In wake of Brazile revelations, Sanders intensifies call for reviving the Democratic Party

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In television interviews and an open letter to political supporters, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has renewed his pledge of eternal fealty to the second-oldest capitalist party in the world. He sent out the mass email under the title, "Revitalizing the Democratic Party" on Monday, on the eve of the off-year elections in New Jersey and Virginia, which the Democrats won by wide margins.

The statement is the first major response from Sanders to the revelations by former interim Democratic National Committee chair Donna Brazile about the takeover of the DNC by the Hillary Clinton campaign in August 2015, six months before the first votes were cast in the contest for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The joint fundraising agreement between the Clinton campaign and the DNC gave Clinton veto power over DNC appointments and actions, even though the leading party body was required by its own rules to remain neutral in the nomination contest between Clinton, Sanders and several other candidates.

Rather than condemn the blatant collusion, which led to the DNC putting its weight behind Clinton at every point during the nomination fight, Sanders cited Brazile's revelations as an argument for uniting with the former Clinton aides who now run the DNC, like the current DNC chair Thomas Perez, who was secretary of labor in the Obama administration and backed Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Sanders wrote, "What the recently released book excerpt from former interim DNC Chair Donna Brazile made clear is that unless we get our act together, we are not going to be effective in either taking on Donald Trump or in stopping the extremist right-wing Republican agenda.

"In order to do that, we need to rethink and rebuild the Democratic Party. We need a Democratic Party that opens its doors to new people, new energy and new ideas. We need a Democratic Party that is truly a grassroots party, where decisions are made from the bottom up, not from the top down."

Contrary to Sanders, the Democratic Party is owned and operated by Wall Street, not by the American people. It is one of the two capitalist parties, controlled by the financial aristocracy, which exist to give the illusion of political choice in elections, while both carry out the instructions of the billionaires.

This perspective is not a new one for Sanders. Despite his nominal "independence" from the two-party system, he sought the Democratic presidential nomination while pledging from the outset to support the eventual Democratic nominee. Once defeated by Clinton, he threw his full support to the candidate who was the favorite of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus.

His main task during the 2016 campaign, which continues today, is to give this corrupt party of corporate America a populist and even "socialist" gloss. In his long email statement, accordingly, Sanders outlined a series of cosmetic reforms that he urged his supporters to demand from DNC Chair Perez and the Democratic National Committee Unity Reform Commission, which is comprised of former Clinton and Sanders supporters as well as additional members selected by Perez.

These include reducing, but not eliminating, superdelegates, opening up participation in primaries

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and caucuses, and making the DNC's own procedures and budget more transparent. In support of this pathetic effort, Sanders urged his supporters to sign a petition to Perez urging action on the reform proposals at the commission's final meeting on December 8-9. Significantly, he said nothing in the email about the decision by Perez to remove several Sanders supporters from the bylaws and rules committees of the DNC.

Sanders continued in this vein in a series of interviews after the Democratic election victories on Tuesday. Interviewed by Anderson Cooper on CNN Wednesday, he praised Donna Brazile for displaying "an enormous amount of courage" in exposing the backroom deal between the DNC and the Clinton campaign, but declined to describe the nomination campaign as "rigged." He continued, "Anderson, to be very honest with you, my job, our job is to go forward, is do everything we can to defeat this right-wing agenda of the Republican Party in the Trump administration, not to look backwards. "

On Thursday, Sanders spoke at length with the *Washington Post* about his call for reform of the DNC, including changes in how the DNC decides on financial backing for candidates for local, state and federal office. "We don't have transparency," he said. "This is tough stuff, but it means to say that you can't have a few people in a meeting saying: Well, we can't support the guy in Kansas. We can't support the guy in Montana, or whatever. That process has to be much more open."

In other words, the "reform" of the Democratic Party is a grubby struggle over which candidates will receive the money doled out by the DNC from its fundraising from the "millionaires and billionaires" whose support Sanders claimed to disavow.

According to the *Post*, Sanders told them that the Brazile revelations should not become a distraction. "The media likes all the divisiveness, and Clinton versus Sanders—fine," he said, but he did not want to pursue the issue further.

These comments from Sanders do not represent any shift in his orientation, but only establish more definitively that he is continuing the political course set during his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. Shocked by the mass support from young people and sections of workers for his (purely nominal) pretensions to socialism, Sanders seeks to divert this leftward movement among working people back within the straitjacket of the corporate-controlled two-party system, to establish a roadblock against any break by the working class from the Democratic Party.

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