OMNI

US DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER #3, January 12, 2015.

http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2015/01/democracy-newsletter-3.html

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace and Justice.

(#1 April 21, 2013; #2 Oct. 28, 2013).


US “democracy” abroad. After discussing the invasion of Iraq: “Elsewhere military regimes have been gently eased out of existence and replaced with a new form of rule. Capitalist democracy = privatization + ‘civil society’. This tried-and-tested formula has already wrecked much of Latin America and the whole of Africa. The dictatorship of capital. . . “ Bush in Babylon by Tariq Ali, p. 3.

My blog: War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
www.faypublic.tv/watch

My Newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

See: 9-11, Bill of Rights, Bill of Rights Day, Capitalism, Censorship, Citizens United,
Constitution, Constitution Day, Corporate Monopoly, Corporations, Democracy Book Forum, Dictatorship, Dollarocracy, Empire, Fascism, Grassroots, Greed, Money, National Security State, Patriot Act, Plutocracy, Police State, Secrecy, Security Mania, Supreme Court, Surveillance, Wars, etc.

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Moyers & Co. 2013 - 2015 Exposing the Plutocracy
The some 50 items in these three newsletters provide a fairly comprehensive look at US democratic failures, achievements, and hopes, but see the newsletters on US imperialism and militarism, capitalism, and corporations for a deeper understanding of the problems of US “democracy.”.

USA TODAY: COSTLY PLUTOCRACY AND INSECURITY

L. Woodall to Coralie, bcc: me

US Is an Oligarchy Not a Democracy, says Scientific Study"

"Despite the seemingly strong empirical support in previous studies for theories of majoritarian democracy, our analyses suggest that majorities of the American public actually have little influence over the policies our government adopts. Americans do enjoy many features central to democratic governance, such as regular elections, freedom of speech and association, and a widespread (if still contested) franchise. But, ..." and then they go on to say, it's not true, and that, "America's claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened" by the findings in this, the first-ever comprehensive scientific study of the subject, which shows that there is instead "the nearly total failure of 'median voter' and other Majoritarian Electoral Democracy theories [of America]."

The authors of this historically important study are Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, and their article is titled "Testing Theories of American Politics." The authors clarify that the data available are probably under-representing the actual extent of control of the U.S. by the super-rich:

**Economic Elite Domination** theories do rather well in our analysis, even though our findings probably understate the political influence of elites. Our measure of the preferences of wealthy or elite Americans – though useful, and the best we could generate for a large set of
policy cases – is probably less consistent with the relevant preferences than are our measures of the views of ordinary citizens or the alignments of engaged interest groups. Yet we found substantial estimated effects even when using this imperfect measure. The real-world impact of elites upon public policy may be still greater. Nonetheless, this is the first-ever scientific study of the question of whether the U.S. is a democracy.

http://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/04/14

MONEY

Culture of Cruelty

How America's Elite Demonize the Poor, Valorize the Rich and Jeopardize the Future by Tim Wise

'Pay 2 Play' takes aim at big money's effect in politics

A scene from the movie "Pay 2 Play." (Handout)

By MARTIN TSAI

Review: 'Pay 2 Play' is a well-researched documentary about the effects of big money in politics

Citing the Citizens United case, the Hobby Lobby case, the Koch brothers, Occupy Wall Street, "stand your ground" and other trending topics of recent civil discourse, the documentary "Pay 2 Play" lays out a compelling case against corporate personhood and money as free speech.

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MOVIES

Dull sequel 'Dolphin Tale 2' needs a rescue of its own

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Filmmaker John Wellington Ennis uses as a case study Ohio's 2005 "Coingate," with Tom Noe making financial contributions to Republican candidates and receiving high-ranking
government posts and $50 million in state funds for his high-risk rare-coins investment fund.

**Movie reviews**

The film also launches into Charles and David Koch's financial contributions to 1,053 winning candidates in the 2010 elections and the billionaire brothers' bankrolling of the American Legislative Exchange Council, the think tank that has masterminded thousands of pieces of legislation, among them anti-collective bargaining laws, voter ID laws and stand-your-ground laws.

For an advocacy agitprop, the film has researched, sourced and interviewed exhaustively. The equal-opportunity Ennis expresses his distaste for both Democratic and Republican parties: Noam Chomsky here dubs them two factions of the Business Party.


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**Koch Brothers’ Americans for Prosperity Spent Record $122 Million in 2012**

Josh Israel, News Analysis, NationofChange, Nov. 17, 2013: Americans for Prosperity, the tax-exempt conservative political organization created by oil billionaires David and Charles Koch, spent one hundred and twenty two million dollars last year — more than it spent in all previous years combined. While the group’s thirty three point five million dollar campaign to defeat President Barack Obama failed, AFP has successfully helped like-minded candidates at the state and local level.


