

Time to Topple Corporate Dictators

The Wall Street crooks who looted the peoples' pensions and savings...

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The 18 day non-violent Egyptian protests for freedom raise the question: is America next? Were Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine around, they would likely say "what are we waiting for?" They would be appalled by the concentration of economic and political power in such a few hands. Remember how often these two men warned about concentrated power.

Our Declaration of Independence (1776) listed grievances against King George III. A good number of them could have been made against "King" George W. Bush who not only brushed aside Congressional War-making authority under the Constitution but plunged the nation through lies into extended illegal wars which he conducted in violation of international law. Even conservative legal scholars such as Republicans Bruce Fein and former Judge Andrew Napolitano believe he and Dick Cheney still should be prosecuted for war and other related crimes. The conservative American Bar Association sent George W. Bush three "white papers" in 2005-2006 that documented his distinct violations of the Constitution he had sworn to uphold.

Here at home, the political system is a two-party dictatorship whose gerrymandering results in most electoral districts being one-party fiefdoms. The two Parties block the freedom of third parties and independent candidates to have equal access to the ballots and to the debates. Another barrier to competitive democratic elections is big money, largely commercial in source, which marinates most politicians in cowardliness and sinecurism.

Our legislative and executive branches, at the federal and state levels, can fairly be called corporate regimes. This is corporatism where government is controlled by private economic power. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called this grip "fascism" in a formal message to Congress in 1938.

Corporatism shuts out the people and opens governmental largesse paid for by taxpayers to insatiable corporations.

Notice how each decade the bailouts, subsidies, hand-outs, giveaways, and tax escapes for big business grow larger. The word "trillions" is increasingly used, as in the magnitude of the rescue by Washington of the Wall Street crooks and speculators who looted the peoples' pensions and savings.

It is not as if these giant companies demonstrate any gratitude to the people who save them again and again. Instead, U.S. companies are fast quitting the country in which they were chartered and prospered. These corporations, which were built on the backs of American

workers, are shipping millions of jobs and whole industries to repressive foreign regimes abroad, such as China.

Over 70 percent of Americans in a September 2000 Business Week poll said corporations had “too much control over their lives.” It’s gotten worse with the last decade’s corporate corruption and crime wave.

Wal-Mart imports over \$20 billion a year in products from sweatshops in China. About a million Wal-Mart workers make under \$10.50 per hour before deductions—many in the \$8 an hour range. While Wal-Mart’s CEO makes about \$11,000 a hour plus benefits and perks.

This scenario has metastasized through the economy. One in three workers in the U.S. makes Wal-Mart level wages. Fifty million people have no health insurance and every year about 45,000 die because they cannot afford diagnosis or treatment. Child poverty is climbing as household income falls. Unemployment and underemployment are near 20% levels. The federal minimum wage, adjusted for inflation since 1968, would be \$10.00 per hour now. Instead, it is \$7.25.

Yet one percent of the richest Americans have financial wealth equivalent to the bottom ninety-five percent of the people. Corporate profits and compensation of corporate bosses are at record levels. While companies, excluding financial firms, are sitting on two trillion dollars in cash.

On February 7, President Obama showed us where the power is by walking across LaFayette Park from the White House to the headquarters of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Before a large audience of CEOs, he pleaded for them to invest more in jobs in America. Imagine, CEOs of pampered, privileged mega-companies often on welfare and in trouble with the law sitting there while the President curtsied.

With Bill Clinton in the Nineties, corporate lobbies tightened their grip on our country by greasing through Congress both NAFTA and the World Trade Organization agreements that subordinated our sovereignty and workers to the global government of corporations.

All this adds to the growing sense of powerlessness by the citizenry. They experience hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths and many more injuries every year in the workplace, the environment, and the marketplace. Massive budgets and technologies do not go to reduce these costly casualties, instead they go to the big business of exaggerated security threats.

While the ObamaBush deficit-financed wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been destroying those nations, our public works here, such as mass transit, schools and clinics crumble for lack of repairs. Foreclosures keep rising.

The debt servitude of consumers is stripping them of control of their own money as fine print contracts, credit ratings and credit scores tighten the noose on family budgets.

Half of democracy is showing up. Too many Americans, despairingly, are not “showing up” at the polls, at rallies, marches, courtrooms or city council meetings. If “we the people” want to reassert our proper constitutional sovereignty over our country—we can start by amassing ourselves in public squares and around the giant buildings of our rulers.

In a country that has so many problems it doesn't deserve and so many solutions that it doesn't apply; all things are possible when people begin looking at themselves for the necessary power to produce a just society.

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