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# TEAM OBAMA

All The President's Real Men And Women

Grassfire Nation



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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2012

ISBN 0-9849860-2-6

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## **About Grassfire Nation**

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***Team Obama***

# Introduction

## Who is Barack Obama?

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Four years into his Presidency,  
we still don't know who he is.

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The truth about Barack Obama—his past and politics—is something most in the mainstream media shied away from during the 2008 presidential election. Yes, they covered his speeches and policies, and gave light treatment to his time in the Illinois legislature and the U.S. Senate. But that was nothing like the intense investigation to which John McCain's vice-presidential pick, Sarah Palin, was treated. Teams of reporters descended on Wasilla, Alaska, in search of details about the conservative firebrand and the *New York Times* called on readers to help sift through Palin's email correspondence. We learned about the church she attended and tried to find out whether she had spoken in tongues.

For Barack Obama, it was a different story—or in most cases, no story at all. When it came to the life and times of Barack Obama, journalists showed themselves decidedly incurious about the details of his upbringing and the many troubling connections in his past.

The result is that, in many ways, Barack Obama remains a mystery to the American public.

A man is known by the company he keeps. And in the case of Barack Hussein Obama, that company

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has been almost exclusively on the left—the hard left. So we’ve set out in *Team Obama* to introduce you to the men and women to whom Obama has been linked by birth and by choice. It’s an amazing collection of liberals, leftists, radicals, and, yes, communists.

Radical scholar Manning Marable revealed the truth when he wrote, *after* Obama’s presidential election, that:

What makes Obama different is that he has also been a community organizer. He has read left literature, including my works, and *he understands what socialism is*. A lot of the people working with him are, indeed, socialists with backgrounds in the Communist Party or as independent Marxists. There are a lot of people like that in Chicago who have worked with him for years. <sup>1</sup>

Too bad we didn’t know that beforehand. Yes, we learned a bit about Jeremiah Wright and Bill Ayers during the campaign, but not much. Media accounts then and since failed to probe the deep links Obama has with both men. As a result, Obama was able to safely distance himself from the loquacious and venomous Wright and pass off unrepentant domestic terrorist and self-described small “c” communist Bill Ayers as just a “guy who lives in my neighborhood...who I know.”

But it’s not just Wright and Ayers that offer telling clues to the real Obama. There is a network of leftists, socialists and communists surrounding him that is much wider and deeper than just those two.

Even his long-time Chicago doctor is a leftist.

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David Scheiner, M.D., treated Barack Obama from 1987 until he entered the White House. Like so many in the long trail of friends, colleagues, and political associates in Obama's youth and adulthood, Scheiner has impeccable credentials as a lefty.

An internist based in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, Scheiner belongs to Physicians for a National Health Program, a far-left group focused on single-payer national health care or, as Dr. Scheiner put it to author Edward Klein, "socialized medicine."<sup>2</sup>

Going into Obama's first term, Scheiner had high hopes that his former patient would give the nation socialized health care. He told Klein that Obama told him he favored government-controlled medicine as practiced in Canada and Western Europe.

But even though ObamaCare puts American health care under government control and places us on a glide path toward a single-payer system, that's not good enough for Scheiner. He knocks Obama for not giving the nation "Medicare for all."<sup>3</sup>

Scheiner, who has treated other Hyde Park patients and partisans like former U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun and the late Studs Terkel, practiced medicine in partnership with Dr. Quentin Young, a man with even more highly burnished left-wing credentials—and someone who has long been an Obama ally and confidant.

Young is a Chicago socialist who was identified as a member of the Communist Party USA before a congressional committee in 1968. He took the Fifth Amendment when asked about his membership.<sup>4</sup>

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He is also the founder of Physicians for a National Health Program and a long-time advocate of single-payer medicine, aka socialized health care. Young, along with John McKnight, one of Obama's mentors in community organizing, founded the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, also a strong backer of government-controlled health care.

Along with other Chicago radicals, Young was in the home of former Weatherman Underground leader Bill Ayers in 1995 when state senator Alice Palmer, a communist sympathizer, announced her plan to run for Congress and named Obama as her successor.

As to the relationship between Ayers' and Obama, Young said they were "friends." <sup>5</sup> Yes, and so much more as we shall see.

Scheiner, Young, McKnight, Palmer, Ayers and Wright. All radicals. All friends of Obama. And we're just getting started in detailing the thick network of leftists, radicals, socialists and communists that pop up at every stage in the life of America's 44th president.

Researcher Stanley Kurtz, author of *Radical-in-Chief*, and the leading sleuth into Obama's socialist past, says there is "a continuous ideological trail, ranging from the childhood influence of Obama's radical mentor, Frank Marshall Davis, to the Socialist Scholars Conferences of Obama's New York years, to the future president's community organizing days and political career." <sup>6</sup>

The upshot of all these friends, allies, associates, and influences?

As Kurtz tells it, "Evidence clearly indicates that the President of the United States is a socialist." <sup>7</sup>



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Gulp.

