

Why Are US Taxpayers Funding George Soros' 'Philanthropy'?

George Soros is synonymous with a well-funded, highly partisan brand of "philanthropy," which begs the question: Why are U.S. taxpayers underwriting it? During the Obama administration, USAID granted Soros' Foundation Open Society-Macedonia (FOSM) and its counterparts \$4.8 million, earmarking an additional \$9.5 million through 2021. Macedonia's center-right president, Gjorge Ivanov, has charged Soros' organizations with rallying to destabilize his government and asked why American foreign aid is attempting to foist unpopular, EU-centric policies on his nation. One Macedonian official called these groups "the Soros infantry."

In a fascinating new essay for *Religion & Liberty Transatlantic*, Mihail Neamțu contrasts political pressure groups with the organic intermediary institutions that Alexis de Tocqueville placed at the heart of American exceptionalism. Neamțu, a public intellectual in Romania, reminds Americans that Eastern Europe once naively regarded Soros as a genuine philanthropist:

Unfortunately, George Soros' politically motivated giving aims at increasing state power at the expense of grassroots, or religious, organizations. Soros' progressive agenda is inimical to everything that Alexis de Tocqueville admired about America: the flourishing of traditional families, the free establishment of churches, the existence of Bible study groups and book clubs and the encouragement of self-restraint in social settings. The tone and the language used by activists funded by Soros is always incendiary, calling for a revolutionary action.

Neamțu writes that Christians should be particularly concerned about how Soros' funding has diverted faith-based

organizations from spreading the Gospel to furthering a hard-left political agenda:

Oftentimes, the radical ideologues favored by the Open Society Foundation subvert or divert religious organizations from their high purpose. If there is a Catholic organization that they want to align with Soros' progressive agenda, they would initially broaden the scope of its mission, soften the pastoral language of its spiritual leaders, and shift the focus of Christian theology from the pursuit of heavenly blessings to entirely earthly matters like income inequality, social justice or global warming. This gradual transition of Christian civil society organizations, from diversion to subversion, has proven effective. By following the model of Saul Alinsky, the heresiarch of community organizers in Chicago, countless activists from across the globe engage in street mobilization ... to replace imperfect but legitimate conservative governments with leftist politicians and bureaucrats whose policies will further erode the voluntary sector.

When Soros' extensive funding of Roman Catholic organizations became known, Acton Institute founder Fr. Robert Sirico wrote:

This isn't education. It's political manipulation in order to focus the Catholic Church on Mr. Soros' political agenda; a well-funded, cynical effort to exploit the faithful to achieve dubious moral and political ends.

Mr. Soros should be condemned for using his money in this way, and the faith-based organizations that took it should be ashamed.

With sweeping insight, Neamțu analyzes how American taxpayers further this agenda in the former Eastern bloc—yet at the same time, through Tocqueville's immortal work, America's past continues to illuminate the path to liberty.

You can read his full essay here. {eoa}

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