

**Corporations, G-20, and Democratic Self-determination**  
**Workshop – Peoples' Summit September 19, 2009**  
**Greg Coleridge**

*When nothing is sure, everything is possible.*

## **POCLAD**

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A group of 11 people instigating democratic conversations and actions that contest the authority of corporations to govern. Our analysis evolves through historical and legal research, writing, public speaking, and working with organizations to develop new strategies that assert people's rights over property interests.

## **Corporate power/rights**

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Corporate rights were never intended. Corporations were originally licensed or chartered by the states

- One at a time
- For a specific purpose
- For a limited time period
- They were transparent
- Their directors had to often reside in the county they were chartered
- They couldn't own other corporations
- They couldn't supply goods or services beyond those stated in their charter
- They couldn't make charitable contributions
- They couldn't donate politically
- They were subordinate to the public

Over the past 2 centuries, all over the world and especially in the US, legal systems have evolved to achieve 2 goals – limit the legal liabilities of business corporations and give corporations the rights and protections of citizens by extending constitutional rights to corporations.

- George Draffan, *The Elite Consensus: When Corporations Wield the Constitution*

What constitutional protections? Corporations ruled as “persons”

- 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment - Equal Protection (*Santa Clara County v Southern Pacific Railroad*, 1886) Extended to include Due Process (*Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad v. Beckwith*, 1889)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill of Rights – Due process (*Noble v. Union River Logging*, 1893) Takings, (*Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Mahon*, 1922), Double jeopardy (*U.S. v. Martin Linen Supply*, 1976)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill of Rights - Search and Seizure (*Hale v Henkel*, 1906)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill of Rights – Trial by jury in criminal case (*Armour Packing Co. v. U.S.*, 1908)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Bill of Rights - Free media speech *Grosjean v. American Press Co.* [1936], Corporate spending on political referenda, (*First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti*, 1977), Right not to speak, (*Pacific Gas and Electric Co. v. Public*

*Utilities Commission, 1986)*

- 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill of Rights- Trial by jury in civil case (*Ross v. Bernhard, 1970*)

The power of corporations influences, if not actually creates, public policy decisions governing (*insert your favorite issue here*). The ultimate problem behind lack of (*insert your favorite issue here*) is the lack of democracy

This power caused by corporations escaping control and authority

- Escaping from legislatures to the courts  
Ultimately to unelected and unaccountable US Supreme Court
- Escaping from legislatures to regulatory agencies  
Limited focus, shield from corporations, can always be appealed
- Escaping from local to federal then international levels  
More difficult for citizen pressure, can meet/deliberate outside of public attention  
(World Bank, IMF, WTO, G-20)

## **G-20**

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What is the G-20?

- Finance ministers and central bank governors from 20 economies: 19 of the world's largest national economies, plus the European Union (EU).
- Leadership from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, International Monetary and Financial Committee, and Development Committee of the IMF and World Bank also attend.
- Meet twice a year in private to address issues of the international financial system as it relates to trade, perpetual growth, energy, environment (i.e. climate change), and debt relief. A major agenda for Pittsburgh is reforming the international financial system,
- Central bank governors are the heads of the nation's major bank responsible for monetary policy. Central banks in most countries are totally or largely privately owned and controlled -- possessed with federal powers to set interest rates, be the lender of last resort to banking corporations (which are often owners or investors of the central bank), regulate the banking industry, and create money (out of thin air). In the US, the central bank is the Federal Reserve.
- Plans were announced following the The April, 2009 London G-20 Summit for implementing the creation of a new global currency to replace the US dollar. This will globalize monetary policy and central banking – further removed from people and democratic institutions.

Since the G-20 is composed of private bankers and government finance ministers (representing governments that are heavily influenced by corporate interests), the G-20 predominately promotes a corporate agenda. It is not a transparent or democratic institution.