*Team Obama* presents the names and, in at least one case, the Communist Party membership number, of the men and women of the Left who walked with Obama in his past and present.

Let's start at the very beginning.

***Team Obama***

# 1

## Like Father, Like Son

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Barack Obama, Sr.

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It is safe to say that Barack Obama's upbringing was anything but traditional. The son of an absentee father from Kenya and a free-spirited mother, Obama spent his childhood in Hawaii and Indonesia, raised by his young mother and her second husband, and then, after age 10, in the home of his grandparents in Honolulu. His father, Barack Obama, Sr., left Hawaii in 1963 to study at Harvard, after which Obama saw him just once, in 1971, for about a month.

Despite his dad's modest personal investment in his life, his father's "heritage was to be a major influence on his world view, ideals and priorities," according to the *Boston Globe*, which reported in 1990 that Obama began regular correspondence with his father while in high school.<sup>8</sup>

Obama told the world just how influential his absent father was in his 1995 political coming-of-age memoir *Dreams from My Father*. In it, he recalled how his mother repeatedly cited his father's "distant authority" in her effort to shape her young son's character and identity. She told him about elder Obama's hard life growing up "poor, in a poor country, in a poor continent" and that "he was diligent and honest, no matter what it cost him."

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That gilded memory involved some serious stretching of the truth. As Obama later learned, his father had not been altogether honest with his mother, failing to tell her that he had another wife back in Africa and later abandoning her when we went to Harvard to pursue a Ph.D. in economics. Whatever his father's failings, "I would follow his example, my mother decided. I had no choice. It was in the genes."<sup>9</sup>

In his fascinating decoding of the Obama enigma, *The Roots of Obama's Rage*, author Dinesh D'Souza presents the father as the key to understanding the son. Handsome, with a deep baritone voice that carried a British accent, Obama, Sr., was an undeniably charismatic and highly intelligent man. He was also deeply flawed. With a taste for strong drink and for women, he was often inebriated and unable to keep himself steadily employed. He fathered eight children by four women and died in 1982 in a drunk-driving accident.

Still, as D'Souza writes, Obama's mother "cultivated in her son Barack, Jr., an almost mystical reverence for his absentee father."<sup>10</sup> The mission of Obama's life, says D'Souza, is to fulfill the dreams he inherited from his father. And he's not alone in saying so. As Sarah Obama, one of the wives of Obama's grandfather, told *Newsweek*, "I look at him and I see all the same things—he has taken everything from his father. The son is realizing everything the father wanted. The dreams of the father are still alive in the son."<sup>11</sup>

Obama bears testimony, as well, to the central role of his father in defining his life purpose. He calls *Dreams from My Father* "the record of a personal, interior journey—a boy's search for his father and through that search a workable meaning for his life as a black American."<sup>12</sup>

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So what are the father's "dreams" that the son has been seeking to fulfill over the past four years, an almost nightmarish time of troubles marked by sluggish economic growth, rising unemployment, and record-breaking federal spending?

The ideological "dream" that animated Obama, Sr., was anti-colonialism, an outlook hostile to the developed world and one widely shared by elites in nations such as Kenya which gained independence from Britain in 1963. Anti-colonialists "were anti-Western and oriented toward national self-determination, but their ideology also contained noticeable strains of Marxism and socialism," writes D'Souza.

The earmarks of anti-colonialism, D'Souza observes, include the beliefs that colonial empires are founded in violence, are racist, steal the subordinated nation's wealth, are led nowadays by the United States, and will not end unless the colonizers are forced out.

All this, D'Souza argues, constitutes a worldview embraced by Obama: "From a very young age and throughout his formative years, Obama learned to see America as a force for global domination and destruction."<sup>13</sup> With his father as guide, he also "grew to perceive the rich as an oppressive class, a kind of neocolonial power within America."<sup>14</sup>

The elder Obama's economic views are revealed in his 1965 paper, "Problems Facing Our Socialism," published in the *East Africa Journal*. In it, Obama calls communal land ownership "one of the best African traditions," favors nationalizing foreign owned firms, says the government has a role in forcing private firms to employ Africans for key roles, and says it is the "government's obligation" to "find

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means by which we can redistribute our economic gains to the benefit of all.”

Obama, Sr., also declares that “the government should tax the rich more so as to generate high tax surpluses” and he toys with the idea of 100 percent taxation:

Theoretically, there is nothing that can stop the government from taxing 100 percent of income so long as the people get benefits from the government commensurate with their income which is taxed.... I do not see why the government cannot tax those who have more and syphon some of these revenues into savings which can be utilized in investment for future development....<sup>15</sup>

It sounds all too familiar. While the son might not say it with the same candor, it's clear from his unguarded exchange with “Joe the Plumber,” his rhetorical bludgeoning of “fat cats” on Wall Street, and his relentless effort to raise taxes on “the rich” that father and son share a common dream.

