political, economic and environmental systems.

**Activities:** We present this course as Community Extension classes at our local community college, Mendocino College. Community extension classes are a great venue because they include an academic atmosphere as well as fully equipped classrooms with audiovisual equipment. These classes could also be presented at community centers, churches, libraries or private homes. Our initial class had six people at one of our homes and proved to be a rich experience. Our classes at Mendocino College filled with engaged participants and provided energizing experiences. Our class minimum has been 12 and our maximum is 25. We have consistently been closer to and occasionally exceeded the maximum:

We attracted course participants in many ways. Interviews and public service announcements on local radio and TV and in local papers provided good results. Here is a sample of a [newspaper article](#), which you could also use as an email appeal or a public service announcement. Access to extensive local email lists was very helpful; check with allied groups to see if you can use their email list or if you can place an article in their email newsletter. We also promoted the class with extensive use of posters. Here is the [first poster](#) we used and here is [one we used most recently](#). We can supply all of these posters as InDesign files for you to modify. Another good way to get participants is through personal phone calls or word of mouth. You could also use social media to promote your course, but we have not utilized that route.

A week before the first class, send all class participants a welcoming letter with a course overview, like the one [here](#), and include whatever other pertinent information you think they should have. The day before the first class, send a reminder about time and location.

In this study guide we provide all the materials you need to produce this course including:

- Questions for each class;
- Notes on answers for the questions;
- Talking Points;
- Lists of videos;
- Reading materials;
- Charts;
- Timelines;
- Suggested plans for each class.

This will be *your* class and you may wish to modify, change, and create the course as you see fit. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions about or feedback on the course or the Study Guide or need support. Our contact information is on the title page of this study guide.

Facilitators of the course should review all the reading material and prepare a plan for each class with a specific timeline to keep the class moving along. If you have never taught a course before, it is important to understand that to some degree you are a performer; our experience is that everyone has a performance persona that comes to the fore once the class begins. Embrace that aspect of your persona. You can do it easily. Just make sure you have fun!



# GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS & CORPORATE POWER

## Giving Communities Tools to Strengthen Self-Governance and Control Corporate Power



### Class 1 — INTRODUCTION

#### Course Overview, Introductions, Exploration of Corporate Power

**Purpose:** To build a community spirit among the participants by giving them a common bond in understanding why they are taking the class and highlighting their common goals and aspirations.

#### Materials

[Course Overview](#), [Corporate Questionnaire](#), [Corporate Questionnaire Answers](#), The Corporation Movie

**Paradigm:** Introductions among the people and to the material are important. It is always good to understand where you are going and whom you are with.

**Context:** “Community” is one of the basic mechanisms for creating strong, citizen-based self-governance. Giving people a chance to fully reveal their personal experiences and identify their common goals in taking this class is an important part of building community. We often point out that we all live in a capitalist sea and as Daniel Tygel of the Brazilian Solidarity Economy points out, we all “get our hands dirty” to survive in our economic system. Since we all have to get “our hands dirty,” it is always important for people to share that part of their lives.

There are many goals for people taking this class including:

- Understanding the historical context and present reality of corporate power;
- Grasping the connection between corporate power and our most dire problems on the planet;
- Identifying groups that are allied with your visions and are working on solutions to corporate power;
- Learning how to strengthen local self-government;
- Creating public policies to enhance the common good;
- Learning talking points to engage in constructive conversation with people who view the world differently;
- Identifying your allies in the local community; and extending your social community.

**Activities:** Class participation is important; providing a time for people to make announcements is a good way to catalyze that, allowing people to get into a participatory role and drawing everyone into the local context of this course.

Introduce the facilitators. Facilitators should be candid about how they “get their hands dirty” in the current system. Pass out a [course overview](#) to all of the class participants and use it to describe the classes. Facilitators should read the entire Study Guide to be familiar with each class.

Highlight the subtopics under each class and cover a surprising aspect of each class, e.g., how Wall Street finances the election process, or how much more money is spent on lobbying than on campaign finance, or how elite control of the Supreme Court has been continuous from the beginning. Entertain questions about the course any time during the course description and make sure to ask if there are any questions once you are done with the description.

Follow up with a discussion on the mechanics of each class as well as the organization of the classes. [Here is a sample](#) of the class structure we have used.

Move from here to the heart of this class, which is getting people to tell their story with passion about who they are and why they are taking this class. Take notes so you can be knowledgeable about each person’s history for future classes. This can easily take an hour.

If there is time, you might show the 2003 movie [The Corporation](#). The Wharton School of Business says *The Corporation* “is a cogent, information-rich and artfully crafted probe of the most powerful business entity of modern times.” Although a little dated, it covers many of the topics covered in this course

You could also show the movie *The Wisdom to Survive* from Bullfrog Films. See a trailer here <http://olddogdocumentaries.org/shop/the-wisdom-to-survive/>. We have a DVD of the movie we could send you.

You can also present a speaker who is connected with a local political or environmental issue relevant to the class. They can widen perspectives on what is happening locally.

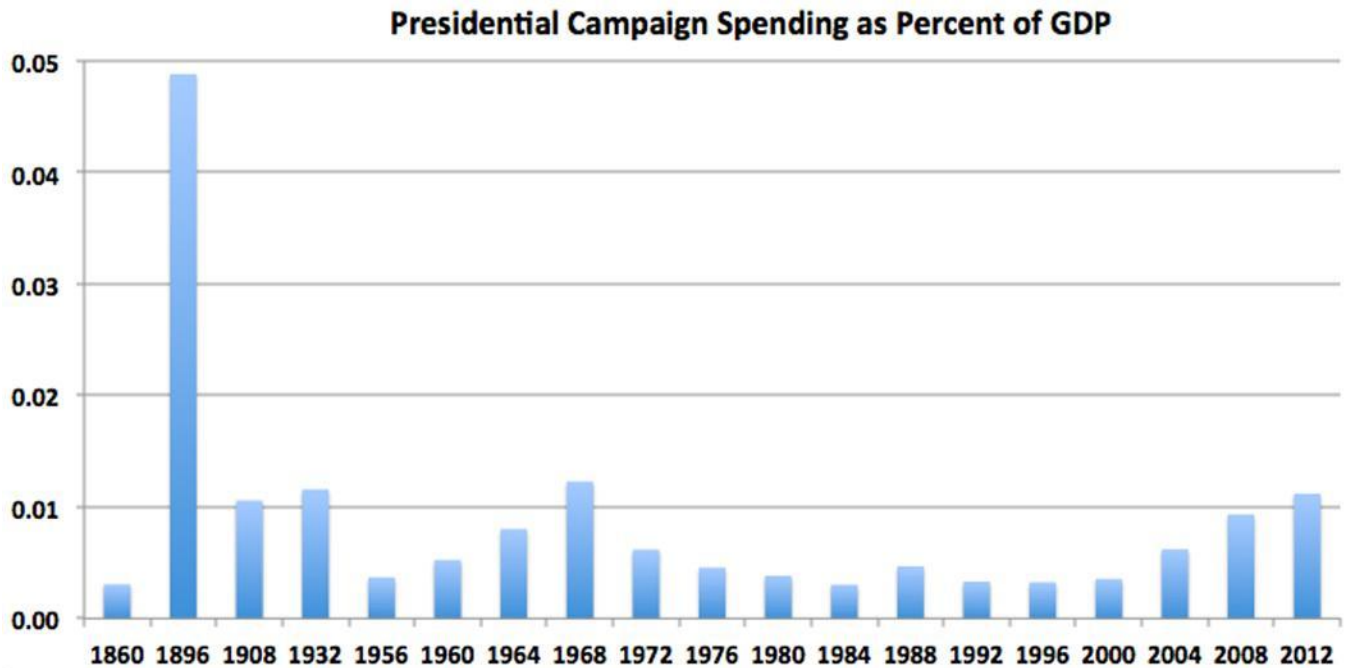
Alternatively you can pass out a [corporate power quiz](#) that was developed by Move to Amend and designed to elicit discussion. Here are [the answers](#) to the quiz.

At the very end of the class, distribute the [article rankings](#), [questions and talking points](#) for the first class of *Corporations, Democracy, & The Rise of Grassroots Popular Power* which is about elections.

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on corporate money in politics.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe another piece on corporate power and our election process.

Part 1 — CORPORATIONS, DEMOCRACY, & THE RISE OF GRASSROOTS POPULAR POWER  
Heart of Corporate Power Concerns & Taking Back our Democracy.



**CLASS 2: ELECTIONS**

**Campaign Finance, Election Integrity, Citizens United, Money in Electoral System  
Solutions — Move to Amend, Transparency, Publicly Financed Elections, Your Ideas**

**Purpose:** To illustrate how our electoral system is manipulated and made dysfunctional by corporate power and suggest grassroots solutions citizens can take to alleviate the problem.

**Materials**

**Readings:** [Justice Rising, Spring 2005, Creating Honest Elections: Problems, People, Solutions](#); [Summer 2011, Money in Democracy, Pt 1: Reclaiming Our Elections](#); [Fall 2016, The People's Vote Must Count](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions & Talking Points](#), [Article Rankings](#)

**Paradigm:** The common narrative is that our elections are honest and fair. This class brings participants face to face with the reality that money power is choosing the candidates, putting initiatives on the ballot, and manipulating the electoral process to produce results most beneficial to corporate and monied elites.

**Context:** Campaign finance has long been the central public concern about corporate money in politics. The roots of this crisis go back more than a century to the 1883 elimination of the spoils system — where government employees contributed to their party's campaign committees in order to keep their jobs.

This change occurred as huge monopolistic trusts were funneling mountains of cash into the coffers of wealthy corporations. As public opinion turned against trusts and public officials began enacting public policies that curbed corporate power, it became apparent to corporate executives that corporations had to take control of public-policy making. The vacuum left by the elimination of the spoils system offered them the perfect opportunity.

As the graphic at the beginning of this class description shows, money dominated the 1896 Presidential election. By that time the Populist Movement, at the heart of the pushback against corporate monopoly power, had elected governors and congressional candidates, and its Presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryant, was running as the Democratic Party standard bearer.

Corporate titans realized that their privileged position could be destroyed if Bryant became President. John D. Rockefeller's Cleveland, Ohio corporate cohort, Mark Hanna, headed up a powerful

corporate-funded political campaign for Republican Presidential nominee, Ohio Governor William McKinley. It raised far more money than had ever been raised before and out-fundraised the Democrats five to one. **The ability of corporations to flood the election with money allowed them to set public policy for years to come and established a fundraising model dependent on corporate money that increasingly dominates our elections.**

The Watergate scandal in the mid-1970s highlighted the corruption of the corporate-funded campaign system and pushed legislators to pass campaign finance reform laws. Within a few years, however, the Supreme Court abrogated those laws. **In Buckley v Valeo (1976) and First National Bank of Boston v Bellotti (1977), the court declared that money is equal to speech and gave corporations political speech rights, making it unconstitutional to limit corporate campaign spending.**

Republicans were the first to take advantage of this change, spending 10 times as much as the Democrats in the 1980 Congressional elections, taking control of the Senate for the first time in 26 years, gaining 35 seats in the House, and electing Republican Ronald Reagan to the Presidency.

Elizabeth Drew, chronicling this change for the *New Yorker*, pointed out that this push for money in political campaigns unfortunately led elected officials to spend an overwhelming amount of time raising campaign funds, giving us “politicians who are exhausted, who can’t think clearly, who don’t think about the broad questions... Who don’t lead.”

The Democrats cashed in on corporate funding during the Clinton years. This achievement allowed them to drop their dependence on the working class and labor unions. As Thomas Frank points out, “A form of corporate and cultural elitism has largely eclipsed the party’s old working-class commitment.” As wages have fallen and stock markets have surged, no major party is protecting the working class or confronting corporate power.

The Citizens United Supreme Court decision in 2010 essentially eliminated any restrictions on corporate money in elections, ratcheting up corporate spending in elections several notches. **Corporations can now influence elections by paying into “independent” non-profits that spend vast sums of money to both support and oppose candidates. Much of the money cannot be traced to its source.**

In 2012, millions of corporate dollars were spent on negative campaigning. Negative campaigning discourages citizens from voting, which is also part of the corporate strategy. **Corporate-funded voter suppression and gerrymandering of electoral districts compromise the integrity of our elections, and corporate electronic voting machines threaten the veracity of the vote count.**

Our electoral problems have risen to such an extent that the Supreme Court is now considering the constitutionality of gerrymandering while other courts are knocking down flagrantly oppressive voter ID laws. Staying one step ahead of these setbacks, corporate-friendly politicians are deleting thousands of names from voter rolls.

**Corporate influence over our election system has become so flagrant that a series of popular efforts has arisen to counter corporate power in our elections.** Move to Amend came into being on the day of the Citizens United decision. Almost 500,000 people have joined their effort to take away court-given corporate rights and to specify that money is not speech.

Their 28<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution is necessary if the important effort promoting publicly financed elections is ever going to be successful. The non-profit Public Campaign facilitates publicly financed elections. There are also extensive efforts by many groups, including the Sunlight Foundation, to bring transparency into the electoral process. Finally, the National Election Defense Coalition and many other citizen groups are coming together to create honest elections and end voter suppression.

**Activities:** Stories are the best teaching tools. People remember them. The best stories are your stories derived from your personal experiences. Come up with stories that reflect the information in the historical context above and use them to start a good class discussion.

It is also good to introduce some current stories on this topic. There is always something new. A good source for this type of article is the Center for Responsive Politics’ website [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org), the premier site for researching money in politics. For articles on election integrity, check out Bev Harris’s Black Box Voting, Jonathan Simon’s Election Defense Alliance or the National Election Defense Coalition. The *New York Times* has also done surprisingly comprehensive reporting on corporate money in politics.

We have put together several handouts for you to use in this class. First is a [chart on the impacts of Citizens United](#) that shows the spiraling increase of money coming into elections. Second is a chart that shows [the overwhelming dominance that Wall Street maintains](#) over campaign finance. You can either use these charts or go to The Center for Responsive Politics website at [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org) to get more up-to-date information and make your own charts.

You can also show the class one or several [videos on elections](#). The best one is probably David Cobb's *Crash Course* on corporations and elections. The video of David Daley discussing gerrymandering and the video of the Director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington also provide interesting information. Use all of these to stimulate engaging discussion in the class.

