

Democracy, the Earth, and You

Session 1. Overviews of the Ecological Era

Session 2. Ecological Crisis

Session 3: Core Blocks

1. Obsolete Economics
2. Corporations Rule Our Lives
3. The Demise of Democracy
4. The Public Relations War on Truth

Session 4: Winning Strategies

How we, the vanguard, can actually win a new destiny for the Earth and humanity.

Crisis as endings and possibilities

Civilization Post-civilization

In the first session, we focused on Overviews of the Ecological Era—on some master pictures that illuminate the times in which we live.

In the second session we focused on the ways that industrial civilization is confronting an Ecological Crisis. We noted that “crisis” means both the ending of some old ways and the possibility of beginning something new. We observed that the ecological crisis cannot be met without constructing a whole new mode of human society.

In this session we will focus on the Core Blocks to progressive change that exist within current industrial civilization. We will deal with the key obstacles which we must overcome to get out of the mess we are in: 1. Our Obsolete Economics, 2. The Corporation Rule of our Lives, 3. The Demise of Democracy, and 4. The Public Relations War on Truth

In the fourth session, we will deal with the construction of Winning Strategies—with how we the vanguard, the concerned minority, can actually win a new destiny for the Earth and humanity. Also in this final session we will raise the question of how each of us can make a significant contribution to the doing of these strategies.

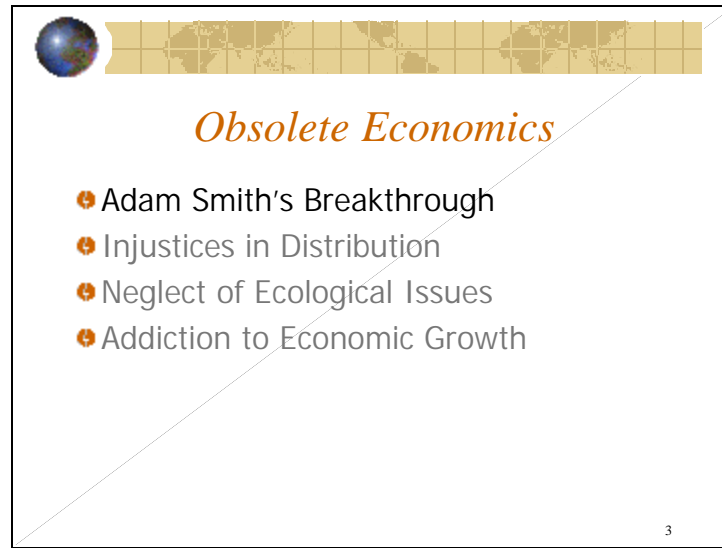


Core Blocks to Progressive Change

- Obsolete Economics
- Corporations Rule Our Lives
- The Demise of Democracy
- The Public Relations War on Truth
- Whence Comes Our Hope?

2

First of all, obsolete economics plays a large role in causing and characterizing the mess we are in. We live in a time in which economics plays a huge role in our lives. The well-being of the economy is a topic on almost every news report. Economic institutions parade their names on billboards, television programs, sporting events, and anywhere else they can. Yet few of us have examined carefully how obsolete much of our economic thinking has become. Let us look briefly at the history of modern economics.



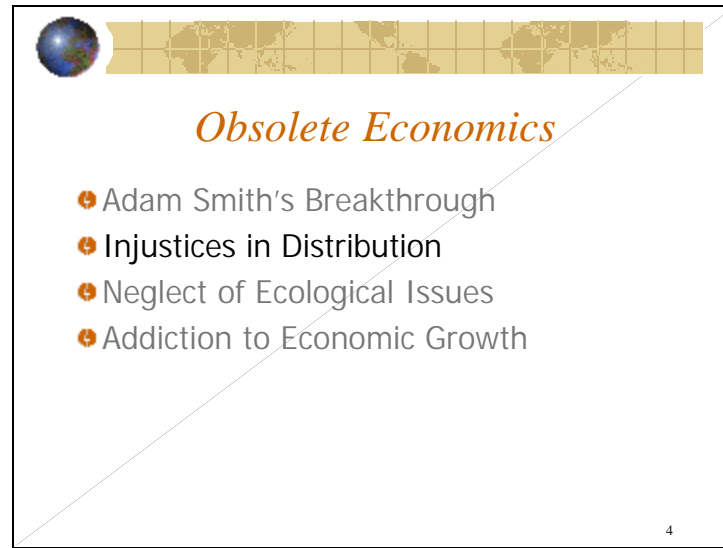
Obsolete Economics

- ✚ Adam Smith's Breakthrough
- ✚ Injustices in Distribution
- ✚ Neglect of Ecological Issues
- ✚ Addiction to Economic Growth

3

In 1776, Adam Smith wrote a book entitled *The Wealth of Nations*. The gist of this famous book is that nations can increase their wealth if they stop trying to micro-manage their economies from government agencies and instead allow the “invisible hand” of the market to set prices by the dynamics of supply and demand. In its initial context this was a valuable discovery. It was a democratic discovery. It decentralized the decision-making power from distant government bureaucrats to individual entrepreneurs and consumers. This increased creativity in the economic arena. Each person seeking his or her own economic interests in a more or less self-governing free market did release energies into wealth production. Aided by the advance of science and technological innovations, the free market increased the overall wealth of many national economies. Smith has clearly made an important contribution to the history of the world.

But something was lacking in Smith’s thinking and in the thinking of most economists after him. Each of us pursuing our own economic interests without regard for others contradicts the golden rule and many other wisdom teachings. Pursuing our own economic interests is, of course, a part of real life, but *caring for our neighbors* is also a part of real life.



Obsolete Economics

- ✚ Adam Smith's Breakthrough
- ✚ Injustices in Distribution
- ✚ Neglect of Ecological Issues
- ✚ Addiction to Economic Growth

4

The invisible hand of the free market did enrich many nations, but it did *not function to bring more wealth to every person*. National wealth can be concentrated in the hands of a few people and thus the entire free-enterprise process can end up making a few people much, much richer and many, many other people poorer and poorer.


Indeed, the unfettered, unrefereed, free market disadvantaged working people to a degree that the ethical mind of Smith would have found unthinkable. Child labor, urban slums, men and women working excessively long hours, pitiful wages, frequent job losses, and extensive unemployment—all these were consequences that Smith did not anticipate. Many nations have at least recognized this problem, primarily through progressive income taxes, estate taxes, labor laws, and welfare provisions. But no nation has fully solved this problem.

And the oppression goes even deeper. *Treating labor as one more commodity* in the economic equations demeans humanity. *It means that unemployed human beings are treated in the same manner as unused coal.*

Labor unions, labor movements, and labor governments came into being to correct these wealth distribution maladies of the unrefereed free market. Labor movements have had their own flaws, but at their best the labor movements tremendously benefited working people. Labor unions and labor-friendly governments have moderated the evils of the free-market system.

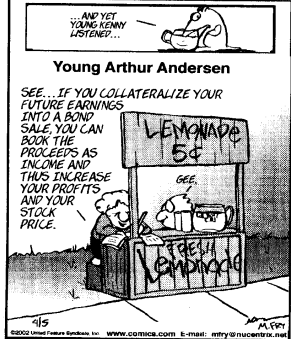
Capitalism, it turns out, works best when it is balanced with democratic governmental regulation. Not only labor laws but also anti-trust regulations, business accounting and reporting regulations, and many other governmental actions have enabled capitalism to function without destroying the society within

which it is functioning. To this day, our greatest risk remains unregulated power of the vast scope that large corporations embody.



Young Arthur Andersen

Committed



...AND YET
YOUNG HENRY
LISTENED...

