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DEMOCRACY > Slave Master To Corporate Manager

Corporations are governing entities. They make the rules and that is contrary to the theory of governance in the United States. That is contrary to ideals of the Declaration of Independence and to all the work that people in every generation have done in order to try to wrest power from the few and distribute it among the many. And, none of those issues are raised. We can see it in the US when the nominations to the United States Supreme Court, you know, which sometimes is a big deal, usually not but sometimes is a big deal, and the nominee has to appear before congressional senate committees and all that.

Nobody, nobody in the history at least throughout the entire 20th century that I've looked at, no congress person has ever raised the issue of the ability of corporations to wield the constitution, that corporations should have freedom of speech and freedom of association and the other bill of rights powers that were written into the constitution. Nobody's asked, "Well, how do you feel about capital and property... an institution of capital and property wielding the rights of persons?" And therefore, when the General Motors Corporation speaks it drowns out the rights of people.

When people go to work for any corporation, as soon as you cross over on to corporate property you have no constitutional rights in the United States. You have no freedom of speech. You have no due process. You have no equal protection. Again, if you violate something – lets say some folks within a corporation, they want to start putting some signs on the walls or they want to start having meetings – well, the corporate leaders, they'll call the Sheriff and it is the state that will come and remove these people and say "you are violating the law."

And, it's not much different from the slave master. They wrote the laws of the southern states saying what the conditions were and making it a crime for anybody to teach a slave to read, certainly making it a capital offense to help a slave escape. They got it written in the constitution that all bonded workers, whether white or black slaves, if they ran away to a non-slave state the law of the land, the Sheriff, the police, the army had to seize this person and send him or her back to her owner.

So, frankly, I think we've sort of evolved in the United States from a slave master society to a corporate manager society and a lot of strong parallels (it's not as horrendous on many levels, it's not as obvious) but I think the slave master society, the southern slavocracy ruled the United States up to the civil war. And, subsequent to the civil war it's men of property through the corporations that have ruled the United States,

And that history is very important to tell us how we got into this mess and also to help suggest ways of undoing it so we go beyond lessening the harms one at a time, which I said is really important to do. We got to deal with those harms cause usually they're about killing people and denying rights and all of that. The thread that is running through all these single issues, what they all have in common is that the law of the land is not neutral even, praise be it would be neutral – I'd accept that for a while. It's not neutral. The law of the land enables men of property enables these institutions of capital, these institutions of property to deny the rights of the many. And, that's not called democracy in my book.

THE NATURE OF THE CORPORATION > And The Corporation Went Forth And Multiplied

Corporations create corporations, which create corporations, which create corporations. That is the reality. Also, the creating corporation has no responsibility for what its subsidiary corporations do. One of the other purposes of the corporation is to prevent anyone from being held accountable or responsible for anything. Why is it so hard to find somebody in a corporation who's responsible? Because that's one of the primary purposes of a corporation. That's why some of the best minds in the world have designed these entities in order that no humans are responsible for anything. That's what they do. That's what they're for, and they work... Beautifully.

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE > The Evolution Of Resistance

For my adult lifetime – the last 30 years – many, many people, large numbers of people, sometimes millions of people have been involved in efforts to stop particular harms. And, in order to do that we've had to learn an enormous amount. Just the folks around the world who were fighting against nuclear power plants over the last 30 years. I mean, people had to learn about chemistry and physics and learn the periodic table and learn about the fuel cycle and money and weapons and how the military atom and the so-called peaceful atom – how they all interact in nuclear ways. And, people have done that around climate change. They've done that over forestry, over mining, over building these giant dams, over just water use. You know, we've done it over how banks use redlining and interlocking directorates. We've studied the nature of corporations; many people have and increasingly are.

So, people are capable - often times without sophisticated official education - of figuring this stuff out and using that knowledge to resist. I think what's happening in the last couple of years is that because of all that work, and because of the resistance from the corporations and the elected governments and stuff, the sense of the work, the nature of the work of people is changing, is evolving –

slowly, but it's happening. And that is... people are moving from single issues... not to say we don't care about that. But, they're understanding that what we need to be doing is to resist those symptoms (single issues) in ways that begin to educate more people about the nature of the whole and that begin to challenge the public officials fundamentally who are giving away the peoples' authority, who are enabling private capital (which is not always private because many times it's just been stolen from the people anyway), but enabling capital and property, you know, put together in these corporate entities to in fact use the law of the land, to use the coercive force of law to instruct people in what they should be doing, to instruct them in how to think, to deny their rights.

...I live in a small state of New Hampshire in a small community of a couple thousand people, you know. We're trying to stop a gravel, a granite quarry corporation coming in to a little hill in our community. They want to come in and mine this... you know, 80 trucks a day for 20 years in this community of two thousand people. And what their lawyers, when their lawyers come and appear before our zoning board - you know, the community is really rising up - and their lawyers come in and say "given the law of the state of New Hampshire and the US government and the US constitution and New Hampshire constitution you people through your elected board of supervisors have no authority here except to help determine the conditions under which we can mine. You cannot...you have no authority to prevent us from mining this granite on this corporation's private property in this hill in your community."

And so, picture that happening all over the place. WalMart corporation wants to come in and Home Depot corporation and all these corporations, and timber companies want to clear cut and all that. When their lawyers come in and say to the community that's trying to either stop it or make it less bad and say "You have no authority, except to work with us - sort of regulate how we destroy everything and how we pull out the guts from this neighbourhood by building this, or how we mine all this stuff." They're right. They're right. That's what the law is. That's what the law says.

So, you know, most of these struggles have been in fact. I mean occasionally you slip by and you can stop it, you make it too costly for the company and you make them stop and all that. But, for the most part, again, the community ends up trying to make it 15 trucks a day and you won't go between 12 midnight and 6 am and when you pass the school you'll slow down and you'll have barriers for the water and you'll protect the deer and the frogs and all that. What's beginning to happen is that we've been through that. People in communities all over the place have been through that and they're realizing it's not enough and so they're changing how they look at the situation and what they're saying is, "Well, I don't care what you say the constitution says or the laws that you, Mr. Corporation, have enacted at the state level. We're saying we're not going to allow this to happen in our community. We're going to write the rules for our community."