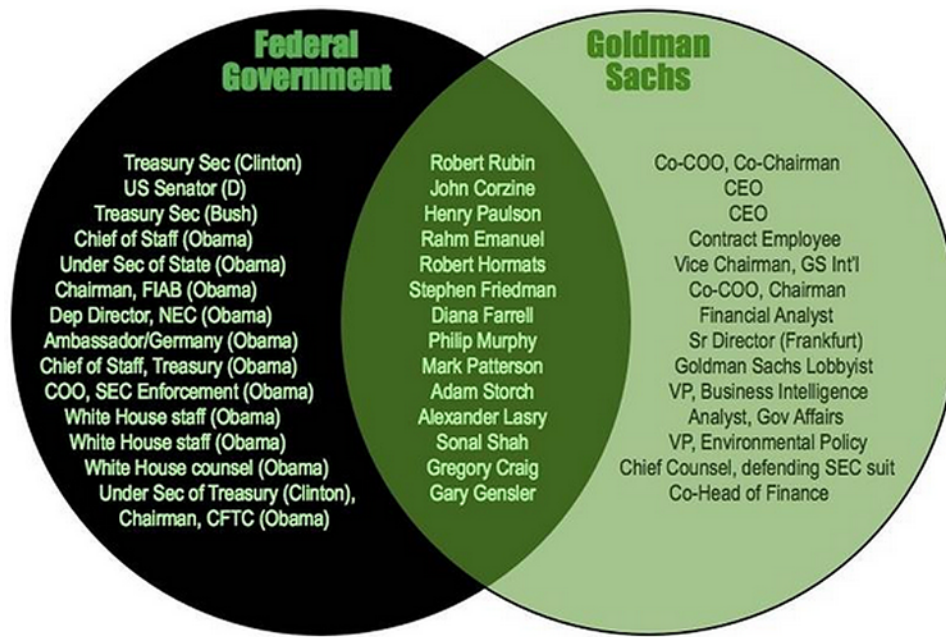
At the midway point in the class, take a break. In the second half of the class, use [the questions on elections](#) to stimulate discussion. Have students choose which questions they want to discuss. You, the facilitator, should also pick a few questions you think are most important to discuss. Use the [Notes on Answers](#) to help craft the discussions around each question. You may not get through all of the questions, but the discussion should be intriguing. Class participation is often the most engaging part of the class.

At the end of the class, pass out the [list of books](#) people can read if they want more in-depth knowledge on corporate money in elections. Finally, pass out the [questions and talking points](#) as well as the [article rankings](#) for the next class on policymaking, lobbying, and the revolving door.

Let us know if you have any questions about all of this. The day after the class, email the questions and reading priorities for the next class to everyone and include a current article on lobbying, think tanks, or the revolving door.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe another piece on corporate power and our public-policy-making process.

Part 1 — CORPORATIONS, DEMOCRACY, & THE RISE OF GRASSROOTS POPULAR POWER  
Heart of Corporate Power, Concerns & Taking Back our Democracy.



### CLASS 3: POLICY MAKING

#### Corporate Political Machine, Lobbying, Think Tanks, Revolving Door Solutions: Occupy, Citizen Engagement, Washington Action?

**Purpose:** To emphasize the central importance of corporate lobbying, think tanks, and the revolving door in corporate public-policy making. This class gives a contextual background on various ways corporations influence public-policy making. It also outlines some of the popular solutions to ensure that public policy is made for the common good and not for the corporate good.

#### Materials

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Winter, 2013, \\$ In Democracy Part 2, Who—or What—Occupies the Government Control Room?](#); [Spring 2013, \\$ in Democracy Part 3, Policymakers—Committed to Public Values or Corporate Agendas?](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions & Talking Points](#), [Article Rankings](#)

**Paradigms:** Citizens have a right to address their grievances to the government, and public employees should have a commitment to promote the common good. This class brings participants face-to-face with two realities:

- (1) Multi-national corporations have claimed our right to address our government and used that right to beleaguer elected officials and public servants with their special-interest lobbying; and
- (2) Corporate-friendly public administrators often create a corporation-to-government revolving door that puts corporate interests in the public policy driver's seat.

This corporate-funded revolving door uses Congress and public service as a training ground for future lobbyists, offering huge compensation when public servants leave government service.

**Context:** Public-policy making is the central operation of our political system, and it is important for citizens in an age of corporate power to understand how money power and corporate interests manipulate our political system.

**Wealthy Americans came out on top after the American Revolution.** John Hancock was the wealthiest man in America when he signed the Declaration of Independence, and George Washington was the wealthiest man in America when he became the first president of the United States. All hopes that the

American Revolution was for the common man who fought in the trenches were smashed by state laws that allowed only white male property owners to vote and by the defeat of Shays Rebellion in 1787.

The roots of Shay's Rebellion grew out of the first actions of the American Revolution in the early 1770s. In those years, farmers in Western Massachusetts got rid of the oppressive taxing and judicial system of the British Empire by surrounding British courthouses in their towns and making the British judge, hat in hand, walk the gauntlet of irate farmers and accept banishment from town. By the time of Lexington and Concord, all British authority had been vacated from Western Massachusetts and pushed into Boston.

Ten years later, with the United States an independent country, the farmers in Western Massachusetts were appalled when they discovered that now American legislators and judges were creating laws in their towns favoring the American upper class, leaving farmers once again burdened by unfair taxes.

In response, farmers again came together, bravely took over the courthouses, made the judges depart, and established their own local authority. Outraged, Boston merchants financed an army to defeat the farmers, bringing Shay's rebellion to an end. But that was not the end of the story.

The new American aristocracy throughout the United States felt frightened by the rebellion of the farmers and anxious about the inability of the federal government to raise an army to fight them. These concerns led a small group of prosperous, slave-owning, white men to secretly write the Constitution of the United States under the guise of rewriting the Articles of Confederation. The Constitution they proposed created a strong central government that could raise an army and protect the interests of the wealthy.

Jumping ahead to the 1960s, popular rebellions again shook the United States.

- A massive uprising to free blacks from the oppression they had long endured succeeded in removing many of the barriers that had kept them from voting.
- Women re-energized the movement for female liberation and began getting some legal control over their bodies.
- A massive anti-war movement forced the American Empire to retreat from its imperial war against the Vietnamese people and questioned the efficacy of the American military.

Culturally and politically, the corporate-financed political class was losing power. In 1973, Lewis Powell, a corporate, tobacco-lawyer from Virginia and president of the American Bar Association, started an aggressive corporate counterattack on the popular causes coming out of the 1960s. Powell sent **the now-famous Powell Memo to the US Chamber of Commerce encouraging corporate America to dominate public-policy making by taking over the electoral system, the courts, the universities, the media etc.**

After reviewing his plea, corporate America took action.

- Joseph Coors provided \$250,000 to start the Heritage Foundation.
- William E. Simon, Nixon and Ford's Treasury Secretary, became the head of the John M. Olin Foundation and formed a relationship with the Bradley, Scaife, and Smith Richardson Foundations to establish a stable of conservative think tanks and legal firms across the country to promote the public policies of the corporate right.

The various Scaife Foundations received their funding from investments of the Mellon family, including BNY Mellon Bank, Alcoa Aluminum, and Chevron. Richard Scaife, head of the Scaife Foundation, was vice president of the Heritage Foundation and granted it more than \$20 million. Like their fellow corporate-funded foundations, Scaife gave money to create an institution that met corporate needs.

The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation joined the Scaife Foundations in the early days of funding corporate-right think tanks. Their funding came from the military contractor Rockwell Inc. Their grantees include the American Enterprise Institute, The Hoover Institute, and the Federalist Society.

The corporate-right influence in Washington has also drawn traditionally liberal think tanks into their sphere. The Brookings Institute is the granddaddy of liberal think tanks. Now, "much of Brookings' top brass has come from Republican administrations," according to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, which then provides, "A brief sampling of some 138 corporate supporters: Bell Atlantic, Citibank, J.P. Morgan, Goldman Sachs, NationsBank, Exxon, Chevron, Microsoft, HP, Toyota, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, DuPont, Mobil and Lockheed Martin, and the foundations of companies like American Express, Travelers, AT&T, GM, ADM and McDonnell Douglas. A few media conglomerates, like Time Warner and the Washington Post Co., are among the donors."

Of course, there are also liberal think tanks that receive corporate money, but they do not usually spend it on promoting pro-corporate public policies. They may, however, still be part of the Washington consensus that promotes corporate empire. We will discuss the difference between the Republican and Democratic approaches to corporate empire in Part 4 on globalization

Examining one of the biggest roles of think tanks takes us back to the revolving door. Think tanks act as placeholders for political pundits who are waiting to have their corporate allies back in power again so they can revolve into a federal job. This is true of think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute as well as established think tanks like the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), which was founded by and always connected with the big New York banks. CFR has revolved almost all of the top State Department managers into their jobs for the past century.

Corporate-friendly think tanks manifested the agenda of the corporate right using democracy-friendly terms: Greed was replaced by “entrepreneurialism,” and the control of politics and the economy by monopolistic corporations was renamed the “free market.” They debilitated the regulatory system by promoting voluntary compliance and market-based solutions for regulatory policies. They also provided the media with free, corporate-friendly research articles and supplied government officials with corporate-friendly public policies ready to be enacted.

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which brought corporate CEOs, politicians and policy makers together to promote corporate-right legislation in states across the country, also rose out of this bubbling cauldron of corporate initiatives.

A few months after Lewis Powell wrote his memo to the Chamber of Commerce outlining how corporations could take over public policy making, he joined the US Supreme Court and strongly participated in the judicial decisions that made money equal to speech and gave corporations free speech rights enabling corporations to vastly expand their political campaign contributions.

All this set the groundwork for our current situation, with corporate-friendly regimes controlling both houses of Congress and a majority in the Supreme Court while a corporate CEO sits in the White House with a cabinet mainly made up of other corporate CEOs.

**Activities:** Telling the stories of Shay’s Rebellion and the Powell memo is a good introduction to elite control of our public-policy making. We do have videos on our [video list](#) that will help tell the story, but you may have to fill in some of the holes.

**Lobbying:** It would be great to start off the discussion of lobbying by showing the 14-minute section of *Sixty Minutes* of convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff after he got out of jail. It is one of the most straightforward descriptions of life in DC I have ever seen. You can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHiicN0Kg10>

You can amplify the discussion on lobbying with three charts we have developed. The first compares spending on [lobbying and campaign finance](#) and shows the increasing amount of money being spent on lobbying — almost seven times what is being spent on campaign finance. This chart also shows how dominant the money industry — sometimes called FIRE for finance, insurance and real estate — is in the lobbying world. My friends in Washington tell me that the most innocuous wording in a bill that might impact the money industry is descended upon by an army of lobbyists to wipe those words out of the law.

In these days of concern about climate change, the second chart shows the expanding [lobbying expenditures of the energy industry](#) as talk of climate change and carbon taxation grew in Washington. There is an article by Bill McKibben on this topic in the *Justice Rising* reading for this class.

The final chart shows the amount of money spent on lobbying along with the [number of registered lobbyists](#) in the past 18 years. It is significant that the number of lobbyists has dropped considerably, not because the number of people acting as lobbyists has declined, but that the number of people registering as lobbyists has declined. Here is a link to a revealing [article about John Boehner](#) after he quit Congress. He went to work for one of the largest lobbying firms in DC, Patton Boggs, headed by the son of ex-Congressman Hale Boggs. As you can tell from the story, he was hired as a lobbyist but is not registering as one. It is another odd mix of lobbying and the revolving door. The Center for Responsive Politics is the source of all of these charts and articles. You can find them at [Opensecrets.org](http://Opensecrets.org)



**Revolving Door:** We run into the revolving door between corporate wealth and public policy makers constantly in this course. It permeates the entire federal government. Here is a [chart](#) that shows how widespread the revolving door phenomenon is across industries and how many revolvers there are from each of the industries.

Even more revealing are Venn Diagrams that show the connections between the individual revolvers, the company or industry they are involved with, and the position they held or maybe still hold in the federal government. Here is a link to one about the [oil industry](#) and one about [Monsanto](#)

You can also show this segment about the revolving door from the *Bill Moyers Show*, which always has good information. <http://billmoyers.com/segment/bill-moyers-essay-washingtons-revolving-door/>

**Think Tanks:** Massive corporate foundation funding of a host of conservative think tanks with specific, pro-corporate agendas developed quickly out of the Powell Memo. Here are some charts from a Drexel University Study on the funding of climate-change-denying think tanks. The first one shows the [funding foundations](#). The largest funder on that chart, Donors Trust/Capital Trust, is an entity established in 1999 for people and foundations that want to remain totally anonymous. In this age of increasing political-money obscurity, the biggest donors to climate denial are secret. They make up 14% of the total donations, twice as much as the Scaife Foundations, the next largest donor.

The Kochs are the fourth biggest donors to the climate deniers. They have become infamous in recent years for contributing a lot of money to pro-corporate causes like Americans for Prosperity. Among their many pro-corporate grantees is the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) that brings corporate CEOs and allied state politicians together to create pro-corporate public policy.

The next chart shows the [climate denying think tanks](#) that received corporate-funded foundation largesse. As you can see, the largest recipients are the same think tanks that developed and grew after Powell wrote his memo in the early 1970s. The American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution, Manhattan Institute and Cato Institute received half the money paid out to climate denying think tanks. All these think tanks know what the corporate-funded foundations want and how to provide it.

By now it should be time to take a break. Follow that up with a discussion of the [questions](#) for the readings. Here are some [notes to the answers](#). Make sure that you also share the [list of books](#) for this class and pass out the [questions and article rankings](#) for the next class on courts and corporations. It would also be good to distribute a printed version of Jan Edwards' and Molly Morgan's article *Abolish Corporate Personhood* that you can access [here](#) or have the class access it at [http://www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/pdf/CP\\_article.pdf](http://www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/pdf/CP_article.pdf)

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on elite influence over the courts.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe a piece on corporate power and our courts.

Part 1 — CORPORATIONS, DEMOCRACY, & THE RISE OF GRASSROOTS POPULAR POWER  
Heart of Corporate Power Concerns & Taking Back Our Democracy.



**CLASS 4: COURTS**

**Elite Power, Personhood Rights Timeline**

**Solutions: Anti Federalists, Other Models of Judicial Systems, Citizen Engagement**

**Purpose:** Educate the class about how our judicial system, from the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS), to the federal appeals courts, down to the State Supreme Courts, is being utilized as a mechanism of corporate and monied elite power and what role “corporate personhood” plays in this process.

**Materials**

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Spring 2010, Courts and Corporations vs. Our Common Good](#), [Abolish Corporate Personhood by Jan Edwards and Molly Morgan](#),

**Handouts:** [Questions & Article Rankings](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** The common narrative is that judges are impartial and fair individuals above the common political fray. This class brings people face-to-face with the reality that **judges have long been politicians in robes and often arbiters on the side of wealth and power.**

**Context:** In the debate over the US Constitution, many American patriots were horrified that the new Constitution proposed an undemocratic, unaccountable, life-long Supreme Court that the patriots saw as a reinstatement of the monarchy, able to solve any conflict in favor of the elite.

