

# Is Corporate Personhood the End of Democracy?

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I suspect the Supreme Court's recent ruling on corporate personhood has many of our founding fathers turning in their graves including Thomas Jefferson who wrote, "I hope we shall ... crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations which dare already to challenge our government in a trial of strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

Abraham Lincoln seemed to prophesize where the country is now headed: "I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country ... corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war."

Schools do not teach our children the following historical context: "Corporations were detested by the colonial rebels in 1776 when the Declaration of Independence severed the States from Great Britain. There had been only a few corporations in colonial America, but they had been very powerful. The Dutch West India Company had founded New York. Corporations had effectively governed Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas. The political history of the colonies up until 1776 was largely one of conflict between citizens trying to establish rule by elected government and the corporations or King ruling through appointed governors." (William Myers, *The Santa Clara Blues: Corporate Personhood versus Democracy*, Nov 2008.)

I find it disturbing that a Supreme court with so many "King George" appointees are returning this nation to colonial conditions where common people again struggle for rule against a government beholden to its corporate sponsors. I have to wonder: Are we now witnessing Lincoln's apocalyptic vision of the end of democracy?

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