Young Arthur Andersen

SEE... IF YOU COLLATERALIZE YOUR FUTURE EARNINGS INTO A BOND SALE, YOU CAN BOOK THE PROCEEDS AS INCOME AND THUS INCREASE YOUR PROFITS AND YOUR STOCK PRICE.

GEE.

GEE. GEE. GEE.

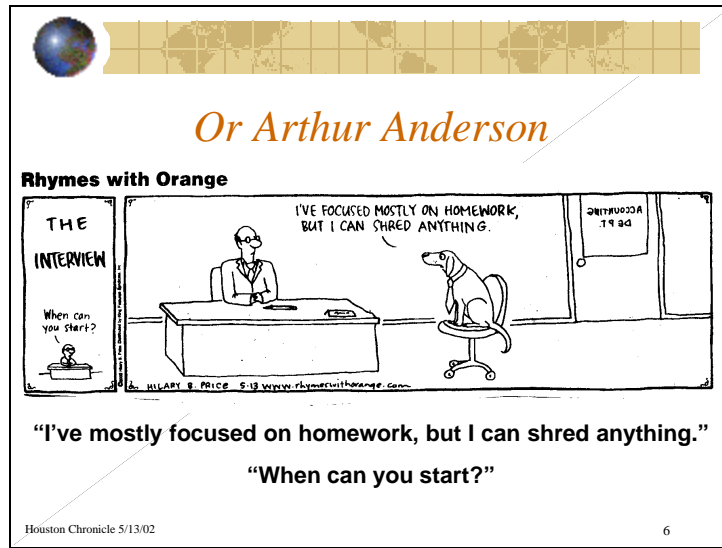
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Houston Chronicle 4/5/02

5

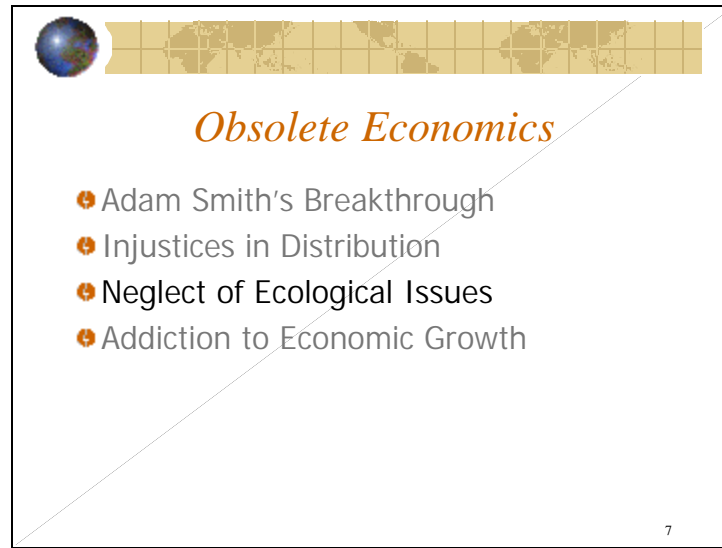
“See...if you collateralize your future earnings into a bond sale, you can book the proceeds as income and thus increase your profits and your stock price.”

The Enron scandal provides a clear example of what happens when regulations are inadequate or poorly enforced.

Slide 6



Or Arthur Anderson.



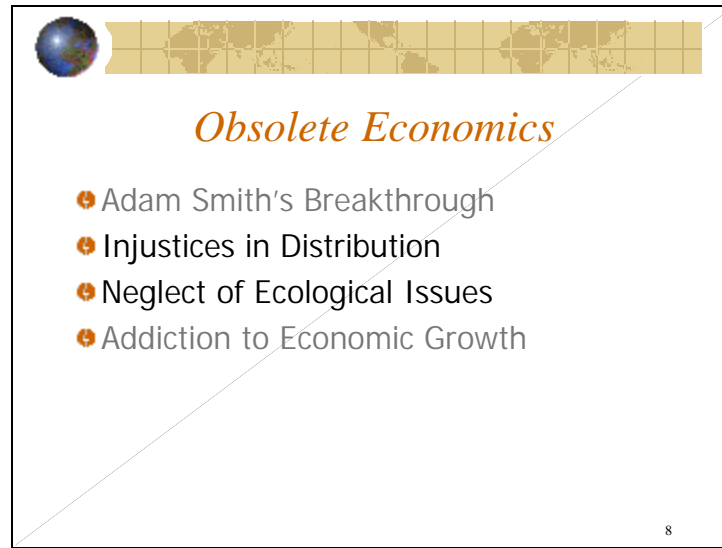
The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title "Obsolete Economics" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four items, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The items are: "Adam Smith's Breakthrough", "Injustices in Distribution", "Neglect of Ecological Issues", and "Addiction to Economic Growth". A small number "7" is located in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

Obsolete Economics

- Adam Smith's Breakthrough
- Injustices in Distribution
- Neglect of Ecological Issues
- Addiction to Economic Growth

7

Not only did Smith's economic thinking neglect wealth-distribution issues, it also neglected **ecological issues**. It did not dawn on Smith or any other early economic thinker that the Earth has limits to economic growth and that these limits could be overreached by the expanding human economy. To this day, regulatory attempts to reduce environmental devastation have been paltry in their overall effect.



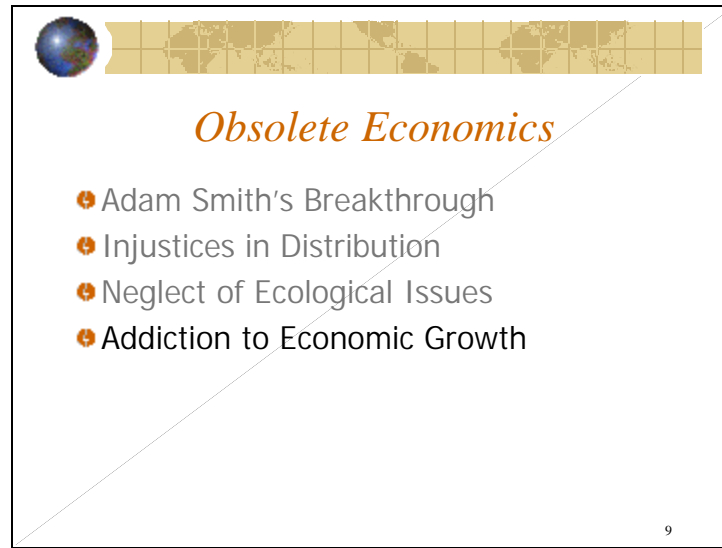
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Obsolete Economics

- Adam Smith's Breakthrough
- Injustices in Distribution
- Neglect of Ecological Issues
- Addiction to Economic Growth

8

These two flaws, ecological over-reaching and injustices in distribution, still exist in the economic thinking of many and perhaps most contemporary economists. When we hear politicians and economic leaders complaining about government regulation and government interference with the distribution of wealth, we are hearing obsolete economic thinking.



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Obsolete Economics

- Adam Smith's Breakthrough
- Injustices in Distribution
- Neglect of Ecological Issues
- Addiction to Economic Growth

9

Similarly, when we hear someone praise “economic growth” as the cure-all for our economic ills, we are hearing obsolete economic thinking. No further growth of the overall human impact on this planet is sustainable. It may be possible to improve our economic life and to distribute our overall wealth more equitably, but “growth” is not the right word for the economic improvements we need. Some parts of the economy need to grow. Other parts of our economy need to decline. We would be better off with fewer cars and trucks. Surely, the automotive industry needs to stop growing at some point short of coast to coast gridlock. Our economy will one day soon have to use far less oil. Oil production cannot forever grow. The truth may be that we are becoming less and less clear what overall growth actually means. Is it growth to speed up the rate at which we destroy the planet?