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**Paul Blumenthal | Nothing Really Compares to the Koch Brothers' Political Empire**

*Paul Blumenthal, Moyers and Company, Reader Supported News,*
April 14, 2014
Blumenthal writes: "As billionaire conservatives Charles and David Koch become a focus of Democratic Party attacks for their big spending in the 2014 elections, conservatives have argued back that the Kochs' 'dark money' is puny compared to the shadowy funds spent by an array of wealthy liberal interests and individuals."

Pay Any Price: Risen's new book a cringe-worthy must-read

Dr. Robert Greer reviews Pay Any Price: Greed, Power and Endless War by James Risen

"If you want to read a book that will make you cringe, or even, perhaps, to make your hair stand on end, then Pay Any Price: Greed, Power and Endless War by James Risen is a must read.

"Risen's book has a simple premise: ever since 9/11 America has fought a politically driven, endless war on terrorism - a war that seems to seek out enemies everywhere and never leads to a lasting peace. In Pay Any Price, Risen explores the unbelievable cost of such a war, and defines how our government has squandered tax dollars in the name of fighting terrorism, when in fact all the government has really done since 9/11 (and that includes both Republican and Democrat administrations) is siphon trillions of dollars out of our pockets in order to prop up a homeland security-industrial complex at home, pay off Middle Eastern thugs and extremists who in fact hate us, feather their own nest, and risk the security, health, safety and welfare of U.S. citizens."

In the radio book review above, Dr. Greer outlines from the book misdeeds on the part of the last two presidents, the ongoing campaign to discredit the author, and the suppression of troubling facts about U.S. policy.

Dr. Greer concludes: "If you are interested in the dark places our republic might be headed, you must read Pay Any Price." http://kuvo.org/post/pay-any-price-risens-new-book-cringe-worthy-must-read
Recently, I visited our County Court House to vote and as always I wondered why we had to pass through a security checkpoint administered by armed guards. Where’s the threat?

Then I was astonished to read in the newspaper about Arkansas’ Secretary of State Mark Martin’s wish to tighten security at the Capitol (Michael Wickline, “Tighter Security an Itch at State Capitol,” Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Nov. 22, 2014). At least maybe I would learn the threat here.

Why tighter security at the Capitol? Had a threat, or even a hint of a threat, been discovered? Well, we are not told, and Martin’s aides, reluctant to disclose more, wish “to meet privately with lawmakers,” since “it involves Capitol security” and “sweeping changes”—that is, will be inconvenient and expensive. But the public did learn that some alert members of the Legislative Council’s Executive Subcommittee had questioned whether security was adequate. Why? Because “security was tightened at the entrance to the Big Mac Building.” Why? No reason given, only that the Director of the Bureau of Legislative Research, Marty Garrity had hired Securitas of Little Rock to “secure the entrance” to the building. Someone had sounded an alarm, and the security-obsessed had started lining up to increase security more. Why? “Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim’rous beastie, O, what a panic's in thy breastie!” thank you Robert Burns. Or does some other motive line them up? A local siphoning of our dollars to prop up the local homeland security complex?

Capitol police Chief Darrell Hedden “outlined steps that could be taken to make the building more secure.” So he is safe. But the public, the People whose Capitol it is? What does he recommend against the amorphous threat for the People? Increased police work, police officers to augment the present 22 (with dispatchers)? No, rather, decreased public access to our Capitol. It could be “closed on weekends and holidays and a traffic tunnel beneath the steps and next to the east entrance could be closed to the public.” And “all events by outside parties should be discontinued at Capitol Hill [Apartments],” where lawmakers live during sessions and have receptions. However, now that he has established himself as thoroughly on the side of security, wily Shut the Capitol
Down Heddon reminds the security-challenged that such changes will be expensive and once in place difficult to change—“‘a major and lasting financial commitment.’”

In response, Secretary of State Martin’s spokesman Doug Matayo repeated their desire to first speak privately with lawmakers, and with the Governor-elect, Asa Hutchinson, a former federal Homeland Security undersecretary (safe at last), before undertaking even minor changes, such as a rope line at the elevator to ensure all visitors had been screened for weapons (requested by President Pro-Tempore Jonathan Dismang). He repeated because “very sweeping changes” were being considered which would be inconvenient and expensive (and who will be the contractors?), and they wanted everyone to be agreeable to the changes. Particularly, they wanted to “be good stewards of the tax dollars.” Finally, Mr. Wickline quotes Matayo as cognizant of the need both for public access to the Capitol and for “safety and security” for the people who work there. That’s his “balancing act.”

Mr. Matayo seems a nimble Wile E. Coyote in all this, until one thinks--about the influence of fear despite the absence of threat (somebody else is increasing security so we’d better do it), the secrecy (prefer “to meet privately with lawmakers”), the cant (planning to spend the people’s treasury without cause while claiming to be good stewards, and to restrict our access—our freedom, our democracy—while trying to undermine our “rare” Capitol’s access), the possibility of greed (Mr. Wickline asks no questions about the ownership and clients of Securitas), and the power (controlling the People’s money and the People’s physical movement).

