

Occupation movement a sign of missing hope

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I am encouraged by the "occupy" movement spreading around our world. Finally we are talking about capitalism and thinking critically about the kinds of worlds we are currently co-creating due to the massive structural adjustments done to our modes of developments beginning in the 1970's.

Most of these adjustments were done by stealth, prompted in part by the likes of the Fraser Institute, the CD Howe Institute, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Council of Corporate Executives.

Their mantras dominated every media outlet: smaller government means more freedom and choice; less taxes on rich and corporations means more wealth and jobs for us; less regulation means competition and lower prices for us ... and on and on.

What was not repeated in dominant media but is the logic underpinning these mantras and only occasionally expressed by some business leaders: "the greatest threat to (global) corporate profit are governments who responded to the needs of their people."

I kind of thought that was the purpose of democracies ... didn't you?

The way to get rid of governments which might respond to the needs of their populations? According to Maggie Thatcher, then PM of the UK, and the folks at the Institute of Economic Affairs (the grandpappy of the Fraser Institute) was to use the economy.

Consequently we have the introduction of structural debts and deficits through reduction of taxes on the rich and corporations coupled with increased public spending in ways that enrich them such as bank bailouts, imposition of smart meters, massive public support for private energy projects that produce energy for export, weaponry and increases in security systems and wars.

Meantime, the poor, low and middle income earners experience an increase in their taxes through user fees and consumption taxes such as the GST/HST while experiencing a decrease in public services for which they actually do pay.

It is a brilliant strategy, as the middle class rightfully screams for tax relief as they shoulder disproportionately the tax shift from the rich and global corporations. Yet, repeatedly, the tax relief benefits disproportionately the rich and global corporations — not the low and middle income earners.

Finally, some people are joining with others and saying: enough!

If we want a future for our grandchildren, there is no going back. A mode of development that requires infinite growth on a finite planet is not sustainable on any

level. We need a new model.

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