By means of an “incredible osmosis,” the father “was able to transmit his ideology to his son living in America,” writes D'Souza. The “father's dream has become his dream. It is a dream that, as President, he is imposing with a vengeance on America and the world.”<sup>16</sup>

But however outsized and fundamental the role played by his father in formulating Obama's outlook on life, his mother played a lead role as well. Meet Stanley Ann Dunham.

## 2

# An “Intellectual Rebel”

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### Stanley Ann Dunham: Mother, Unitarian Socialist

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Barack Obama, Sr.’s, starring role in setting the ideological course of Obama’s life from a continent away came in large part because of Obama, Jr.’s, mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, “the dominant figure in my formative years,” Obama said in an interview. “The values she taught me continue to be my touchstone when it comes to how I go about the world of politics.”<sup>17</sup> She was, Obama wrote, a “lonely witness for secular humanism, a soldier for New Deal, Peace Corps, position-paper liberalism.”<sup>18</sup>

Ann Dunham was an 18-year-old University of Hawaii student when she gave birth to Barack Obama in 1961. She divorced his father, Barack Obama, Sr., in 1964 and married Indonesian Lolo Soetoro two years later. She later earned a Ph.D. in anthropology, but died in 1995, at age 52 from ovarian cancer.

An “intellectual rebel,” who blossomed during her teen years on Mercer Island, just outside Seattle, Dunham had a “fledgling beatnik sensibility that would eventually take her around the globe,” according to a *Seattle Times* report that featured the recollections of high school classmates.

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“She touted herself as an atheist, and it was something she’d read about and could argue,” said Dunham’s high school best friend, Maxine Box. “She was always challenging and arguing and comparing. She was already thinking about things that the rest of us hadn’t.”

One teacher, Jim Wichterman, who included Karl Marx and “The Communist Manifesto” in his philosophy course, still had a sharp memory of Dunham 47 years after she graduated.

“As much as a high-school student can, she’d question anything: What’s so good about democracy? What’s so good about capitalism? What’s wrong with communism? What’s good about communism? She had what I call an inquiring mind.”<sup>19</sup>

Those were questions John Stenhouse, chairman of the Mercer Island School Board, could have answered quite well. He testified in 1955 before the House Un-American Activities Subcommittee that he had been a member of the Communist Party.

The classroom instruction of Wichterman and another teacher, Val Foubert, who assigned readings from Margaret Mead on homosexuality, prompted parental outrage and calls for the two teachers’ dismissal. Ann’s parents, Stanley and Madalyn Dunham did not join the protest.

They had already dispensed with the doctrinal confines of their Baptist and Methodist backgrounds and were attending East Shore Unitarian Church, a congregation that offered a great deal more theological and political latitude. Some called it “The Little Red Church on the Hill.”<sup>20</sup> It was a place, the *Chicago Tribune* reported, where the kind of skepticism Stanley practiced and passed on to his daughter Ann



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was welcomed.<sup>21</sup>

Later, in Hawaii, Obama's grandfather or grandmother took him as a young boy to the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu—a hyper-liberal congregation that offered sanctuary to military deserters during the Vietnam War. The church celebrated 50 years of existence in 2003 with T-shirts declaring “Liberal Religion for 50 Years.” The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* filled in the picture:

Activism for peace and human rights causes has characterized the congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu since it was organized 50 years ago. Members were instrumental in founding the League of Women Voters and activating a local branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. It offered sanctuary to servicemen who went AWOL to avoid being sent to Vietnam. It helped launch the Save Our Constitution effort to fight the constitutional amendment on same-sex marriages....

After leaving Hawaii to work at the Unitarian seminary in Berkeley, Calif., (Church co-founder Rosemary) Mattson and her husband were active in the international peace movement. She escorted more than 25 tours of Americans to the former Soviet Union for people-to-people experience.<sup>22</sup>

The church was the site of Madelyn Dunham's memorial service in 2008.

The Dunham's links to left-wing Unitarian churches in Washington and Hawaii fits with Obama's description of his grandfather as someone

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who “had come to consider himself as something of a freethinker—bohemian, even. That outlook, transmitted to daughter and to the grandson he helped raise, led him to “enroll the family in the local Unitarian Universalist congregation; he liked the idea that Unitarians drew on the scriptures of all the great religions (‘It’s like you get five religions in one,’ he would say).”<sup>23</sup>

And that freethinking attitude led Stanley Dunham to strike up a relationship with black journalist and Communist Party member Frank Marshall Davis, a Stalinist on whom the FBI compiled a book-length file. This man became a friend and counselor to young Barack.

### 3

## "A Poet Named Frank"

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Frank Marshall Davis,  
Communist Mentor

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Barack Obama gently introduces readers to a man he calls "Frank" in his 1995 memoir, *Dreams from My Father*. Frank, we're told, in Obama's circumspect version, was an elderly gentleman who "had enjoyed some modest notoriety once, [and] was a contemporary of writer Richard Wright and poet and playwright Langston Hughes during his years in Chicago."<sup>24</sup> Wright was a Communist Party member who gave up his party membership in 1942; Hughes was a communist sympathizer and admirer of Stalin.

