

The Coors Connection

...and it tastes bad, too!

Hank S. Latimer

1993

a review of

The Coors Connection, Russ Ballant, South End Press, Boston, 1992, 149 pp., \$9.00

Not only does Coors make lousy beer, but it's bankrolling just about every right-wing extremist group it can find.

However, Detroit's Russ Ballant doesn't critique Coors products in his book. He goes straight to the Coors family's sponsorship of far-right groups ranging from the Heritage Foundation to Pat Robertson's snake-oil-and-politics caravan.

The brewery's anti-labor history is pretty common knowledge, but it doesn't exactly set the company apart from its peers in Corporate America. Name two big corporations that aren't trying to squeeze every last penny out of their workers.

The Coors family goes several steps beyond Reaganomics, though. Ballant outlines a whole web of right-wing think tanks, influence groups, lobbying outfits and universities that the family supports through its foundation. The fact that a lot of these groups are connected with Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church or with Nazi collaborators from Eastern Europe and eugenic "scientists" seems not to matter.

The Coors goal: a country filled with flag-waving, underpaid, Norman Rockwell Americans and their pregnant, second-class wives, all of whom still believe we need a big army to keep the commies at bay. Meanwhile, Ballant points out, the company touts itself as progressive in publications aimed at women, minorities and even gays.

Most Fifth Estate readers won't be tremendously surprised by the picture Ballant paints, but that doesn't mean they won't get anything out of this book. In the first place, it's good to check in on the far right every so often, just to know who they are and what they're up to. These guys mean to take over, and they've got computers, mailing lists, access to media and people at all levels of government and the cops, which puts them within striking distance even though they constitute a small minority of the population.

Also, the book is a good tool for someone who wants to organize the Coors boycott in their area. With the resurgence of local breweries, there are more and more alternatives to the corporate, tasteless brew. Now, if we can only convince the microbrewers to stop targeting the yuppie market and start making more affordable beer...

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