

# The Kochs, the millionaires afraid of a communist president

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Antonio Muñoz Molina once wrote that workers' revolutions never achieve their goals or that they always end badly, while only revolutions made by the rich and powerful end up triumphing. Then **go cook** could be an example of it. And by that we mean the American Kochs, not the founders of the European media empire Koch Media. These are the ones who started with the oil business and today are the second richest family in the United States, with **an estimated net worth of \$100 billion**.

**The origin of the family fortune dates back to 1929, when Fred C. Koch began to invest in oil** and in 1940 he founded the Wood River Oil and Refining Company. This would soon become Koch Industries which, although it owes its success to oil, soon diversified its investments into the chemical, mining, paper and financial industries.

From its general poster in Wichita (Kansas, USA), **Fred** viewed with disgust the social policies of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and **expressed to anyone who wanted to hear his rejection of trade unionism, the redistribution of wealth, taxes** and, in short, to the United States being governed by "a communist president."

Fred had four sons, Charles, Frederick, David, and William, of whom only Frederick escaped his father's political leanings. When this one died, **In 1967, Charles took over the reins of Koch Industries and the other three brothers inherited a sizeable stake in it..**

Charles took it upon himself to complete the diversification with a firm hand, while at the same time taking charge of employing a harsh anti-union and anti-environmental policy throughout the corporate group. **The Koch industries are the subject of innumerable controversies for their illegal dumping, for allegedly swindling Indian tribes to extract raw materials from their land, and for paying wages so low that they make it impossible for many of their workers to organize or go on strike.**

At the same time, discreetly, three of the four brothers (with the exception of Frederick), **dedicated themselves to financing increasingly conservative candidates, enemies of taxes and regulations**, mostly belonging to the Republican Party of the United States. And at the same time, to finance pressure groups and *think tanks* such as the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute and Americans For Prosperity, which are considered the creators of the most conservative branch of the Republican Party, the so-called "Tea Party".

While, **During the 1980s and part of the 1990s, Frederick and Bill (William) engaged in a lengthy legal battle with their two other brothers.** Bill for taking control of the family business and Frederick for his rejection of the politics he was taking toward Native American tribes. The legal battles failed and Bill ended up taking over his own coal and oil company, Oxbow, and Frederick retired to pursue philanthropy and the promotion of art and literature until his death in February 2020.

While, **Charles and David continued to mix politics with business, with perhaps their greatest triumph being the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States.**, to whom they made generous donations and over whom, they say, they exercised enormous influence. All this after having spent hundreds of millions of dollars fighting the policies of Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama. And although Trump was not his favorite candidate (they leaned more toward Jeb Bush or Marco Rubio), they enthusiastically joined his campaign when he was elected as a presidential candidate.

**But the relationship with Trump soured after he decided to embark on his famous "trade war" with China and the European Union,** imposing tariffs that hampered free international trade. David and Charles consider themselves, above all, "libertarianists" ("libertarians" in English) and began to denounce the interference of the former television star in business.

David died in 2019 and Charles kept up his pressure to influence politics. Relations with Trump apparently ended up blowing up after he refused to recognize the results of the elections in November 2020 and with the subsequent storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021. **Now, Charles seeks ways of understanding with the Biden Administration** while his net worth is around 62.7 billion dollars.