What we're not told in Obama's lyrical and factually deficient account of his early life is that Frank, his adolescent counselor, was Frank Marshall Davis, a man whose Communist Party membership and engagement with a long list of communist front groups generated a 601-page FBI file over 19 years of surveillance. And a man who denounced author Richard Wright for exposing the party in the classic work, *The God That Failed*—something Davis blasted as an "act of treason."<sup>25</sup>

Davis' communist involvement may date as far back as 1931, but he was definitely linked to numerous Communist front groups in the late 1930s, including the National Negro Congress, the League of American

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Writers, the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, and the Civil Rights Congress. <sup>26</sup>

He joined the Communist Party USA in 1943 while working in Chicago as managing editor and, later, executive editor of the *Associated Negro Press*, a news service for black newspapers. At a time when millions had already perished under Soviet communism, Davis celebrated the land of Lenin and Stalin, writing in 1947:

I admire Russia for wiping out an economic system which permitted a handful of rich to exploit and beat gold from the millions of plain people.... As one who believes in freedom and democracy for all, I honor the Red nation.

Davis, whose Communist Party USA card number was 47544, moved to Hawaii in 1948 with his second wife, Helen Canfield Davis, also a Communist Party member (CP # 62109). They made the move at the suggestion of Davis' friend Paul Robeson, an American celebrity and Communist Party member who was star-struck by Stalin. After visiting Russia, Robeson offered a glowing report of life in the worker's paradise, even defending Stalin's purges. "From what I have already seen of the workings of the Soviet Government," Robeson said, "I can only say that anybody who lifts his hand against it ought to be shot!" <sup>27</sup>

Once in Hawaii, Davis began writing a column, "Frankly Speaking," for a recently launched communist weekly newspaper. Historian Paul Kengor has reviewed those half-century old columns and writes that they "flawlessly parroted official Soviet propaganda."

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Davis also found time in the Aloha state to take pictures of the Hawaii coastline, using a camera with a telescopic lens, according to the FBI. Hawaii's status as a mid-Pacific outpost of U.S. military power made it of great importance to the Communist Party USA and its minders in Moscow. The FBI report states that:

Informant stated that DAVIS spent much of his time in this activity. He said this was the third different occasion DAVIS had been observed photographing shorelines and beachfronts. Informant advised that it did not appear he was photographing any particular objects. <sup>28</sup>

This “poet” and man of “modest notoriety” became a counselor to Obama during his formative adolescent years. As Kengor writes, “a mentor of the current president of the United States was a Communist — and not only a party member, but an actual propagandist for Stalin’s USSR....”

The influence of Davis on Obama was not inconsequential. In his new book, *The Communist — Frank Marshall Davis: The Untold Story of Barack Obama’s Mentor*, Kengor notes that Obama devotes 2,500 words in *Dreams* to Davis, who “surfaces repeatedly from start to finish, from Hawaii to Los Angeles to Chicago to Germany to Kenya ... from the 1970s to the 1980s to the 1990s.” <sup>29</sup>

Obama’s grandfather, Stanley Dunham, introduced Obama to Davis in 1970, according to Dawna Weatherly-Williams, a friend of the two men. At the time, Davis already “knew Stan real well,” Weatherly-Williams told the *Telegraph* newspaper. “They’d play Scrabble and drink and crack jokes and argue.”

“Stan had been promising to bring Barry by because

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we all had that in common—Frank’s kids were half-white, Stan’s grandson was half-black and my son was half-black. We all had that in common and we all really enjoyed it. We got a real kick out of reality.”<sup>30</sup>

Maya Soetoro-Ng, Obama’s half-sister, said her grandfather saw Davis as “a point of connection, a bridge if you will, to the larger African-American experience for my brother.”<sup>31</sup>

Obama relates two occasions when the elderly man shared his “hard-earned knowledge” with young Barack. After a confrontation erupted between his grandparents over his grandmother’s fear of a black panhandler—something Stanley Dunham thought rooted in racism—teen Obama made his way over to Frank’s house to sort it all out.

After sharing whiskey together, Davis delivered an oracle about the fixity of the racial divide—and the legitimacy of black hate. “What I’m trying to tell you is, your grandma’s right to be scared,” Davis says. “...She understands that black people have a reason to hate. That’s just how it is. For your sake, I wish it were otherwise. But it’s not. So you might as well get used to it.”<sup>32</sup>

At their last get together, just before Obama left for Occidental College in Los Angeles, Davis warned Obama not to abandon his race by letting college turn him into a “well-trained, well-paid nigger.”<sup>33</sup>

“Understand something, boy,” Davis told Obama. “You’re not going to college to get educated. You’re going there to get trained. They’ll train you to want what you don’t need. They’ll train you to manipulate words so they don’t mean anything anymore. They’ll train you to forget what it is that you already know.

