
POCLAD

Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy

P.O. Box 246, S. Yarmouth, MA 02664-0246
508-398-1145 people@poclad.org <http://www.poclad.org/>

Democracy Insurgency Curriculum

Real change, led by *We the People*, is needed in our nation and world. A bottom-up *democracy insurgency* calling and working for genuine self-governance has begun. It's represented in the US by multi-state responses to attacks on workers, the Occupy Wall Street movement and Move to Amend; and internationally by the massive "Arab Spring" demonstrations throughout the Middle East, North Africa and beyond.

The Declaration of Independence in 1776 was the first major collective statement in the colonies outlining oppression and asserting self-determination. The Populists followed the same course in their Omaha Platform of 1892.

The problem isn't a few corporate "bad apples" or in general this or that corporate abuse. The fundamental problem is never-intended constitutional powers and rights corporations have acquired permitting them to usurp us, *We the People*, from governing ourselves.

POCLAD invites you to join together with others where you are in study/action groups to:

(1) Study and reflect on the political, legal and institutional oppressions of today - to widen and deepen understanding of the origins of the problem (Note: it just didn't begin with the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision)

(2) Learn about democracy campaigns and cooperative programs from democracy/self-governance organizations, and,

(3) More consciously discuss what people are willing to do to work for *real* change over the long haul — beginning where they are.

POCLAD has prepared this *Democracy Insurgency Curriculum* to assist those who want to embark on this quest.

If you wish a hard copy packet, the cost is \$10 (including postage). To order, contact POCLAD at people@poclad.org or call 508-398-1145.

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The Declaration of Independence

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new guards for their future security — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. — The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly

firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our People, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free system of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislature, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock

Button Gwinnett Lyman Hall Geo. Walton

Wm. Hooper Joseph Hewes John Penn Edward Rutledge Thos. Heyward, Junr.
Thomas Lynch, Junr. Arthur Middleton

Samuel Chase Wm. Paca Thos. Stone Charles Carroll of Carrollton George
Wythe Richard Henry Lee Th. Jefferson Benja. Harrison Thos. Nelson, Jr .
Francis Lightfoot Lee Carter Braxton

Robt. Morris Benjamin Rush Benja. Franklin John Morton Geo. Clymer Jas.
Smith Geo. Taylor James Wilson Geo. Ross Caesar Rodney Geo. Read Tho.
Mckean

Wm. Floyd Phil. Livingston Frans. Lewis Lewis Morris Richd. Stockton Jno.
Witherspoon Fras. Hopkinson John Har Abra. Clark

Josiah Bartlett Wm. Whipple Saml. Adams John Adams Robt. Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry Step. Hopkins William Ellery Roger Sherman Samuel
Huntington Wm. Williams Oliver Wolcott Matthew Thornton

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The Omaha Platform

Although historians often speak of a “Populist movement” in the 1880s, it wasn’t until 1892 that the People’s or Populist Party was formally organized. The Omaha Platform, adopted by the founding convention of the party on July 4, 1892, set out the basic tenets of the Populist movement. The movement had emerged out of the cooperative crusade organized by the Farmer’s Alliance in the 1880s. The preamble was written by Minnesota lawyer, farmer, politician, and novelist Ignatius Donnelly. Delegates to the convention embraced the platform with great enthusiasm. Many of the specific proposals urged by the Omaha Platform—the graduated income tax, the secret ballot, the direct election of Senators, the eight-hour day—won enactment in the progressive and New Deal eras of the next century. Yet at least one historian has argued that the fundamental cooperative and democratic spirit of the agrarian radicals was lost along the way.

NATIONAL PEOPLE’S PARTY PLATFORM

Assembled upon the 116th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the People’s Party of America, in their first national convention, invoking upon their action the blessing of Almighty God, put forth in the name and on behalf of the people of this country, the following preamble and declaration of principles:

PREAMBLE

The conditions which surround us best justify our co-operation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes—tramps and millionaires.

The national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bondholders; a vast public debt payable in legal tender currency has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burdens of the people.

Silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor, and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten usurers, bankrupt enterprise, and enslave industry. A vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on two continents, and it is rapidly taking possession of the world. If not met and overthrown at once it forebodes terrible social convulsions, the destruction of civilization, or the establishment of an absolute despotism.

