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Slavery is quickly becoming universal

We have all been taught that our nation's founding fathers in 1776 rebelled against the British. However, the truth of the matter is that the colonists were actually rebelling against British corporations - not the British themselves. At the time, the colonies had been founded and were ruled by large European business corporations. Enterprises with names like the London Company, the Plymouth Company, the East India Trading Company, and the Hudson Bay Company - as well as proprietorships like William Penn and Lord Calvert - were running things. Colonists were sick of the oppression these corporations caused in their singular quest for profits, and wanted political representation with the power to control the corporations. Colonists did not revolt solely to get rid of a tea tax (levied by the East India Company, incidentally). They fought for a country where citizens were the government ruling over corporations, and protecting them from corporate abuse. After ridding ourselves of the king and his controlling corporations, the decree entrusted to the new legislators was to severely limit the issuance of corporate charters allowed to operate in America. Charters were carefully issued, one at a time, for a limited amount of time. Corporations were formed under strict rules and subjected to constant public scrutiny.

At the birthing of America, our economy consisted of the highest rate of self-employment in world history. The whole nation consisted of small farms and businesses owned by local people. The idealist Christians of the new nation felt that the Biblical ideal of "every man sitting under his own vine and his own fig tree" had truly been established.

This euphoric hope was not to last very long. The power of money quickly began to chip away at that extraordinary attempt. Throughout the 1800s, industrialists, bankers, and cooperative judges slowly re-endowed corporations with their lost rights, and ultimately gave them more rights than any citizen might enjoy. Quietly, corporate power and government were partners once more.

The most flagrant dissolution of our revolutionary accomplishments began in 1886, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a private corporation was "a natural person". This ushered in the age of the robber-barons - Gould, Morgan, Rockefeller, and the rest. Sixty years afterwards, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote "there was no history, logic, or reason, to support that enactment". Once corporations had secured the legal status of "a natural person", they had unrestricted freedom of speech and the power to participate in elections and apply their wealth toward lobbying elected officials. The handwriting was on the wall. Corporate control kept growing stronger as law after law, recommend under their influence, created a favorable atmosphere, guaranteeing their growth and invincibility.

Since then, corporate control of our lives has grown like a malignant cancer on our democracy. John C. Calhoun spoke these words in the 1840s: "The very essence of a free government, consists in considering offices as public trusts, bestowed for the good of the country, and not for the benefit of an individual party." He further stated, "A power has risen up in government greater than the people themselves, consisting of many and powerful interests, combined into one mass, held together by money." The realization of what was happening was apparent even then.

Today, wherever we look we have been shoved back to where we started from. Our country, once dead set on controlling corporate influence, has fully returned power to them. Two-thirds of American families now require two wage-earners to pay the bills, and plenty of them are barely getting by. Our national predicament is defined in weird new words like "downsizing", "restructuring", and "outsourcing". The corporations have moved our jobs to foreign lands.

Corporations are not "natural persons". A person has feelings, empathy, and cares about other persons. A corporation by definition excludes all such human consideration. Corporations are quite simply there to make money. Different from a mom and pop operation, where big enough can be a personal decision, corporate ties to banks, the stock market and shareholders demand that growth never cease. They must continue to grow in order to stay in business. This means the profits have to keep increasing, and someone must pay for the spiral.

If a real person operates a business, he will have to have some human thoughts about how much he ought to pay his employees, and how they should be treated. This is not the case with large corporations. In fact, it is a vested interest to corporations to reduce the standard of living in the United States. This creates cheaper labor costs and boosts profits. It is also in the best interests of corporations to maintain a high rate of unemployment. If everyone were employed, high wages would have to be paid even for menial jobs. That would cut into profits. Unemployment calms and suppresses labor unions, and prevents wage increases. Threats are made by management to shut or shift operations, freeze or cut wages. Unemployment has become a winning tactic of corporate power. It is also in the best self interests of corporate power to curb free speech, take away the right to bear arms, reduce or eliminate pensions and all other employee benefits, restrict the growth of small businesses, curtail the power of the vote, fight wars to acquire raw materials and exploitable labor, and manipulate interest rates to maximize profits. All of these are against our best interests as free American citizens. Corporate power is the enemy of the citizens, the enemy of our Constitution, and the enemy of the American Dream.

This is not to say there is a "master plan" or any conspiracy involved in the corporate takeover of our lives. There is no "cabal" of evil geniuses pulling the strings. The natural behavior of corporate entities makes such collusion unnecessary. It occurs automatically and incrementally. Corporate culture is ugly. Brown-nosing, one-upsmanship, the drive to be "number one", boardroom politics, "creative accounting", conformity, hostile takeovers, mergers, junk bonds, insider trading, and other expensive evils represent the face of corporate power in America.

These abuses do not exist to any extent in small business, which is the basis of true American capitalism. The final destination of corporate control is a form of government that silences dissent, imposes autocratic control, and rules by decree - which is exactly how corporations operate internally. Try "free speech" at work sometime and find out for yourself!

The average American spends half of his waking hours at work, where there is truly no freedom. He doesn't get to elect the bosses. He has to dress, act, and speak in the manner prescribed. He is given a book full of rules that must be followed. Since 95% of America is now employed by large corporations, most of us have now become serfs on the feudal estates of corporate power.

The only solution is that the people must act to curb this malignant power. Our tax structure should not favor mergers and conglomerates - it should discourage them. Our forgotten and de-clawed antitrust laws should be dusted off and re-deployed. Corporate power poses a greater threat to freedom than terrorists in the mid-east do. They truly are the "enemy within".

The insurance and pharmaceutical corporations have bought and paid for enough lawmakers to ensure that any health care reform plan that is enacted will only serve to further enrich them. In fact, Congress recently voted to make it a federal crime to not buy health insurance, punishable by fines and imprisonment. If you can't afford it, you go to jail. That's what they are calling "reform" these days in Washington.

All of us have to pay for these fat corporations to keep growing, but only the stockholders benefit. More than half of those stockholders are not even Americans. So it is that what enemy armies could not do, lawyers and bankers have done to us under cover of darkness. Freedom is lost.

If current trends continue, the average American laborer will have the same living standard as laborers in Mexico by the year 2024, about the time today's first-graders enter the job market. What a great victory that day will be for the corporations who exploit us all.

I conclude with a quote from Thomas Jefferson during his Presidency: "I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country."
BADSAM

Take everything in moderation. Including moderation.