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They'll train you so good, you'll start believing what they tell you about equal opportunity and the American way and all that shit." <sup>34</sup>

Obama took those words to heart. "To avoid being mistaken for a sellout, I chose my friends carefully," Obama writes in *Dreams*. "The more politically active black students. The foreign students. The Chicanos. The Marxist professors and structural feminists and punk-rock performance poets. We smoked cigarettes and wore leather jackets. At night, in the dorms, we discussed neocolonialism, Franz Fanon, Eurocentrism, and patriarchy." <sup>35</sup>

Guided by Frank, Obama determined not to let college compromise his principles. It's now very clear that he more than succeeded.

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## 4

# “Ardent Marxist” in 1980

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## John Drew and the College Years

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The story of Obama’s college days, like much else that threatens to unveil the truth about who he is, is still largely in the shadows. He attended Occidental College in Los Angeles from 1979-81 and transferred to Columbia University in New York after his sophomore year, graduating in 1983.

Obama has kept his college transcripts under wraps and rejected media requests to detail his life at Columbia. The *New York Times* reported in 2007 that Obama “declined repeated requests to talk about his New York years, release his Columbia transcript or identify even a single fellow student, co-worker, roommate or friend from those years.”<sup>36</sup>

While not much is known about his time at Columbia, at least one Occidental graduate has stepped forward with a striking account of young Barry’s well-developed Marxist worldview as a sophomore at the small, prestigious liberal arts school.

“Obama was already an ardent Marxist when I met him in the fall of 1980,” claims John C. Drew, Ph.D., who met Obama while visiting his girlfriend at Occidental. “I know it’s incendiary to say this,” he told author Paul Kengor, but Obama “was basically a Marxist-Leninist.”<sup>37</sup>

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Then pursuing graduate studies at Cornell, Drew was a 1979 Occidental graduate and a Marxist who in 1976 started what became the Democratic Student Socialist Alliance at Occidental.

His then-girlfriend, Caroline Boss, a committed Marxist, DSA member, and anti-apartheid activist, told Drew, when he visited her around Christmas 1980, that Obama and his roommate Mohammed Hasan Chandoo were “on our side.” Drew remembers Boss telling Obama, “You’ve worked with us.... You’ve been at our DSA meetings. You’ve been active in the anti-apartheid movement.”

A few days after Christmas 1980 Drew joined his girlfriend, her parents, Obama, and Chandoo at a restaurant where the talk turned to politics. Drew remembers Obama’s emphatic assertion that revolution was imminent and inevitable. “Obama repeatedly used the phrase, ‘When the revolution comes...,’” Drew writes. “‘There’s going to be a revolution,’ Obama said, ‘we need to be organized and grow the movement.’ In Obama’s view, our role must be to educate others so that we might usher in more quickly this inevitable revolution.”<sup>38</sup>

Obama himself testifies to his growing political engagement, writing in *Dreams* that he began, by his sophomore year, to protest apartheid in South Africa and joined the call for corporations to divest from South Africa:

It had started as something of a lark, I suppose, part of the radical pose my friends and I sought to maintain, a subconscious end run around issues closer to home. But as the months passed and I found myself drawn into a larger role—contacting representatives of the African National Congress to speak on

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campus, drafting letters to the faculty, printing up flyers, arguing strategy—I noticed that people had begun to listen to my opinions.<sup>39</sup>

Obama shared his opinions in his maiden political speech, a two-minute affair that ended abruptly with a bit of contrived political theater as two white students tackled Obama and hustled him off-stage—a ham-handed demonstration of white racism in South Africa. That first speech took place at a divestment rally put on by Students for Economic Democracy (SED), a group founded by former student radical Tom Hayden which favored public ownership and control of the economy. While no evidence has been found to show Obama joined SED, his close involvement in the disinvestment campaign—not to mention his Marxist self-identification when talking with Drew—suggests he agreed and aligned with their goals and knew its members and leaders.

Obama told *Occidental's* magazine in 2004 that it was his “involvement in the South African divestment movement at Occidental that first set him on his current path. ‘I got into politics at Occidental.... I made a conscious decision to go into public policy.’”<sup>40</sup>

While not much is known about Obama's life while at Columbia University from 1981-83, it's clear that his leftward political course did not alter. One telling item that has surfaced from Obama's time at Columbia, what the *New York Times* called a “lost chapter” in Obama's life, is an anti-war article he wrote for a school newspaper on March 10, 1983. In “Breaking the War Mentality,” Obama took issue with “the relentless, often silent spread of militarism in the country” and praised a couple of anti-war student groups which “are throwing their weight into shifting America off the dead-end track,” of the nation's “distorted national priorities.”

