

Control the Corporation
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What can we do to control the corporations?

by Dimitra Doukas

Our national political efforts at controlling corporations—imposing legal controls, as the will of a sovereign people—date to 1887 and the founding of the Interstate Commerce Commission. We've tried to control corporations for a century and a quarter, but never quite succeeded. Somehow they always find ways to subvert our efforts to regulate them.

What lever do we the people have left with which we might exert control over the corporate giants? Don't we have to admit that we are facing raw power, power that, no matter how sweetly it can speak, is not really amenable to reason, least of all to moral reason?

Ralph Nader told a conference in Redlands, California last September: "Small communities are about the only hope." I agree.

And so do millions of others. Many communities are taking the first steps toward breaking their dependency on corporate supply lines. We've seen wonders in developing local food supply over the last decade, with CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture, or co-op farms) and farmers' markets sprouting up all over the country, supported by a broad public.

In the next round, we need to move toward the production of other necessities with CSMs (Community Supported Manufacturing), local power generation, healthcare, housing, and banking cooperatives, local "stock markets," and local currencies.

Real wealth is made of people power.

Staying small will be community enterprises' best defense against corporate intrusion. Stay small, but stay linked together in decentralized communications networks, to compare notes, share ideas, assess progress, and plan ahead.

Working together, we could gain enough strength at the grassroots to withdraw our consent from the corporate state. Standing together, we could delegitimize it.

There are obstacles to grassroots community-building that can only be surmounted by recognizing a social problem of which most of us are in denial, the problem of *class*. Let me put it bluntly: working-class folk believe that people like us hold them in contempt.

I know because I've studied them as an anthropologist for twenty years. I have befriended people who listen to Rush and Glenn Beck. My research can help with the class problem.