



Conservative Millennials, Boomers & Libertarians All being Conned

By Thom Hartmann (about the author)

Multigenerational political influence by a very narrow special interest group is rare, but we're seeing it played out right now in front of us. A billionaire family - the Kochs - have gone from influencing my father's generation, to my generation, to my kids' generation - and very few Americans realize it. Daddy Koch - Fred - made his first millions palling around with Joe Stalin in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. As the fascists rose to power in Europe in the 1930s, he was an enthusiastic supporter of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, who invented the word "fascist," meaning essentially the takeover of democratic governments by big business interests. Mussolini went so far as to dissolve the Italian parliament, and replace elected politicians with representatives of each district's largest corporations. Fred Koch and Mussolini both particularly hated the trade unionists and their sometimes allies, the communists. So after Mussolini, along with his ally Hitler, lost World War II against America, Fred Koch brought the anti-communist pro-business-running-government - what some would call "facist" - torch to America big time, helping start the John Birch Society.

Two of their biggest efforts are pretty well known. After the Supreme Court ruled, in 1954, in the Brown versus Board of Education case, that segregation in schools was unconstitutional, the John Birch Society put up billboards all across America calling for the impeachment of the Chief Justice of the Court, Earl Warren. Daddy Fred Koch was very concerned about the integration of our schools - in fact, he wrote, "The colored man looms large in the Communist plan to take over America." With JFK's election, Fred Koch's John Birch Society went off again - this time against JFK. Using rhetoric not that different from the "secret Muslim" plots the Tea Party promotes about Obama, in a 1963 speech Fred said that "[Communists would] infiltrate the highest offices of government in the U.S. until the President is a Communist, unknown to the rest of us."

When JFK was scheduled to come to Dallas that year, the JBS distributed flyers saying, "Wanted, for Treason" all around the town two days before his arrival. On the day JFK was assassinated, large ads ran in the Dallas newspapers attacking Kennedy as being soft on Castro, among other things. That was my dad's generation. Daddy Koch died, and his sons Charles and David took over the family business of promoting the business and billionaire takeover of our American government.

They're doing it with a two-pronged attack. For people over forty, they're funding the Tea Party through a variety of groups, most notably Americans for Prosperity and Freedomworks. And for people under forty, they're funding Libertarian think tanks, like the Charles Koch Foundation (which was renamed as the Cato Institute), and the Reason Foundation, where David Koch is a trustee, which happily embraces a new generation of young people with the idea that "freedom" means the "freedom" to buy politicians and the "freedom" to pollute. For the young people, of course, the Libertarians throw in the "freedom" to smoke dope and hire a hooker, but those are just bones being cynically tossed to young potheads and young protoge's of Dick Morris.

But the Koch's have been inside the Libertarian movement from its beginning - 32 years ago this year, David Koch was the Libertarian Party's official candidate for Vice President of the United States. It's really pretty incredible, but it's all true. The main agenda of the Koch's John Birch Society was to enhance the power and control of our government by big business and billionaires, while fighting organized labor and people like me who were protesting the Vietnam War. The main agenda of the Koch's Tea Party is to get millionaires elected to Congress and have them cut taxes and regulations for Koch Industries and other polluting corporations, while fighting organized labor and people like me who were protesting the Iraq War.

And the main agenda of the Koch's Libertarians - again, funded and trained by the Koch Brothers - is to keep intact the power of big money over our government, cut taxes and regulations on billionaires and polluting industries, while fighting organized labor and people like me who are protesting the corporate takeover of the United States of America. Three generations of Americans, all duped by the same billionaire family. Three generations buying into the idea that "what's best for industry and billionaires is best for America" - and that government is our "enemy" rather than something that our nation's founders fought and died to create for all of "We The People" And, increasingly, it's not just the Koch family. The Walton family - whose combined wealth is greater than 40 percent of all Americans - funded a covert campaign to rename the estate tax as the "death tax" and lobbied so hard they got the estate tax eliminated entirely in 2010.

Senator Bernie Sanders pointed out yesterday that - so far - we know of 26 billionaires - worth over \$146 billion - who have already "invested" or committed to invest over \$561 million dollars in this election cycle - most of it to defeat Democrats who want to raise their taxes. The good news is that young people are waking up and realizing that the Libertarian hustle the billionaires are feeding them is just that - a hustle. Just like Tea Partiers are waking up to their having been had by billionaires who want to privatize their Social Security. Hopefully, soon, America will regain its sanity and we'll go back to viewing cranky billionaires the way my Dad's generation did - as Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower did - when Eisenhower referred to their ilk as "small in number and stupid" They're not stupid any more, and if we really value American traditions, we really must push back on this kind of power and influence in American politics.

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