And until one remembers. This drama mimics anti-democratic national politics. At the conclusion of Pay Any Price, 273 circumstantial pages on the catastrophe against our democracy by the “War on Terror” (torture legalized, 4th Amendment nullified) author James Risen writes: “The intense [bipartisan] campaign to ramp up cybersecurity and pour money and resources into mysterious new programs, while limiting online privacy, sounds eerily similar to the debate after 9/11 over security versus civil liberty, in which security always won.”

But perhaps it will not win in this wee case, if the People speak up for access
to its elected officials and for spending for citizens’ needs instead of officials’ fear, conformity, and ambition (Securitas!). Thanks to reporter Wickline for providing the resistant circumstantiality of Absurditas!

Top 10 Ways the US is the Most Corrupt Country in the World By Juan Cole | Dec. 3, 2013 | Informed Comment

Those ratings that castigate Afghanistan and some other poor countries as hopelessly “corrupt” always imply that the United States is not corrupt.

While it is true that you don’t typically have to bribe your postman to deliver the mail in the US, in many key ways America’s political and financial practices make it in absolute terms far more corrupt than the usual global South suspects. After all, the US economy is worth over $16 trillion a year, so in our corruption a lot more money changes hands.

1. Instead of having short, publicly-funded political campaigns with limited and/or free advertising (as a number of Western European countries do), the US has long political campaigns in which candidates are dunned big bucks for advertising. They are therefore forced to spend much of their time fundraising, which is to say, seeking bribes. All American politicians are basically on the take, though many are honorable people. They are forced into it by the system. House Majority leader John Boehner has actually just handed out cash on the floor of the House from the tobacco industry to other representatives.

When French President Nicolas Sarkozy was defeated in 2012, soon thereafter French police actually went into his private residence searching for an alleged $50,000 in illicit campaign contributions from the L’Oreale heiress. I thought to myself, seriously? $50,000 in a presidential campaign? Our presidential campaigns cost a billion dollars each! $50,000 is a rounding error, not a basis for police action. Why, George W. Bush took millions from arms manufacturers and then ginned up a war for them, and the police haven’t been anywhere near his house.

American politicians don’t represent “the people.” With a few honorable exceptions, they represent the the 1%. American democracy is being corrupted out of existence.

2. That politicians can be bribed to reduce regulation of industries like banking (what is called “regulatory capture”) means that they will be so bribed. Billions were spent and 3,000
lobbyists employed by bankers to remove cumbersome rules in the zeroes. Thus, political corruption enabled financial corruption (in some cases legalizing it!) Without regulations and government auditing, the finance sector went wild and engaged in corrupt practices that caused the 2008 crash. Too bad the poor Afghans can’t just legislate their corruption out of existence by regularizing it, the way Wall street did.

3. That the chief villains of the 2008 meltdown (from which 90% of Americans have not recovered) have not been prosecuted is itself a form of corruption.

4. The US military budget is bloated and enormous, bigger than the military budgets of the next twelve major states. What isn’t usually realized is that perhaps half of it is spent on outsourced services, not on the military. It is corporate welfare on a cosmic scale. I’ve seen with my own eyes how officers in the military get out and then form companies to sell things to their former colleagues still on the inside.

5. The US has a vast gulag of 2.2 million prisoners in jail and penitentiary. There is an increasing tendency for prisons to be privatized, and this tendency is corrupting the system. It is wrong for people to profit from putting and keeping human beings behind bars. This troubling trend is made all the more troubling by the move to give extra-long sentences for minor crimes, to deny parole and to imprison people for life for e.g, three small thefts.

6. The rich are well placed to bribe our politicians to reduce taxes on the rich. This and other government policies has produced a situation where 400 American billionaires are worth $2 trillion, as much as the bottom 150 million Americans. That kind of wealth inequality hasn’t been seen in the US since the age of the robber barons in the nineteenth century. Both eras are marked by extreme corruption.

7. The National Security Agency’s domestic spying is a form of corruption in itself, and lends itself to corruption. With some 4 million government employees and private contractors engaged in this surveillance, it is highly unlikely that various forms of insider trading and other corrupt practices are not being committed. If you knew who Warren Buffett and George Soros were calling every day, that alone could make you a killing. The American political class wouldn’t be defending this indefensible invasion of citizens’ privacy so vigorously if someone somewhere weren’t making money on it.

8. As for insider trading, it turns out Congress undid much of the law it hastily passed forbidding members, rather belatedly, to engage in insider trading (buying and selling stock
based on their privileged knowledge of future government policy). That this practice only became an issue recently is another sign of how corrupt the system is.

9. Asset forfeiture in the ‘drug war’ is corrupting police departments and the judiciary.

10. Money and corruption have seeped so far into our media system that people can with a straight face assert that scientists aren’t sure human carbon emissions are causing global warming. Fox Cable News is among the more corrupt institutions in American society, purveying outright lies for the benefit of the billionaire class. The US is so corrupt that it is resisting the obvious urgency to slash carbon production. Even our relatively progressive president talks about exploiting all sources of energy, as though hydrocarbons were just as valuable as green energy and as though hydrocarbons weren’t poisoning the earth.