As Jan Edwards and Molly Morgan point out in their piece *Corporate Personhood*, which is part of the readings for this class, “The pattern over more than two centuries of US legal history is that people acquire rights by amendment to the Constitution — a long and difficult, but democratic, process — and corporations acquire them by Supreme Court decisions.” They go on to say that “It is important to remember what a corporation is, to understand the implications of corporate personhood for democracy. A corporation is not a real thing; it’s a legal fiction, an abstraction. You can’t see or hear or touch or smell a corporation — it’s just an idea that people agree to and put into writing. Because legal personhood has been conferred upon an abstraction that can be redefined at will under the law, corporations have become super humans in our world.

- A corporation can live forever.
- It can change its identity in a day.
- It can cut off parts of itself — even its head — and actually function better than before.
- It can also cut off parts of itself and from those parts grow new corporations.
- It can own others of its own kind and it can merge with others of its own kind.

- It doesn't need fresh air to breathe or clean water to drink or safe food to eat.
- It doesn't fear illness or death.
- It can have simultaneous residence in many different nations.
- It's not male, female, or even transgendered.
- Without giving birth it can create children and even parents.
- If it's found guilty of a crime, it cannot go to prison."

Then they go on to ask, **"What would change if corporations did not have personhood? The first and main effect would be that a barrier would be removed that is preventing democratic change** just as the abolition of slavery tore down an insurmountable legal block, making it possible to pass laws to provide full rights to the newly freed slaves. After corporate personhood is abolished, new legislation will be possible. Here are a few examples.

- If 'corporate persons' no longer had First Amendment right of free speech, we could prohibit all corporate political activity, such as lobbying and contributions to political candidates and parties.
- If 'corporate persons' were not protected against search without a warrant under the Fourth Amendment, then corporate managers couldn't turn OSHA and the EPA inspectors away if they make surprise, unscheduled searches.
- If 'corporate persons' weren't protected against discrimination under the 14th Amendment, corporations like Wal-Mart couldn't force themselves into communities that don't want them."

Our current Supreme Court, which gave us the Citizens United decision in 2010, is the culmination of a long push stimulated by the money and political drive coming out of the Powell Memo. Starting in that period there was a coordinated drive to change law schools and legal thinking in the direction of free market analysis and libertarianism.

**The Federalist Society, founded by Reagan's Attorney General and promoted by deceased Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, acts as the biggest provocateur constructing the conservative legal movement.** It gives lip service to returning to the original intent of the country's founders, but it fails to renounce later judicial decisions that increased the power of money in this country, including the acceptance of corporate personhood, the concept that money is equal to speech and all of the corporate rights that allow corporations to dominate our public-policy making.

The financial backing for the Federalist Society has come from the Scaife Family Foundations, the Koch brothers, Chevron, and Google. It is openly acknowledged that without their support the Federalist Society would have never come into being.

Many groups are working to solve the problems the pro-corporate, conservative legal movement has created. The group **Move to Amend (MTA) is promoting one of the primary solutions.** Founded in response to the Citizen United decision in 2010, it is a coalition of hundreds of citizen groups determined to pass a Constitutional amendment, (the 28<sup>th</sup>), to end corporate personhood and make sure that money is not considered equal to speech in our laws. They have 54 chapters in 16 states. Check out their website at <https://movetoamend.org/>

There are many ways people can get involved with Move to Amend, including:

- Forming a local group;
- Passing a local resolution in support of the Constitutional amendment;
- Signing the petition in support of the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment;
- Stamping your money with any of several messages such as, "A Corporation is Not a Person, Money is Not Speech" or "Not to be Used For Bribing Politicians."

There are many groups working to resolve the problems of the Citizens United decision, but none of them covers the corporate personhood and money as speech issues like Move to Amend. Free Speech for the People, <https://freespeechforpeople.org/> and American Promise, <http://www.americanpromise.net/> support an amendment that would limit corporate rights but do not necessarily take on the money as speech issue or push to take away all judicially created corporate rights. All these groups are working together and the thinking seems to be that in the end there will be consensus on what will work best. They all address different constituencies. American Promise brings together a long list of prominent politicians. Free Speech for the People is headed by long-time voter rights advocate John Bonifaz and brings the voters rights groups into the discussion. You can check them all out but beware of other groups who just use the Citizens

United issue as a fund-raising tool and are not committed to pursuing the tough changes needed to control corporate power.

The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund takes another approach. It has written an ordinance for local governments to take charge of their elections and end corporate personhood in their jurisdictions. See their section on corporate rights and read their ordinance at their website [www.celdf.org](http://www.celdf.org)

**Activities:** There are two major activities for this class. The first is a discussion of the connection between Supreme Court judges and America's monied elite. It uses the center section from *Justice Rising* Vol. 5 #3 regarding three Supreme Courts as a starting point for discussion. You can download it [here](#) and have it printed out on a 36" plotter. It shows the history and make-up of:

- The original US Supreme Court;
- The Supreme Court of the 1880s that cemented corporate personhood as a legal precedent;
- The current Roberts court.

It is a startling confirmation that the Supreme Court has long supported the power of the monied elite. Here are [notes for talking about the center section presentation](#).

The second important activity for this class is a discussion of the ways that corporations have gained rights over the past 250-years as opposed to the way citizens have gained rights over that same period. This discussion uses the Timeline of Corporate and Human Rights, which shows various court cases where corporate-friendly judges gave corporations rights and the huge social movements that had to develop to give citizens more rights. This timeline can be printed out on [a series of 8.5x11](#) sheets of paper. However, you can also download larger presentation versions at <https://movetoamend.org/timeline>. Depending on the wall space available, the 26" tall version is best for presentations but ends up being about 17 feet long. Choose one and have it printed out on a plotter. Mount it on the wall before the class begins so that people can inspect it when they have time. Here are [notes for discussing the Timeline](#), but you can also choose your own cases to talk about.

If you can, invite a speaker from Move to Amend or any of the other groups to talk about what they are doing. If not, you can certainly show MTA's 30-minute video, *Legalize Democracy*, to the class. You can find it at <https://movetoamend.org/toolkit/legalize-democracy-discussion-guide>

These discussions can easily take up the first part of the class. If you run out of time, you can always talk about the solutions in the second part of the class. Take a break in the middle. In the second part of the class, discuss the [questions](#) for the readings. Here are some [notes for discussing those questions](#).

Since the questions do not cover the piece on *Corporate Personhood* by Jan Edwards and Molly Morgan, it would also be good to discuss that document. Here are some [notes on the most important ideas](#) in that article.

Before the end of the class, present this [list of books](#) for further reading on courts and corporations. Before everyone leaves, pass out the [talking points, questions and article rankings](#) for the next class, which is the first class in Part 3: *Crisis of Economics and Visions for the Future* and looks at *Climate Change, Resource Depletion and Global Pollution*.

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone—and include a current article on corporate money in politics.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe a piece on the machinations of our corporate-dominated economic system.

## PART 2 — ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY OR CORPORATE HEGEMONY

### Divine Right of Capital & Economic Democracy

**Purpose:** The section on Economic Democracy or Corporate Hegemony develops out of the first section on Money and Democracy, which clearly established that in our wealth-dominated political system, money is power. This section on economics investigates where the economic system came from, how the economic system works, and how the unseen costs of the economy are causing the biggest problems faced by humans today. This section then looks at how we can develop an economic system that accounts for the unseen costs of the current system and build a healthy and happy future for both people and planet

**Paradigm:** Classical economic theory says that we can be as greedy as we want and an invisible hand will manage human activities and nature to maximize the happiness and health of all. The reality, however, is that the invisible hand is a hoax and a system run on greed depletes our natural resources, destroys our natural system, and subjects people to an alienating wage and production system that has been decreasing happiness for the past half century.

### CLASS 5: CRISIS OF ECONOMICS & VISIONS FOR A NEW ECONOMY

#### Failed Economic Assumptions, Inequality & Alienation

Solutions: Localization/Regionalization, Solidarity Economy, Restoration Economy



**Purpose:** This class reveals the origins of our current system that came from the avaricious minds of London stockbrokers at the height of the British Empire. It then shows the damage this system has wrought on people and the planet and suggests alternative economic solutions that would help build a healthy future for all.

#### Materials

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Fall 2007, Moving from Corporate Extraction to the Grassroots Restoration Economy](#); Fall 2010, [Building an Economy for People and Nature](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions & Article Rankings](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** Classical economic theory says that we are all small producers with little power over the market, which will drive us to do the right thing for each other and the planet. The reality is that we live in a world

of oligopolistic capitalism, where a tiny number of huge multi-national corporations manipulate markets, public policy, and income distribution for their own good, ignoring policies that would promote the common good.

**Context:** At the height of the British Empire in the early 1800s, London stockbrokers like David Ricardo and James Mills — father of renowned economist John Stuart Mills — developed classical economic theory from the biased assumptions of moneychangers. Corporations use those biased theories as the basis for their operations. For two hundred years, corporatist economists have held to those false assumptions to convince the public that the neo-liberal, corporate, free-trade agenda is in tune with human nature and the laws of the universe. They are not.

Here are three fallacious assumptions of classical and neo-classical economics that are causing our biggest problems on the earth today. They are only the beginning of the false assumptions.

- False assumption 1: Our natural resources will go on forever and are replaceable:

Leads to:

- Resource depletion
- Species extinction

Causing:

- Wars
- Mass migrations
- Social and cultural destruction

- False assumption 2: Nature and natural systems have no inherent value

Leads to:

- Climate change
- Ocean acidification
- Top soil depletion

Causing:

- Threats to human survival
- Death of ocean life
- Starvation for terrestrial life

- False assumption 3: The invisible hand of the market will allocate economic resources, human activity, and nature for the maximum benefit of all humanity

Leads to:

- Extreme wealth inequality
- Poisoning of the planet
- Domestic slavery

Causing:

- Destruction of our democracy
- Poverty and human despair
- Epidemic spread of deadly diseases
- Oppression of women

As Martin Luther King pointed out decades ago about societies that accept this fate: “People find themselves oppressed by increasing frustration, alienation, insecurity and so forth...When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

As the fallaciousness of these assumptions becomes increasingly evident, more and more people are realizing that we must envision and implement a new economy that:

- Works for everyone
- Serves the common good
- Promotes a healthy planet, healthy products and healthy people

Economists like E.F. Schumacher and Herman Daly began working on these problems years ago. Schumacher wrote the seminal books *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered* and *A Guide*

for the *Perplexed* in the 1970s. He came up with what he called Buddhist Economics by which everyone has meaningful work, "production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life," and technology should be appropriate to local resources as well as ecologically suitable to the size of the community.

Herman Daly served as editor of *Toward a Steady-state Economy* in the 1970s and as senior environmental economist at the World Bank in the '80s and '90s. In the same period he developed the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare to replace Gross National Product accounting and co-wrote the seminal book *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*. From there he moved on to develop Ecological Economics. That system posits economics as a subset of the larger global environmental system where preservation of natural capital is the primary goal. This movement has become global through the International Society of Ecological Economics. See <http://www.isecoeco.org/>

Since the late 1990s there has also been a growing international movement focused on the idea of Social Solidarity Economy (SSE), "...an ethical and values-based approach to economic development that prioritizes the welfare of people and planet over profits and blind growth. In an SSE, ordinary people play an active role in shaping all of the dimensions of human life: economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental. SSE has the ability to take the best practices that exist in our present system and transform them to serve the welfare of the community, based on common good values and goals."

The Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy operates across five continents and has working chapters in dozens of countries. It presents a very successful model of what the global economy could look like in the future using institutions that exist today. More information is available at <http://www.riposs.org/> or <https://ussen.org/>,

There are also many other groups that are working to create a new economy. They include the Next System Project (<http://thenextsystem.org/>), The New Economy Coalition (<http://neweconomy.net/>), and Economics: The Next Evolution of Economics (<http://evonomics.com>).

**Activities:** Start the class with an overview as presented above and then move into the PowerPoint *Economics: Dismal Science or Prescription for Happiness* which examines the origins of our insidious economic system from the thinking of London stockbroker David Ricardo, and discusses solutions that can save the planet. You can download the [PowerPoint](#) and [notes for the PowerPoint](#) here. When you open the PowerPoint, it should show a file of the slides and notes for each slide. Print this out as a script for the PowerPoint. Then go to the "slide show" pull down menu and go to "view slide show" to show the PowerPoint. You can also modify the PowerPoint to better reflect your local economy and circumstances. Let us know if you want any help with this or have any questions about the PowerPoint. At the end of the PowerPoint you should have a question and answer period so people can talk about what they have just seen.

If you have time, you can also show the class a video from the [list of videos](#). They include:

- Richard Heinberg on the limits to growth;
- One that explains the new designation of B Corporations, whereby corporate managers include environmental impacts and social responsibility in the corporation's bottom line;
- Four videos on the Solidarity Economy. Those featuring Nancy Neamtan and Daniel Tygel and the UN meeting on the Solidarity Economy are particularly good.

It is important that you help everyone understand all the economic alternatives being talked about. You can highlight the Social Solidarity Economy and show the developing map of the US Solidarity economy at <http://solidarityeconomy.us/>. We are working on mapping all the solidarity economy enterprises in our county. But that is a different course. Let us know if you want more information about this mapping project.

After the break, move on to the [questions](#). Notes on the answers for the questions are [here](#). Remember to mention the fine collection of books that deal with classical economics and creating an economy for the future. You will find them listed [here](#). Before class is over, remember to hand out the [questions and rankings](#) and [talking points](#) for the next class, *Banking Failure of 2008 & Public Control of the Money Supply*.

The day after the class, email the talking points, questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on our failing economic policies.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and attach the talking points, questions and reading priority, and maybe a piece on the power of Wall Street.



PART 2 — ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY OR CORPORATE HEGEMONY?  
Divine Right of Capital & Economic Democracy



**CLASS 6: MONETARY SYSTEM FAILURE OF 2008 & PUBLIC CONTROL OF THE MONEY SUPPLY**

**History of Money, Private vs. Public Control of Our Money Supply**

**Purpose:** This class takes a serious look at money, what it is, where it comes from, and how we can get it to work for the betterment of all of us rather than just the 1%.

**Materials**

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Winter 2009, Money for People Not Corporate Plunder](#); [Spring 2009, Deglobalization/Relocalization](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions & Article Rankings](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** We are told that the only way to get money is to work hard for it and that certain people have a lot of money because they produced something of value for the rest of us. The reality, however, is that the banks and the Federal Reserve, a private/public undertaking driven by the big banks, create money out of thin air and distribute it to their supporters and friends.

**Context: Our monetary system is a public common.** We depend upon our monetary system to enable a stable and secure economic future with meaningful jobs, livable wages and secure housing. Policy makers have understood the importance of public control of the monetary system since the dawn of civilization.

Money's origin comes from our concept of value. Policy makers initially created monetary value to provide compensation for horrific human events. They used cows as currency to mitigate human tragedy, e.g., two cows from one clan for the grief and loss they caused around the death of a member of another clan. Public authorities administered these exchanges to maintain peace within communities.

