

Welcome To The Bright Future

by [Gilles d'Aymery](#)

"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."

—Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

(*Swans - September 6, 2010*) Less than three months after the Obama family moved into their new quarters, the first Tea Party demos took place over the tyranny of taxation, followed by the Town Hall meetings in the summer where Tea Partiers disrupted each and every gathering with obnoxious statements against the partisans of health care reform and vitriolic insults thrown at Obama. They were gun-toting deathers and birthers acting in the name of freedom (as they define it), a movement described in the main media as an organic grassroots assembly of angry and economically and socially insecure people. Some observers noted that far from being inchoate the movement had long been in the making, fostered by powerful corporate interests (see my October 2009 [Blips #91](#)). The assertion was dismissed as another leftist lunacy. Nobody was behind the Tea Partiers and they needed nobody's help to express their legitimate grievances -- a narrative that [Richard Arme](#)y, the former Republican House Majority Leader and head of [FreedomWorks](#), assiduously disseminated. The Tea Party, let it be said, was the Immaculate Conception reincarnated, and Armey would swear on his [Hayek](#) bible (*The Road to Serfdom*) that he and his organization had nothing to do with the movement. As the French say: *croix de bois, croix de fer, si je ments, je vais en enfer*, which can be translated as "cross my heart and hope to die (if I do tell a lie)."

It turns out that Armey was a bit disingenuous, as the neoliberal *New York Times* in the person of Kate Zernike exposed in ["Shaping Tea Party Passion Into Campaign Force"](#) (August 25, 2010). Zernike wrote: "[...] FreedomWorks, the Washington advocacy group that has done more than any other organization to build the [Tea Party movement](#). For 18 months, the group's young staff has been conducting training sessions [...] across the country, in hotel conference rooms or basements of bars, shaping the inchoate anger of the Tea Party with its libertarian ideology and leftist organizing tactics." Which means that the "grassroots movement" was being developed, organized, and funded *before* the election of Obama in November 2008. Zernike added, "FreedomWorks was founded in 1984 as Citizens for a Sound Economy, which was financed by the Koch Foundation, the underwriter for many libertarian causes." In my [Blips #91](#) I wrote: "Founded in 1984 -- [FreedomWorks] used to be named [Citizens for a Sound Economy](#),

whose first chairman was none other than [Representative Ron Paul](#) (small world!) -- [it] promotes the usual hard-core libertarian policies: lower taxes, less government, more freedom." Op-Ed columnist Frank Rich expanded on the connections between the Koch business conglomerate, the Murdoch media empire, et al., and the Tea Partiers in his August 28, 2010 column, "[The Billionaires Bankrolling the Tea Party](#)". Writes Rich:

When David Koch ran to the right of Reagan as vice president on the 1980 Libertarian ticket (it polled 1 percent), his campaign called for the abolition not just of Social Security, federal regulatory agencies and welfare but also of the F.B.I., the C.I.A., and public schools -- in other words, any government enterprise that would either inhibit his business profits or increase his taxes. He hasn't changed.

Rich also referred to a 10,000-word investigative article by Jane Mayer published in the August 30, 2010, issue of *The New Yorker* (posted on their Web site on or about August 24), "[Covert Operations: The billionaire brothers who are waging a war against Obama](#)," in which she examined in great detail the influence and the control the Koch brothers Charles and David have exercised for decades over the hard-core libertarians and other right-wing radicals.

At long last the "All the News That's Fit to Print" and the stylish press have finally joined this member of the so-called lunatic fringe, which brought Justin Raimondo, the trite Rothbardian Paulista holding sway at Antiwar.com, to publish a few strong words "[In Defense of the Kochtopus](#)" (August 30, 2010). He does not hold the Kochs in great esteem though, except for their apparent opposition to the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan and their defense of civil liberties in the company of the [Cato Institute](#) (a libertarian think tank originally funded by Charles Koch, but whose "true founder and inspirer," Raimondo claims, was his idol [Murray Rothbard](#)). The Kochs are just [entryists](#) who "are Johnny-come-latelies to the Tea Party" and whose money has had no effect on the ascendancy of the movement, which he traces back to December 2007 and the supporters of his political hero [Ron Paul](#). The Kochs are much too moderate and liberal for his and Paul's brand of libertarian radicalism. Glad to know.

Strangely enough, one has yet to hear the Tea Partiers call for bringing the troops home, de-funding the Pentagon, and abolishing the military-industrial-congressional complex. But they certainly are in favor of abolishing quite a few institutions and social programs. From the Fed to the Internal Revenue Service and the income (and estate) tax, from unemployment benefits to Social Security and Medicare, from the Department of Education to the [EPA](#), from public schools to [OSHA](#), from any and all regulations to managed health care, from welfare to food stamps, and on and on till the country finds its way back to the eighteenth century or a new [Age of Rand](#).

The distressing paradox lies in the fact that these reactionary doctrinaires are using the work of [Saul Alinsky](#) -- [Rules for Radicals](#) -- to drive the middle class to their dark-age views and in so doing, as Alinsky once put it, "making them ripe for the plucking by some guy on horseback promising a return to the vanished verities of yesterday" -- the latest contender being the lachrymose Glenn Beck, a Murdoch buffoon that the folks at [ThinkProgress](#) call a right-wing "rodeo clown" with his message of "faith, hope, charity" that he distilled on August 28, 2010, to a live TV audience and some [90,000 people](#) assembled on the Washington Mall for his "Restoring Honor" rally -- and not the 3 to 500,000 Beck said were attending. Amusingly,

Representative [Michele Bachmann](#) (R. MN) asserted first that 1,000,000 people were in attendance, and the next day, she increased that number to 1.6.

These people have no decency and know no shame. Dishonest manipulators and ideological demagogues, they keep propagating lies fully aware that their ignorant constituencies will only remember what they want to believe and will disregard all facts to the contrary. And as we know, ignorance is bliss... In [a recent survey](#) the Pew Research Center found that only 28% of Americans could identify the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court (John Roberts). A reader of an August 27, 2010, NYT Op-Ed on Glenn Beck and Martin Luther King by Charles Blow, "[I Had a Nightmare](#)," filed the following in the comment section (comment #22 by "Rosenblum," posted the next morning):

I taught for many years at both NYU and Columbia. Over the years, I watched as each new class came in with less and less knowledge of basic history. Their attitude increasingly became "I can look it up if I want to find something out." They were not stupid, just uneducated, and to a great extent, unaware of how uneducated they were. Most were unable to differentiate between Martin Luther and Martin Luther King.

That was amusing up to a point. It isn't any longer. We have debased the educational system in this country for two generations and now we are going to pay a price. And that price begins when people like Glenn Beck can claim "ownership" of the Civil Rights Movement. It is beyond pornography, but we don't have enough people with a basic knowledge of history to even see it for what it is: revolting.

And the reason we don't is that we have let education go the same route as bridges and highways -- deep into disrepair. It is one thing when a bridge collapses; it is far more serious when a culture collapses. And that is what we are going to see today at the Lincoln Memorial -- the collapse of a culture.

Welcome to the bright future, indeed.

Otium sine litteris mors est et hominis vivi sepultura.

—Seneca the Younger, [Epistulae morales ad Lucilium](#), Epistle 82



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[Gilles d'Aymery](#) on *Swans* -- with bio. He is *Swans*' publisher and co-editor. ([back](#))

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THE COMPANION OF THINKING PEOPLE