We have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the suffering people. We charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them. Neither do they now promise us any substantial reform. They have agreed together to ignore, in the coming campaign, every issue but one. They propose to drown the outcries of a plundered people with the uproar of a sham battle over the tariff, so that capitalists, corporations, national banks, rings, trusts, watered stock, the demonetization of silver and the oppressions of the usurers may all be lost sight of. They propose to sacrifice our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires.

Assembled on the anniversary of the birthday of the nation, and filled with the spirit of the grand general and chief who established our independence, we seek to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of “the plain people,” with which class it originated. We assert our purposes to be identical with the purposes of the National Constitution; to form a more perfect union and establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.

We declare that this Republic can only endure as a free government while built upon the love of the whole people for each other and for the nation; that it cannot be pinned together by bayonets; that the civil war is over, and that every passion and resentment which grew out of it must die with it, and that we must be in fact, as we are in name, one united brotherhood of free men.

Our country finds itself confronted by conditions for which there is no precedent in the history of the world; our annual agricultural productions amount to billions of dollars in value, which must, within a few weeks or months, be exchanged for billions of dollars' worth of commodities consumed in their production; the existing currency supply is wholly inadequate to make this exchange; the results are falling prices, the formation of combines and rings, the impoverishment of the producing class. We pledge ourselves that if given power we will labor to correct these evils by wise and reasonable legislation, in accordance with the terms of our platform.

We believe that the power of government—in other words, of the people—should be expanded (as in the case of the postal service) as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land.

While our sympathies as a party of reform are naturally upon the side of every proposition which will tend to make men intelligent, virtuous, and temperate, we nevertheless regard these questions, important as they are, as secondary to the great issues now pressing for solution, and upon which not only our individual prosperity but the very existence of free institutions depend; and we ask all men to first help us to determine whether we are to have a republic to administer before we differ as to the conditions upon which it is to be administered, believing that the forces of reform this day organized will never cease to move forward until every wrong is remedied and equal rights and equal privileges securely established for all the men and women of this country.

PLATFORM

We declare, therefore—

First.—That the union of the labor forces of the United States this day consummated shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit enter into all hearts for the salvation of the Republic and the uplifting of mankind.

Second.—Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without an equivalent is robbery. “If any will not work, neither shall he eat.” The interests of rural and civic labor are the same; their enemies are identical.

Third.—We believe that the time has come when the railroad corporations will either own the people or the people must own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the Constitution by which all persons engaged in the government service shall be placed under a civil-service regulation of the most rigid character, so as to prevent the increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees.

FINANCE.—We demand a national currency, safe, sound, and flexible, issued by the general government only, a full legal tender for all debts, public and private, and that without the use of banking corporations, a just, equitable, and efficient means of distribution direct to the people, at a tax not to exceed 2 per cent. per annum, to be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmers' Alliance, or a better system; also by payments in discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

1. We demand free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1.
2. We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.
3. We demand a graduated income tax.
4. We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all State and national revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses of the government, economically and honestly administered.
5. We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of the

earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

TRANSPORTATION—Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people. The telegraph, telephone, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

LAND.—The land, including all the natural sources⁶⁹ of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

EXPRESSION OF SENTIMENTS

Your Committee on Platform and Resolutions beg leave unanimously to report the following:

Whereas, Other questions have been presented for our consideration, we hereby submit the following, not as a part of the Platform of the People's Party, but as resolutions expressive of the sentiment of this Convention.

1. RESOLVED, That we demand a free ballot and a fair count in all elections and pledge ourselves to secure it to every legal voter without Federal Intervention, through the adoption by the States of the unperverted Australian or secret ballot system.
2. RESOLVED, That the revenue derived from a graduated income tax should be applied to the reduction of the burden of taxation now levied upon the domestic industries of this country.
3. RESOLVED, That we pledge our support to fair and liberal pensions to ex-Union soldiers and sailors.
4. RESOLVED, That we condemn the fallacy of protecting American labor under the present system, which opens our ports to the pauper and criminal classes of the world and crowds out our wage-earners; and we denounce the present ineffective laws against contract labor, and demand the further restriction of undesirable emigration.
5. RESOLVED, That we cordially sympathize with the efforts of organized workingmen to shorten the hours of labor, and demand a rigid enforcement of the existing eight-hour law on Government work, and ask that a penalty clause be added to the said law.
6. RESOLVED, That we regard the maintenance of a large standing army of mercenaries, known as the Pinkerton system, as a menace to our liberties, and we demand its abolition. . . .
7. RESOLVED, That we commend to the favorable consideration of the people and the reform press the legislative system known as the initiative and referendum.
8. RESOLVED, That we favor a constitutional provision limiting the office of President and Vice-President to one term, and providing for the election of Senators of the United States by a direct vote of the people.
9. RESOLVED, That we oppose any subsidy or national aid to any private corporation for any purpose.
10. RESOLVED, That this convention sympathizes with the Knights of Labor and their righteous contest with the tyrannical combine of clothing manufacturers of Rochester, and declare it to be a duty of all who hate tyranny and oppression to refuse to purchase the goods made by the said manufacturers, or to patronize any merchants who sell such goods.

