

Democratic Party donors funnel millions to protest groups

By Tom Hall
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A *New York Times* report titled “The ‘Resistance,’ Raising Big Money, Upends Liberal Politics” details how the Democratic Party’s billionaire and millionaire donors are giving millions of dollars to so-called left-wing and progressive protest groups around the Democratic Party.

“It started as a scrappy grass-roots protest movement against President Trump,” the article begins, “but now the so-called resistance is attracting six- and seven-figure checks from major liberal donors, posing an insurgent challenge to some of the left’s most venerable institutions — and the Democratic Party itself.”

The article highlights the efforts of one particular group, Democracy Alliance, which the *Times* describes as “a club of wealthy liberals” who have donated more than \$600 million since 2005 and have “helped shape the institutional left.” Since the election of Donald Trump, the group has shifted its funding priorities away from well-established organizations that supported Hillary Clinton in the 2016 primaries into a host of new “anti-Trump” groups. Their aim is to bolster the left-wing credentials of the Democratic Party, stem the growth of social opposition, and block the development of interest in socialism among tens of millions of workers and youth.

“The Democracy Alliance distributed a ‘resistance map’ to its donors in July including new groups focused on converting the anti-Trump energy into electoral wins, such as Flippable, Swing Left and Sister District, as well as legal watchdog groups and others focused on mobilizing protesters, such as Women’s March and Indivisible,” the article states.

Indivisible, the *Times* notes, was able to expand from little more than an online text document detailing how to “resist” the Trump administration into a national

organization of 40 staff members, with more than 6,000 volunteer chapters across the country,” as well as two associated nonprofits which have raised \$6 million dollars in donations.

The *Times* article continues: “Yet Indivisible has also received funding from the tech entrepreneur Reid Hoffman, as well as foundations or coalitions tied to Democracy Alliance donors, including the San Francisco mortgage billionaire Herbert Sandler, the New York real estate heiress Patricia Bauman and the oil heiress Leah Hunt-Hendrix.” A representative from the group said that they would “gladly” accept funding from billionaire investor George Soros, a major financial backer of the Democratic Party.

Cloaked under rhetorical attacks on the supposed “neoliberal” and “establishment” wing of the Democratic Party, a ferocious struggle is unfolding over the division of the spoils. The Center for American Progress, the *Times* observes, “has engendered resentment from others on the left for casting itself as a leader of the anti-Trump movement and raising money off the resistance nomenclature,” including selling t-shirts branded with the word “resist” on its website.

Only the politically naive will believe that these Wall Street millionaires and billionaires will not see a “return on investment” from their donations. All of the “left-wing” groups that are receiving millions in donations seek, in one way or another, to camouflage the character of the Democratic Party as a party of the financial oligarchy and the military and promote illusions that the Democrats can be shifted through popular pressure to the left.

The political goal behind these fundraising efforts is to boost the tattered credibility of the Democratic Party, widely seen as a party of Wall Street and the military,

and to channel mass opposition to the Trump administration behind the Democrats in order to prevent it from escaping the control of the ruling class.

Workers and young people who have been taken in by the illusion that the Democrats can be transformed from a party of Wall Street into a “people’s party” should consider the fact that the very groups promoting the perspective of pressuring the Democrats are themselves being directly backed and financed by Wall Street.

“The resistance is strongest when everyone has access to our resources,” David Brock, founder of Media Matters and a prominent Clinton supporter, told the *Times*. “These grass-roots groups play a different, unique role, and their energy is something the progressive movement hadn’t seen in decades,” an official with the Center for American Progress added. The *Times* also cited Democratic National Committee spokeswoman Xochitl Hinojosa, who praised these groups’ work in Democratic electoral campaigns.

This type of funding of supposedly left-wing protest groups did not emerge only after the 2016 presidential elections. Last October, the Ford Foundation announced that it would spend \$100 million over six years on Black Lives Matter.

The perspective of racial and gender identity politics that these groups espouse corresponds to the interests of a narrow layer of the affluent upper-middle class that has benefited directly over the past 30 years from the rising stock market and whose gains come at the expense of the working class of all races.

The bulk of the “left-wing” upper-middle class supported the primary campaign of Bernie Sanders, who combined progressive and even “socialist” phraseology with a total silence on the reactionary role of the Democratic Party. After unceremoniously capitulating to Clinton, Sanders went on a national postelection tour with Democratic National Committee Chairman Thomas Perez to save the Democrats’ image as a party of “working people.” Sanders constantly papered over the experience of the Obama administration in order to bolster illusions in the Democrats.

The result of Sanders’ efforts has been disastrous for the working class. Far from turning the Democratic Party to the left, the Democratic Party has ignored the votes of Sanders’ 13 million voters, promised to make

deals with Trump on everything from tax cuts for the rich to mass deportation, and launched a nationalist campaign aimed at whipping up hostility to Russia, blaming “Russian interference” for Trump’s victory. The leadership of the Democratic Party now hopes that by mobilizing wealthy donors they can inject a popular veneer into their pro-war, pro-corporate program and block the development of a mass movement for socialist revolution.

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