Slide 10



Addiction to Economic Growth

From a front-page article from the April 29, 2002, Houston Chronicle:

“Prompted by a nationwide shortage of the tetanus and diphtheria vaccine, the Texas Department of Health has *again* decided to defer booster shots traditionally required at age 14. ‘It’s pretty simple, actually: We just don’t have enough of the vaccine to go around,’ said Jan Pelosi, director to the department’s immunization division.

“Shots designed to protect children against eight of 11 vaccine-preventable infections are in low supply. The shortages have existed for a year and are expected to last at least another six months.

“A recent CDC study found that children delayed in getting immunized were unlikely to ever catch up on all their shots.

“The cause of the shortage is mostly a matter of simple economics: Making vaccines usually is not very profitable. The number of vaccine manufacturers has dropped from 37 in the mid-1960s to four major makers today, with only two based in the United States.” [Emphasis added]

10

We have come to a place in economic history when the basic question must change from: *“What promotes economic growth?”* to *“What is moving us toward a sustainable human presence on this planet?”*



Addiction to Economic Growth

From M.I.T.'s *Technology Review*, May 2002, pp. 39-43, "Should the Government Make Vaccines?"

"Vaccine shortages could have the United States on the brink of a public-health disaster. Federal health organizations are pushing for nationalized vaccine production, but industry says no."



Core Blocks to Progressive Change

- Obsolete Economics
- Corporations Rule Our Lives
- The Demise of Democracy
- The Public Relations War on Truth
- Whence Comes Our Hope?

12

Let us look at a second key block to progressive progress: the rule of huge corporations over all elements of our lives.



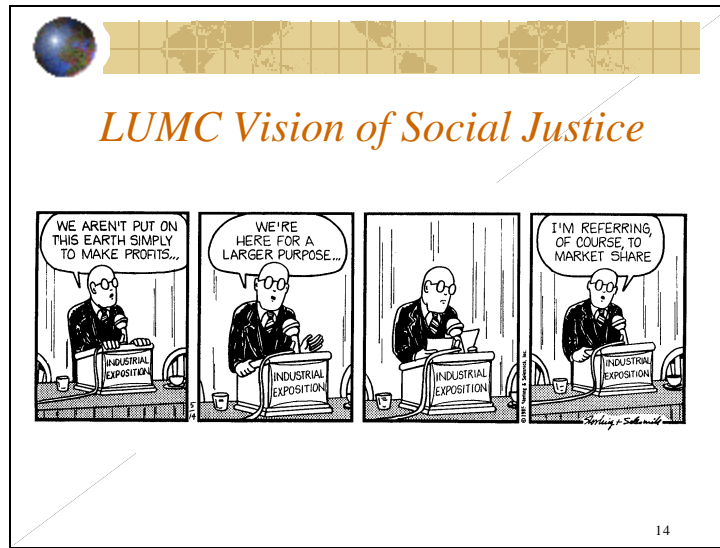
The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title "Corporations Rule Our Lives" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number "13" is located in the bottom right corner.

Corporations Rule Our Lives

- Unexpected Hugeness
- Control of the "Free" Market
- Escape from Accountability
- Our False View of Dependence

13

Here is another development that Smith did not anticipate: the growth of huge corporations which are able to control the market for their own narrow purposes. As long as the players in the economic game were small in relation to the whole economy, competition functioned as a limiting force just as Smith had described. But today some of the economic players in the global market have become larger than all but a few national economies.



The slide features a header with a globe icon and a world map background. Below the header, the title "LUMC Vision of Social Justice" is written in a stylized, orange font. The main content is a four-panel cartoon. In each panel, a man in a suit and glasses sits at a desk labeled "INDUSTRIAL EXPOSITION". The panels contain the following dialogue:

- Panel 1: "WE AREN'T PUT ON THIS EARTH SIMPLY TO MAKE PROFITS..."
- Panel 2: "WE'RE HERE FOR A LARGER PURPOSE..."
- Panel 3: (No dialogue)
- Panel 4: "I'M REFERRING, OF COURSE, TO MARKET SHARE"

The cartoon is signed "S. Haring & S. S. S. 2002" in the bottom right corner of the fourth panel. The number "14" is printed in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

Many transnational corporations have become so big that there is no longer a bigger force that can restrain their excesses. The Enron and Arthur Andersen scandal is bringing some of this to our attention.



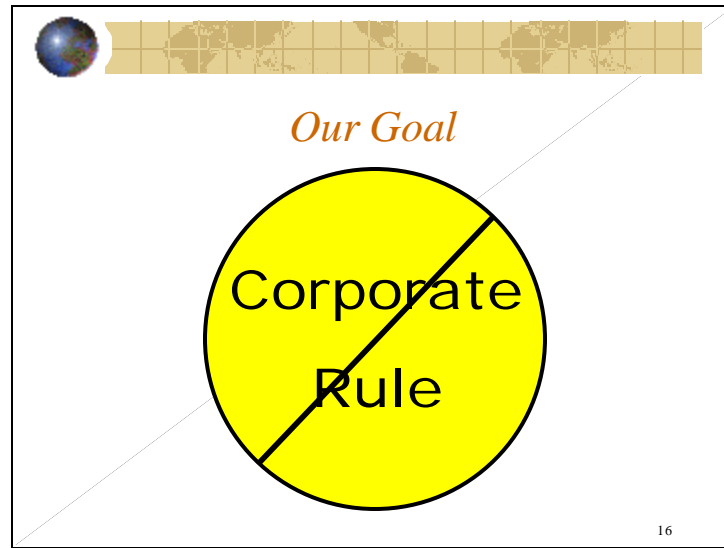
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Corporations Rule Our Lives

- Unexpected Hugeness
- Control of the "Free" Market
- Escape from Accountability
- Our False View of Dependence

15

Furthermore, because of the hugeness of these economic players and the lack of accountability for them, *we no longer have a free market*. We have a market managed by our largest corporations. These large players in the economic game not only resist the limiting efforts of national governments, they even control those governments to serve their interests.



As David Korten put it, "*In the 1980s, capitalism triumphed over communism. In the 1990s it triumphed over democracy and the market economy.*"[1] Korten has documented in a most convincing fashion this decline of democracy and the market economy in his book, *When Corporations Rule the World*.

[1] Korten, David; *The Post-Corporate World* (Kumarian Press: 1998) page 1



So let us put this poster on our refrigerator doors: *We no longer have democracy and we no longer have a free market economy.* We have huge corporations ruling the world.



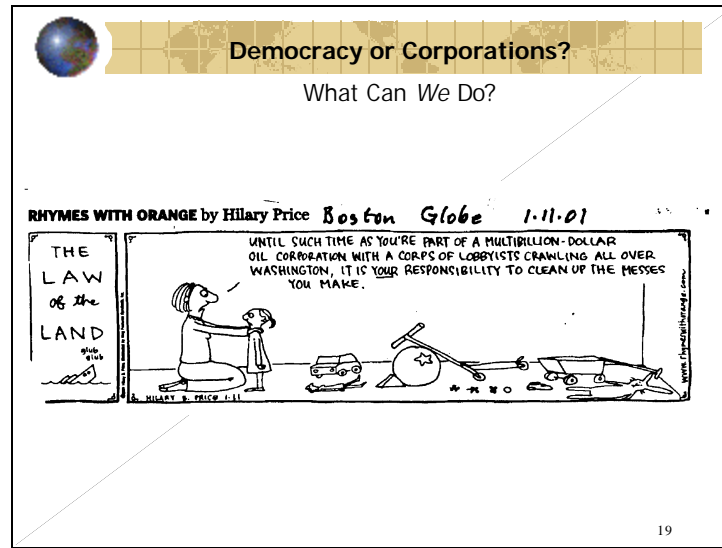
The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title is in a brown, italicized serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a small orange circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number '18' is located in the bottom right corner.