Source: *The World Almanac*, 1893 (New York: 1893), 83–85. Reprinted in George Brown Tindall, ed., *A Populist Reader, Selections from the Works of American Populist Leaders* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 90–96.

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Democracy Insurgency Curriculum

Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences between the demands of the Omaha Platform and current US laws and rules?
2. What would the nation and world look like today if the Omaha Platform had been adopted?
3. What are the current barriers to creating and maintaining real change in our communities and nation?
4. What are the current opportunities for creating real change?
5. What is the role of political candidates and public officials in creating real change?
6. Are the 4 sequential steps promoted by the Populists (forming organizations, recruitment, education, and political action) to create a revolutionary social movement for change relevant today? If not, what should be different?
7. Is the “Rule of Law” often at odds with democracy. If so, how and when?
8. Discuss the role of mythology and “official stories” in the strategy of Empire. What are some elements of the U.S. Empire’s official story?
9. The World Trade Organization facilitates global corporate rule. What are earlier examples of institutions that served corporate power? Why do you think this pattern continues its dominance generation after generation?
10. If you were charged with writing new election law for this country, what would your legislation include?
11. Organizational and community activists have, throughout the last 40 years waged their struggles for positive change through regulatory agencies. Discuss the basis on which these agencies and the law they implement are now seen as providing no remedy for environmental, labor or consumer activists.
12. What do you commit to doing to create a “democracy insurgency” once you leave here today?

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Resources

[Gaveling Down the Rabble](#)

[How "Free Trade" Is Stealing Our Democracy](#)

In *Gaveling Down the Rabble*, author/activist Jane Anne Morris explores a .century and a half of efforts by corporations and the courts to undermine local democracy in the United States by using a "free trade" model. It was that very nineteenth-century model that was later adopted globally by corporations to subvert local attempts at protecting the environment and citizen and worker health. **\$15.00**

[The Rule of Property](#)

In *The Rule of Property*, Karen Coulter offers a groundbreaking new perspective on the rise of private property over the public domain by linking two popular streams of thought: the legal history of the rise of corporate power developed by POCLAD (Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy) together with the new thinking about corporate encroachment on the ecological and social commons. Coulter, a member of POCLAD, is also a forest activist who watchdogs public lands against corporate theft. **\$5.00**

[War and Peace and Democracy](#)

Four essays that ask: why again? And where goes the peace movement after Iraq? Of all the possible responses to the attacks of September 11, why did the U.S. government choose war? What can a reactivated peace movement learn from the Iraq war and from 20th Century social movement history to prepare us to do more than react to the demands of empire? In other words: how can we fundamentally challenge the power of corporations to turn our government against us and march another generation off to war? **\$3.00**

[Taking Care of Business](#)

[Citizenship and the charter of incorporation](#)

Taking Care of Business discusses the rise of the powerful corporation, its transformation into personhood, and the need for the structural reform of governance of this institution as a great and urgent challenge for the coming generation. — Ralph Nader
4.00

Building Unions

Past, present and future

Your union local or activist community group is doing good work against one corporate assault after another. But your successes aren't making the next campaigns easier. Or challenging public officials who enable corporate usurpations. You're itching to take action. Whether your passion is organizing unions, ending clear cutting, stopping genetic engineering or nurturing sane industrial transitions, this booklet is for you. Learn how to leave your favorite regulatory agency in the dust; contest corporate denial of people's self-governing authority; reframe single issues as struggles for constitutional rights. **\$5.00**

Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy

A book of history and strategy

In these 70 essays, speeches, sermons and screeds, POCLADers probe: corporations as "legal persons"; corporate social responsibility as a ploy; strategies for amending state corporation codes and challenging judge-made laws; and much, much more. This collection, which Howard Zinn calls "powerfully persuasive," chronicles POCLAD's evolution — among the twelve POCLADers and with thousands of activists. Here are hidden histories, crisp analyses and thoughtful responses to corporate apologists — all in one provocative book. **\$17.95**