The popular narrative is that before humans used money they utilized a barter-based economy. The reality appears to be that barter was rarely used. People simply took care of each other. It was essentially a gifting economy.

Public authorities developed the first money to finance public undertakings that distributed money to the general populace who needed some of that money to pay the taxes that the public authorities collected. Greece, the Middle East, and China created some of the first successful monetary systems to promote trade in their domains and along the Silk Road trade route.

Throughout history public authorities kept a tight rein over their monetary systems to guard against counterfeiters and chiselers who constantly attempted to make monetary systems work for their own private good rather than the common public good. Government administrators also guarded the money supply because they knew that money was power. Owning a lot of money is like owing a lot of robotic slaves. Money can build infrastructure and provide services for the public good or can be used to rape, pillage and rob the vulnerable and unsuspecting. Without a public guardian of the money supply, there is no protection of the common good or the vulnerable and unsuspecting.

**Private bankers took control of the money supply in the late 1600s when wealthy financiers of the British Empire forced the king to give their private Bank of England control over the public monetary system.** After 250 years of rancorous political discord over private control of the English monetary system, British public authorities brought the monetary system back under public control in 1946.

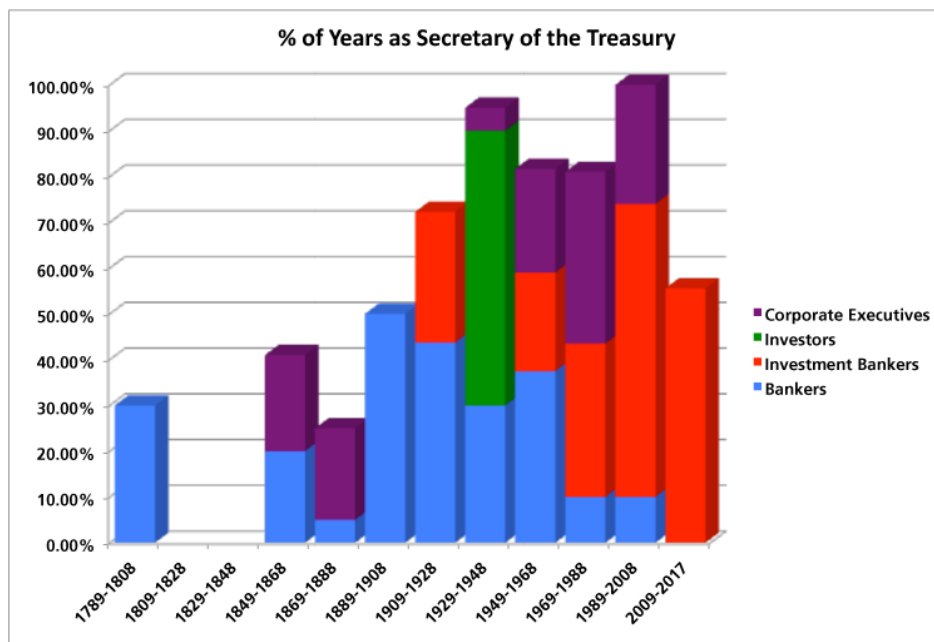
The battle for control over the monetary system of the United States has been equally rancorous. When the first Treasurer of the United States, banker Alexander Hamilton, enriched his Wall Street brethren with insider information, America's farmers and soldiers were so enraged that only a few bankers served as the Secretary of the Treasury over the next century.

Hamilton followed that up by proposing the first Bank of the United States, largely funded by his British clients. This bank took control of US monetary policy and so enraged its critics that congress did not renew its charter in 1811. By 1816 however, a Second Bank of the United States was chartered by Congress and fierce fights raged again over the authority of the privately run bank to control monetary system. President Andrew Jackson ended that practice, declaring to the private bankers, "You are a den of vipers and thieves. I intend to rout you out." And he did.

**Private bankers again took over the US monetary system after corporate wealth began financing our elections in 1896.** They installed their own policy makers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who depended on big bankers to bail the government out. Creation of the Federal Reserve System (the Fed) in 1913 marked the institutional beginning of private bankers regaining official control over our monetary system. Congress established the Fed as a system of twelve regional banks run by the private national banks in their regions and the Central Federal Reserve Bank in Washington DC, which is administered by both the regional banks and presidential appointees. Due to the power of the big banks to dominate the actions of the regional Fed banks, Fed decision-making is heavily influenced by the biggest private banks.

The power of the big banks over the Fed has been amplified in recent years by a trend of appointing Wall Street bankers to be presidents of the regional Fed banks. William C. Dudley, a former managing director of Goldman Sachs and president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, is the vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and a permanent member of the influential Open Markets Committee, which is in charge of US Monetary Policy.

**Augmenting corporate control of monetary policy by the Fed has been the take over of the Treasury Department by bankers, investors, corporate executives and investment bankers.** The chart below shows the evolution of Treasury Secretaries from non-bankers to bankers and corporate executives, and then to investors and investment bankers, who are essentially speculative gamblers. Investment bankers regulating the monetary system resemble foxes guarding the hen house. Even after the 2008 financial crisis both Presidents Obama and Trump continued to appoint investment bankers to be the Secretary of the Treasury, our chief monetary system policy maker.



The salient events in monetary policymaking of the past century were taking the dollar off the gold standard and having the Fed issue Reserve Notes backed only by the faith of the American people. It is a faith supported by the subliminal message in our consumer-based economy that money is God. Unfortunately, it is a god without a soul or values, allowing private banks and financial institutions to print unlimited quantities of money. As long as the faith of Americans in the dollar holds strong and private bankers control the money supply, wealthy investors will gain power over the making of public policy, which impacts all of our lives. Amazingly, when Wall Street greed and lax regulatory enforcement by their Wall Street brethren in the government caused the monetary system to blow up in 2008, the faith of Americans in their monetary system held firm **even though, jobs evaporated, wages sank, businesses went broke, and millions lost their homes.** The investment bankers running the monetary system bailed out their banks and wealthy friends, leaving everyone else to struggle. Besides the bailouts, their stimulus policy of quantitative easing produced \$80 billion dollars a month and sent it to the banks to further enrich their executives. They should have sent checks to all American citizens, which would have had a much stronger stimulus effect on the economy.

The increased money supply from quantitative easing also raised the value of stocks and bonds, allowing wealthy investors to grow richer as asset prices rose. **As central actors in most major financial transactions, bankers grow rich by siphoning off a tiny percentage of the money from each transaction. Meanwhile, wage earners suffer from a stagnant pay scale, creating an income inequality not seen since the feudal ages.**

The bailouts were based on the fact that the bank-friendly public policy makers claimed our biggest financial institutions were too-big-to-fail. If they were too big to fail then, will the taxpayers have to bail them out again in a future financial crisis?

One devious scenario is that the banks will perform a bail-in where they take depositor money and convert it into stock of the failing bank. This first happened in Cyprus in 2013 and has been contemplated as public policy by Canada, Cyprus, New Zealand, the US, the UK, and Germany. This could devastate a lot of people's bank accounts.

The best way to solve the too-big-to-fail dilemma is to get investment bankers out of our regulatory agencies and for everyone in America to put their money into small local banks or credit unions. Some regulators are confident that they could break up the big banks smoothly, but their Wall-Street friendly bosses are not about to give them a chance.

The big banks could also be converted to public banks. This makes sense once banks have so much control over the monetary system that they present a systemic risk to all of society. Big banks should then become part of the commons and no longer belong in the private sphere. Our democracy is about people as power, not money as power.

**Activities:** There are several movies that provide a comprehensive picture of what happened during the financial crisis, including *The Big Short* and *Inside Job*. Some of the best analysis came from Matt Taibbi, investigative journalist for *Rolling Stone Magazine*. You can see [videos with him](#) here. The best is probably the one with Bernie Sanders. It is over an hour long, but I have identified several excerpts that you could play for the class. Another clear voice on the causes of the crisis is Sheila Bair, the past head of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, who proved to be one of the few public policymakers looking out for the public good during the financial crisis. Here are [several links](#) to her presentations.

One of the most important points to understand is how banks create money under the fractional reserve banking system. Here is a list of [videos on the hocus pocus](#) way that banks create money. The video *How Banks Create Money and the Money Multiplier* is probably the best. There is also a video of Glenn Beck giving a forthright analysis of the Federal Reserve System

As a result of the 2008 crisis, the largest banks have increased in size, particularly the biggest four. Here is a [chart](#) you can print and hand out showing how much they have grown. JP Morgan Chase has grown by 57%, while Wells Fargo grew by almost 270%. Much of their growth came from the 35 banks they have swallowed up since 1990. JP Morgan's growth is mainly due to its purchase of Washington Mutual and Bear Stearns at bargain prices during the 2008 crisis, while Wells Fargo bought the much larger Wachovia, and Bank of America bought Countrywide and Merrill Lynch. Wells Fargo also became infamous for trying to stimulate growth by creating thousands of fraudulent accounts without account holder permission.

At this point, take a break and then come back to deal with all of the [questions](#) for the class. You can use the [notes on the answers](#) to guide the discussion. It would also be good to talk about some of the [best books](#) on money. In the last few minutes of the class pass out the [questions and article rankings](#) as well as the [talking points](#) for the next class on *Public Banking and Other Solutions*.

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on the power of Wall Street.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and article rankings for the next class, *Public Banking and Other Solutions*. Include a piece on public banking or the health of your local economy.

PART 2 — ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY OR CORPORATE HEGEMONY?  
Divine Right of Capital and Economic Democracy



**Class 7: SOLUTIONS TO ECONOMIC CRISIS: PUBLIC BANKING & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**  
**Solutions: Public Banking, Solidarity Economy, Other Local Models**

**Purpose:** To look at local initiatives creating new economic models and systems.

**Materials**

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Spring 2014, Public Banking: Creating Jobs, Building Communities, & Reclaiming the Commons](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions & Article Ranking](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** The narrative from Wall Street and academia is that our privately run economy works for the betterment of everyone and that public control of our money supply will ruin it. The reality is that public control of the money supply and other economic models would provide a happier and more sustainable future.

**Context:** The current movement to create public banks to recapture the monetary system for the common good began with the publication of Ellen Brown's book *Web of Debt* in 1994. **Following the financial crisis in 2008, interest in public banking exploded as people sought an alternative to our private banking system.**

In the 2008 crisis, private banking ruined our monetary system, leaving millions of people both homeless and unemployed. Interest in public banking as an alternative led to the establishment of the Public Banking Institute in 2010. In the spring of 2014, *Justice Rising* collaborated with the Public Banking Institute to produce *Public Banking: Creating Jobs, Building Communities and Reclaiming the Commons*, the reading material for this class. Now there are 21 states with initiatives to start a public bank in their state or community.

There is also a movement to create US Postal Banks using the US Postal Service. In the past the Postal Service has offered a variety of banking services including savings accounts to underserved Americans. There is a movement to re-establish those services supported by a wide variety of groups. For more information go to <http://www.campaignforpostalbanking.org/>

**There are many other groups working to set up alternative economic models. One of them is Transition Town, a global movement that is looking at ways to reinvent local economies by organizing locally.** It "is a vibrant, grassroots movement that seeks to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change, and the economic crisis. It represents one of the most promising ways to engage people in strengthening their communities against the effects of these challenges,

resulting in a life that is more abundant, fulfilling, equitable, and socially connected.” Started in England by Rob Hopkins, it now has over 160 official affiliates in the US and numerous unofficial affiliates.

Economic localization is another global movement to create an economy for the common good. **The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE)** <https://bealocalist.org/> **has been on the forefront of the localization movement for the past two decades.** The localization movement often focuses on building a local food movement and is responsible for the proliferation of farmers markets around the world, many farm-to-school and farm-to-table programs, and community-supported agriculture. A slow money movement has developed to help finance this change. Class 8 on Food and Health will concentrate on local food.

Activities: **Start by looking at local initiatives for establishing a public bank.** To find local initiatives, see page 16 of the Justice Rising on Public Banking. If there is an initiative in your state, invite a speaker to your class. If there is no local chapter, you could invite someone from the Public Banking Institute or Marc Armstrong from Commonomics to address your class. Or show one of the many videos from the Public Banking Institute website. A list of three of the best is [here](#).

One interesting rationale for starting a public bank is to service an industry that is now underserved. This could range from the marijuana industry to the local homeless population. Discuss if there is an underserved population in your community and how either a public bank or perhaps a postal bank could change that.

You should also present at least one other presentation. One of our favorites is **a presentation by a panel of people involved in the local food network.** This can include local farmers, farmers’ market representatives, or local storeowners who sell local food. There are many passionate and articulate people involved in this phenomenon. If you cannot find anyone to speak on this topic, click [here](#) for a short list of relevant videos.

If there is a Transition Town group near you, there would probably be a representative happy to talk to the class. You can see a map and list at <http://www.transitionus.org/transition-towns>. You could also show some videos. [Here](#) are several good ones, including one from Houston where petrochemical engineers are moving into the new era.

These presentations and discussions may take up the entire class. Hopefully you will have time to go over the questions. You should also talk about this [list](#) of books on public control of the monetary system. Finally, remember to pass out the [questions](#), [article rankings](#) and [talking points](#) for the next class, *Climate Change, Resource Depletion, and Global Pollution*, the first in Part 3: *Saving The Environment From Corporate Destruction*. The day after the class, email the talking point, questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on corporate impacts on the environment.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again, attach the talking points, questions and reading priorities and maybe another piece on corporate impact on the environment.

**PART 3 — SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT FROM CORPORATE DESTRUCTION**  
**Market Failure Imperils Our World; Rights of Nature Are Mandatory**



**CLASS 8: CLIMATE CHANGE, RESOURCE DEPLETION & GLOBAL POLLUTION**

**Regulatory Capture, Energy Ownership, Overconsumption**  
**Solutions: Rights of Nature, Promote Ecological responsibility**

**Purpose:** To show the systemic dysfunction of the corporate-run political and economic systems that degrade the environment and present solutions so communities can protect themselves from corporate environmental devastation.

**Material**

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Summer, 2007, Corporate Destruction of Nature & Grassroots Solutions to Save the Planet](#); [Summer 2008, Corporate Energy or Grassroots Power](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions](#), [Article Rankings](#), and [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** The free market narrative is that (1) The environment will take care of itself, (2) The health of natural systems is not important and (3) The resources of the planet will go on forever. **The reality is that these fallacious assumptions of classical economic theory are depleting the vital resources of the planet and destroying the environment as well as the natural systems pivotal to our survival.**

**Context:** Visions of Earth from space began a great alteration of human consciousness. Every astronaut came back a changed person. Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon, founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences that melds scientific understanding with our awareness that we are all part of nature, living on a small planet in the vastness of the universe.

The major point of this class is that the challenges we experience because of climate change, resource depletion, and global pollution are not due to a few rogue actors who clear cut the trees or pollute the rivers or dump carbon into the atmosphere, but to the inherent incentives and operational principles of our economic and political systems that grant rights to corporations that supersede our rights as citizens to protect our environment.