Corporations Rule Our Lives

- Unexpected Hugeness
- Control of the "Free" Market
- Escape from Accountability
- Our False View of Dependence

18

Furthermore, these huge economic players are still at work to further consolidate their rulership. In the relative political vacuum that characterizes the global scope of human life, the corporations rule almost without any meaningful restraints. The early European and American corporations lived within the boundaries of national economies and were subject to laws that could be enforced. Anti-trust laws kept them from getting too big. Later, labor laws kept them from getting too greedy. And still later, environmental laws restrained other extremes.



But all these restraints are now falling apart. Corporations have achieved such power that they can twist the rules to their own purposes. They even make the rules in the first place. We citizens need to be very clear about this point: when all restraints have been removed from corporations, the motive toward profit and power becomes a destructive force.

The slide features a header with a globe icon and a world map background. The title "Corporations Rule Our Lives" is written in a brown, italicized serif font. Below the title, a yellow rectangular box contains the quote "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." in a green, sans-serif font. The number "20" is located in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

As Lord Acton wrote to Bishop Creighton over 100 years ago, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background. The title "Corporations Rule Our Lives" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number "21" is located in the bottom right corner.

Corporations Rule Our Lives

- Unexpected Hugeness
- Control of the "Free" Market
- Escape from Accountability
- Our False View of Dependence

21

When I use the word "corporations," I do not mean small businesses. I mean huge national, multinational, and transnational business organizations. The standard advertising of these big companies leads us to believe that we are *dependent upon these institutions* for our jobs and our shopping malls and our overall prosperity. But our dependence on these huge businesses is not as great as we usually think. Most big institutions are not trustworthy in producing the goods we need nor in providing secure employment. Every few days we hear about another downsizing with many people put out of work. Small businesses are providing most of our new employment.

Perhaps 60% of our jobs and our services are produced by small businesses. Whether that percentage is more or less, we clearly do not need to be wedded to huge uncontrollable institutions in order to have jobs and goods and a decent standard of living. There are better ways to provide for our needs.

Some big enterprises may be necessary, but when this is so we need to stop thinking of them as privately owned. Our huge institutions belong to all of us and should be accountable to all of us. For example, power companies do not need to be the personal toys of a few individuals. They are public facilities. Democratic government is our vehicle for making these huge economic entities serve us rather than a few wealthy, power-addicted individuals. Such governmental action is not a violation of free enterprise. We can have the benefits of a free market and still retain public accountability of the huge institutions that our social life may require. In fact, government regulation is necessary for free enterprise to flourish.



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map on a grid background. The main content is a list of five bullet points, each preceded by a small orange circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number '22' is located in the bottom right corner.

Core Blocks to Progressive Change

- Obsolete Economics
- Corporations Rule Our Lives
- The Demise of Democracy
- The Public Relations War on Truth
- Whence Comes Our Hope?

22

Unfortunately, the democratic quality of our states and nations has been experiencing demise. As it now stands, we the ordinary citizens have very little say in the shaping of our future.



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background. The title "The Demise of Democracy" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number "23" is located in the bottom right corner.

The Demise of Democracy

- Corporations Make the Big Decisions
- The Money Pollution of Democratic Processes
- Our Citizens Are Compassionate Enough
- The Need for a Citizen Revolt

23

Huge corporations and those who control them are making all the big decisions. And they are doing so without any effective accountability or restraints. Our economic system has been warped to the point that these multinationals are virtually unaccountable to anyone: their governments, their employees, their suppliers, their customers, their communities, or even their boards of directors and stockholders.

Furthermore, these huge corporations are buying our national democracies. They are paying for the campaigns of the politicians they want elected. They own most of our media and to a large extent slant the news to support their ends. They also buy the support of any repressive dictatorship who will allow these corporations the special privileges they desire. Corporations even encourage the U.S. government to support whatever oppressive regimes they like. Corporations, not voters, are making the large decisions that determine the destiny of this planet. And they are spending millions of dollars every day to defeat any force that attempts to limit their power. The extent to which we allow these great pools of wealth and unrestrained power to make all the big decisions for our domestic lives and our foreign policies is shocking to those of us who still treasure democracy.

In the time of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, the United States of America made a good start on a post-monarchical form of democratic governance. It is, however, quite fair to say that today we the citizens of the United States do not have a democracy any more. All the big decisions in both our domestic lives and our foreign policies are made by oil companies, car companies, drug companies, food companies, insurance companies, munitions factories, banks, and other huge corporations.




The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title is in a brown, italicized serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white dot. The slide number '24' is located in the bottom right corner.

The Demise of Democracy

- Corporations Make the Big Decisions
- The Money Pollution of Democratic Processes
- Our Citizens Are Compassionate Enough
- The Need for a Citizen Revolt

24

Let me share with you some information and figures compiled by the Center for Responsible Politics and published widely by the Alliance for Democracy:



The Money Pollution of Democratic Processes

Every two years members of Congress receive	From
\$50,300,000	oil, gas, mining, and chemical corporations.
\$13,800,000	the nuclear power industry
\$8,400,000	pulp/paper and timber corporations
\$14,100,000	food-processing corporations

25

Let us assume that we the citizens want a reduction in greenhouse gases, and clean air in our cities. Let us suppose that we want to cut back on fossil fuel usage and eventually phase out fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy sources. Do we expect to see a responsible long-range energy policy that does this?

Not when members of Congress take \$50,300,000 every two years from oil, gas, mining, and chemical corporations.

Let us assume that we believe that there will never be a safe way to dispose of the wastes from nuclear energy plants or to make the operation of nuclear power plants entirely safe. Do we expect to see a full development of the alternatives to nuclear energy?

Not when members of Congress take \$13,800,000 every two years from the nuclear power industry.

Do we expect to see adequate practices of forest conservation?

Not when members of Congress take \$8,400,000 every two years from pulp/paper and timber corporations.

This formula applies in every area:

Do we expect pristine attention to be paid to our food safety and to the wellbeing and survival of our farmers?

Not when members of Congress take \$14,100,000 every two years in political contributions from food-processing corporations.



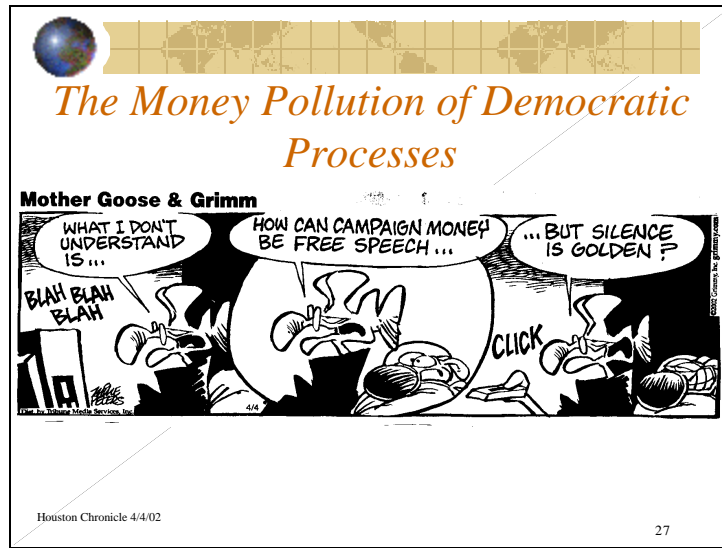
The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background. The title is in a stylized orange font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a small orange icon. The slide number '26' is in the bottom right corner.