The Elite Consensus

Financial and business corporations throw millions of dollars at think tanks, lobbyists and universities, exploiting writers and artists galore. Their assignment? To twist words, gnarl symbols, sell lies, whip people into line. *The Elite Consensus* fingers the American Enterprise Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Heritage Foundation, and many other "educational" corporations, which men of property have unleashed on this planet. The author shows how these corporate con artists teach us our history, elect our representatives, write our laws, define ideas and frame public policy debates. Originally published in 2000 by Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project as *The Corporate Consensus*. **\$9.00**

To order, go to <http://cipa-apex.org/books/poclad/>

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THE DEMOCRATIC ARTS

Attitudes and Skills for Participatory Democracy

An organization, institution or society is democratic to the degree that its members share leadership and responsibility, and individually and collectively have the skills needed to do so. While there is training for most human endeavors, until relatively recently group membership and citizenship -- cornerstones of a democratic society -- have been taken for granted rather than understood to involve attitudes and tasks to be learned and practiced. From the smallest meeting to the largest legislative body, the majority of participants are not empowered, either philosophically or practically, to interact cooperatively, make decisions democratically and act on them effectively. **We the People** offers training in **THE DEMOCRATIC ARTS** to organizations, agencies, school, and town governments.

A COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM & DIVERSITY

Diversity is a given; the only choice is whether we recognize its importance and create processes that invite wide and varied participation. Differences within any group representative of our society will be not only those of race, gender, ethnicity, age, class, religion, and sexuality, but of opinions, world views, ways of learning and communicating. These can all be sources of greater power, richness and effectiveness rather than bones of contention.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In any group of thinking, feeling people, there will be contention. Conflict is natural and potentially creative. In both interpersonal and societal relationships, its satisfactory resolution is central to authentic democratic process. Without open-mindedness and specific skills, some people stifle their voices and others prevail by aggression, thus disempowering both individuals and the group.

DECISION MAKING WITHOUT LOSERS

Many people equate democracy and voting. While ballots may have uses in a democracy, a group's automatic resort to voting inevitably results in winners and losers, whether these be issues or candidates. Consensual processes, on the other hand, place more responsibility on the group as a whole and its members to work cooperatively, speak and listen carefully, and seek creative solutions. Consensus attempts to synthesize all the ideas in the group instead of selecting one among several. Because this approach to discussion and decision-making is not generally part of US culture, it is important to have training in its assumptions and processes.

HOLDING FUN & FAIR MEETINGS

Meetings are a major arena in which democracy processes are enacted -- or not. The best of intentions won't make a meeting effective or democratic if there aren't the agreements and commitments, structures and skills that enable each member to participate freely and fully. Training includes how to: involve people in the planning, conducting and follow-up of the meeting; build lively agendas; facilitate effectively; communicate clearly; solve problems and resolve conflict.

PLANNING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Another set of group tasks involves setting goals and establishing priorities; developing proposals; doing short and long range planning; implementing organizational decisions and change. These generally set the direction and provide the substance of a group's meetings and activity. Clear, commonly understood and accessible processes are essential to cooperative forward movement and accomplishment.

ORGANIZING

How do people communicate their concerns? Form a group? Hold an event? Gain support from others for their efforts? Organizing includes door knocking, phoning and fundraising; media and public relations work; identifying and sharing tasks. It requires accountability, follow-up and evaluation, both during and on completion of a project.

THE FISHBOWL: DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSIONS IN LARGE GROUPS

In Arcata, California, hundreds of citizens debated the question "Can we have democracy when large corporations wield so much power and wealth under law?" by using a technique of democratic conversation known as "the fishbowl."

Six chairs, each with its own microphone, were set up in a circle in the center of the high-school multipurpose room. Surrounding these were concentric rings of seats for the "audience." Periodically a conversant seated at the center would relinquish her seat to be replaced by someone from the audience, a seamless transition that allowed the conversation taking place in the inner circle to continue uninterrupted.

The purpose is to develop a conversation that is not dominated by conversants making independent statements. Ideally any person who wishes to participate in the conversation eventually will be seated. Fishbowls thus can change public discussions from adversarial confrontations to more respectful, democratic conversations.

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Democracy / Self-governance Groups & Campaigns

MovetoAmend.org

MovetoAmend.org is a coalition supported by hundreds of organizations and tens of thousands of individuals dedicated to ending the illegitimate legal doctrines that prevent the American people from governing ourselves. It proposes a constitutional amendment stipulating that a corporation is not a person and money is not speech – therefore, both can be regulated.