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Obama signaled in the article that his beef with American society was more fundamental than mere matters of war and peace. “One is forced to wonder,” he wrote, “whether disarmament or arms control issues, severed from economic and political issues, might be another instance of focusing on the symptoms of a problem instead of the disease itself.”<sup>41</sup>

The “disease,” in Obama’s view, was America’s social and economic injustice, a pathology he wanted to cure with his 1983 decision to become a community organizer. It was, he told friends, the pathway to change: “Change in the White House, where Reagan and his minions were carrying on their dirty deeds. Change in the Congress, compliant and corrupt. Change in the mood of the country, manic and self-absorbed. Change won’t come from the top, I would say. Change will come from a mobilized grass roots.”<sup>42</sup>

Obama doesn’t tell us exactly when in 1983 he decided to become an organizer, but one event that precipitated or confirmed Obama’s career choice came in the spring of 1983 when he attended the Cooper Union Socialist Scholars Conference. This confab on the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, opened with an address from Frances Fox Piven, a leading theorist of community organizing, who praised Marx as a man who “helped people around the globe to struggle to make history.”<sup>43</sup> Piven instructed the socialist faithful that “We must stand within the intellectual and political tradition Marx bequeathed.”<sup>44</sup>

Obama, it seems clear, took those words to heart, setting his sights on a career in community organizing and finding his way, two years later, to Chicago where he went to work under the tutelage of disciples of the master organizer himself, Saul Alinsky.

## 5

# Agitator Extraordinaire

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### Saul Alinsky, the Father of Community Organizing

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It is one thing for an Obama critic to spotlight the president's many links to the far-left flank of American politics. It's another when a Marxist academic and self-professed Obamaphile makes the same point, in calm and measure cadences. The late Manning Marable, a professor at Columbia and a man who was at one time "probably the best known black Marxist in the country," according to Marxist intellectual Cornel West, issued this appraisal of Obama and his coterie of Chicago friends: <sup>45</sup>

What makes Obama different is that he has also been a community organiser. He has read left literature, including my works, and *he understands what socialism is*. A lot of the people working with him are, indeed, socialists with backgrounds in the Communist Party or as independent Marxists. There are a lot of people like that in Chicago who have worked with him for years. <sup>46</sup>

Marable declined to name those people in an interview with Aaron Klein, co-author of *The Manchurian Candidate*, but others have identified the leading lights of the Windy City socialist network that surrounded Obama from his arrival in 1985 as

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a community organizer.

First on the list is agitator extraordinaire Saul Alinsky.

Saul Alinsky died in 1972 when, as President Obama might say, Obama was only ten years old. But the influence of Alinsky on Obama is profound and lasting. He was trained in the Alinsky method by community organizers who, in some cases, had been taught by the master himself.

Obama was, it seems, a keen student. Alinsky's son, David, enthused over Obama's mastery of his father's method in 2008 after the grandiose Democratic National Convention, replete with Roman columns and a stadium setting:

All the elements were present: the individual stories told by real people of their situations and hardships, the packed-to-the rafters crowd, the crowd's chanting of key phrases and names, the action on the spot of texting and phoning to show instant support and commitment to jump into the political battle, the rallying selections of music, the setting of the agenda by the power people. The Democratic National Convention had all the elements of the perfectly organized event, Saul Alinsky style.

Barack Obama's training in Chicago by the great community organizers is showing its effectiveness. It is an amazingly powerful format, and the method of my late father always works to get the message out and get the supporters on board. When executed meticulously and thoughtfully, it is a powerful strategy

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for initiating change and making it really happen. Obama learned his lesson well.<sup>47</sup>

Labeled “this country’s leading hell-raiser” by *The Nation* magazine, Saul Alinsky invented community organizing in the 1930s, launching his community organizing training institute, the Industrial Areas Foundation, in 1939 with help from millionaire Marshall Field. Trained as a sociologist, Alinsky sought to imitate the work of labor organizers, but in a community setting. He said the community organizer’s task is to overthrow the existing order.

“[W]e are concerned,” Alinsky remarked in *Rules for Radicals*, “with how to create mass organizations to seize power and give it to the people.... We are talking about a mass power organization which will change the world.... This means revolution.”<sup>48</sup>

Reaching that goal meant fomenting discontentment and rage in order to mobilize people for action. “The organizer dedicated to changing the life of a particular community must first rub raw the resentments of the people of the community; fan the latent hostilities of many of the people to the point of overt oppression.”<sup>49</sup>

The next step is to mobilize for political power by pitting people against one another along economic lines. As Alinsky tells readers of *Rules for Radicals*, his “primer for realistic radicals,” “*The Prince* was written by Machiavelli for the Haves on how to hold power. *Rules for Radicals* is written for the Have-Nots on how to take it away.”<sup>50</sup>

Boycotts, sit-ins, rent strikes and other direct action methods to confront and/or embarrass the “Haves” were Alinsky’s stock-in-trade. And he wasn’t afraid

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to employ creative and unconventional methods.

He once threatened a “fart-in” at a Rochester Philharmonic concert in order to get attention for his group’s demands. Members of FIGHT (Freedom, Independence (later Integration), God, Honor, Today) were told to eat platefuls of baked beans and attend a concert where, as author Nicholas von Hoffman wrote, “they would sit expelling gaseous vapors with such noisy velocity as to compete with the woodwinds.”<sup>51</sup>

Alinsky never brought that tactic to the Windy City, but he did take things a step further, threatening a “piss-in” at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport to force the city to discuss his demands. Had the city not agreed to talk, Alinsky would have deployed African Americans to occupy urinals and toilets at the airport to the discomfiture and distress of travelers.