Even Qatar, its economy based on natural gas, freely admits the challenge of human-induced climate change. American politicians like Jim Inhofe are openly ridiculed when they travel to Europe for their know-nothingism on climate.

So don’t tell the Philippines or the other victims of American corruption how corrupt they are for taking a few petty bribes. Americans are not seen as corrupt because we only deal in the big denominations. Steal $2 trillion and you aren’t corrupt, you’re respectable.

THE PEOPLE STRUGGLING FOR DEMOCRACY

There is also a handout on the page and a sign up form for candidates committed to proposing the Pledge to their opponent(s). Thanks for asking! Aquene
KIRKUS REVIEW

A spirited call to remember and act on the original progressive intent of Franklin Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms.

The rallying cry of the Greatest Generation—with its back to the Great Depression and its face to the Axis threat in Europe—contained those “four freedoms” delineated by President Roosevelt in his annual message to Congress on Jan. 6, 1941: freedom of speech and expression, freedom to worship God in one’s own way; freedom from want; and freedom from fear. As historian, author and journalist Kaye (Democracy and Justice Studies/Univ. of Wisconsin-Green Bay; Thomas Paine and the Promise of America, 2005, etc.) sets forth in this stirring survey, those four basic ideals have been supplanted and even submerged over the last 30 years by the erosion of democratic impulses through private greed and massive economic inequality. Kaye walks readers through the Roosevelt era to remind us of its greatest achievement: the recovery from an unprecedented Great Depression through a battery of mightily effective government agencies, public works and regulatory acts. The programs aimed to empower laboring people, consumers, Southern blacks, minorities and women, and while much of the New Deal was deemed radical, Roosevelt claimed his programs were part of the “perpetual, peaceful revolution—a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly, adjusting itself to changing conditions without the concentration camp or the quicklime of the ditch.” Indeed, the Four Freedoms unfurled not long before the U.S. was plunged headlong into war, thus becoming the sustaining ideals worth fighting for. Moreover, FDR intimated that “the American experiment was unfinished,” and yet subsequent presidents and administrations did not necessarily fulfill the promise of the freedoms, as Cold War fears and business interests strengthened the country’s conservative and reactionary elements.

A systematic, heady dose of American history by a frustrated, even outraged progressive thinker.
Reviewing David Swanson's 'Daybreak'
By Stephen Lendman
9-9-9

David Swanson is co-founder of AfterDowningStreet.org and Washington Director of Democrats.com. He's also a board member of Progressive Democrats of America, the Backbone Campaign, and Voters for Peace as well as a member of the legislative working group of United for Peace and Justice.

Subtitled "Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming A More Perfect Union, Daybreak" is Swanson's first book, a timely and impressive account of presidential extremism, congressional complicity, the urgency for progressive change, and how to do it.

Swanson exposes what was wrong under George Bush and provides a compelling prescription for real change.

In his book "Cracks in the Constitution," Ferdinand Lundberg explained that the supreme law of the land, the Constitution, never deterred presidents or sitting governments from doing what they wished, then inventing justifications for their actions. During eight years in office, George Bush personified it and said so in his own words. In 2005, he told congressional Republican leaders:

"I'm the president and the commander-in chief. Do (things) my way. Stop throwing the Constitution in my face. It's just a goddamned
piece of paper." Both parties acceded. The administration got away with murder. Separation of powers were abandoned. Checks and balances barely exist. Lawlessness became the new standard, and the republic took a giant step backward toward despotism and dystopia under a culture of violence, police state laws, and a Wall Street-run asset-stripping system - parasitically destroying America, wrecking the economy for profit, and forcing the public into permanent debt peonage.

Swanson's book is a call to arms for change, an alert about what's wrong with the nation, the urgency to restore the rule of law, save the republic, and necessity to get engaged enough to matter. After eight years under Bush - Cheney and Obama's early months, the government is more than ever corrupted, imperial, and extremist. **Undoing the damage will take years of committed effort, and Swanson explains how:**

-- understand the imminent danger;

-- replace today's media system with a more democratic one;

-- develop new thoughts and actions;

-- engage to work for change;

-- cooperate with other nations, don't exploit them;

-- consider eight years of damage and serious problems built up over decades;
-- demand accountability for wrongdoing; and

-- "encourage the American people to take actions that are absolutely necessary. Now."

Presidential Power Grab and How to Repair It

George Bush's "attorneys openly argued before a congressional committee that the president (may) violate any law until the Supreme Court specifically rules in favor of it." He used signing statements to rewrite them, issued one-man rule Executive Orders, and unconstitutionally usurped "unitary executive" powers that Chalmers Johnson called a "bald-faced assertion of presidential supremacy....dressed up in legalistic mumbo jumbo."