*They no longer use bullets and ropes. They use the World Bank and the IMF*

– Jesse Jackson

## **Promoting Self-Determination**

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Taking a glocal (global to local) approach

### **Globally**

Doing what is going on here in Pittsburgh

- Education -- forums, summit, workshops, etc.
- Noncooperation – marches, rallies, vigils, letters, calls, etc.
- Resistance – attempts to shut down or other ways disrupt meetings

### **Nationally**

- Promote/protect public control of public assets
- Eliminate private money from public elections
- Abolish corporate “personhood”
- Democratize monetary policy
  1. Audit Federal Reserve Act HR 1207 and S 604
  2. American Monetary Act <http://www.monetary.org/amacolorpamphlet.pdf>
  3. Monetary Reform Act <http://www.themoneymasters.com/mra.htm>

### **Locally**

Effort to democratize G-20 is ultimately only as effective as our effort to democratize its respective members – especially those which are supposedly “democratic” – nation-states.

1. Measure T  
Citizen initiative in Humboldt County, CA which passed by 55% of vote in 2006 strengthening local democracy by prohibiting any non-local entity including non-local corporations, unions, and non-profits from making contributions to Humboldt County Elections.
2. PA  
Dozens of local townships have passed ordinances that...
  - Prohibits Corporations from Taking Private Property Through Eminent Domain
  - Prohibits Corporations from Mining
  - Prohibits Corporate Land Development
  - Enforces the Right to Local Self-Governance and Eliminates Corporate Privileges
  - New Ordinance Prohibiting Land Application of Sewage Sludge
  - Protects Rights of Ecosystems
  - Asserts Liability for Bodily Chemical Trespass
  - Prohibits Corporate Water Withdrawals
  - Prohibits Corporate Retailing
  - Prohibits Unsustainable Energy Production
  - Prohibits Corporate Hauling of Toxins Through Municipalities
  - Nullifies the USA PATRIOT Act
  - Nullifies the National Animal Identification System
  - Bans Corporate Introduction of Genetically Modified Crops
3. NH

Nottingham, NH Bans Corporate Water-Taking; Joins Barnstead, NH in Adopting Law Recognizing Nature Has Rights

4. Maine – 3 towns (Shapleigh, Newfield, and Wells) passed resolutions that strip corporations of the rights of “personhood”
5. Privatization/corporatization – Private takeover of public assets and services are increasing from the local to the national levels as –
  - Government budgets decline,
  - Infrastructure repairs climb
  - Communities seek a quick infusion of money
  - Corporations look for safe investments
6. Local education/action on democratization of money
  1. Educate: Web of Debt, The Money Masters: How International Bankers Gained Control of America, Money as Debt (I and II), Lost Science of Money: The Mythology of Money, The Story of Power
  2. Launch local currencies (i.e. Ithaca HOURS, BerkShares)
  3. Start barter program
  4. Shift funds to credit unions, start one

## **More information**

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## Monetary Reform Act - A Summary (in four paragraphs)

This proposed law would require banks to increase their reserves on deposits from the current 10%, to 100%, over a one-year period. This would abolish fractional reserve banking (*i.e.*, money creation by private banks) which depends upon fractional (*i.e.*, partial) reserve lending. To provide the funds for this reserve increase, the US Treasury Department would be authorized to issue new United States Notes (and/or US Note accounts) sufficient in quantity to pay off the entire national debt (and replace all Federal Reserve Notes).

The funds required to pay off the national debt are always closely equivalent to the amount of money the banks have created by engaging in fractional lending because the Fed creates 10% of the money the government needs to finance deficit spending (and uses that newly created money to buy US bonds on the open market), then the banks create the other 90% as loans (as is explained on our FAQ page). Thus the national debt closely tracks the combined total of US Treasury debt held by the Fed (10%) and the amount of money created by private banks (90%).

Because this two-part action (increasing bank reserves to 100% and paying off the entire national debt) adds no net increase to the money supply (the two actions cancel each other in net effect on the money supply), it would cause neither inflation nor deflation, but would result in monetary stability and the end of the boom-bust pattern of US economic activity caused by our current, inherently unstable system. Thus our entire national debt would be extinguished – thereby dramatically reducing or entirely eliminating the US budget deficit and the need for taxes to pay the \$400+ billion interest per year on the national debt - and our economic system would be stabilized, while ending the terrible injustice of private banks being allowed to create over 90% of our money as loans on which they charge us interest. Wealth would cease to be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands as a result of private bank money creation. Thereafter, apart from a regular 3% annual increase (roughly matching population growth), only Congress would have the power to authorize changes in the US money supply - for public use -not private banks increasing only private bankers' wealth.