

# THE CORPORATION: THE PATHOLOGICAL PURSUIT OF POWER

by **Joel Bakan.**

Eminent Canadian law professor and legal theorist Joel Bakan contends the modern business corporation is created by law to function like a psychopathic personality. The book was written during the making of **THE CORPORATION** (co-created with Mark Achbar) and formed the basis of the research and writing for the film.

Beginning with its origins in the sixteenth century, Bakan traces the corporation's rise to dominance. In what Simon and Schuster describes as "the most revolutionary assessment of the corporation since Peter Drucker's early works", *The Corporation* makes the following claims:

- Corporations are required by law to elevate their own interests above those of others, making them prone to prey upon and exploit others without regard for legal rules or moral limits.
- Corporate social responsibility, though sometimes yielding positive results, most often serves to mask the corporation's true character, not to change it.
- The corporation's unbridled self interest victimizes individuals, the environment, and even shareholders, and can cause corporations to self-destruct, as recent Wall Street scandals reveal.
- Despite its flawed character, governments have freed the corporation from legal constraints through deregulation, and granted it ever greater power over society through privatization.

Bakan urges restoration of the corporation's original purpose, to serve the public interest, and calls for re-establishment of democratic control over the institution. Concrete, pragmatic, and realistic reforms are proposed. A groundbreaking book filled with big ideas and fascinating stories, *The Corporation* is original, provocative and informative.

"This fine book was virtually begging to be written. With lucidity and verve, expert knowledge and incisive analysis, Joel Bakan unveils the history and the character of a devilish instrument that has been created and is nurtured by powerful modern states. They have endowed their creature with the rights of persons -- and by now, rights far exceeding persons of flesh and blood -- but a person that is pathological by nature and by law, and systematically crushes democracy, freedom, rights, and the natural human instincts on which a decent life and even human survival depends: the modern corporation. This incisive study should be read carefully, and pondered. And it should be a stimulus to constructive action -- not at all beyond our means, as the author outlines."

-- **Noam Chomsky**



"Bakan's "The Corporation" is one of those rare books that opens up a new world. It's message is compelling-- and more important now than ever. With exquisite historical evocations and incisive contemporary examples, the author challenges us to recognize the flaws inherent in the very nature of the corporation and the practical possibilities for reform. You will want to have the book at hand for frequent reference for many years to come."

-- **Robert Monks**

"Since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* began to expose the abuses of the modern industrial system, there has been a growing awareness that profit at



the expense of Earth--of individuals, society, and the environment--is unsustainable. Joel Bakan has performed a valuable service to corporations everywhere by holding up a mirror for them to see their destructive selves as others see them. The clarion call for change is here for all who would listen."

-- **Ray Anderson**