Congress let him bypass the Constitution and do as he pleased. Police state laws were enacted. Permanent wars are waged for world dominance. Torture became official US policy. Government is more secretive and intrusive than ever. Illegal spying is pervasive. Dissent is targeted. Social decay is deepening. Democracy is eroding and dying. Incestuous ties between favored business interests and government created a cesspool of corruption, and America is plagued more than ever by the dynamic that doomed earlier empires - what Chalmers Johnson calls "isolation, overstretch, the uniting of local and global forces opposed to imperialism, and in the end bankruptcy."

Under Obama, little so far has changed as the nation strays further toward tyranny and ruin. http://rense.com/general87/midl.htm

The Power of War

Article 51 of the UN Charter authorizes the "right of individual or
collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member....until the Security Council has taken measures to maintain international peace and security." Preemptive attacks are banned at all times with no exceptions.

The Nuremberg Charter's Article VI explicitly prohibits the following:

-- crimes against peace;

-- planning and waging wars of aggression;

-- war crimes; and

-- crimes against humanity.

The Nuremberg Tribunal also stated that, "To initiate a war of aggression....is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime (against peace) differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

The Constitution's Article I, Section 8 empowers Congress alone to declare war, even though since 1941 it deferred unconstitutionally to the president.

If America is under attack or faces an imminent threat, the November 1973 War Powers Resolution lets the president deploy US forces for up to 60 days plus an additional 30 days for withdrawal, subject to congressional authorization and without a declaration of war.
Post-9/11, no threat existed, yet the Bush administration used deception to wage illegal aggressive wars in defiance of the above constitutional and international law standards. Republican and Democrat Congresses acceded, and so has Barack Obama by continuing an open-ended Iraq occupation and stepped up belligerency against Afghanistan and Pakistan, with perhaps other nations and regions to follow.

If it chooses, Congress can end wars by no longer funding them. Article I, Section 7, Clause I says:

"All bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other Bills."

Either House may originate an appropriations bill although the House claims sole authority to do it. Either may amend bills of any kind, including revenue and appropriation ones. Congress has the power of the purse, so it alone, if it wishes, can fund or end wars. Under George Bush and Barack Obama, Democrats and Republicans are united to continue them.

September 11 was the pretext for launching a long-planned premeditated attack against Afghanistan - a non-belligerent country posing no threat to America and one that sought peaceful engagement. Non-existent weapons of mass destruction then became justification for waging preemptive war against Iraq. Both conflicts are blatantly illegal, yet continue without end.

On January 17, 2003 (ahead of the Iraq war), Law Professor and international human rights law expert Francis Boyle introduced six articles of impeachment against George W. Bush on charges of "high crimes and misdemeanors," including:
-- trying to suspend Habeas Corpus;

-- backing the unconstitutional USA Patriot Act;

-- the mass-rounding up and incarcerating of foreigners;

-- conducting kangaroo tribunal proceedings;

-- violating and subverting the Posse Comitatus Act;

-- conducting lawless searches and seizures; and

-- violating the First Amendment, the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, US War Crimes Act, UN Convention Against Torture, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As a result, "George Walker Bush has acted in a manner contrary to his trust as President and subversive of constitutional government, to the great prejudice of the cause of law and justice and to the manifest injury of the people of the United States." So far, Barack Obama shares equal guilt under US and international law.

On June 10, 2008, Congressman Dennis Kucinich introduced 35 Articles of Impeachment against George W. Bush, citing among other charges:
"Creating a Secret Propaganda Campaign to Manufacture a False Case for War Against Iraq;"

-- lying to Congress and the public about weapons of mass destruction and calling Iraq a security threat;

-- violating the Constitution and UN Charter;

-- "Initiating a War Against Iraq for Control of That Nation's Natural Resources;"

-- "illegally misspen(ding) funds to begin a war in secret prior to any congressional authorization;"

-- authorizing torture and extraordinary renditions to secret "black sites;"

-- threatening to attack Iran;

-- illegally spying on Americans; and

-- obstructing investigations about the 9/11 attacks.

No action was taken, so George Bush, Dick Cheney and other high officials in their administration faced no charges in office and still don't today.
The Power of Money

As explained above, only Congress has "the power of the purse" to spend or not spend as it chooses and also how much. Under constitutional and statutory law, "it is illegal to use government funds for anything other than what Congress appropriates them for." Yet lawless spending occurs regularly, including through unaccountable black budgets, and Congress does nothing to stop it.

Through a signing statement, George Bush empowered himself to transfer funds from authorized programs to secret ones. It was one of Kucinich's impeachment charges against him.

Then in 2008, the Bush administration began looting the federal Treasury to reward criminal bankers for their crimes and accelerated the process of transferring public wealth to Wall Street. Obama greatly stepped up the practice, and on July 20, 2009, AP reported that:

"The federal government has devoted $4.7 trillion to help the financial sector through its crisis, a watchdog report said Monday," referring to Neil Barofsky, the Special Treasury Department's Inspector General in charge of overseeing the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP).

"Under the worst of circumstances, the report said, the government's maximum exposure could total nearly $24 trillion, or (an) $80,000 (liability) for every American."

