

Myths of the free market

As the Republican assault on organized labor unfolds, something George Carlin said seems poignant: "The reason they call it the American Dream is because you have to be asleep to believe it."

Of course, for the apologists of free-market capitalism, this sentiment is heresy. That's why, in the face of the growing disparity between wealth and mere subsistence, between corporate control of government and our own civic impotence, the wizards behind the curtain do everything in their power to keep us asleep.

Their lullaby is the myth that unregulated capitalism is the one, true religion that provides the **greatest good for the greatest number, and that anyone who works hard can rise to the top.**

It's a lie we all want to believe. It's a lie calculated to persuade us that the empires the wizards control are too big to fail; that their infusion of money and influence into our politics is free speech; that our collective well-being depends on their corporate welfare; that distribution of wealth is unthinkable, unless it's upward; that losing our homes to foreclosure is an insignificant price to pay for their creativity.

And when, occasionally, one of us awakens long enough to observe that the wizard has no clothes, he is viewed by those who drink the free-market Kool-Aid as someone who hates his country, a fomenter of class warfare, despite the fact that thousands of hard-working Americans slip daily into poverty as a direct result of the unregulated excesses of Wall Street and the super-rich it serves.

The once-vibrant American middle class is being reduced to a giant pool of cheap labor, not because of unions, but because free-market freebooters and the politicians they own are destroying them. Carlin was right.

T.M. Liston

Stow