It’s worth remembering that Alinsky dedicated *Rules for Radicals* to “the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom — Lucifer.”<sup>52</sup>

For Alinsky, community organizing is all about creating conflict. “When those prominent in the status quo turn and label you an ‘agitator’ they are completely correct, for that is, in one word, your function—to agitate to the point of conflict.”<sup>53</sup>

Agitation was where Obama excelled, according to Mike Kruglik, one of Obama’s neighborhood organizing mentors. Obama was the best student Kruglik ever had, claims journalist Ryan Lizza:

[Obama] was a natural, the undisputed master of agitation, who could engage a room full of



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recruiting targets in a rapid-fire Socratic dialogue, nudging them to admit that they were not living up to their own standards.... He could be aggressive and confrontational. With probing, sometimes personal questions, he would pinpoint the source of pain in their lives, tearing down their egos just enough before dangling a carrot of hope that they could make things better.<sup>54</sup>

And, as wife Michelle Obama, told the media in 1996, her husband brought the techniques of community organizing into politics. “Barack is not a politician first and foremost,” she said. “He’s a community activist exploring the viability of politics to make change.”<sup>55</sup>

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## 6

# Barack's Community Organizing Mentors

Alinsky never joined the Communist Party USA, nor did he claim the socialist label. He was, however, a revolutionary who incited anger along class lines as a lever to force change. Those who follow his method today likewise largely reject ideological classification, but that doesn't change the fact, says Kurtz, that "Community organizing is a largely socialist profession." Instead of claiming the socialist brand, he writes, "America's community organizers have adopted a deliberately stealthy posture," hiding behind popular movements and posing as "pragmatic problem solvers" even as they advance step-by-step toward a socialist future. "Barack Obama's colleagues and mentors were some of the smartest and most influential stealth-socialist community organizers in the country," writes Kurtz.<sup>56</sup> Let's meet several who mentored America's community-organizer-in-chief.

### **The South Side Mentor: Jerry Kellman, Bringing Social Justice To Black Churches**

Alinsky disciple Jerry Kellman hired Obama in 1985 to reach out to churches on Chicago's south side as part of the Developing Communities Project. Kellman's goal, as executive director of DCP, was to "use the 'social justice' teachings of leftwing Catholicism to bring radical politics to black churches."<sup>57</sup> Kellman hired Obama to get past

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racial and cultural barriers that kept Kellman and other white organizers from gaining the confidence of black pastors.

A long-time leftist who jokes that he “went to the University of Wisconsin to major in student protesting,”<sup>58</sup> Kellman learned community organizing at Alinsky’s Industrial Areas Foundation after he arrived in Chicago in 1970. He remains active within Chicago’s progressive community and close to Obama, who wrote, “To Jerry, a friend and a mentor,” In Kellman’s copy of *Dreams from My Father*.

Jodi Kantor, author of *The Obamas*, recalled in an interview a 2009 White House Christmas party encounter between Obama and Kellman...

...*The Obamas* often don’t mingle freely - they often just stand behind the rope and reach out to shake hands but he sees Jerry Kellman, his old community organizing boss, and he’s so happy to see him he reaches across and pulls him in. And Obama says, “*I’m still organizing.*” It was a stunning moment and when [Kellman] told me the story, it had echoes of what Valerie Jarrett had told me once - “The senator still thinks of himself as a community organizer.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Alinsky’s “Best Disciple”: Gregory Galluzzo, The Ruthless Organizer**

When the two were in Iowa in 2006 or 2007, Obama reportedly put an arm around Gregory Galluzzo, a former Jesuit priest and long-time community organizer, and credited him for the speed with which his presidential campaign launched its grass-roots operation. Galluzzo, who played a role

in bringing Obama to Chicago in 1985 and served as a mentor for Obama, says Obama's election was "like a son winning an office."<sup>60</sup>

Galluzzo has written that he "met with Barack on a regular basis as he incorporated the Developing Communities Project, as he moved the organization into action and as he developed the leadership structure for the organization. He would write beautiful and brilliant weekly reports about his work and the people he was engaging."<sup>61</sup>

Galluzzo calls himself the "best disciple" of Alinsky, who died in 1972 just after Galluzzo arrived in Chicago. With his wife, Mary Gonzalez, Galluzzo founded in 1980 the United Neighborhood Organization of Chicago (UNO), an "in your face" group that tried to bring community organizing to Chicago's Hispanic neighborhoods. He later led the Gamaliel Foundation, which provides leadership training in community organizing and has established a network of 18 affiliates nationwide.

Stanley Kurtz, author of *Radical-in-Chief*, thinks he knows why Obama didn't identify his organizing mentors by name in *Dreams*, using the pseudonym Marty Kaufmann for Jerry Kellman and obscuring the role played by Galluzzo, "once the head of the most aggressive and controversial community organization in Chicago." Acknowledging Galluzzo in 1995, when *Dreams* was first published, "would have been a bit like calling yourself a protégé of ACORN founder Wade Rathke today," writes Kurtz.<sup>62</sup>

Rey Lopez-Calderone, a former Gamaliel Foundation community organizer, gave an insider's perspective on Galluzzo's confrontational approach to organizing. He told *Foundation Watch*, a publication of the

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Capital Research Institute, that “Galluzzo told me that he wanted organizers to be tough bastards who could build power like the Conquistadors.”