On March 31, Bloomberg reported that the Treasury and Fed "spent, lent or committed $12.8 trillion," an amount approaching America's 2008 $14 trillion GDP. Currently, the number at least matches and
may exceed it.

At the same time, the **economic crisis** is worsening. Credit remains frozen. The worst housing and commercial real estate slump since the Great Depression continues. Foreclosures threaten millions. Job losses keep mounting. True unemployment, according to economist John Williams (with all uncounted categories included), approaches 21% and is rising. Savings have greatly eroded. Government debt levels are unparalleled during peacetime. Major banks are effectively insolvent. Households are too over-extended to spend or borrow more, and the administration offered little relief to them or states unable to meet their budget commitments, so they adjust by slashing essential social services, including health care, education, and everything for the most needy.

**Power of the Judiciary**

For years and especially under George Bush, the federal judiciary has been stacked with judges from or affiliated with the extremist **Federalist Society.** It advocates rolling back civil liberties; ending New Deal social policies; opposing reproductive choice, government regulations (except industry approved ones), labor rights and environmental protections; and subverting justice in defense of privilege.

Bush’s Justice Department was just as corrupted by putting politics ahead of the rule of law, hiring and firing prosecutors and other employees based on their loyalty to the Republican party, targeting the innocent opportunistically, waging war on Islam and Latino immigrants, creating justifications for administration crimes, then turning a blind eye to them.

For eight years, waging illegal wars, committing crimes of war and against humanity, violating constitutional and international laws, legalizing torture as official US policy, sanctioning police state laws,
spying illegally on Americans, permitting government and corporate
fraud, criminalizing dissent, and creating "a justice system stripped of
all justice," became federal policy under George Bush and remains
so under Obama.

MORE  http://rense.com/general87/midl.htm

**Forming a More Perfect Union**

*We can* restore the Bill of Rights and add new ones, revoke illegal
laws like the USA Patriot Act, and enforce all constitutional, statutory,
and international ones. *We can* reinvent democracy and make it real.
*We can* make social equity and equal justice the law of the land. *We
can* be good neighbors, not intimidating ones.

*We can* protect against "arbitrary arrest, detention, exile, or enforced
disappearance, and from all forms of slavery and forced labor, with
criminal penalties for violators and compensation for victims." *We can*
ban torture, illegal surveillance, political witch-hunts, and corporate
personhood. *We can* protect, not wreck the environment, prohibit
unsafe foods and drugs, enforce collective bargaining and human
and civil rights. *We can* guarantee safety net protections for the
needy, end homelessness and hunger, elevate living standards, and
make corporations and the rich pay their fair share.

*We can* take the power of money out of politics, convene a second
constitutional convention, redo the document Michael Parenti said
protected "a rising bourgeoisie('s freedom to) invest, speculate, trade,
and accumulate" to assure that people who own the country run it.
*We get it right this time, but grassroots pressure is needed to do it.
We can discover that organized people can beat organized money
with enough will."
We no longer need tolerate extreme inequalities of wealth, lost civil liberties, human rights abuses, destructive foreign wars, the American dream turned nightmare, and politics more corrupted than ever regardless of the party in power. Ideas for change abound. Free and open debate are needed to pick the best, then organize for change and work to enact them for the fundamental goal of equity and justice for all in a nation again to be proud of.

Citizen Power

People are crying for change, but only grassroots activism can bring it. In his call to arms, Swanson says:

"We have reached a critical moment, at great expense, but with great possibility. Things have gotten bad enough in the minds of enough Americans that there is an opening for creating a mass movement for real change, and that movement is already growing all around us." After eight years under Bush - Cheney and a complicit Congress, "What is needed in US civil society is a revolution," a non-violent one.

But "Throughout history, the most powerful movements have (been met by) the most powerful suppressive reactions....Our own power and potential for greater power lies in the coalition we can build of activist groups focused on domestic and international issues, in organizing and training, in funding, in media of our own creation, in leaders, in sympathetic and organized government employees, in protection we can offer to whistleblowers and resisters, in our international allies, in local and state governments, and possibly even in the Congress or the Supreme Court resisting the abuses of the White House in the interests of a balance of powers."

Short of effective real change, odds are "our future will take us from bad to worse," and produce a government even more harmful to the public interest. "The choice belongs (collectively) to all of us together" to prevent it and work for the America we want. But wishing won't
Dear Dick,

I am not sure if you have heard of this "Untold History of the United States" film series by Oliver Stone? It is apparently a very factual series of documentaries from WWI to present in the tradition of Howard Zinn's "People's History". I am going to buy a copy of the DVDs (there is a book also). I am copying links to where they can be purchased at Amazon below if you are interested too. I am also copying a link to a trailer preview, and the educational Untoldhistory.com website, which has lesson plans for teachers. I have read wonderful things about this project:

"There is much here to reflect upon... At stake is whether the United States will choose to be the policeman of a 'Pax Americana,' which is a recipe for disaster, or partner with other nations on the way to a safer, more just, and sustainable future."