Most people take this course because they are concerned about the future of our planetary environment. **The primary strategies for creating a vibrant environmental future are to assert community rights to protect the air, water, and soil, and give rights to nature.** This, coupled with correcting the systemic dysfunctions of our economic and political systems, will build a long-term, sustainable future for all life on earth.

There are many incidents of horrific corporate activity that damage our air, water, or soil, or deplete resources. Your area probably has closed industrial sites harboring toxic wastes that cause cancer or other serious health damage.

Natural resource extraction operations or other corporate projects regularly destroy the land and create horrific environmental devastation. They are driven by systemic factors like maximizing production and minimizing costs. It is the system that makes corporate managers implement destructive policies. The

best solutions, therefore, also have to be systemic, like mandating social and environmental responsibility, which are now often absent from corporate thinking.

I worked for years on a mill-site clean-up project in Fort Bragg, California. We dealt with the corporation, the regulators, and the community. Our experience was that the corporation glossed over the problem. We had to solicit information from former employees to present the regulators with the true story. Regulators, however, are often subject to extreme political pressure from their superiors to back off of making corporations clean up the environmental messes they make, or desist from devastating the existing environment.

Local elected officials, in turn, have to hold regulators accountable for making sure that toxics are cleaned up and that the environment is as strong and healthy as possible. To make sure this happens **Citizens have to hold their public officials accountable for building a vibrant environmental future with plentiful renewable resources.**

I have also been involved with the people of Junin, Ecuador who have fought the construction of a copper mine for 20 years. In addition to burning down the mining camp twice and facing down armed corporate thugs, they have been tracking the pollution created by mining activities and are actively building sustainable enterprises to give the local people an economic alternative to working for the mine. They are a great example of strong community action.

There are also positive public policies communities can utilize to protect their environment. One of the best strategies for protecting the local environment from corporate destruction is community rights organizing. **The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) pioneered community rights public policies** when they helped small towns in central Pennsylvania stop corporate hog farms from poisoning their communities. Since then, they have spread their approach around the world, helping towns establish community bills of rights that protect people from corporations poisoning their air, water, and soil. They have developed a particular legal wording that institutes a community bill of rights and denies corporations constitutional rights. In order to challenge these ordinances in courts, corporations have to argue that they have superior rights to pollute a community's air water and soil, which they no doubt do not want to do. This has proved to be an effective deterrent from legal challenges and always creates what CELDF's founder, Tom Linzey, calls a teachable moment.

CELDF will also come to your community and hold a [Democracy School](#). "Democracy School explores the limits of conventional regulatory organizing and offers a model that helps citizens confront the usurpation of the rights of communities, people, and earth by corporations. Lectures cover the history of people's movements and corporate power, and the dramatic organizing over the last decade in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Ohio, Colorado, Washington, and Oregon by communities confronting agribusiness, the oil and gas industry, corporate hegemony over worker rights, etc."

**Activities:** Concentrate on local examples of corporate environmental destruction that people can relate to personally. Invite people who are working on these local environmental problems to talk to the class. People in the class could also take on a local environmental problem and address it as a class project.

[Here](#) is a list of videos that cover these topics. One of them is a documentary on Javier Ramirez, the leader of the community effort in Junin, Ecuador to stop the construction of a copper mine that would decimate their community

Explore initiating a community rights ordinance in your town. Check out the website of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, [celdf.org](http://celdf.org) Talk about their **chemical trespass** ordinance with information at <https://celdf.org/rights/issues/chemical-trespass/> and their push to create [rights for nature](#). Here are some [CELDF videos](#) that you can show to familiarize people with CELDF's work.

Show Naomi Klein's movie *This Changes Everything* about capitalism, our climate, and the global movement that is rising to save the Earth, as we know it. We have a copy you could borrow.

Take a break at a mid-class point and move on to the [questions](#) and [responses to those questions](#) for the last part of the class. Also hand out this [list of books](#) on Climate Change, Resource Depletion and Global Pollution. Do not forget to pass out the [questions](#), [article rankings](#) and [talking points](#) for the next class on *The Commons*.



The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on corporate environmental destruction.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe another piece on The Commons.

PART 3 — SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT FROM CORPORATE DESTRUCTION  
Market Failure Imperils Our World; Rights of Nature Are Mandatory



**Class 9: THE COMMONS**  
**Privatization, Tapestry of The Commons, Commodification**  
**Solutions: Community Rights, CELDF, and Rights of Nature**

**Purpose:** To explore and understand the importance of The Commons to all of our lives, with a special focus on water. We look at the historical context of The Commons, as well as the threat that corporate privatization of The Commons poses to the well being of all living species.

**Materials**

Readings: *Justice Rising*, [Spring 2006, Reclaiming The Commons from the Jaws of Corporate Privatization](#); [Summer 2006, Water for Life Not Corporate Profit](#)

Handouts: [Questions](#), [Article Rankings](#), [Talking Points](#), [Gifts from Nature](#), [Gifts from Our Ancestors](#), [Water, A Natural Commons](#), [Books on The Commons](#), [Videos on the Commons](#)

**Paradigm:** Market-promoting zealots of Austrian Economics seized upon Garret Hardin's 1968 article, "The Tragedy of the Commons," to convince the world that everything should be privatized and that "the common good" is nonsensical. The reality is that well-managed Commons are essential for human survival.

**Context:** We are all part of nature, sharing in common many aspects of the world that are vital to our existence. All elements of our natural environmental commons, from the climate system to the water we drink, provide the physical context for our existence. The Commons also include the cultural environment our lives are built upon, including socio-economic institutions such as our democracy and our monetary system that we all depend upon for our wellbeing.

In these days of climate change, resource depletion, global pollution, and species extinction, our need to maintain the viability of our natural environmental systems is essential. In Roman law, The Commons received its own legal classification, *res communes*, "things common to all." Two thousand years later, the **wealthy, white, property-owning males who wrote our Constitution ignored the special role of the Commons and made everything either a person or property.**

This led our legal system to classify the environment as property. This legal status has given corporations free reign to deplete our natural resources. It also opened the door for the privatization of the Commons, from the commodification of water to corporatization of our parks. Federal environmental laws rest upon the Interstate Commerce clause of the US Constitution. Classifying the environment as property and commerce leaves nature in a state of jeopardy. **The solution to this situation is to pass a**

**constitutional amendment giving rights to nature**, or at least creating a legal understanding that nature has rights and should have standing in court. US Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas contemplated this concept in the 1970s when the Disney Corporation wanted to put a resort in the Mineral King Wilderness of California. Dissenting in that case, Douglas wrote, “The critical question of ‘standing’ would be simplified and also put neatly in focus if we...allowed environmental issues to be litigated...in the name of the inanimate object about to be despoiled, defaced or invaded.”

More than standing, however, nature needs to have its own rights. The case for the rights of nature has been elaborated in many books and promoted heavily by the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF). They successfully helped the countries of Ecuador and Bolivia put the rights of nature into their national constitutions.

Deepening the discussion about the Commons is Jan Edward’s article on the [Legal Commons](#) from *Justice Rising*. It contains a sidebar by CELDF founder Tom Linzey who questions whether nature should be called the Commons because that may infer some sort of property designation. He points out that nature should be more like a jural person and have its own rights, what we now call the Rights of Nature. So, the framers of the Constitution and Supreme Court got it wrong. Nature should be a legal person, not corporations.

The battle to ensure that all can share the Commons has a long history. **Land is one of the three basic elements of the Commons on which our survival depends.** For the vast majority of human history, land was held in common by a largely self-sufficient agricultural population that managed their commons through local relationships. With the growth of international trade, driven by the Italian city-states, concepts of land and property began to change.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Venetian and Genoese empires dominated an extensive trading network across the Mediterranean Sea, up through the Bosphorus, and into the Black Sea where they connected with Silk Route caravans coming out of East and South Asia. Wool and wool products became the most valuable items the Europeans had to offer in trade. The best raw wool came from sheep raised on the British Isles. Craft workers in the European Low Countries processed most of that raw wool into various products.

Simultaneously, prominent families in Sienna and Florence, including the Medicis, developed the first modern banking industry, established offices in major trading cities throughout Europe, and became the financial hub of global commerce. These **early bankers developed one of the first exotic financial instruments — a futures contract.**

Realizing that wool was the heart of international trade, Florentine bankers used their offices in London to offer English aristocratic land barons futures contracts for their wool. After capturing most of the English raw-wool output, they moved the manufacturing of wool products to Florence, providing the economic base for the wealth and beauty of that city. In the process, they devastated the wool-processing industry in the European lowlands.

With wool futures from Italian bankers promising rich rewards for raising sheep, English land barons began privatizing common grazing land so that they could raise more sheep and produce even more wool to sell into the global market. This movement to fence off the common lands caused an uprising by the English agricultural underclass that depended on that common land for survival. Conflict simmered for centuries until direct action broke out during the English Civil War in the mid-1600s. Peasant groups began destroying the fences and digging up hedgerows the wealthy utilized to enclose the former common land. This general peasant rebellion led to songs such as this:

*They hang the man and flog the woman  
That steals the goose from off the Common,  
But let the greater villain loose  
That steals the Common from the goose.*

*The law demands that we atone  
When we take things we do not own,  
But leaves the Lords and Ladies fine  
Who take things that are yours and mine.*

*The law locks up the man or woman  
Who steals the goose off the Common,  
And geese will still a Common lack  
Til they go and steal it back.*

Hundreds of years later, those fights continue. Just last year, gun-wielding, range land barons descended on a remote public wildlife refuge demanding that public property be handed over to private interests for their personal gain.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, water, one of the other basic elements of the Commons in all of our lives, is subject to commodification and privatization. As Jan Edwards points out, **“If we could step back from our cultural training and see Water as it really is, we would see one complete cycle — one Water — flowing through every living thing on earth and connecting us all to the whole...Trade agreements and water grabs have changed humans' relationship to Water from one of a gift of nature for all to share — towards a property relationship.”**

Alaska Water Exports Corporation, a partner of World Water SA, came to our remote section of the Northern California Coast in 2002. It had a scheme to fill up huge rubber bladders with fresh water from the undammed, free-flowing and wild Albion and Gualala Rivers for transport by sea to Southern California. It planned to sell the water from our public commons for their shareholders' private gain. The California Coastal Commission and other state agencies thwarted its plans when the agencies realized that, due to global trade agreements, such a precedent could destroy the State's public trust responsibilities to protect our water for the common good.

Ric Davidge developed this water heist as Director of Water at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources where he oversaw the public trust for 40% of the nation's free flowing fresh water. His long history of revolving through the swinging door between corporate America and public agencies, which are supposed to be protecting our commons, is a typical example of how our commons become privatized while former public servants, now private businessmen, enrich themselves.

The most egregious schemes for privatizing the water commons come from efforts to bottle public tap water and from the corporatizing of public water agencies. Both of these corporate strategies capture our water commons for corporate gain

Soda-drink corporations like Coca-Cola and Pepsi identified bottled water as a profitable product two decades ago and undertook an advertising campaign to convince consumers that their tap water was dangerously polluted. This fraudulent claim allowed them to sell bottled water to consumers at 300 times the price those same consumers pay for tap water. The truth is that the water they sell is often municipal tap water. The gigantic profits from bottled water sends huge multinational corporations into communities around the world to build bottling plants that deplete local water supplies.

Luckily there has been a huge pushback to this effort, largely overseen by the Alliance for Democracy helping communities pass community rights ordinances that prohibit corporations from taking local water, deny corporations any personhood rights, and give rights to nature.

This is an ongoing struggle and may impact a community near you.

Meanwhile, huge corporations like Bechtel are convincing local politicians that the corporations can operate local water agencies more effectively. Once the deal is done, prices rise and corporations are once again profiting from our natural commons.

Massive popular movements have also pushed back against these schemes. Thousands of people flooded the streets in Cochabamba, Bolivia, when Bechtel took over the local water agency and even claimed they owned the rainwater. Citizens stayed in the streets despite facing lethal firepower from government troops enforcing the corporate takeover. When the people won and Bechtel left town, everyone celebrated a brave and powerful victory.

In many other cities from Lexington, Kentucky to Stockton, California, citizens are standing up to demand public control over their water supply. We the people have to reverse the trend of corporate privatization and protect our commons for all future generations.

Air is the third vital common we all depend upon. Pollution of the air by agribusiness and the fossil fuels industry is one of the biggest challenges we face as climate change threatens our existence. We have to view this as another battle to control our commons.

**Activities:** Place The Commons in a historic and current context as outlined above, i.e.,

- Where the concept of The Commons comes from
- Why The Commons are important
- What is happening to The Commons currently
- How concerned citizens can protect them

If everybody has read the *Justice Rising* selections, you may be able to present them as a series of questions. Or make a short presentation about them from the above material and then ask some questions. Or you can have the class watch one or two videos from the [video list](#), which includes a piece by Elinor Ostrom who won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009 for her work about the commons and collective action.

With the context established, one of the best activities is to **find a local group engaged in protecting your community commons and invite them to talk to the class about their struggle**. This could include groups trying to conserve local land or water or environmental organizations protecting nature from corporate extraction operations.

The Tapestry of The Commons, created by Jan Edwards and displayed at the top of this class section, is another possible activity. **The Tapestry of the Commons weaves a tapestry of ribbons wherein each ribbon identifies a different part of The Commons**. The various aspects of the natural commons go in one direction and parts of our cultural commons go in the other direction. You can take your class through this exercise by weaving the ribbons together while talking about the common that each ribbon represents. In the end, the group ends up with a strong tapestry, just as we end up with a strong society when all of our commons are accessible to all of us. Or you can take the class in the other direction, which shows how privatization of the Commons destroys a strong society. Do this by starting with the completed tapestry and removing individual ribbons from the weaving, making the tapestry fall apart, much as our society falls apart as the Commons are privatized.

Here is an article from *Justice Rising* on [instructions for making the tapestry](#) frame and ribbons; here is a [transcript for the presentation of the tapestry](#). Here is a list of the [natural commons](#) and here is a list of the [cultural commons](#) we inherit from our forbearers. Here is also an article from *Justice Rising* on [constructing and presenting the Tapestry](#). Jan also came up with:

- A collection of [essays](#) to give you more information on The Commons;
- [Links to other groups](#) dealing with The Commons;
  - [Talking points](#) and worksheets for starting a movement to protect The Commons we still have and to reclaim the Commons we have lost.

Jan developed another group activity she calls a spectrogram to help people identify what should be part of the Commons and what should be private property. You can get instructions for that [here](#).

Be sure to take a break at some point and come back to deal with [questions on the commons](#) and refer to the [notes on the questions](#) to further the discussion. Be sure to pass out the list of further [readings](#) on the Commons. Also make sure you pass out the [questions](#), [article rankings](#) and [talking points](#) for the next class on *Health & Food* at the end of the class.

