

The Reflector

A different view offered of the Koch brothers

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I read the glowing report by Don Brunell in the Nov. 11 issue of The Reflector about the Koch brothers. He assured us that what Koch Industries does is in our best interest. I have to disagree.

The Koch brothers, David and Charles, are fabulously wealthy businessmen men who have interests in oil, mining, manufacturing, finance, etc. I found it amusing that Brunell lists pollution control equipment as one of Koch's products, since the Kochs have long been identified as some of the worst polluters of our air and water in the history of America.

The Koch brother's father, Fred Koch, was the son of a Dutch immigrant who had prospered as a Texas newspaper owner. After graduating from MIT Fred started his own oil drilling business, but soon was involved in litigation charging that he had infringed on patent right for a new way of drilling.

He couldn't work in the U.S. profitably, so went to the Soviet Union where he helped the Stalin regime set up 15 modern oil refineries between 1929 and 1932. Becoming disillusioned with Stalin, he came back to the U.S. and begin "to see government as a threat and became paranoid about Communism," according to his son David, and because of this paranoia helped organize the John Birch Society with John Welch in 1958.

The Society platform included the belief that President Eisenhower was a Communist. They opposed the Civil Right Movement, the United Nations, free trade agreements, immigration, government regulations, building a safety net for the poor, unions, and fluoridation which they branded "mass medicine."

In the late 1960s Welch wrote that President Johnson's fight in Vietnam was part of a Communist plot to "overthrow America." President Clinton was accused of trying to "bring down America" through a conspiracy with the Council of Foreign Relations. These conspiracy theories have carried over to the present with President Obama being accused of "plotting to destroy America." It's not a coincidence; it's a carefully planned attack on our country to make citizens distrust the government.

Charles joined the John Birchers and by 1970 was advocating the "barest possible obedience to regulation." Much of his dislike for regulation had to do with Koch Oil. Because both Republican and Democrats were united in bringing regulation to the oil industry, Charles joined the Libertarian Party. Their platform called for slashing government regulation, offering a 50 percent tax break to top earners and abolishing a \$16 billion windfall profit tax on the oil industry. In 1980 he pleaded guilty to five felonies in Federal court including conspiracy to commit fraud over oil leases.

In the 1980s a sting operation found Koch had stolen oil from American Tribal oil fields. In 1990 the Kochs gave \$8 million to Citizens for a Sound Economy, a group that managed to beat back the administration's plans to tax companies that pollute the air. In 1994, 90 million gallons of oil spilled in South Texas from 50 year old pipelines that the Koch's refused to maintain. Between 1988-1996, 11.6 million gallons of crude and petroleum products were spilled from Koch pipelines. In 1995 the EPA sued Koch for violation of the Clean Water Act. In 2000 Koch Industries was hit with a 97 count indictment for venting massive quantities of benzene into the air and covering it up.

While it is true that liberal billionaires like George Soros donate to political races, it's done openly. The Koch brothers hide their donations through their organizations; Americans for Prosperity, Cato Institute, Freedom Works, Heritage Foundation, and the Tea Party. In Congress right now we have a group called the Freedom Caucus comprised of 40 Koch-backed Tea Party members. They vote as a bloc and tie up legislation that would improve the lives of average Americans. Koch has helped get them there so it's no wonder they oppose regulation, minimum wage increases, Obama Care, and deny climate change. These issues have to do with profit, bottom lines, and what's best for Koch.

It's frightening to think of how far right these two men have pulled the Republican Party, always looking for conspiracies, always ready to believe the latest right wing propaganda. Remember the Death Panels that was supposed to be part of Obama Care? What about the military training in Texas last summer, Jade Helm, which was characterized as a move by President Obama to take over the state? The only causality occurred when a citizen shot himself in the leg while keeping an eye on the soldiers.

The message from Koch Industries is to not trust the government, your own military, and for goodness sake don't trust the colleges. These notions didn't come out of thin air, but rather from carefully orchestrated propaganda. We live in the best country in the world, but unfortunately some of our citizens have been taken in by men who only care about profit, and that is not good for us, and not good for America.

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