The Demise of Democracy

- Corporations Make the Big Decisions
- The Money Pollution of Democratic Processes
- Our Citizens Are Compassionate Enough
- The Need for a Citizen Revolt

26

What are you concerned about? Endangered Species, Nuclear Disarmament, Living Wages for working people, National Wildlife Refuges? In all these areas, millions of dollars are spent every two years to encourage our governments to do precisely the opposite of the improvements most of us want. Almost never do the private interests of a corporation reflect the real needs of the overall society. So why should we let the corporations rule our lives?



There are people in our society who believe that the corporations can rule our lives better than we can. But there is no evidence for this. It is safer to assume that we can rule our lives better than the corporations can.



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background. The title "The Demise of Democracy" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white dot. The slide number "28" is located in the bottom right corner.

The Demise of Democracy

- Corporations Make the Big Decisions
- The Money Pollution of Democratic Processes
- Our Citizens Are Compassionate Enough
- The Need for a Citizen Revolt

28

The problem is not our people. *We have good-hearted, well-meaning citizens.* I have been impressed at the compassion of the volunteers who have gone to New York City to work for free and for months alleviating suffering and chaos. Others have given blood and money. Our citizens are compassionate enough. *We just don't have a democracy.* Our wisdom and our compassion don't influence the decision-making processes very much .

I do not agree with those who say that the U.S. political scene is hopeless *Yet if we do not use what voting power and educative power we have left to get big money out of our political decision- making, then our situation is worse than hopeless.*

The underlying flaw in the U.S. political scene is that we citizens are confused about what it means to support democracy and why a strong emphasis upon democracy is necessary to counteract corporate rule and enable a just and ecologically viable future. We hesitate to rock the boat of the established corporate rule which is so well financed and so skilled in pretending to be democratic. We prefer to believe what our television sets tell us rather to than *think all this through for ourselves.*



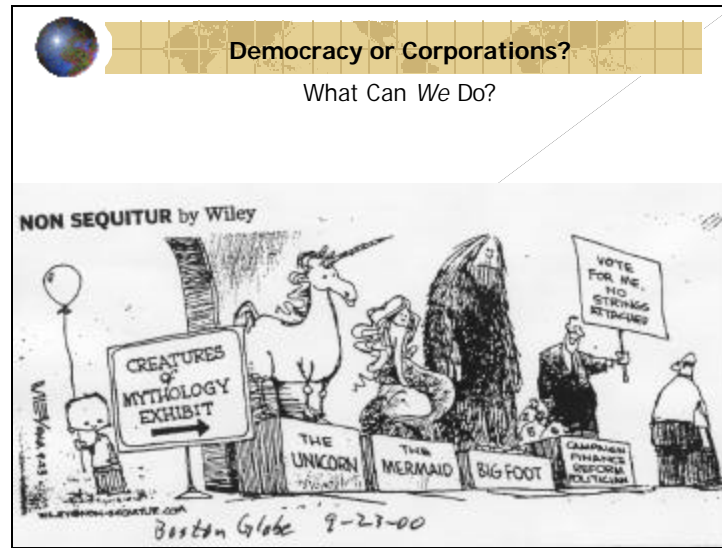
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The Demise of Democracy

- Corporations Make the Big Decisions
- The Money Pollution of Democratic Processes
- Our Citizens Are Compassionate Enough
- The Need for a Citizen Revolt

29

We need a citizens' revolt against the general course of events. It is not enough just to show up at the polls and vote for the less worse of two bad options. We need to change the significance of what we are voting for. Until the political decision-making practices of our industrial democracies are changed, there is no hope for an ecologically functional planet for our grandchildren. In the United States and Canada, we still have enough voting power to restrain corporate rulership. But we are not doing so, and the corporate interests are hard at work to further diminish our voting power. *If we the voters don't use and expand our voting power, and if we don't do that soon, we will lose even the slight power that we still have.*



Until we take back our voting power, we are blocked from moving effectively on the pressing challenges of our age. *So this is our first priority: we have to undo the rulership of corporate money pools over our national governments and over our lives. Our lives are being run by the transnational corporations and the moneyed aristocracies that control them.*

This simple, plain fact is the big secret kept from most people. This basic truth is being intentionally hidden, minimized, or dismissed as unimportant. One would think from listening to all the advertising, news reports, and political spins that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with our democracy. This hiding of the truth is what I am pointing to with this fourth major block to progressive change. The transnational corporations and their backers are conducting a public relations war on truth.



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title is in a brown, italicized serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list of five items, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number '31' is located in the bottom right corner.

Core Blocks to Progressive Change

- Obsolete Economics
- Corporations Rule Our Lives
- The Demise of Democracy
- The Public Relations War on Truth
- Whence Comes Our Hope?

31

If you have money enough, you can hire a public relations firm to tell the public what you want them to believe. Billions of dollars are being spent as we speak to manipulate our views on virtually every important matter. Some of the behaviors of our corporations and governments are so horrific that public relations firms have to be quite imaginative in order to convince the public to overlook what their clients have done. And public relations firms are imaginative: this is their job. And they know how to do it well.

But all this emphasis on public-image management makes you and me victims of a devastatingly undemocratic manner of informing us about what is going on.



The Public Relations War on Truth

- A Secretive Industry
- The Eclipse of News Journalism
- Only *Money* Has “Free” Speech
- The Matrix of Delusion

32

And these public relations firms are secretive about what they do. Their work is largely unknown to us. We don't even know the names of the biggest public relations firms. Yet they are telling us what to believe. They are framing most of the news stories for our reporters and TV newscasters. Here is quotation from John Stauber, the founder of the Center for Media and Democracy. He says:

“The key is invisibility. Once propaganda becomes visible it's less effective. Public relations is effective in manipulating opinion – and thus public policy – only if people believe that the message covertly delivered in the PR campaign is not propaganda at all but simple common sense or accepted reality. For instance, there is a consensus within the scientific community that global warming is real, and that the burning of fossil fuels is a major cause of the problem. But to the petroleum industry, the coal industry, and other industries that profit from fossil fuel consumption, this is merely an inconvenient message that needs to be ‘debunked’ because it could lead to public policies that reduce their profits. So with the help of PR firms, these vested interests create and fund industry front groups such as Global Climate Coalition. The coalition then selects, promotes, and publicizes scientists who proclaim global warming a myth and characterize hard evidence of global climate change as “junk science” being pushed by self-serving environmental groups out to scare the public for fund-raising purposes.

“Another industry front group is the Hudson Institute, a prominent far-right think tank espousing the view that global climate changes will be beneficial! The Hudson Institute is funded by the American Trucking Association, the Ford Motor Company, Allison Engine Company, Bombardier, and McDonnell Douglas, among others. The Global Climate Coalition and the

Hudson Institute are routinely quoted in the news media, where they promote their message of “Don’t worry, burn lots of oil, gas, and coal.” [1]

[1] Mountain Record, September 2001, page 48



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title is in a stylized orange font. Below the title is a bulleted list of four points, each preceded by a small orange globe icon. The slide number '33' is located in the bottom right corner.

The Public Relations War on Truth

- A Secretive Industry
- The Eclipse of News Journalism
- Only *Money* Has "Free" Speech
- The Matrix of Delusion

33

Stauber goes on to point out that half of everything we hear reported in the news actually originates in a PR firm. It takes staff and drive and will power to do good investigative reporting, so a lazy journalist or staff-poor news organization finds it easier to use the prepared spins passed along to them by the public relations experts. These experts are working for biased groups who have a spin to spin.

Furthermore, news agencies are often sponsored by companies who are providing some of these PR spins. Understandably, these news agencies feel constrained to give at least preferential treatment to the views of their sponsors.

