

DAILY INTER LAKE

Wealthy Capitalists Are Threat To Freedom

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December 3, 2017

The game of Monopoly was invented by Elizabeth Magie and patented in 1904. She wanted to create a way to inform the average person of how concentration of property ownership and acquiring of rents over time would lead to the concentration of wealth in a few hands, with the rest of the population experiencing widespread poverty. The game ends with one person in possession of all the money or capital.

This is how free market capitalism works. Greed is good. The free market rules. Money is what matters in life.

The free-market capitalism is known by many different names — neoliberalism, Reaganomics, trickle-down economics, voodoo economics, rugged individualism and even fascism. All have the world view of Ayn Rand, who believed everybody in the world is motivated purely by self-interest, greed, and money. It is a myth. They may as well have Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd and Goofy write their economic policy. How can an ideology based on selfishness possibly work. Where are the moral values? This is not Republican or conservative, but libertarian (the radical right, RINOs).

David Koch ran for vice president on the Libertarian ticket in 1980. Their party platform is exactly what the radical right is promoting now. The Koch brothers have been funding propaganda machines for over 40 years. Some of the institutions are the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, Citizens for a Sound Economy, Americans for Prosperity, Freedom Works, the Club for Growth, the State Policy Network, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the Tax Foundation, the Reason Foundation, the Leadership Institute, all to promote their libertarian views and free market ideology.

Their agenda is to deregulate — so corporations can be free to pollute the environment; privatize everything — so billionaires can suck the life blood out of society; cut taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations — so government will have no money to function; and reduce government — so its only purpose is for national defense, police and courts.

The Supreme Court has ruled on corporate personhood and they claim that spending in our political process is free speech. Many of our government officials are drawn from mega corporations on the belief that these people have unique insights. Mostly they are looking out for their own corporate self-interest and act against the public interest. Bought off politicians and lobbyists have captured or bought the government. People need to regain control of government and fix it.

In the U.S. during its greatest periods of economic prosperity there was an economy favoring domestic producers and significant government support. The 1950s and 1960s was a period of growth which helped most Americans. Wages grew and poverty declined. Markets helped but so

did government, the New Deal, and labor union power. Income was taxed at rates up to 90 percent and the banking system was heavily regulated. The government has made significant contributions to economic growth by funding scientific research, military projects, the space program and many others.

We need to restore the cultural assumption that humans are valued for who they are, not what they produce. We need to restore democracy and civic engagement. Justice needs to be restored to the judicial system, instead of the current two-class system of haves and have-nots. Executives of companies that tolerate unsafe, fraudulent and predatory practices must be punished.

As in the game of Monopoly, free-market capitalism, the wealthy will have all the liberty and freedom they want, but everyone else is screwed. We need Democracy.