Contact: <http://movetoamend.org/>

Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County

Democracy Unlimited of Humboldt County (DUHC) educates citizens about the illegitimate seizure of our authority to govern ourselves. We design and implement grassroots strategies that exercise democratic power over corporations and governments. We seek to create a truly democratic society by provoking a non-violent popular uprising against corporate rule in Humboldt County that can serve as a model for other communities across the United States.

Contact: P.O. Box 610, Eureka, California, 95502 | 707-269-0984
info@DUHC.org <http://www.duhc.org/>

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Corporations v. Democracy Committee

Following up on WILPF's Challenge Corporate Power, Assert the People's Rights campaign, this committee is focused on understanding how corporations use their illegitimate constitutional "rights" and powers to define our law, politics, jurisprudence, work, technologies, food, communities. The Committee distributes information on hidden histories with an eye toward rethinking WILPF activism by placing it in the context of people's right to self and mutual governance and uncovering the meaning of real (radical) democracy along with developing its skills and practice.

Contact: nabbey@cruzio.com <http://www.wilpf.org>

Reclaim Democracy

ReclaimDemocracy.org works to create a representative democracy with an actively participating public, where citizens don't merely choose from a menu of options determined by elites, but play an active role in guiding the country and its political agenda. We believe that one's influence should be a direct result of the quality of one's ideas and the energy one puts into promoting these ideas, independent of wealth or status.

We inspire citizens to make conscious choices about what role corporations should play in our society and to limit them to that role. We are a non-partisan, non-profit (501c3) organization and welcome the opportunity to work with all who share our goals.

Contact: 222 S. Black Ave, Bozeman, MT 59715. 406-582-1224
<http://www.reclaimdemocracy.org/>

United for the People.

A coalition that believes that America works best when our government is of, by and for the people. Although we have differences in scope and tactics, all of us are united in the understanding that the Court's decision in *Citizens United* must be remedied by amending the Constitution in order to restore the democratic promise of America.

Contact: Calvin Sloan at csloan@pfor.org <http://united4thepeople.org>

Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund

CELDF was formed to provide free and affordable legal services to community based groups and local governments working to protect their quality of life and the natural environment through building sustainable communities. Increasingly, that means teaming up with people and their municipal representatives to mount campaigns that challenge the legal clout of corporations to overrule decisions made by citizens for their communities.

Contact: PO Box 360, Mercersburg, PA 17236 717-709-0457
info@celdf.org <http://www.celdf.org>

Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee Corporations and Democracy project

The Northeast Ohio AFSC educates, advocates, and organizes for democracy and against corporate constitutional rights. We make the connections between peace, justice and democracy/self-governance. We've produced DVDs and written materials, speak, hold workshops, and organize grassroots campaigns.

Contact: 2101 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221 330-928-2301
GColeridge@afsc.org <http://www.afsc.net/ejcorpdem.html>

Sierra Club Corporate Accountability Committee

The Corporate Accountability Committee facilitates the Club's response to the corporate abuse of power and its advocacy of enforceable measures to ensure corporate accountability in relation to the environment, communities and public health.

Our three priorities:

Water Privatization Task Force

Shareholder Action Task Force

Confronting Corporate Power Task Force

Contact: <http://www.sierraclub.org/committees/cac/corporatepower>

Liberty Tree Foundation

The Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution is a nonprofit organization rooted in the belief that the American Revolution is a living tradition whose greatest promise is democracy. Because that promise is as yet unfulfilled, our central purpose is to build on the accomplishments of earlier American movements by launching a new stage in the struggle for democracy. We are a fellowship of organizers, lawyers, and scholars. We provide support to pro-democracy campaigns in the form of policy research, publications, legal assistance, consultative services, and the convening of pro-democracy organizers.

Contact: P.O. Box 260217, Madison, Wisconsin 53726-0217 608-257-1606
<http://www.libertytreedr.org/>

CounterCorp

The CounterCorp Anti-Corporate Film Festival is an annual three-day series of films, post-screening discussions, and related events held in San Francisco. By "anti-corporate" we don't just mean "independent" (i.e., *non-corporate*) films, but those that examine and reflect the role that corporations play in our daily lives, and the effect they have on people, communities, and cultures around the world — and on the planet itself.

Contact: 2017 Mission Street, 2nd floor San Francisco, CA 94110
filmfest@countercorp.org <http://www.countercorp.org/>