The sad result of these developments is that news journalism is declining and is becoming merely a front for corporation propaganda. More and more we are getting news that is far, far from balanced reporting, And true investigative reporting is rarer still.

This PR influence of the large corporations is so subtle and pervasive that the extent of it is hidden from public view. We may find it hard to believe how successful public relations firms have been in shaping our minds. Our thinking is obviously affected when day after day, trusted news agencies, and trusted individuals tell us whichever half of the truth some profit-making firm has decided we need to believe.

Bill Moyers' documentary *Trade Secrets* provides a good example of how successful the chemical companies who make plastics have been in hiding from our view the injuries to the health of their workers as well as the threats that have been made to public health. If Moyers had been dependent on financing from these companies, they would have prevented him from airing his documentary on PBS Television.

If we want to genuinely think for ourselves about the important matters that determine our future, we are going to have to work at it. Thinking for ourselves takes some effort.



The Public Relations War on Truth

- A Secretive Industry
- The Eclipse of News Journalism
- Only *Money* Has "Free" Speech
- The Matrix of Delusion

34

We treasure the right to free speech, but as it now stands only the wealthy have free speech. The wealthy can hire effective PR firms to help them say what they want to say and get it heard. Those who have millions of dollars to spend can promote half truths and brash lies to an entire nation. But your speech or my speech reaches only a short distance. Even if we get good at saying important things to lots of people, we may find that our speech is opposed by firms that can spend millions of dollars to convince the public that we are crazy.

Wealth has a megaphone in our culture. Most of us can only whisper. That is not free speech.

And as long as these well-financed mind manipulators provide our information, we don't have democracy. This is the deepest kept secret of all. We are sheep being led to slaughter by bright people who earn big salaries for managing our minds.



The Public Relations War on Truth

- A Secretive Industry
- The Eclipse of News Journalism
- Only *Money* Has "Free" Speech
- The Matrix of Delusion


35

Perhaps you saw the science fiction movie "Matrix." In this story the world war is run by machines. Human beings had become merely energy cells to keep the machines running. And the machines were keeping this a secret. The whole population was in a sort of trance. Awakening from this trance was a traumatic experience. The movie is about rescuing people from this matrix of delusion and returning them to the real world. The hero is offered a red pill that will help him awaken to the true state of affairs. Or he can take a blue pill and return to the world of illusions having forgotten that this choice ever came up. Our hero takes the red pill and goes through the layers and layers of shock it takes to move away from the utterly false world and back into the real one.

This imaginative movie raise for us this question, "What would it mean for us to take the red pill in our situation?" Using this movie as a foil, an imaginative web site has been created that deals directly with this question.[1] This web site documents how we, in our actual society, are also in a sort of trance. We also live in a matrix of delusion from which we need to be rescued.

[1] <http://morpheus911.piranho.de/>

Slide 36




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
US foreign policy	The US government promotes democracy around the world	The US government promotes corporate power and naked self interest. It has overthrown democracies, installed brutal dictators who killed millions of innocent people.
September 11	Evil, mindless, terrorist attack done by people who "hate our freedom"	An evil terrorist outrage re-tack responding to decades of US Government terror on Muslim and Arab people world wide.
The mainstream media (New York Times, NBC, CNN, etc.)	The mainstream media provides a realistic picture of the world. Although it tends to emphasize death, destruction, and sex for ratings, overall it helps the public challenge government and big business abuses	The mainstream media is big business and is paid for by big business. Its primary product is audiences (you) which are sold to other big businesses (advertisers). Its secondary product is "the news," which, of course is shaped by the need to keep its primary customers (big business) happy.
Democracy	Our leaders believe citizens should know what their government is doing and have a role in shaping Policy	Our leaders believe the people are ignorant and meddling outsiders who will mess things up if they are allowed to influence policy. The "responsible men" guide the "bewildered herd" using PR (propaganda). Furthermore, real democracy is avoided because it would threaten the very rich (the poor would vote their wealth away).
The anti-globalization protests	Stupid, violent	Raising important issues. Protests are 98% nonviolent. Security forces increasingly violent.
International "Trade" Agreements like NAFTA, FTA, MAI, Organizations like WTO	Promote trade and wealth for all, especially poorest in third world	Have little to do with trade. Mostly used to increase corporate power over governments.
Green Party	Pointless distraction from the real choices. Comprised of disgruntled Democrats	A mechanism for exerting outside pressure on the unresponsive two party system that is responsible for the above atrocities. Not the only mechanism but an important one. Most serious Greens know the information on this web site. We also need Republicans and Democrats that are wide awake, fighting to change the system from the inside. But that is not enough.

36

One of the interesting items on this web site is a chart comparing our matrix of delusions with the real world. (The web site has an additional column listing sources for more information.)

Notice the headings at the top of the chart : The Topic, The Matrix, and The Real World
(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
US foreign policy	The US government promotes democracy around the world	The US government promotes corporate power and naked self interest. It has overthrown democracies, installed brutal dictators who killed millions of innocent people.

37

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
September 11	Evil, mindless, terrorist attack done by people who “hate our freedom”	An evil terrorist <i>counter</i> -attack responding to decades of US Government terror on Muslim and Arab people world wide

38

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
The mainstream media (New York Times, NBC, CNN, etc.)	The mainstream media provides a realistic picture of the world. Although it tends to emphasize death, destruction, and sex for ratings, overall it helps the public challenge government and big business abuses.	The mainstream media is big business and is paid for by big business. Its primary product is audiences (you) which are sold to other big businesses (advertisers). Its secondary product is "the news," which, of course is shaped by the need to keep its primary customers (big business) happy.

39

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
Democracy	Our leaders believe citizens should know what their government is doing and have a role in shaping Policy	Our leaders believe the people are ignorant and meddling outsiders who will mess things up if they are allowed to influence policy. The “responsible men” guide the “bewildered herd” using PR (propaganda). Furthermore, real democracy is avoided because it would threaten the very rich (the poor would vote their wealth away).

40

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
The anti-globalization protests	Stupid, violent	Raising important issues. Protests are 98% nonviolent. Security forces increasingly violent.

41

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
International “Trade” Agreements like NAFTA, FTAA, MAI, Organizations like WTO	Promote trade and wealth for all, especially poorest in third world	Have little to do with trade. Mostly used to increase corporate power over governments.

42

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)




The Matrix of Delusion

Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
Green Party	Pointless distraction from the real choices. Comprised of disgruntled Democrats	A mechanism for exerting outside pressure on the unresponsive two party system that is responsible for the above atrocities. Not the only mechanism but an important one. Most serious Greens know the information on this web site. We also need Republicans and Democrats that are wide awake, fighting to change the system from the inside. But that is not enough.

43

(Read through parts or all of this chart.)