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on the Commons or on health and food as part of our commons.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe another piece on corporate power threatening our health and food commons.



## CLASS 10: FOOD AND HEALTH: LIVING WITHIN OUR BODILY ENVIRONMENT Agribusiness & Local Food

Health Industry & Single Payer Health Care, Personal Control Over Our Bodies

**Purpose:** To understand cultural institutions central to the well being of our body and consequences of corporate influence over both our food and health that are part of the Commons.

### Materials

Readings: *Justice Rising*, [Winter 2015, Local Rules for Local Food: Communities Hold On To Food, Tradition & Democracy](#); [Winter 2008, Health for Humans - Not Corporate Profits](#)

Handouts: [Questions](#), [Article Rankings](#), [Talking Points](#).

**Paradigm:** We are our bodies and we are what we eat. Nothing is more personal and deserving of responsible stewardship than our bodies. Yet corporate power dictates the food available to eat and invades how we care for our health.

**Context:** Life's magic evokes awe and reverence. Farmers and healers are key factors in maximizing the wellbeing of our lives. Their function to provide nutrition and vitality emerge from our common human need to be fed and cared for. Without fulfillment of those needs, human existence would disappear. Unlike almost any other calling, farming and healing are intrinsic parts of the human experience. The essential nature of both activities makes their allocation a necessary social decision. Much like water or the environment, they are part of our public commons. The money-powered market should not control them. **Corporate giants are now demanding that the work of farmers and healers maximize corporate profits rather than our nutrition and vitality.**

Farmers have always fought against the tyranny of money. When the Italian banks of the Renaissance sought to buy out the British wool market, the English landed aristocracy moved to privatize the common farmland in order raise more sheep. The peasantry depended upon the common lands for their survival. The enclosure of the commons awakened peasant farmers as a political force that threatened to lead a complete revolution during the English Civil War in the mid-1600s. The spirit of those farmers carried on into the American Revolution; Thomas Jefferson envisioned a nation of yeoman farmers providing for the nation's food and public-policy making.

With the rise of corporate power in the late 1800s, avaricious bankers and monopolistic railroads pushed those yeoman farmers toward bankruptcy and started taking their land. **The Farmers Alliance, which grew out of cooperative organizations like the Grange, responded by bringing farmers together in extensive cooperative ventures to buy their necessities and distribute their products in**

**defiance of corporate America.** This led the big banks to reject the farm co-ops' applications for financing, forcing the co-ops out of business. As the Farmers Alliance co-ops were forced into bankruptcy, pro-corporate public policies paved the way for agribusiness corporations to dominate our food supply. Instead of being concerned about our nutrition, the objective of the food industry is now to maximize the corporate bottom line

University of Iowa Agricultural Economics Professor John E. Ikerd outlines this progression after World War II:

- Factories that made tanks started turning out tractors.
- Factories that designed gunpowder started turning out cheap nitrogen fertilizers.
- Technologies developed for chemical warfare were redirected to agriculture pesticides.
- Agriculture became industrialized, farms became factories.
- Evidence of corporate influence on government farm and food policy became pervasive.
- Agribusiness contributed more than \$65 million to political campaigns during the 2008 election cycle.
- The Farm Bureau and ag-commodity associations are among the biggest corporate lobbyists in DC.
- The U.S. government promotes corporate consolidation of the food system.
- Politicians put the economic interests of corporate lobbyists ahead of the public interests.
- Food markets in the US have not been economically competitive for decades.
- 74% of total government agricultural payments go to the largest 10% of recipients.
- Commercial fertilizers and pesticides are a primary source of environmental degradation and toxic food.
- Giant confinement animal feeding factories foul the air and water.
- Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) threaten the genetic integrity of the entire natural ecosystem.
- The percentage of food insecure people in American is higher now than in the 1960s.
- Problems of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart problems, and food-related cancers are epidemic.

The list of problems caused by our profit-maximizing corporate food system goes on and on. One of the biggest problems is that **corporate farming destroys our topsoil with the use of toxics and salt-laden fertilizers.**

Now, a broad movement of organic and family farms is pushing back. They build new, rich topsoil. They distribute their produce via entirely new mechanisms, including farmers markets and community-supported agriculture. In Maine, Local Food Rules popularized and passed a local initiative to relieve small farmers from the burdens of corporate agribusiness regulations by pointing out that the real regulation is between the farmer and the consumer. The state of Maine has validated their ordinance.

**Corporations have also stolen the historic knowledge of farming communities around the globe and are claiming to own life itself.** Historically, courts recognized life as part of the Commons. Even though individual cows could be owned, a species of cows could not be owned. The US Supreme Court first permitted the patenting of life in 1980, reversing the legal tradition that life could not be patented. Courts now allow the patenting of the basic process of life, even though applicants have nothing to do with the central factor of their patent request — the creation of life.

These legal decisions allow Monsanto to claim ownership of genetically modified seeds even though the basic building blocks of the seeds were developed over thousands of years by indigenous agricultural communities around the world. Aided by corporate-driven public policies and trade agreements, these corporations control over 60% of the world's seed supply.

Small farmer groups around the world, like Via Campesina, are fighting against agribusinesses that claim they own life. **They are saving and exchanging seeds that have not been given over to private ownership.** This is a critical movement if control of our food supply and life in general is to remain a part of the commons.

This same debate carries over to the healthcare industry where multiple corporations are claiming ownership of our genes, although they had nothing to do with the creation of life that gives those genes the eternal economic value that the corporations are seeking. Like the historic system that provided our food, the traditional healthcare system came out of the Commons.

**From the fourth century BC, in the time of Hippocrates, came the notion that medical care must be practiced and taught freely.** Doctors adhered to Hippocrates's oath that "Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, [and] to teach this art." This notion of freely available healthcare

remained prominent until the early 1900s when the corporate-funded Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations collaborated with the American Medical Association (AMA) and its close ally, the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), to create what is now known as the medical/industrial complex, made up of “an ever-growing managerial class” of corporate leaders, government allies, and corporate foundations.

In 1910 they commissioned the Flexner Report, which promoted the intrusive and prescription-heavy medicine practiced in Germany and adopted by the AMA. This approach promoted doctors as scientists rather than healers. **They then used their report to justify the initial licensing of doctors, who had to receive training at an AMA medical school.**

Any medical practitioners who did not practice the AMA’s form of medicine were discredited along with the medical practice they adhered to, such as herbalism and homeopathy, that followed a much less aggressive and less invasive medical strategy. **The new monopolistic licensing regime bankrupted the medical schools that did not adhere to AMA medicine and vilified their medical philosophy in the process.**

The result was that medical schools in rural and poor communities closed down as well as most of the medical schools that admitted women. This stymied the availability of medical care in poor and rural America. Meanwhile, the incomes of the urban doctors increased substantially, especially the surgeons whose bills often made up half the cost of a procedure.

The resulting cost increase of medical care caused a crisis as the onset of the Depression left American families unable to pay for expensive medical care. Hospital beds stood empty. That brought the original collaborators of the licensing policy back together along with the American Association of Hospitals and various government agencies to form the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care (CCMC). This entity developed the Blue Cross and Blue Shield corporations that provided a reliable funding source for the AMA medical/industrial complex.

After World War II, President Truman pushed for a medical insurance program for all citizens that would maintain the private health care delivery system. The medical/industrial complex led by the AMA, Chamber of Commerce, and the American Hospital Association fiercely opposed the plan, calling it “socialism.”

**After the defeat of universal medical insurance, Truman wrote, “I had no patience with the reactionary, selfish people and politicians who fought year after year every proposal we made to improve the people’s health.** I have had some bitter disappointments as President, but the one that has troubled me most, in a personal way, has been the failure to defeat the organized opposition to a national compulsory health-insurance program . . . The vast majority of the people have no such organized voice speaking for them.”

Out of this defeat, the private health insurance industry grew through employee/employer-sponsored group insurance policies. That health insurance industry now drives public policy regarding the funding of health care and has fought bitterly to stop any single-payer health care initiatives that would return at least the funding of healthcare to the commons.

Science-based medicine has contributed many miracles to our wellbeing, but the corporate medical/industrial complex has been the real winner. On top of that, the loss of the healer has negatively impacted our vitality. Many people understand this situation and slowly, alternative healing techniques are coming back. Unfortunately, they are mainly outside the insurance funding stream. We need better public policies that promote the health of the people, not the corporations.

**Activities:** After covering the above material, we often utilize outside speakers for this class. You can invite people working in the local food movement, including farmers, organizers of farmers markets, and other local food distributors to form a panel on the vitality of the local food movement in your area. Or you could invite medical practitioners to speak on the need for single-payer health care.

You can show any of the clips on this [list of videos](#) about food, farmers, and healthcare on a range of topics, from “The Supermarket Racket” to creating a democratic conversation on food. The first one with Raj Patel on global food is fantastic. There are also videos of Vandana Shiva on the patenting of life and Fred Kirschenmann on soil, two strong voices that bring these topics to the screen. On the health front, there is a stirring talk by Bernie Sanders on our rights to healthcare, a segment by Bill Moyers on single-payer healthcare, as well as two pieces on the pharmaceutical industry.



Here are three charts on the healthcare industry you can hand out and discuss. The [first](#) shows the dominance of the healthcare industry in lobbying our federal policy makers and [the second one](#) shows the dominance of the pharmaceutical industry lobbying effort. The [third one](#) shows how much more money people in the United States spend on healthcare in comparison to people in other western countries, despite the fact that healthcare in the US is not as available or necessarily as good as healthcare in the rest of the western world.

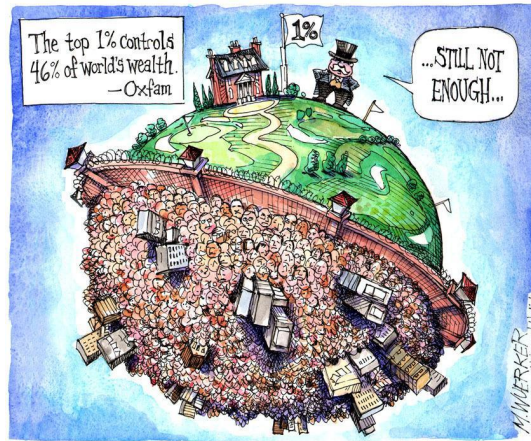
In addition, here is a [Venn diagram](#) showing the revolving door between the Federal government and both Monsanto and the pharmaceutical industry. Finally, here is [a chart](#) you can hand out to discuss the campaign contributions to members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees. Notice that the members on the House Ag Committee receive ten times as much from the Ag lobby as the average member of Congress. To fill out the picture, here is a list of the [biggest Ag industry contributors](#) that shows that two agricultural industries contributed more than half of the money to the committee members.

All of this will no doubt fill up the first part of the class. Take a break. Continue into the second half with the [questions](#) from the readings. Here are [notes on the answers](#). Before the end of the class, also hand out the [list of books](#) for more background reading on food and health. Finally make sure to pass out the [questions](#), [article rankings](#), and [talking points](#) for the first class of Part 4, Corporate Global Trade vs. Popular Local Control.

The day after the class, email the questions and reading priorities for the next class to everyone and include an article on corporate globalization.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe another piece on corporate globalization.

PART 4—GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: WHO OR WHAT WILL RULE THE WORLD?  
Failure of the Corporate Nation State, Rise of World Citizens, & Universal Values



CLASS 11: CORPORATE GLOBAL TRADE VS. POPULAR LOCAL CONTROL  
Globalized Elites, Neoliberal Trade, Competitive Destruction

Solutions: Democratic Decentralization, Global People's Movement, World Social Forum

**Purpose:** To understand globalization as an historic corporate drive for global power using trade agreements, global social institutions, and a globalized military as the central mechanisms to enact corporate global governance, and to highlight the global popular pushback against the corporate global empire.

**Materials**

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Winter 2005-06, Global Corporate Empire or Popular Governance: The Next Millennium](#); Fall 2013, [World Citizenry Takes On Corporate Global Rule](#)

**Handouts:** : [Questions](#), [Article Rankings](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** The nation-state system is unable to handle our most severe global problems, including climate change, resource depletion, global pollution, and human migration. It must be replaced by a system of global governance based on subsidiarity, whereby decisions are made at the most local level possible while still being able to solve our threatening global problems.

**Context:** For 1700 years, Silk Road trade formed the basis of the Chinese, Persian, and Venetian Empires. When Mongol and Turkish control blocked the Silk Road in the 1400s, European merchants struck out in different directions. Portuguese explorers found a route around Africa to Asia, and Columbus sailed west from Spain to discover the Americas. Thus began globalization.

**Theft, military violence, and trade played a central role in the corporate take-over of the globalization process.** It began with the British and Dutch merchants' heist of the Portuguese trade routes around Africa in the late 1500s, which led to the formation of the first business corporations in the world, the British East India Company and Dutch Vereernigde Oost-Indische Compagnie. Their royal charters gave them the privilege to raise private armies and violently conquer all the territory necessary to exploit resources throughout Africa and Asia. At the same time, their founders were also pioneers in the money-laden democracy movement. Mayors of London revolved through the leadership of the British East India Company. Founders of the Vereernigde Oost-Indische served as the leaders of the Dutch Republic. **Corporate elites, war and democratic elites have been close partners from the beginning of both modern democracy and corporations.** Merchants took over almost all British public policy making in the mid-1600s and relegated the monarch to a figurehead by the 1680s.

But, American revolutionaries rejected the power of corporations and England's money-based governing structure. Patriots threw British East India Company tea into Boston Harbor. After the revolution, states limited the lifespan of corporations and required that they serve the common good. John

Jacob Astor's American Fur Company and the early railroad corporations slowly weakened state control of corporate power. Corporate elites exercised over arching power in the United States by the late 1800s in the era of the robber barons.

**Corporate lawyers took direct control of US foreign policy at the turn of the twentieth century.** They launched America into the corporate globalization process with the Spanish American War, giving the tycoons of the American Sugar Trust colonial access to the best sugar cane-growing regions in the Philippines, Cuba, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Wall Street lawyers took over the US War and State Departments in the first decade of the twentieth century. Elihu Root, legal counsel for steel baron Andrew Carnegie, served as US Secretary of War from 1899 to 1904 and Secretary of State from 1905 to 1909. Banking mogul JP Morgan's partner, Robert Bacon, followed Root as Secretary of State and Philander Knox, who helped establish the US Steel Trust, followed him, serving until 1913.

When Democratic President Woodrow Wilson and his Secretary of State William Jennings Bryant shunned corporate interests in 1913, Elihu Root and Philander Knox created a private group to control US foreign policy and established the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) to reinsert corporate interest into US foreign policy on a permanent basis. It has overseen US foreign policy for the last century by revolving its members through the US State Department. Since its founding, CFR has been managed by financial titans including David Rockefeller and Robert Rubin. CFR member Henry Kissinger, a primary protégé of the Rockefellers, served corporate interests as US Secretary of State and National Security advisor.

