

The chaos we see in the world today seems to confirm the old saying that the only thing we learn from history is that we never learn from history. Everything that is occurring around us today has happened, in one form or another, again and again and again. As we pass through life, we SHOULD learn by experience. We can look back on our own behavior when we were young, realize how foolish we were, and vow not to make the same mistakes again. In the same way our family, our community and our country should endeavor to avoid the mistakes made by our predecessors.

The experiences of the human race have been recorded, in more or less detail, for some four thousand years. When considering the history of our own country, we write at length of the periods when our ancestors were prosperous and victorious, but we tend to pass quickly over their shortcomings or their defeats. Our people are represented as patriotic heroes, our enemies as subversive rebels. In other words, our national histories are largely propaganda, rather than well-balanced investigations.

History demonstrates that politics is all about money at every level but it was a dark day for the country when the US Supreme Court brought us Citizens United. Money is not, as claimed, free speech but, rather, a huge volume control on speech. With the Citizens United ruling, the term campaign contributions changed from a euphemism to a synonym for bribery.

And let's not forget that it is capital that rules, not labor, and that capital owns most of the news media. Five media

giants now control a staggering 90% of what we read, watch or listen to. Their control spans most of the newspapers, magazines, books, radio and TV stations, movie studios, and much of the web news content of the United States. These conglomerates are in large measure responsible for inculcating the social, political, economic, and moral values of both adults and children in the United States.

Quoting the words of the master of spin, Edward Bernays, “The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country.”

From my perspective we are at a very fragile tipping point in our history. We must step back and take a long hard look at who we are as a people and what we are becoming. The decisions we have to make during this election year are going to determine the fate of the nation for decades. Economic elites and organized groups representing global business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence.

So I guess the questions we need to ask ourselves are; who governs, who really rules and to what extent is the broad body of U.S. citizens sovereign, semi-sovereign or powerless.