Slide 44



Topic	The Matrix	The Real World
US foreign policy	The US government promotes democracy around the world	The US government promotes corporate power and naked self interest. It has overthrown democracies, installed brutal dictators who killed millions of innocent people.
September 11	Evil, mindless, terrorist attack done by people who "hate our freedom"	An evil terrorist outrage-rantack responding to decades of US Government terror on Muslim and Arab people world wide.
The mainstream media (New York Times, NBC, CNN, etc.)	The mainstream media provides a realistic picture of the world. Although it tends to emphasize death, destruction, and sex for ratings, overall it helps the public challenge government and big business abuses	The mainstream media is big business and is paid for by big business. Its primary product is audiences (you) which are sold to other big businesses (advertisers). Its secondary product is "the news," which, of course is shaped by the need to keep its primary customers (big business) happy.
Democracy	Our leaders believe citizens should know what their government is doing and have a role in shaping Policy	Our leaders believe the people are ignorant and meddling outsiders who will mess things up if they are allowed to influence policy. The "responsible men" guide the "bewildered herd" using PR (propaganda). Furthermore, real democracy is avoided because it would threaten the very rich (the poor would vote their wealth away).
The anti-globalization protests	Stupid, violent	Raising important issues. Protests are 98% nonviolent. Security forces increasingly violent.
International "Trade" Agreements like NAFTA, FTA, MAI, Organizations like WTO	Promote trade and wealth for all, especially poorest in third world	Have little to do with trade. Mostly used to increase corporate power over governments.
Green Party	Pointless distraction from the real choices. Comprised of disgruntled Democrats	A mechanism for exerting outside pressure on the unresponsive two party system that is responsible for the above atrocities. Not the only mechanism but an important one. Most serious Greens know the information on this web site. We also need Republicans and Democrats that are wide awake, fighting to change the system from the inside. But that is not enough.

Rather than face the sort of information contained in this chart, most people would rather remain in the matrix of delusion. So we may find our friends and neighbors resisting such awakening. We may be resisting it ourselves.

When we know the truth within our own beings, the truth will set us free. [1] Truth is the way to the happy life. Making peace with lies is not peaceful in the end; it kills and destroys and ends in a heap of despair. Making peace with the truth may be controversial and even dangerous at times, but in the end it is the happy life. Living the truth may be tough, but we can get used to it.

[1] A paraphrase of John 8:22



Core Blocks to Progressive Change

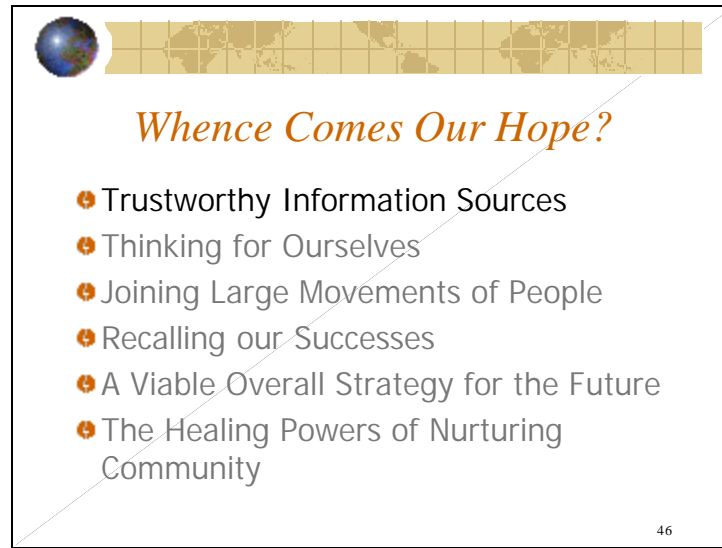
- Obsolete Economics
- Corporations Rule Our Lives
- The Demise of Democracy
- The Public Relations War on Truth
- Whence Comes Our Hope?

45

When we see the pervasiveness of the matrix of illusion, it is easy to collapse in despair. It's all too big. It's too dangerous. It's too incredible. It's impossible to change anyhow. It's simply too overwhelming to think about.

But once we are awake, we are awake. *Do we really want to go back to sleep?* Hopefully, increasing numbers of us will *not* want to go back to sleep. Hopefully, we will want to go forward to ever greater truth and to ever more relevant actions that truth requires of us.

So how do we do that?




Whence Comes Our Hope?

- Trustworthy Information Sources
- Thinking for Ourselves
- Joining Large Movements of People
- Recalling our Successes
- A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

46

We need to get in touch with *trustworthy information sources*. For example, I have enjoyed reading *The Hightower Lowdown*, a four page rag put out every month by Jim Hightower, the ex-agricultural secretary of Texas and a colorful comedian and radio broadcaster. This gives me pungent bits of novel information and ways to explore issues further.

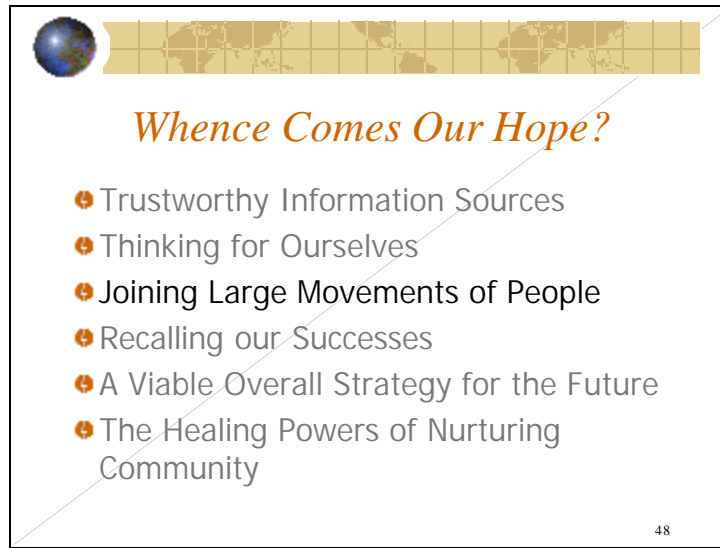


Whence Comes Our Hope?

- ✚ Trustworthy Information Sources
- ✚ Thinking for Ourselves
- ✚ Joining Large Movements of People
- ✚ Recalling our Successes
- ✚ A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- ✚ The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

47

We must decide to *think for ourselves* and not allow any so-called authority to do our thinking for us. Of course we need to think with other people. No one person can seek out all the needed truth. But we can learn for ourselves whom to trust and whom to suspect of lying.



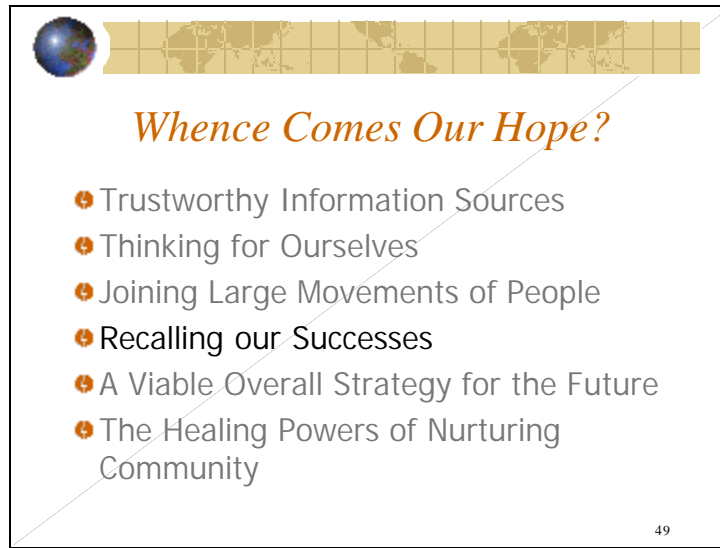
The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title "Whence Comes Our Hope?" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of six items, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The items are: "Trustworthy Information Sources", "Thinking for Ourselves", "Joining Large Movements of People", "Recalling our Successes", "A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future", and "The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community". The number "48" is located in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

Whence Comes Our Hope?

- ✚ Trustworthy Information Sources
- ✚ Thinking for Ourselves
- ✚ Joining Large Movements of People
- ✚ Recalling our Successes
- ✚ A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- ✚ The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

48

We cannot do these huge tasks by ourselves. We need to *join large movements* of people. We need to learn to work with others. We need to add our energies and thoughtfulness and gifts to those organizations that are on the ball or might be on the ball with a little more help.