Meanwhile, Elihu Root's Wall Street legal protégé, Henry Stimson, served as Secretary of War from 1911 to 1913 and then went on to serve as Secretary of State from 1929-1933 and Secretary of War from 1940 to 1945 during World War II. All these corporate functionaries served as central policy makers in the establishment of the American Empire that opened up resources and markets to American corporations around the world.

**Corporate elites around the world have also come together in social institutions like the World Economic Forum, the Tri-lateral Commission, and the Bilderberg Group.** Their gatherings operate to establish the social and economic ties necessary for them to establish their own global governance in alliance with global military leaders.

Spurred by oil and money, corporate globalization of the Twentieth Century turned into the global corporatization of the Twenty-First Century. The trajectory of global corporatization began with the oil crisis of the 1970s when the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) brought the Western industrialized world to its knees by controlling the price and distribution of oil around the world. The resolution of the crisis came when the oil producing states — dominated by Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern nations — agreed to place their oil profits with big New York banks. Flush with cash, those banks identified the “underdeveloped” nations as prime targets for development loans. As told by John Perkins in his *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, they persuaded these countries to undertake loan obligations they could not afford. When those countries defaulted on their loans, the global financial community leaned on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bail those countries out.

The International Monetary Fund came out of the Bretton Woods Conference at the lavish Mount Washington Hotel in 1944. It was openly acknowledged that attendees were there to make the world safe for investment capital. Along with the IMF, corporate and Western leaders launched the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the World Bank. They created the IMF to help countries deal with short-term balance of payments problems.

When bankrupt countries were unable to repay the big banks in the 1980s, the IMF stepped in to bail those countries out. In return for the bail-out, the IMF forced them to privatize their public services, cut back their public benefits, and promote the growth of a cash economy dedicated to exporting commodities and importing industrialized goods. These actions devastated land-based, peasant cultures around the world. Banks benefitted because nations paid back the fraudulent loans. Privatization of state enterprises and expansion of their cash economies ensured the expansion of global corporate empire.

**Corporate-driven trade agreements joined this IMF effort to facilitate global corporate governance.** The World Trade Organization (WTO) grew out of the GATT and advertised itself as the new global constitution under which nation-states would lose their sovereign right to protect the health and safety of their citizens and environment. Capital could flow freely around the world unrestrained by national laws. Corporate lawyers would settle disputes in secret. The WTO was not concerned with setting up a fair

global trading system; it was set up to give capital ultimate power and bypass national regulatory laws. This same model was used to make regional trade deals like the North America Free Trade Agreement and others.

This process came to a standstill when citizens rose up and shut down the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle in November 1999. Activist organizers then formed the World Social Forum as a counterpoint to the World Economic Forum and the global civil war continues.

**Activities:** Present the historical narrative above to give a sense of the origins of corporate globalization. Here are links ([PowerPoint](#) and [notes on each slide](#)) to the primary teaching tool we have used for this class, *Ecuador: Globalization, Devastation and Hope*, a PowerPoint I put together that provides a classic example of what has happened to much of the world in the process of global corporatization. It depicts how multinational oil corporations penetrated the Amazon jungle to extract oil, leaving an environmental disaster, which led to one of the largest environmental lawsuits in history. The PowerPoint shows how the Ecuadorian elite leveraged future oil profits to borrow heavily from international financial markets for projects that never delivered the necessary returns to repay the loans. When Ecuador went broke, international bankers demanded that Ecuador get rid of its national currency and use the US dollar, destroying all the savings of the Ecuadorian middle class. The “Hope” comes from the response of the Ecuadorian indigenous and peasant communities that rose up in the face of globalization and devastation to throw out the elites and, for a short time, rule the country. This catalyzed a national movement to confront the devastation caused by globalization, including efforts to stop a second oil pipeline over the Andes Mountains and localized efforts like that of Junin, where the people burned down a copper mine twice in their 20-year effort to stop its development from devastating their town.

In addition to the PowerPoint, there are many excellent videos about globalization. I have listed some [here](#) showing presentations by:

- Kevin Danaher, the co-founder of Global Exchange and one of the most dramatic speakers on the topic,
- Lori Wallach, long-time activist organizing protests against the international trade agreements,
- Ruth Caplan from the Alliance for Democracy,
- David Rothkopf, who operates inside corporate globalization,
- Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom on global governance from the local level,
- Professor William Robinson on what the next systems might look like.

You may also be able to find a local speaker on these issues, particularly someone connected with Citizens Trade Campaign, which is connected with local groups across the country. You can get a list of their affiliated organizations [here](#).

You could also concentrate on a current topic. One example is the story of the global corporatization of the Ukraine, which is an obvious case of the global corporate empire dragging a part of the old communist bloc into the imperial corporate sphere. Here are links to a couple of studies by the Oakland Institute [The Corporate Takeover Of Ukrainian Agriculture](#) and on [Walking on the West Side: The World Bank and the IMF in the Ukraine Conflict](#).

This should be enough material for the first part of this class. Take a break and in the second part of the class, discuss the [questions](#) for this class. Here is a link to [notes on the answers](#). Remember to discuss the many [books on globalization](#). Also be sure to pass out the [questions](#), [reading rankings](#) and [talking points](#) for the next class on global military and the imperial media.

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone and include a current article on corporate globalization.

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe a piece on corporatization of the military.

PART 4 — GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: WHO OR WHAT WILL RULE THE WORLD?  
Failure of the Corporate Nation State, Rise of World Citizens and Universal Values



*Code Pink just off the floor of the Democratic National Convention 2004. Medea Benjamin is on the right.*

### Class 12: WAR AND ITS PROMOTERS

#### 6,000 years of Human History, Militaries as Global Governors, The Imperial Media Solutions: Global Anti-War Movement, Rise of Popular Media, Partnership Society

**Purpose:** To show how Western militaries, the largest military operation in the history of the world, have long been dedicated to protecting and promoting the interests of the global corporate empire, while the media giants, as multinational corporations themselves, perform as a mouthpiece for our corporate/military public policy.

#### Materials

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Fall 2006, Corporate Origins of War and Grassroots Struggles for Peace](#); [Fall 2005, Vol. 1 Information and Democracy: Corporate Control and the Rise of Popular Media](#)

**Handouts:** [Questions](#), [Article Ranking](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** Media and military are portrayed as adversaries, but in reality the press has sold the American public on going to war for corporate gain for over a century.

**Context:** Corporate money purchased the US presidency for William McKinley in 1896. This led to an immediate and long-term takeover of US military policy by Wall Street lawyers and corporate CEOs. They used the US military to open markets and resources for American corporations around the world. McKinley appointed well-known Wall-Street lawyer Elihu Root as Secretary of War in 1899. He became the prototype of the “wise man” who spins the revolving door between defending elite corporate interests in the courts and making public policy in the corporate interest as a government official. Root performed corporate legal work for railroad barons Jay Gould and E. H. Harriman and then enforced the “open door” policy that created US corporate access to any and all resources and markets around the world. Under his oversight, the US military blew doors open in China, Cuba, and the Philippines.

**America’s corporate press promoted such policies, often inventing events to rile American public opinion in favor of aggressive military action.**

These included:

- Hearst’s New York Journal headlines about the sinking of the Maine that the Spanish American War;
- The popular media narrative that we were bringing civilization to the Philippines as we slaughtered millions of Filipinos fighting for their independence;
- The widespread media claim that America put down the Chinese Boxer Rebellion to protect American missionaries.

This is the sort of headlines Americans received in the media for the next century. They claimed the military performed a policing role either to improve the invaded countries or to protect American citizens at home and abroad. In reality they were carrying on a constant campaign of military brutality to promote corporate interests.

Known globally as “gunboat diplomacy,” Teddy Roosevelt called it “Big Stick Diplomacy.” Since 1900, the US military intervened in foreign countries over two hundred times. After 33 years of participating in military ventures, Smedley Butler, the top-ranked Marine and most decorated military officer, as well as the son of the Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, rebelled. **Smedley Butler proclaimed that in his military service he had really been a “high class muscle man for Wall Street...a gangster for capitalism...I helped make Mexico safe for American oil, Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank...I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers...I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests...I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies...In China I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested.”**

Heading into World War II, the Council on Foreign Relations, which had become a major voice in promoting multi-national corporate interests through US military and foreign policy, produced a study proclaiming that it was in our “national interest” to control certain global resources if we were to maintain a dominant position in the world. Those resources included the oil in Indonesia. **Our protection of those resources animated US foreign and military policy throughout the Cold War, including our tragic engagement in Vietnam.**

Norman Solomon took on the imperial press as promoters of war in his book *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death*, and with Sean Penn, in the movie by the same name. They highlight how the media unquestioningly spread disinformation across the country about a fictitious Gulf of Tonkin incident that was used to gain congressional approval for the Vietnam War. They explain how the media/Pentagon disinformation campaign continued from Vietnam to the War on Terror.

They also point out that the military always blamed the media coverage of the Vietnam War for the loss of American public support for the war. That excuse led the military to increasingly control the information that the media could put out, to the point that they incorporated the media into their disastrous invasion of Iraq where the media performed as partners with the military. Entrenched reporters ballyhooed the technical perfection of the new weapons, claiming they saved civilian lives. Meanwhile civilian casualties went from 10% of the casualties in World War I to 90% of the casualties in George W. Bush’s Iraq War.

That was a war sold by both the Pentagon and the media on entirely false claims that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The false claims obfuscated the real purpose of the war: to “open the door” to American corporate access to Middle East markets and resources. The fallout from this fallacious, violent conquest of Iraq continues to be an all-out disaster.

**Major media outlets also supported our military policy during the Iraq war by underreporting the size of the anti-war movement in the United States while discrediting the participants.** Bill O’Reilly on Fox News said that all the protesters were part of the “Far Left,” which he called, “a destructive force that must be confronted.” Michelle Malkin, another Fox commentator, called Medea Benjamin, the founder of Code Pink and one of the leaders of the anti-war movement, a “terrorist sympathizer, dictator-worshipping propagandist.” This statement could not be further from the truth. As a leader of the demonstrations against the WTO and formidable critic of US imperial policies, she has long highlighted the importance of true democracy and the power of people over corporate military power.

**The global military has positioned itself along with corporations as the two institutions taking a central role in creating de facto global corporate governance.** Along with multinational corporate leaders who meet at global forums and have long-term social and financial relations, the members of the various regional and national militaries, including NATO, also establish long-term personal and financial relationships. This enables them to form essentially a single, coherent military force aimed at protecting corporate interests. Derek Reveron, professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, detailed this military role in his book *Exporting Security*. Quoting from the *Justice Rising* review of that book, Reveron “outlines the development of this globalized military coming together to support the objectives of the neoliberal strategy for corporate dominance...He points out that militaries around the world talk the same language and frame the world in a similar light, making it easy for them to establish

life-long relationships of trust. These relationships have helped in partnering with almost every nation in the world to ensure security for foreign investments, corporate access to natural resources, global trade, and economic integration with global corporatization. They hold conferences and train military leaders, as well as police and other law enforcement units in operations from oil platform security to non-lethal crowd control.” NATO is the premier example of the globalized military.

Four decades ago, corporate imperial policy identified nation-states in the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, as obstacles to global domination by corporate empire. Since that time, war supported by Western allies has been waged in three of those countries and is often threatened in the fourth. NATO has been at the heart of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, is allied with the Western Powers in Syria, and leery of the situation in Iran.

The global military made its first foray into global affairs with its incursion in Yugoslavia in the 1990s. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Yugoslavia was the only functioning communist state in Europe. Corporate global empire needed to have it crushed. It was NATO’s first action in its new role as the military of the corporate global empire. For background reading, see these pieces by [Michael Parenti](#) and [Michel Chossudovsky](#).

As was fully demonstrated during the months before the Iraq War, there exists a huge, united, global movement opposing war to enhance corporate interests. **Millions of people joined a coordinated anti-war effort in 2003 and are ready to unite under the banner of the World Social Forum, “Another World is Possible.”** Here is how we portrayed this movement in our book *Imperial Overstretch: George W. Bush and the Hubris of Empire*:

*Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies points out that “the more-or-less spontaneous emergence of this global movement means helping provide a space for strategic planning among key actors in the key countries, and helping to shape a political/intellectual framework on which a world-wide peace and justice movement can transform itself into a politically conscious movement challenging empire while building a new internationalism.”<sup>1</sup>*

*As Immanuel Wallerstein states in The Decline of American Power, “A new kind of historical system will be constructed in the next half century. The worldwide battle has already begun over what it will look like...”<sup>2</sup>*

*Certain fundamental beliefs and values for “another world” are emerging from the movement for global justice and against corporate globalization. Among them are demands for participatory democracy, an end to all forms of racism, and a rejection of the “commodification” of all aspects of life that global capital is bent on imposing on us. This rejection is pivotal, and perhaps central, to demystifying and replacing the corporate imperial system that dominates the world.*

*We are entering an interregnum between an international system bullied by a rogue empire and the dreams and demands of the multitude. Will that future be controlled by an economic plutocracy? Or will the vast majority of humanity come together and create a world that believes in a harmonious and liberated future for planet earth. As Wallerstein says, “History is on no one’s side. It depends on what we do.”*

**Activities:** You can start the class with the 6,000 years of history chart we developed to show the historic cycles when people power, violent power, and money power dominated public policy making. It extends from the Mediterranean partnership culture to the Age of Aquarius. Here is the [timeline chart](#) to print out on a 36” format printer. You can also use this [PDF](#) to print it out at 8.5 x 11 and hand out to all of the class for discussion. Here are [notes](#) to be used for discussing the timeline.

**The time line starts with the rise of non-hierarchical, partnership cultures in the Mediterranean more than 6,000 years ago. They lived without war or hierarchy for thousands of years.** From there it traces the invasion of violent armies from the steppes armed with horses and chariots between 1500-1000 BC that began a thousand years of violence dominating human existence. The final extinction of any people power came in 50 BC with the end of the Roman Republic. This is the era of violent kingdoms when public policies came from the point of a sword.

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Money as we know it first came into use in 700 BC, and monied elites first showed their dominance over the power of violence with the Magna Carta in 1220, when the English aristocracy acted to curb the king's powers because he wanted their money.

**We still live in an age where money is power, with money power often using military violence to ensure its rule.** However, beginning in the enlightenment 200 years ago, personal power of the people began to emerge. By the 1960s, American Blacks, women and Native Americans, along with the anti-war movement, challenged the power of the wealthy white patriarchy. The Age of Aquarius began in 2015. It promises two thousand years in which:

- Planetary peace and harmony will pervade human society in an era of compassion ,
- All people are revered and nurtured.
- Diversity is cherished,
- Human society promotes global unity,
- Common spiritual understandings are held universally

I often present this timeline in 15 minutes, only covering the most important points, which include the partnership era, the invasion of violence, the beginning of money, the Magna Carta, the first banks, the first corporations, the enlightenment, the 1960s and the Age of Aquarius. You can spend as much time on it as you like.