- Mikhail Gorbachev

"Following in the footsteps of William Appleman Williams, Walter LaFeber, and Howard Zinn, the Stone-Kuznick team grapples with the unsavory legacy of American militarism... Make room on your book shelf or Kindle."
- Douglas Brinkley, Historian


Trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnESozuHxHE

Website: www.untoldhistory.com

View entire message

**Imagine Democracy**

**Dave Johnson, Op-Ed, NationofChange, Nov. 17, 2013:** “We the People.” How many of us have really thought through the implications of these three words? Can people today even imagine a government that is on the side of We the People, instead of being rigged to benefit the already-wealthy and crush the hopes and efforts of the rest of us? Corporate/conservative-funded interests have pounded the public with unceasing propaganda promoting the idea that government can’t do anything right, business always does everything better and more “efficiently,” market solutions (one-dollar-one-vote) are better than public (one-person-one-vote) solutions, and so on.

 READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/imagine-democracy-1384698599

**BILL MOYERS , MOYERS & CO., A FEW OF HIS RECENT PROGRAMS ON US DEMOCRATIC DEFICIENCIES AND THEIR REMEDIES**

- **Full Show: The New Robber Barons**

December 19, 2014 | Moyers & Company
Washington continues to reward wealthy donors and Wall St but what about everyday Americans? Author and historian Steve Fraser has answers.

Full Show: Democrats Bow Down to Wall Street

December 12, 2014 | Moyers & Company

John R. MacArthur of Harper’s Magazine says that Republicans and Democrats alike are abandoning the republic in pursuit of big bucks.

Full Show: The United States of Ferguson

December 5, 2014 | Moyers & Company

In an encore broadcast, journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates talks about the nation’s legacy of slavery and white supremacy.

Full Show: The Long, Dark Shadows of Plutocracy

November 28, 2014 | Moyers & Company

From luxury skyscrapers — taller, more expensive and exclusive than ever before — the dark shadows of plutocracy are spreading across the commons of democracy.
Full Show: How Public Power Can Defeat Plutocrats

November 21, 2014 | Moyers & Company

Lawrence Lessig and Zephyr Teachout return to talk about the corrupting influence of money in politics, and their push to change the system.

Full Show: The Bare Knuckle Fight Against Money in Politics

November 14, 2014 | Moyers & Company

Two college professors leave academia for the rough-and-tumble world of electoral politics. What did they learn?

Full Show: Facing Down Corporate Election Greed

November 7, 2014 | Moyers & Company

On Election Day, a small California city took on one of the biggest corporations in America… and declared victory.

Full Show: Bernie Sanders on Breaking Big Money’s Grip on Elections
The only independent member of the US Senate tells Bill big money’s purchase of political power is a grave threat, and shares his plan to put government back in voters’ control.

ORGANIZATIONS AND DIRECT ACTION

RESISTANCE: GET MONEY OUT and REPRESENT US

GET MONEY OUT Google Search, January 12, 2015

1. Tweets about #getmoneyout hashtag on Twitter
   https://twitter.com/hashtag/getmoneyout
   The latest and best Tweets on #getmoneyout. Read what people are saying and join the conversation.

2. Get Money Out - Huffington Post
   The Huffington Post
   A project of the Money Out/Voters In (MOVI) Coalition, the Get Money Out Campaign seeks to unite activists, politicians, and personalities working on diverse …

3. Get Money Out | Facebook
   https://www.facebook.com/gettingmoneyout
   Get Money Out. 4645 likes · 24 talking about this. Uniting the Fight to Get Money Out of Politics. Support the American Anti-Corruption Act! Add Your...
4. **StampStampede**

www.stampstampede.org/

Stamp Stampede

The Stampede is tens of thousands of Americans legally stamping messages on our Nation's currency to #GetMoneyOut of Politics. As more and more stamped ...

**Stamp Store** - **Stamp Money Out of Politics** - **Yes, it's Legal!** - **FAQ**

5. **Amend the Constitution, Get Money Out | StampStampede**

www.stampstampede.org/pages/amend

... constitutional amendments, meet the state and federal politicians who support the amendment process. Join the movement and help GET MONEY OUT ...

6. **Get Money Out: Join 100,000 Americans | Dylan Ratigan**

www.dylanratigan.com/2011/09/.../get-money-out-join-100000-america...

Sep 27, 2011 - Love to sign up to getmoneyout.com but I'm being “blocked” by servers, hope it's ..... All you have to do is say it aloud, GET MONEY OUT!

7. **Second day of Senate debate to #GetMoneyOut | blog.pfaw**

blog.pfaw.org/.../Second-day-of-Senate-de...

People for the American Way

Sep 11, 2014 - When Senators returned to the floor on Tuesday for the second day of debate on the Democracy for All amendment, supporters continued to ...