A rectangular box with a black border containing the slide content. At the top left is a small globe icon. To its right is a horizontal bar with a gold background and a faint world map grid. Below this is the title 'Whence Comes Our Hope?' in orange italicized font. A list of six items follows, each with a gold circular icon containing a white plus sign. The items are: 'Trustworthy Information Sources', 'Thinking for Ourselves', 'Joining Large Movements of People', 'Recalling our Successes', 'A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future', and 'The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community'. The number '49' is in the bottom right corner.

Whence Comes Our Hope?

- ✚ Trustworthy Information Sources
- ✚ Thinking for Ourselves
- ✚ Joining Large Movements of People
- ✚ Recalling our Successes
- ✚ A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- ✚ The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

49

And we need to *call to mind our successes*. In many ways the world is better than it used to be. It is better because people like you and me have made it better. It's better because people have resisted the matrix.



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background. The title "Recalling Our Successes" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a list of ten items, each preceded by a brown gear icon. The list contains several repetitions of "The end of slavery", "The end of child labor", and "Labor laws that protect workers", followed by "The end of apartheid in South Africa". A small number "50" is located in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

Recalling Our Successes

- ⚙ The end of slavery
- ⚙ The end of child labor
- ⚙ Labor laws that protect workers
- ⚙ The end of slavery
- ⚙ The end of child labor
- ⚙ Labor laws that protect workers
- ⚙ The end of slavery
- ⚙ The end of child labor
- ⚙ Labor laws that protect workers
- ⚙ The end of apartheid in South Africa

50

Here are some examples:

The end of slavery

The end of child labor

Labor laws that protect workers

(We are in decline now, but in the 1920's we had no labor laws.)

The end of slavery

The end of child labor

Labor laws that protect workers

(the fact that the public is more suspicious of the US wars)

The end of slavery

The end of child labor


Labor laws that protect workers

(This is particularly exciting because it brings together labor, environment, and human rights groups.)

The end of apartheid in South Africa

(Many US and Canadian citizens helped with that.)

So let us recognize our successes. Our despair comes from feelings of powerlessness and isolation. As large groups of people we have succeeded before. We can succeed again.

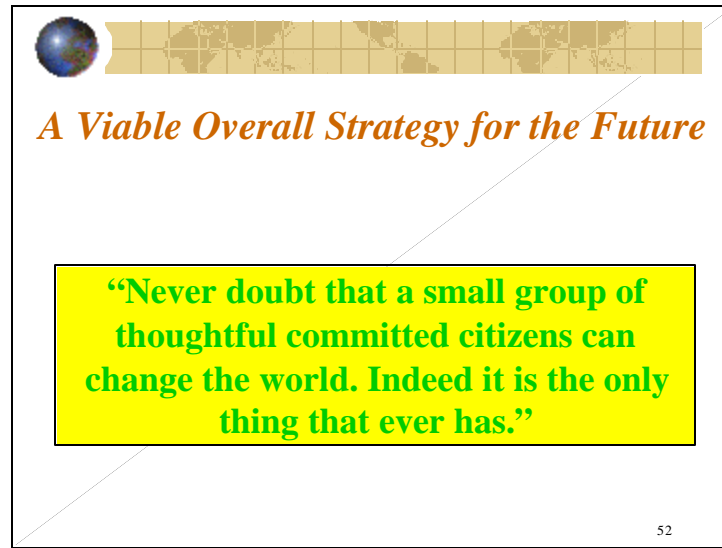


Whence Comes Our Hope?

- Trustworthy Information Sources
- Thinking for Ourselves
- Joining Large Movements of People
- Recalling our Successes
- A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

51

All large movements begin small.



A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

52

As Margaret Mead put it, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background in shades of gold and brown. The title "Whence Comes Our Hope?" is written in a gold, italicized serif font. Below the title is a bulleted list of six items, each preceded by a gold circular icon with a white cross. The items are: "Trustworthy Information Sources", "Thinking for Ourselves", "Joining Large Movements of People", "Recalling our Successes", "A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future", and "The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community". The number "53" is printed in the bottom right corner of the slide's border.

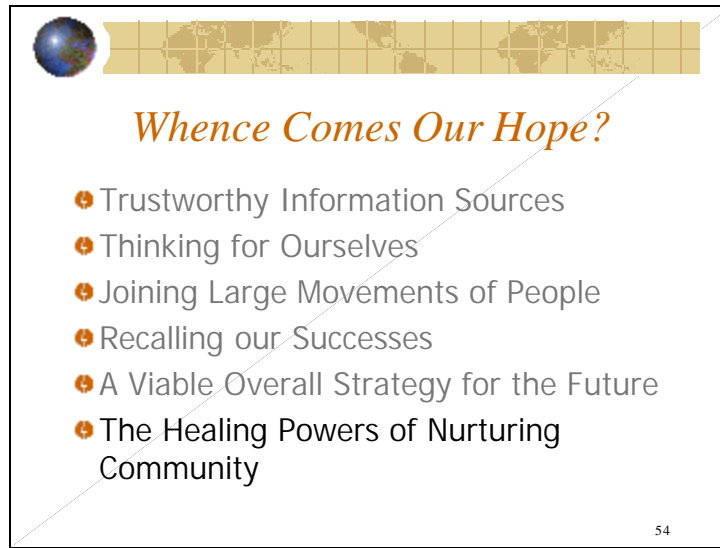
Whence Comes Our Hope?

- ✦ Trustworthy Information Sources
- ✦ Thinking for Ourselves
- ✦ Joining Large Movements of People
- ✦ Recalling our Successes
- ✦ A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- ✦ The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

53

But as small groups or large movements we need a *viable overall strategy*, one that will actually win the victories that need to be won. Working together, we humans made this current mess; so working together, we humans can unmake this society and make a better society. We are the responsible ones—not just political leaders, CEOs, and celebrities. We are it.

It will take a lot of us, and this is a long-term task. Some things will not get done in our lifetimes. We live in a transition period. But if we have a viable overall strategy upon which we are working, we do not have to lose hope. In the next session of this course, we will be thinking together about viable overall strategy.



The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title "Whence Comes Our Hope?" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of six items, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white plus sign. The slide number "54" is located in the bottom right corner.

Whence Comes Our Hope?

- Trustworthy Information Sources
- Thinking for Ourselves
- Joining Large Movements of People
- Recalling our Successes
- A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future
- The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

54

Finally, it is essential to our hopefulness that we associate ourselves with *communities of nurturing people*. We need people in our lives who can expand our natural sensitivities and awaken our even personal freedom and assist us to learn to make contributions that are far more powerful than we can even dream.

The slide features a decorative header with a globe icon on the left and a world map background on the right. The title "Whence Comes Our Hope?" is centered in a brown, italicized font. Below the title is a bulleted list of six items, each preceded by a brown circular icon with a white dot. The items are: "Trustworthy Information Sources", "Thinking for Ourselves", "Joining Large Movements of People", "Recalling our Successes", "A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future", and "The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community". A small number "55" is located in the bottom right corner of the slide's border.

Whence Comes Our Hope?

- **Trustworthy Information Sources**
- **Thinking for Ourselves**
- **Joining Large Movements of People**
- **Recalling our Successes**
- **A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future**
- **The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community**

55

So whence comes our hope?

Trustworthy Information Sources
Thinking for Ourselves
Joining Large Movements of People
Recalling our Successes
A Viable Overall Strategy for the Future, and
The Healing Powers of Nurturing Community

These are some of the sources for our practical hope.



Core Blocks to Progressive Change

- **Obsolete Economics**
- **Corporations Rule Our Lives**
- **The Demise of Democracy**
- **The Public Relations War on Truth**
- **Whence Comes Our Hope?**

56

Let's talk together now.