

## Trump's Supporters and Opponents are Just Pawns in the Bigger Game

### News:

Following the carnage at the US Capitol, ABC News reported on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January: "Corporate donors flee Republican Party following Capitol Hill riot, and it's only the beginning". Disney, Coca-Cola, Walmart, Amazon, Airbnb and Mastercard are "targeting the 147 Republicans who still challenged the results of America's presidential election *after* the Capitol building was stormed by Donald Trump's supporters on January 6." A Disney spokesman said: "In the immediate aftermath of that appalling siege, Members of Congress had an opportunity to unite — an opportunity that some sadly refused to embrace. In light of these events, we have decided we will not make political contributions in 2021 to lawmakers who voted to reject the certification of the Electoral College votes." Many more major US companies are reviewing their political donations according to the article, so does this mean that the Republican Party will be starved of funds and who are the real losers?

### Comment:

First, if this defunding were to have a significant affect on the Republican Party, then these companies would be deciding US politics, and not the people. However, these companies are worried about their image before the consumers of their products, and so the will of the people could be said to affect politics indirectly, through the companies that fund the political parties. This could be called 'consumer democracy'. Consumer democracy is a debasement of the ideal of democracy as it puts an additional layer between the voter and the rules enacted for him, such that before ruling on the people's behalf through elected representatives, the companies that fund the representatives have a huge say. These big and highly visible companies are not the major money source, however.

Donations of unlimited size, often in the six or seven figure range, are allowed to be made to super PACs (Political Action Committees) and these donations not restricted to image-sensitive corporations. A Forbes article by Michela Tindera listed the billionaires that have been funding the Trump campaign in the latest election cycle up to the end of February. Donations from 80 billionaires were identified from Federal Election Commission filings, but the author also went on to analyze the industries that made them rich. Of the 16 industries that were identified, the biggest was finance and investments, followed by energy and then real estate. That may help to explain Trump's excessive attention from day one of his presidency to the stock market, and his opposition to the Paris Climate Agreement. His publicity machine never failed to remind his billionaire backers that he was delivering for them and cutting their taxes as well.

The biggest donor last year has just died. He gave \$172.7 million in support of Trump's failed 2020 campaign. Sheldon Adelson made his billions from casinos and he got what he wanted before he died: unparalleled support for 'Israeli' ambitions, including moving the US embassy to Jerusalem, and US recognition of 'Israeli' sovereignty over the Golan Heights. 'Israeli' Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke of his "deep sorrow and heartbreak" for Adelson's death.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in funding go to a variety of political organizations that support candidates and parties that match with their beliefs and their financial interests. These funds can be tracked through the Federal Election Commission. However, this is before considering the so-called "dark money" that funds activities that are not explicitly supporting a candidate or his party. They support his agenda by, for example, spreading negative propaganda about the policies of an opponent. The dark money is not registered with the Federal Election Commission, because it falls outside of its jurisdiction.

In such ways both Republicans and Democrats will have no shortage of funds with which to fight for the interests of the massively wealthy in America, whatever bad publicity may come their way. As for the foot soldiers who risked everything by invading the US Capitol on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January under the banner of 'make America great' and 'stop the steal', they and their equally passionate opponents are the eternal losers in the capitalist game.

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