

# Rupert Murdoch backs Hillary Clinton: by their friends you shall know them

Bill Van Auken, Socialist Equality Party candidate for US Senate from New York  
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The billionaire media magnate Rupert Murdoch changed his nationality from Australian to American some two decades ago in order to further his aim of gobbling up US media for his global empire. In both countries, he projected an image of a super-patriot and nationalist.

When it comes to politics, Murdoch, known in media circles as the “dirty digger,” is equally adaptable in pursuing his personal gain. The most loyal right-wing Tory and friend of Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s, as he built up his media holdings in Britain, he switched his loyalties to “New Labour” when he saw that Tony Blair could provide a fresh face for even more reactionary politics and was more than willing to further Murdoch’s interests in return for editorial backing. He made similar swings in his native Australia between the Labor and Liberal parties to further his efforts at monopolizing the print and broadcast media.

So, it should really come as no surprise that Murdoch is now emerging as a prominent backer of the Democratic US Senator from New York, Hillary Clinton. The *Financial Times* of London reported Tuesday that Murdoch will personally host a July fundraiser for Mrs. Clinton on behalf of his News Corp.

CBS News reported on the upcoming fundraiser with the provocative headline “Rupert Murdoch Loves Hillary Clinton.” It stated, “The mating ritual of the unlikely allies has been under way for months.”

When she first ran for Senate from New York, Murdoch’s *New York Post* sought to demonize her as an arch-liberal and was notorious for publishing the most unflattering photographs of the former First Lady. “To vote for Hillary Rodham Clinton is to affirm double-dealing and deception,” one *Post* editorial warned New Yorkers. A leading columnist referred to her as a “duplicitous sow.” How times have changed.

This will be by no means the first such friendly encounter between the Democratic senator—and frontrunner for the party’s 2008 presidential nomination—and the right-wing media baron. Last month, it was reported that Mrs. Clinton was in attendance at the 10th anniversary party for Murdoch’s Fox News in Washington.

As the *Washington Post* reported: “Clinton spent an hour at Cafe Milano schmoozing with News Corp. Chairman Rupert Murdoch (very chummy since last year’s truce), Fox News Chairman Roger Ailes, and most of the Bush administration, including Karl Rove, Josh Bolten, Karen Hughes, Dan Bartlett and former Fox host Tony Snow, just hours after he was named the new Bush spokesman.”

For the last five years, Murdoch’s Fox News has served as the closest thing to a state propaganda network that America has ever seen, unswervingly defending the Bush administration while vilifying its critics. Tony Snow’s transformation from a right-wing Fox talk show host into the head of the White House press office is only the most blatant expression of this politically incestuous relationship.

Murdoch, a reactionary warmonger, used Fox as well as other cable and satellite networks covering five continents and his worldwide chain of 175 newspapers to promote the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq and to steadfastly defend both Bush and Blair for launching the war. While insisting that Bush was “acting very morally” in attacking a virtually defenseless country that had offered no provocation, Murdoch was not as reticent as most US politicians in identifying the economic aim of the war: “Once Iraq is behind us, the whole world will benefit from cheaper oil.”

Fox and other Murdoch news outlets led the media in

trumpeting the Bush administration's lies about "weapons of mass destruction" and terrorist threats, and continues to promote the White House claims—long since rejected by the American people—about "progress" in Iraq.

In New York, Murdoch's *New York Post* has given new meaning to the term "gutter press," promoting the most backward, racist and anti-working class views. During the strike by New York City transit workers last December, the billionaire Murdoch used the paper to call the train and bus workers "greedy" and "rats." Comparing these workers to the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the *Post* demanded that they be arrested and fired en masse.

Union busting is not just a platonic affair for Murdoch. In 1986, he used mass firings and police violence to crush the British print workers' union in the Wapping strike. He used similar tactics against striking members of the Newspaper Guild at the *New York Post* in 1993, firing nearly 300 of them.

Now, Hillary Clinton, whose \$20 million campaign fund includes large sums from the unions, including Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, will be getting even more money from Murdoch, a veteran union-buster and one of the most prominent advocates of the TWU's destruction.

Murdoch is if nothing else a good judge of character. He can sniff out a politician who lacks any principles, whose views and votes are for sale. Support from such elements—in Australia, Britain the US and elsewhere—has played a decisive role in his amassing a multibillion-dollar fortune.

Having watched Hillary Clinton vote for and support the Iraq war and curry favor with the Republican right (as she and husband Bill accumulated their own multimillion-dollar fortune), he likes what he sees. Moreover, the Australian-born press baron can read opinion polls as well as anyone else. With Bush's approval rating falling below the one-third mark, there is ample reason for him to start hedging his political bets.

In the midst of the Republican impeachment drive over the Monica Lewinsky affair, Hillary Clinton accurately described the forces mobilized to oust her husband from the White House as a "vast right-wing conspiracy." Fox News, and many of those whom Murdoch has assembled to craft its ideological line as

well as that of his other media outlets—the *New York Post* and the *Weekly Standard*, for example—played a prominent role in this conspiracy.

Mrs. Clinton has long since distanced herself from the bluntly accurate description of these forces that she offered eight years ago. The fact is that those who hatched the conspiracy now have a grip on all the essential levers of power in Washington, and Hillary Clinton is collaborating closely with them.

The budding alliance between Rupert Murdoch and Hillary Clinton provides the most graphic proof that the Democrats offer no means whatsoever to oppose the ultra-right policies of the Republican administration in Washington. Democratic politicians like Clinton are willing accomplices of the Bush White House, supporting both militarism abroad and the attacks on basic democratic rights and social conditions at home.

Whatever their tactical political differences, both parties are committed to defending the interests of the US corporate and financial ruling elite. That is why Rupert Murdoch is confident that he can achieve his ends by backing Hillary Clinton just as well as he did through his fulsome support for George W. Bush.



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