

## Thomas DiLorenzo Destroys Nancy MacLean (And the First Detailed Coverage of Rothbard)

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There have been a number of very important critiques of the new Nancy MacLean book, [Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America](#) (SEE: [Critical Reviews of and Commentary on "Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America" By Nancy MacLean](#)) that point out many of the inaccuracies in her book and her many outrageous distortions of the birth of the libertarian movement.

However, a new review by Thomas DiLorenzo, in [The Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics](#), of the book is most significant for students of Murray Rothbard. His review is the first to point in detail to the glaring errors that MacLean makes in characterizing Rothbard and also the errors she makes in the characterization of his break with the Koch brothers. For example:

She does get much of the Koch story *backwards*, however, by saying that Charles Koch insisted that his well-funded minions remain “uncompromisingly radical” (p. 145). That, in fact, is why Rothbard was booted—he was in fact uncompromisingly radical whereas Koch, who moved the Cato Institute from California to Washington, D.C., was not. He wanted to pursue a patently un-radical plan of trying to teach free-market and libertarian principles to the Washington, D.C. bureaucracy—at least in a *watered down and compromised form* that would not be too offensive to them.

DiLorenzo's depth of historical knowledge also results in his being able to identify a number of other inaccuracies in the book that haven't been identified in other reviews.

Also, for those into deep inside baseball of the Koch libertarian-lite operations, it is noteworthy that DiLorenzo spotlights some correspondence that MacLean discovered between James Buchanan and, Koch lieutenant for all things [beltarian](#), Richie Fink.

Maclean's reporting here may be the only accurate part of the book and it is vicious on, from what I am told is the very Machiavellian, Fink.

While the critical reviews of the book, from those closest to the inner workings of the Koch beltarian movement, justifiably defend James Buchanan and Tyler Cowen against MacLean attacks, those reviews are silent on Maclean's attacks on Fink. The silence is most certainly

deafening.

DiLorenzo, however, does not fail us here:

One interesting and informative part of the book is MacLean's discussion in the last two chapters of how Charles Koch and his lieutenant, Richie Fink, talked seventy-nine-year-old James Buchanan into lending his name to an organization on the George Mason campus that would become essentially a lobbying arm of Koch Industries. The James Buchanan Center, funded by a \$10 million grant to George Mason University in 1997, was staffed mostly by non-academics who conducted "outreach" programs for "Senators, Congressmen, and state legislators, legislative staff and regulators...." (p. 199). Some academics were involved, but they were in the minority, writes MacLean. Most were apparently Richie Fink's political cronies from the D.C. corporate lobbying world. Buchanan was not happy with this arrangement. MacLean uncovered a September 17, 1998 memo from Buchanan to Fink in the files at Buchanan House in which Buchanan wrote: "Quite frankly, I am pissed off." What was being done under his name "verges on fraud and surely, at a minimum amounts to exploitation of me, of you, of JBC [the James Buchanan Center], of the university" (p. 201). "Buchanan had been played like a fiddle" by Koch and Fink, writes MacLean, and she is right. Buchanan retired to his farm in Blacksburg soon thereafter.

The full review is [here](#).