

Over 30 Major News Organizations Linked to George Soros

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First of Four Parts

When liberal investor George Soros gave \$1.8 million to National Public Radio, it became part of the firestorm of controversy that jeopardized NPR's federal funding. But that gift only hints at the widespread influence the controversial billionaire has on the mainstream media. Soros, who spent \$27 million trying to defeat President Bush in 2004, has ties to more than 30 mainstream news outlets - including The New York Times, Washington Post, the Associated Press, NBC and ABC.

Prominent journalists like ABC's Christiane Amanpour and former Washington Post editor and now Vice President Len Downie serve on boards of operations that take Soros cash. This despite the Society of Professional Journalist's ethical code stating: "avoid all conflicts real or perceived."

This information is part of an upcoming report by the Media Research Centers Business & Media Institute which has been looking into George Soros and his influence on the media.

The investigative reporting start-up ProPublica is a prime example. ProPublica, which recently won its second Pulitzer Prize, initially was given millions of dollars from the Sandler Foundation to "strengthen the progressive infrastructure" - "progressive" the code for very liberal. In 2010, it also received a two-year contribution of \$125,000 each year from the Open Society Foundations. In case you wonder where that money comes from, the OSF website is www.soros.org. It is a network of more than 30 international foundations, mostly funded by Soros, who has contributed more than \$8 billion to those efforts.

The ProPublica stories are thoroughly researched by top-notch staffers who used to work at some of the biggest news outlets in the nation. But the topics are almost laughably left-wing. The site's proud list of "Our Investigations" includes attacks on oil companies, gas companies, the health care industry, for-profit schools and more. More than 100 stories on the latest lefty cause: opposition to drilling for natural gas by hydraulic fracking. Another 100 on the evils of the foreclosure industry.

Throw in a couple investigations making the military look bad and another about prisoners at Guantanamo Bay and you have almost the perfect journalism fantasy - a huge budget, lots of major media partners and a liberal agenda unconstrained by advertising.

One more thing: a 14-person Journalism Advisory Board, stacked with CNN's David Gergen and representatives from top newspapers, a former publisher of *The Wall Street Journal* and the editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster. Several are working journalists, including:

- Jill Abramson, a managing editor of The New York Times;
- Martin D. Baron, the editor of The Boston Globe;
- David Boardman, the executive editor of the Seattle Times;
- Kerry Smith, the senior vice president for editorial quality of ABC News;
- Cynthia A. Tucker, the editor of the editorial page of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.
- Alberto Ibarra, the former publisher of The Miami Herald, is on the board of directors. He's also president and CEO of journalism's prestigious John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

ProPublica is new and prominent, but it's far from the only Soros-funded organization that is stacked with members of the supposedly neutral press. The Center for Public Integrity is another great example. Its board of directors is filled with working journalists like Amanpour from ABC, right along side blatant liberal media types like Arianna Huffington, of the Huffington Post and now AOL.

Like ProPublica, the CPI board is a veritable Who's Who of journalism and top media organizations, including:

- **Christiane Amanpour** - Anchor of ABC's Sunday morning political affairs program, 'This Week with Christiane Amanpour.' A reliable lefty, she has called tax cuts 'giveaways,' the Tea Party 'extreme,' and Obama 'very Reaganesque.'
- **Arianna Huffington** - Co-founder of the popular left-wing website named after her, The Huffington Post, a nationally syndicated columnist, and thanks to a recent \$315 million sale, the person in charge of AOL's news divisions.
- **Paula Madison** - Executive vice president and chief diversity officer for NBC Universal, who leads NBC Universal's corporate diversity initiatives, spanning all broadcast television, cable, digital, and film properties.
- **Matt Thompson** - Editorial product manager at National Public Radio and an adjunct faculty member at the prominent Poynter Institute.

Once again, like ProPublica, the center's investigations are mostly liberal - attacks on the coal industry, payday loans and conservatives like Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour. The Center for Public Integrity is also more open about its politics, including a detailed investigation into conservative funders David and Charles Koch and their "web of influence." According to the center's own 990 tax forms, the Open Society Institute gave it \$651,650 in 2009 alone.

The well-known Center for Investigative Reporting follows the same template - important journalists on the board and a liberal editorial agenda. Both the board of directors and the advisory board contain journalists from major news outlets. The board features:

- **Phil Bronstein** (President), San Francisco Chronicle;
- **David Boardman**, The Seattle Times;
- **Len Downie**, former Executive Editor of the Washington Post, now VP;
- **George Osterkamp**, CBS News producer.

The Advisory Board features prominent liberal journalists like Bill Moyers, Seymour Hersh of The New Yorker, former '60 Minutes' host Mike Wallace, and representatives of both PBS and NPR.

Readers of the site are greeted with numerous stories on climate change, illegal immigration and the evils of big companies. It counts among its media partners The Washington Post, Salon, CNN and ABC News. CIR received close to \$1 million from Open Society from 2003 to 2008.

Why does it all matter? Journalists, we are constantly told, are neutral in their reporting. In almost the same breath, many bemoan the influence of money in politics. It is a maxim of both the left and many in the media that conservatives are bought and paid for by business interests. Yet where are the concerns about where *their* money comes from?

Fred Brown, who recently revised the book "Journalism Ethics: A Casebook of Professional Conduct for News Media," argues journalists need to be "transparent" about their connections and "be up front about your relationship" with those who fund you.

Unfortunately, that rarely happens. While the nonprofits list who sits on their boards, the news outlets they work for make little or no effort to connect those dots. Amanpour's [biography page](#), for instance, talks about her lengthy career, her time at CNN and her many awards. It makes no mention of her affiliation with the Center for Public Integrity.

If journalists were more up front, they would have to admit numerous uncomfortable connections with groups that push a liberal agenda, many of them funded by the stridently liberal George Soros. So don't expect that transparency any time soon.