

Who pays the news?

By Tom Loewy – February 15, 2013

How would you feel if you woke up Monday morning and read, in the U.K.-based online edition of The Guardian, that Tom Loewy's blog was sponsored by fund a set up by rich, anonymous, far-left wing business tycoons?

At first you might laugh at the notion of "business tycoons" paired with "far-left" ideologies. A little like pairing socialists and Nazis. Communists and capitalists. Ayn Rand with Paul Krugman.

But after the laugh, you should be peeved. Really, really peeved.

Why?

Duh. Because Tom Loewy never disclosed that fact to readers. All the blogs about drones and poverty and the common good would take on decidedly different meanings if you discovered Tom Loewy was carrying water for some small, anonymous group using Tom Loewy as a mouthpiece to further an agenda.

For the record, I'm paid by Gatehouse and employed by The Galesburg Register-Mail. I've never accepted money — or anything else, for that matter — from a think tank, lobbyist, special-interest group or any private or public concern.

I'm variously described as an Obama supporter, a Marxist, an idiot, a hypocrite and a ranting left-wing ideologue.

Unfortunately, I'm not an Obama supporter. And if there's an anonymous group of wealthy Marxists, idiots, hypocrites or ranting left-wing ideologues who are doling out cash for slanted reporting and columns, I have managed to miss out on the gravy train.

I get email updates from anti-union education reform groups, the Minutemen, assorted "Patriot" groups like the John Birch Society, the Heritage Foundation, occasionally the Cato Institute, Herman Cain, the American Conservative Union and the American Enterprise Institute — all, and I'll be kind here, decidedly conservative interests.

As it turns out, however, the people who fund some of those groups just so happen to fund the way issues like alternative energies are covered in local newspapers.

Before you slip into some well-earned weekend distraction, check out this story:

<http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/02/15/secret-donors-funded-media-campaign-against-wind-farms/>

Why should this concern you? Don't conservatives have as much right to media access and the deserve the opportunity to have their policy idea presented in a public forum?

Absolutely.

The deeply troubling aspect of all of this is what too many shrug off as the “Fox News effect.” It’s not OK that the policy objectives of the elite in this country are presented as hard news.

Moreover, it’s disturbing that motivations and backers are not disclosed. You wanna carry water for the Koch brothers? Cool. Just tell people that’s what you’re doing.

Here are the links to Franklin Center and its little Illinois offshoot:

<http://franklincenterhq.org/>

<http://watchdog.org/category/illinois/>

If you want to know more about the funding for news agencies in general, including the Center for Public Integrity, check out:

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/02/14/12181/donors-use-charity-push-free-market-policies-states>

And one last thing, by way of joining the fray:

In recent comments to my blogs it has been suggested “liberalism” has robbed America of will to work, compete and succeed, that all the wrong in this country can be traced to “liberalism.”

Stop it. Honestly. Have a shred of intellectual integrity.

Why am I critical of the kind of free-market ideology and policy making we’ve seen in the last 30 years? It’s not because I’m liberal.

It’s because that free-market, no-regulation, lower-taxes-on-the-wealthy model has failed. Miserably. By any economic measure you choose — unless, of course, you believe in the concentration of wealth going to upper five or 10 percent — the free-market model has trashed regulation, consumer protection, wages, the housing market, the environment and the health and welfare of millions of Americans.

Must we cite chapter and verse, time and again, or can you simply connect the dots from Reagan to Enron to Wall Street to endless war and shrinking taxes?

I’ve been called a hypocrite. Fine.

But I find it amusing the very same people who argue an economy on the verge of collapse and failing to work for the vast majority of its citizens needs more of the blindingly inept free-market policies that dragged it there in the first place.

Read. Your. History.

Liberalism didn’t destroy this country. Progressive policy-making didn’t ruin the

economy in 1929 or 2008.

If you want to live in a world where there were no worker's rights movements or civil rights movements or anti-war movements or commitment to the very things you take for granted — public roads, public schools, public police and fire protection and on and on and on — you opt for a pretty mean existence.

The history books call it feudalism.

So you can call me an idiot or an ideologue or a Bush-basher, or a currying-favor anti-Obama neophyte or a hypocrite or a fat, bald utopian who knows nothing of the real world.

One thing is certain.

I'll be back next week. And I hope you're here to read it.