8. **Third day of Senate debate to #GetMoneyOut | blog.pfaw.org**

blog.pfaw.org/.../Third-day-of-Senate-deb...
Third day of Senate debate to #GetMoneyOut. Thu, 09/11/2014 - 1:00pm — Jen. While America's foreign policy challenges and other critical issues dominated ...

9. Four Marches, Two Weeks, One Destination: The New ...

www.occupy.com/.../four-marches-two-weeks-one-destination-new-ham..

Four Marches, Two Weeks, One Destination: The New Hampshire Rebellion To Get Money Out of Politics. Fri, 1/9/2015 - by Eleanor Goldfield. reddit ...

REPRESENT US: END CORRUPTION, Google Search, January 12, 2015


https://represent.us/

Represent.Us is the movement to end corruption. Money is controlling politics and standing in our way. Together we can win.


https://represent.us/

Represent.Us is the movement to end corruption. Money is controlling politics and standing in our way. Together we can win.

2. Pass a local Anti-Corruption Act - Represent.Us

https://represent.us/local-anti-corruption-act/

How to roll up your sleeves and pass an Anti-Corruption Act in your city or county. ... After all, we're trying to put an end to the legalized bribery that defines ...

3. Careers - End corruption. Get America back. - Represent.Us
Join our team as we seek to transform our nation’s smoldering outrage over corruption, gridlock, and bailouts into a powerful political force that will deliver lasting ...

4. Questions about the Represent.Us Campaign - End ...
https://represent.us/tools/questions-represent-us-campaign/

A new study shows over 97% of Americans across the political spectrum are ready to end corruption. We're going to need everyone, working together, in order to ...

5. Represent.Us | Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/RepresentDotUs

Represent.Us. 222279 likes · 212155 talking about this. We are a non-partisan movement to end corruption and demand leaders that represent us, the...

6. Represent.Us (@RepresentDotUs) | Twitter
https://twitter.com/representdotus

Represent.Us · @RepresentDotUs. You shouldn't have to buy access to your own government. We are a non-partisan movement to end corruption and demand ... 

7. Represent.Us Campaign Launched To Promote Anti ...
www.dailykos.com/.../Represent-Us-Campaign-Launched-To-...

Nov 13, 2012 - Us and AntiCorruptionAct.org - contain lots of information about the effort, ... 2) End Secret Money - require full transparency and disclosure of ...

8. How can we end corruption in government? Represent.Us ...
www.quora.com › People › Society › Social Dynamics › Corruption

Quora

Feb 6, 2014 - Answer 1 of 3: Get INFORMED... Yes it's a lot of work, yes dealing with the bribed LIARS and TRAITORS who call themselves
politicians sucks.

9. New Group Unveils Its Plan to Get Money Out of Politics ... 

www.motherjones.com/.../represent-us-campaign-finance-r...

Mother Jones

Nov 13, 2012 - After that, Represent.Us plans to introduce the Anti-Corruption Act to Congress by the end of 2013 and rally cosponsors. It's also got its eye on ...

10. Introducing: The American Anti-Corruption Act - YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGECjjoJ3KE

Nov 12, 2012 - Uploaded by Represent.Us

To read the act, sign your name, and learn more. http://www.Represent.Us For details about the Act, visit ...

Searches related to Represent Us: End Corruption

ways to end corruption

the end of corruption world

corruption mean

what does morally corrupt mean

corrupt meaning dictionary

what does the word corrupt mean

what does corruption mean in a democracy

what does corruption mean in the bible
Contents of #1

Dick Bennett: Left? No Full Spectrum Diversity in USA

TomDispatch: US Electoral Democracy

Greg Palast: Stealing Elections

McChesney: Internet and Democracy

McChesney: *Digital Disconnect*

Clements: Controlling Corporate Power, Reversing *Citizens United*

Nichols: Oppose *Citizens United* and Corporate Personhood

Clark and Teachout: *Slow Democracy*, Grassroots Politics

Creativity, Dissent, Resistance: Rejecting Status Quo

Elder and Paul: Better Thinking, Critical Thinking

Dick: Chomsky, Sharp, Crises, Democracy Deficit

Anti-Corruption Act: Sign on, Rescuing Our Government from Money

*In These Times*: One of numerous Pro-Democracy US Magazines

Contents of #2

Restoring US Democracy

Nichols, McChesney, *Dollarocracy* (one of the best books vs. US plutocracy)

Dick, Resisting Dollarocracy

Organizations For Democratic Campaign Financing and vs. *Citizens United* and Corporate Personhood
Free Speech for People

Move to Amend

Democracy Is for People

Alperovitz, Renovating the American Dream

Progressive Democrats of America

Regnat Populus 2014 Ballot Initiative and Ben & Jerry’s Stamp Stampede

**More of What We’re Up Against** (see Newsletter Index for fuller record)

Jimmy Carter: NSA Spying = US Failed Democracy

Leibovich: Washington Vanity Fair

Dick, US Bully vs. US Democracy

END US DEMOCRACY NEWSLETTER #3

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Dick Bennett

**Newsletters**

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:

http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

jbennet@uark.edu