Galluzzo had a seminar with a segment titled, “Walking the Edge of Immorality,” in which trainees were taught to be “ruthless,” Lopez-Calderone said. “It talked about how, if people are getting in the way of what you want to achieve as an organizer, you should be willing to push those people out of your way,” he recalled. Galluzzo repeatedly stressed in the seminar that “the ends justify the means,” said Lopez-Calderone. “The idea was to get people to make shady decisions in order to build power.”<sup>63</sup>

### **The Community Organizing Socialist John McKnight, Mentor In Anti-Capitalist Organizing**

John McKnight is a leftist academic, activist, and another of Barack Obama’s neighborhood organizing mentors. A former Illinois director of the American Civil Liberties Union, he is co-founder of the Center for Urban Affairs Policy Research at Northwestern University, where he is now professor emeritus. McKnight has expertise in both community organizing and health policy. He has been a Gamaliel Foundation Board member and served, as did Dr. Jeremiah Wright and Father Michael Pfleger, on the advisory board of a youth counseling program launched by Obama in 1987.

McKnight also recommended Obama to Harvard Law School. Speaking to a small audience, McKnight recalled how Obama had said, “You’re the only professor I know,” when asking for a letter of recommendation. McKnight added, jocularly, but also curiously, “I think he didn’t do

too well in college.”<sup>64</sup>

McKnight co-authored a 1984 paper likely read by Obama that advocates a new strategy to lift organizer’s sights above small-ball skirmishes with city hall or local businesses to actions targeted at restructuring the economy. Using the Community Reinvestment Act, which forces lending institutions to make “sub-prime loans” to high credit-risk customers, as a model, McKnight and his co-author John Kretzmann argued for burdening other industries with CRA-like requirements as a means to redistribute private wealth and, presumably, “achieve economic justice.” By distorting housing lending decisions CRA had a role in the 2008 economic crisis. However, McKnight wants the same kind of law applied across the economy, with predictable and catastrophic consequences.

Author Stanley Kurtz, a close student of the Obama network, observes that:

McKnight and Kretzmann want to impose CRA-like redistributive constraints on a whole range of industries. For example, they favor laws that would give community organizers a place on corporate boards and regulatory agencies, thereby preventing businesses from leaving a community at will. Just as ACORN inserted itself into America’s banking system through CRA, McKnight and Kretzmann want organizers to press for laws that would give them influence over the entire system of production. This movement to place constraints on capitalism “from below” was the strategy favored by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in the eighties. This socialist vision, I argue, inspired Obama to become a community organizer. He learned how to go

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about it from his mentor John McKnight.<sup>65</sup>

McKnight's socialist impulses are also displayed in his health care policy work. The co-founder with Dr. Quentin Young of the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, he has long championed a single-payer health care system. *Health & Medicine*, a magazine published by the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group in the 1980s is "filled with socialist themes," notes Kurtz.

The Winter 1985 issue speaks favorably about health care under the Marxist Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Also in that issue, Quentin Young interviews McKnight on Sweden's welfare state, a topic on which McKnight has expertise. McKnight notes that Sweden's 52 percent tax rate (add to that its 15 percent national sales tax) probably maxes out the taxpayer's capacity to pay. A solution favored by leftists in Sweden to get even more out of taxpayers is to tax the time of its citizens, requiring them to provide manual labor in state institutions, a policy that would also put an upper limit on the amount of time a Swede could devote to working for his own private profit.

Young and McKnight are not disturbed by a proposal that amounts to slave labor. While they "acknowledge the radicalism of this proposal," Kurtz writes, "they clearly admire the Swedish system and are at least open to the idea of compulsory citizen labor. Such are the values of Obama's organizing mentors and political collaborators."<sup>66</sup>



# 7

## Radical Unrepentant Terrorist

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Bill Ayers, Obama's Political Partner

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Obama likely first met unrepentant domestic terrorist Bill Ayers in 1988 when both were working on school reform in Chicago, a concern on which the two men also collaborated from 1995 to 2001 when they dished out more than \$100 million as leaders of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge.

To get the rest of the story on Team Obama, order the 140-page printed resource by visiting [Grassfire.com](http://Grassfire.com).

*Learn about Obama's connection to far-left radicals like Bill Ayers (Barack's political partner), Alice Palmer (the Soviet-loving predecessor), Jeremiah Wright (the radical pastor), Father Pfleger ("dear friend" and racial divider), Louis Farrakhan (the anti-Semitic power broker), Rahid Khalidi (Barack's PLO babysitter) and others who continue to shape the mind of Obama.*

*Two copies in appreciation of a contribution of any amount — while supplies last.*

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