Once you have covered the 6.000 years, you can go back and highlight the history of the past 100 years discussed in the Context section above. Follow this up with a description of the global military dedicated to protecting the neoliberal trade agenda. Finish with a discussion of the global movement to make another world possible.

Here is a [list](#) of videos you can use to flesh out this topic. Norman Solomon and Sean Penn's *War Made Easy* is one of the best as it portrays the cheerleading role the corporate media plays in the lead up and execution of US war policies. It is a long documentary; you might want to show a few of the shorter pieces to stimulate discussion of the various topics.

By now it should be a time to take a break and go onto the second part of the class discussing the [questions](#). Here are [notes](#) to help stimulate discussion around the questions.

Do not forget to hand out the [article rankings](#), [questions](#) and [talking points](#) for the next class on *World Citizenry & Global Consciousness*. Also make sure you give out the list of [books](#) for more in depth reading on War and the imperial media

The day after the class, email the questions and rankings for the next class to everyone on your class list and include a current article on global citizenship and global values. Make sure that you include a PDF of the reading for the next class, which is a combination of the *JR* on progressive religion and *Yes Magazine* on *Together with the Earth*. Here is a [PDF of that issue](#).

The day before the next class, send a reminder email that the class is coming up and again attach the questions and ranking and maybe a piece on immigration or global consciousness.





### Class 13: World Citizenry and Global Consciousness Migration, International Workers' Rights, Earth Consciousness

**Purpose:** To examine the need for global citizenship and earth consciousness in an age of corporate empire and corrupted morals.

#### Materials

**Readings:** *Justice Rising*, [Spring 2008, Emigrants—World Citizens or Corporate Slaves?](#); [Combined JR Winter 2007, Progressive Religion vs. Pervasive Corporate Corruption](#); [Yes Magazine, Spring 2015, Together with the Earth](#) **Handouts:** [Questions](#), [Talking Points](#)

**Paradigm:** Policies of the global corporate empire and their failing nation-states, driven by an amoral corporate culture, have created a crisis of worldwide emigration, earth destruction and human bondage that can only be reversed with global citizenship and earth consciousness.

**Context:** Humans have revered birth's magic and held nature's wonders in awe since our beginning. Our oldest human artifacts honor fertility. Ancient cultures shared a deep respect for their fellow humans and nature. They flourished in societies built on partnerships, cooperation, and the sacredness of the land. That social milieu occupies 99.8% of the human time line.

The disintegration of those societies erupted 3,500 years ago as notions of private property began erasing old concepts. The Old Testament, which forms the basis of our Judeo/Christian culture, displaced the old pagan cultures and supported the domination of nature by humans, establishment of private property, and patriarchal rule. The first human writing systems arose in this era and were used to divide land and wealth between haves and have-nots.

**Notions of human domination over nature and male patriarchy still drive today's extraction societies of our global corporate empire.** Imperial wars in the Middle East are destroying local societies. Western-promoted trade agreements help lay waste to local economies. Both wars and trade agreements send floods of migrants across borders to places where the corporate empire needs workers. This has led to racially tainted culture wars across Europe and the US, instituting uncooperative national governments that denigrate migrants and eschew social justice. Nation states have proved incapable of solving these problems of migration.

Meanwhile, as outlined in Part 3 of this course, the corporate empire is fouling the nest we live in. Oblivious to the economic and spiritual values of our natural systems, we are ruining nature's systems and depleting our natural resources.

We all need to adhere to a moral narrative that recognizes the value of other humans and nature and understand how we are all connected. Continual migration of humans has long developed a sense that more

than anything we are citizens of the earth. That sense was canonized in the 1948 passage of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. That document creates a basis of human rights and includes:

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family.
- Everyone has the right to education.

Our inherent respect for social justice does animate parts of our major religions. An Episcopalian priest once implored me to understand that the gospel never says that you win, that it is always a struggle. Most religions also address concepts of social justice including:

- The concept of Karma in Buddhism,
- The Zakat of the Quran,
- Rita of the Hindu tradition,
- Jewish "simcha ("gladness" or "joy"), tzedakah ("the religious obligation to perform charity and philanthropic acts"), chesed ("deeds of kindness"), and tikkun olam ("repairing the world").

The Quakers emerged during the strife of the English Civil War when merchants, corporations, and capitalism began dominating the culture in England. They presented a stinging analysis of what the new commercial ethos meant to the lives of the common people:

- "Trading has become a trap to captivate men in deceitful dealings;"
- "Vain customs and fashions [serve] the adulterous eye and vanity;"
- In this trap the just become a prey to the insatiable, the obsessively self-interested;
- Vainglorious clothing and amusements "have lost the man of the heart through vanity;"
- Consumerism "destroys the creation;"
- Flattering merchandisers "cheat poor country people;"
- "What traps there are in laws, which should protect the simple."

This is the type of analysis we should be embracing. Martin Luther King in his great *Beyond Vietnam* speech encouraged us all to embrace a new morality. He declared **"We must rapidly shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives, and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."**

Almost all indigenous belief systems embrace social justice along with a respect for nature. When indigenous cultures rose to political prominence in Ecuador and Bolivia, **indigenous leaders placed "sumak kawsay — "living well" or living in harmony with the natural world, while insisting that nature has rights deserving of protection — into their national constitutions.** Those cultures have recognized that the earth is in peril and chosen to spread their concepts of *sumak kawsay* to the far corners of the planet.

After the 2010 World People's Conference on Climate Change and The Rights Of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia, the participants declared the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth. It is a great addition to the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights that essentially calls for global citizenship for all humans. The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth presents a moral and spiritual connection between humans and nature. Its dozens of statements include:

- We are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny;
- Mother Earth is the source of life, nourishment and learning and provides everything we need to live well;
- All beings have the right to
  - maintain their identity and integrity as a distinct, self-regulating and interrelated being;
  - be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste;
  - water as a source of life;
- Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth;
- Human beings, all States, and all public and private institutions must:
  - ensure that the pursuit of human wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of Mother Earth;
  - respect, protect, conserve and where necessary, restore the integrity, of the vital ecological cycles, processes and balances of Mother Earth;

- promote and support practices of respect for Mother Earth and all beings;
- promote economic systems that are in harmony with Mother Earth;

Such global visions animate the growing global movement against corporate imperial empire that flooded the streets of the world with millions of people in February 2003. It also inspired the 2017 global women's marches confronting the institutionalization of patriarchy in many societies around the world. Both events demonstrated that a global movement is coming together to promote cooperation, social justice, and a vision that we are all a part of nature.

The great questions are: Will this movement achieve acceptance and political power before the earth plummets into endless wars over resources or rising waters flood our streets? Can we bring on the Age of Aquarius in time to save earth as we know it?

**Activities:** Give the class a historic sense of our migratory and spiritual history described above. Emphasize that we are a land of migrants and that economic policies and wars driven by economic/political/corporate conquest often force that migration. It might be interesting to see if economic necessity or wars drove the migration of the class members' ancestors.

**You could also have someone talk to the class who has, or whose** family has recently migrated to your community, especially if their migration was caused by corporate trade policies, resource wars, or the power of money.

You can also distribute a copy of the Declaration of Human Rights. Please download a [copy here](#). You can also download a copy of the [Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth](#). It can be interesting to have each member of the class read an individual section of the Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and come to a sense of our moral responsibilities to each other and to nature.

It is also interesting to discuss the early Quaker critiques of the budding capitalism of the 1600s. For ideas on this, [here is a link](#) to the transcript of a talk I once researched and gave on *Commercial Empire and the Selling of the Soul*. You can see videos about global citizenship and global consciousness [here](#). These are such important and personal issues, it might be good to go around the class and solicit people's thoughts on these two topics.

These activities can easily take up the first part of the class. Take a break and come back for a discussion on [questions](#) about migration and spiritual responses to our global problems. Here are [notes](#) to help facilitate the answers to those questions.

This is the end of the regular class portion of this course. The last class helps people develop local solutions. One of the things we have done for that class is have everyone create a thirty-second elevator speech on one of the topics we have covered. To facilitate that, we have created an expanded list of the talking points you have handed out for each class. It provides background material for each of the talking points. Here is a [link to those talking points](#). Send it as a PDF to all the class participants. Here is also a shorter amalgamated list of [the talking points](#) you have handed out for each class.

You could also prepare the students to do some role-playing with the talking points and get ready to practice talking to their "conservative Uncle George" on one of these topics. Also hand out the survey about the class for class members to fill out and bring back

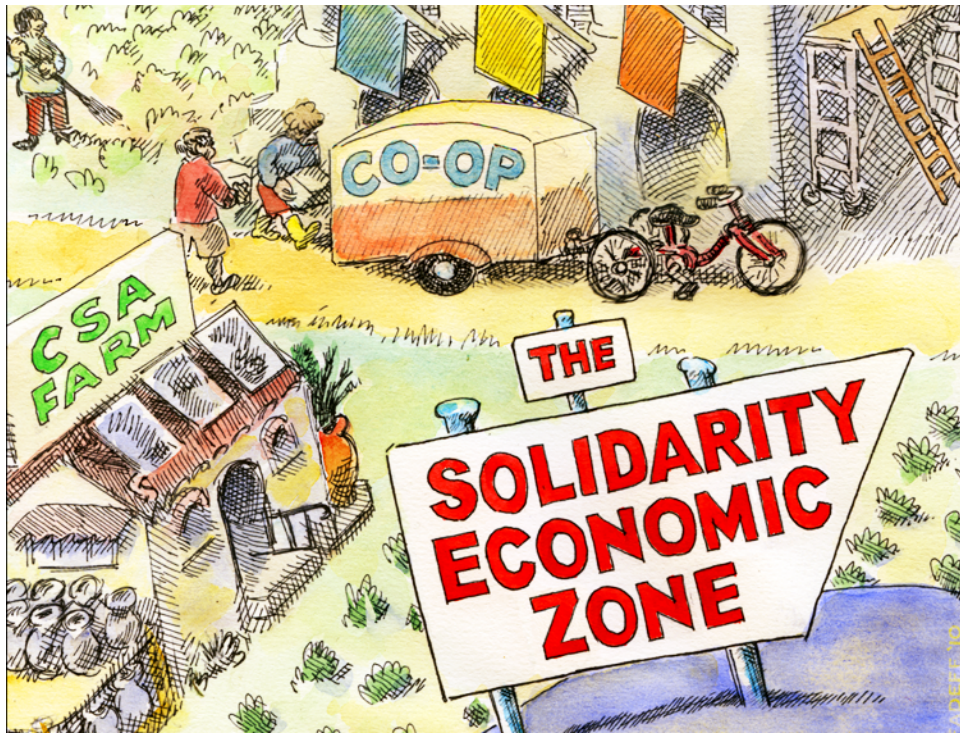
The day after the class, email the [word document](#) giving background for the talking points. You can also send them the [survey](#) for the class, a document about making an [elevator speech](#), and a list of the [solutions](#) that have been discussed in class or in the readings. You can also send them this URL to a video about making an elevator speech.

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/1248069313393/refining-the-elevator-pitch.html>

The day before the last class, send a reminder email that the last class is coming up and maybe resend the survey, talking points, elevator speech information, solutions and the URL to the video.

## GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS AND CORPORATE POWER

### Giving Communities Tools to Strengthen Self-Governance & Control Corporate Power



#### CONCLUSIONS & SOLUTIONS: THE LAST CLASS

##### Other Local Solutions, Elevator Speeches, Role Playing, Survey

**Purpose:** To wrap up the preceding 13 classes by emphasizing local responses to corporate power available to your community and providing an opportunity for putting what we have learned into action.

**Materials:** [Solutions](#), [Talking Points complete](#), [Talking Points abbreviated](#), [Survey](#)

**Paradigm:** We have studied the history and problems of corporate power, and we have explored the solutions. Now, it is time for action.

**Context:** Our friend and cohort Jan Edwards, who worked to pass the first corporate personhood resolution in Point Arena, California in 2000, often reminds us of the old phrase, “Ready, Aim, Fire.” If we only get to the first two stages, continually-saying-“ready, ready, aim, aim, ready, aim, ready,” we will never solve problems. At some point we have to take action. The concluding class is an opportunity to move in that direction by exploring any unexamined local solutions, discussing the solutions we have studied, and discuss local community actions that can impact the problems of corporate power and help build a local, sustainable, cooperative, vibrant community in the future. It is also a time to practice acting personally as a responsible citizen to educate and advocate for the democratic solutions you feel most deeply about. Finally, it is also a time to reflect on your experience with the class, what you liked, what could be improved.

**Activities:** This class is a time to cover all of the important points that did not get covered in the first 13 classes. If there is someone in the class who is involved with creating a local solution but has not already discussed their work, this is the time to invite him or her to make a presentation about that solution to the class. It can also be a time for the class as a whole to identify local initiatives they can take as a group to further build the resilience of the local community and counter the depredations of corporate power. You can also review all the [solutions](#) that have been brought up in the readings

This is also a time for everyone to put themselves out into the public space and practice a short speech on a topic of their choosing connected to this class. Here is short video at <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/1248069313393/refining-the-elevator-pitch.html> on making elevator

speeches that you may have sent to everyone, but if only a few people watched it, you can show it in class. Here is another video that is a [great example](#) of an elevator speech on ending plutocracy. Here is a template for organizing [an elevator speech](#). Students can then make their elevator speeches. It is important to be supportive while discussing and critiquing the talks.

People can use the information from their elevator speech to have a role playing discussion with someone sitting near them. Have their partner be a fictional opponent, like Old Uncle Bob who spent his life as a corporate executive and thinks that corporations should rule the world and that governments are just getting in the way of corporations making life better for everyone. Or people could role-play with a potential ally like a young cousin Ned who is just figuring the world out, or an old Aunt Alice, who was or is a hippie and activist but who spent most of her life as a middle-class housewife far from the world of money and power, though probably deeply involved with community. The partner should start the conversation so the speaker has to adjust to a real world situation. Then switch roles.

By now you are probably coming to the end of the class. One of the final things to do is to pass out [the survey](#). Our advisor and mentor, Lillian Carttright, who has been involved in academia on many levels for many years, recommends doing this sort of survey to give the participants time to reflect on what the class has meant for them and to give the facilitators some pointers on how the class might change and improve in the future. If there is time, have people fill them out in class. If there is not time, have them send them to you. Finally, give everyone a big thank you and ask if anyone has any parting words.

It can also be fun to organize a party for all of the participants. We do this once a year in the middle of the summer. We invite all the people from the most recent class plus everyone else who ever took any of our classes. Here is a [sample invitation](#). Have Fun! That is one of the most important parts of doing this work. Let us know how it works out.