

Revolution you can believe in

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A portrait of Melanie Phillips, a woman with short grey hair, wearing glasses and a red top, resting her chin on her hand.

Melanie Phillips

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In her game-changing convention speech, Sarah Palin took a swipe at Obama for having been nothing more in his life than a ‘community organiser’.

This prompted the Obama campaign to issue a pained defence of community organisation as a way of promoting social change ‘from the bottom up’. The impression is that community organising is a worthy if woolly and ultimately ineffectual grassroots activity. This is to miss something of the greatest importance: that in the world of Barack Obama, community organisers are a key strategy in a different game altogether; and the name of that game is revolutionary Marxism.

The seditious role of the community organiser was developed by an extreme left intellectual called Saul Alinsky. He was a radical Chicago activist who, by the time he died in 1972, had had a profound influence on the highest levels of the Democratic party. Alinsky was a ‘transformational Marxist’ in the mould of Antonio Gramsci, who promoted the strategy of a ‘long march through the institutions’ by capturing the culture and turning it inside out as the most effective means of overturning western society. In similar vein, Alinsky condemned the New Left for alienating the general public by its demonstrations and outlandish appearance. The revolution had to be carried out through stealth and deception. Its proponents had to cultivate an image of centrism and pragmatism. A master of infiltration, Alinsky wooed Chicago mobsters and Wall Street financiers alike. And successive Democratic politicians fell under his spell.

His creed was set out in his book ‘*Rules for Radicals*’ – a book he dedicated to Lucifer, whom he called the ‘first radical’. It was Alinsky for whom ‘change’ was his

mantra. And by 'change', he meant a Marxist revolution achieved by slow, incremental, Machiavellian means which turned society inside out. This had to be done through systematic deception, winning the trust of the naively idealistic middle class by using the language of morality to conceal an agenda designed to destroy it. And the way to do this, he said, was through 'people's organisations'.

Community organisers would mobilise direct action by the oppressed masses against their capitalist oppressors. In [FrontPageMagazine.Com](#) John Perazzo writes:

These People's Organizations were to be composed largely of discontented individuals who believed that society was replete with injustices that prevented them from being able to live satisfying lives. Such organizations, Alinsky advised, should not be imported from the outside into a community, but rather should be staffed by locals who, with some guidance from trained radical organizers, could set their own agendas.

The installment of local leaders as the top-level officers of People's Organizations helped give the organizations credibility and authenticity in the eyes of the community. This tactic closely paralleled the longtime Communist Party strategy of creating front organizations that ostensibly were led by non-communist fellow-travelers, but which were in fact controlled by Party members behind the scenes...

Alinsky viewed as supremely important the role of the organizer, or master manipulator, whose guidance was responsible for setting the agendas of the People's Organization... Alinsky laid out a set of basic principles to guide the actions and decisions of radical organizers and the People's Organizations they established. The organizer, he said, 'must first rub raw the resentments of the people; fan the latent hostilities to the point of overt expression. He must search out controversy and issues, rather than avoid them, for unless there is controversy people are not concerned enough to act.'^[40] The organizer's function, he added, was 'to agitate to the point of conflict'^[41] and 'to maneuver and bait the establishment so that it will publicly attack him as a "dangerous enemy."^[42] 'The word 'enemy,' said Alinsky, 'is sufficient to put the organizer on the side of the people';^[43] i.e., to convince members of the community that he is so eager to advocate on their behalf, that he has willingly opened himself up to condemnation and derision.

Obama's connection with Alinsky, whom he never met but whom he reportedly idolised, was through two bodies promoting the Alinsky model of community organisation, ACORN and the Gamaliel Foundation. John Perazzo again:

Obama was **trained** by the Alinsky-founded Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in Chicago and worked for an affiliate of the **Gamaliel Foundation**, whose *modus operandi* for the creation of 'a more just and democratic society' is rooted firmly in the Alinsky method. As *The Nation* magazine **puts it**, 'Obama worked in the organizing tradition of Saul Alinsky, who made Chicago the birthplace of modern community organizing...' In fact, for several years Obama himself **taught workshops** on the Alinsky method.

But Obama brought a special slant to Alinsky's radicalism. Far from being – as he has been painted – a 'post-racial' politician, Obama's politics are all about promoting the cause of black people and achieving 'reparations' from white society (a perspective through which his whole welfare redistribution agenda is framed). Accordingly, he saw his three-year role as a community organiser in Chicago as mobilising black people for action against their white oppressors. Finding himself hampered in creating an activist network among black churches, he decided to join such a church to give himself more credibility. That's why he joined the infamous black-power Trinity Church of Christ – a move, it seems, that had less to do with any spiritual quest than as a radical tactic for mobilising the black proletariat.

According to Stanley Kurtz in [National Review](#) (subscription required), as a trainer for Gamaliel and ACORN Obama used his influence to secure a major increase in funding for both groups. Kurtz writes of Gamaliel, one of the least known yet most influential national umbrella groups for church-based community organizers:

Gamaliel specializes in ideological stealth, and Obama, a master student of Gamaliel strategy, shows disturbing signs of being a sub rosa radical himself. Obama's legislative tactics, as well as his persistent professions of non-ideological pragmatism, appear to be inspired by his radical mentors' most sophisticated tactics. Not only has Obama studied, taught, and apparently absorbed stealth techniques from radical groups like Gamaliel and ACORN, but in his position as a board member of Chicago's supposedly nonpartisan Woods Fund, he quietly funneled money to his radical allies -- at the very moment he most needed their support to boost his political career.

Kurtz also quotes Rutgers political scientist Heidi Swarts who, in her book *Organizing Urban America: Secular and Faith-based Progressive Movements*, lays out the strategy of stealth:

Swarts calls groups like ACORN and (especially) Gamaliel 'invisible actors,' hidden from public view because they often prefer to downplay their efforts, because they work locally, and because scholars and journalists pay greater attention to movements with national profiles (like the Sierra Club or the Christian Coalition). Congregation-based community organizations like Gamaliel, by contrast, are often invisible even at the local level. A newspaper might report on a demonstration led by a local minister or priest, for example, without noticing that the clergyman in question is part of the Gamaliel network. 'Though often hidden from view,' says Swarts, 'leaders have intentionally and strategically organized these movements that appear to well up and erupt from below.'

Although Gamaliel and ACORN have significantly different tactics and styles, Swarts notes that their political goals and ideologies are broadly similar. Both groups press the state for economic redistribution. The tactics of Gamaliel and ACORN have been shaped in a 'post-Alinsky' era of welfare reform and conservative resurgence, posing a severe challenge to those who wish to expand the welfare state. The answer these activists have hit upon, says Swarts, is to work incrementally in urban areas, while

deliberately downplaying the far-Left ideology that stands behind their carefully targeted campaigns.

To avoid seeming like radicals or 'hippies left over from the sixties,' Gamaliel organizers are careful to wear conventional clothing and conduct themselves with dignity, even formality. Since liberal social movements tend to come off as naïve and idealistic, Gamaliel organizers make a point of presenting their ideas as practical, pragmatic, and down-to-earth. When no one else is listening, Gamaliel organizers may rail at 'racism,' 'sexism,' and 'oppressive corporate systems,' but when speaking to their blue-collar followers, they describe their plans as 'common sense solutions for working families.'

If anyone should doubt Obama's debt to Saul Alinsky, they might ponder this encomium from no less an authority than Alinsky's own son. In a [letter](#) to the Boston Globe, L. David Alinsky wrote of his father's influence at the Democratic Convention:

All the elements were present: the individual stories told by real people of their situation 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.

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 for initiating change and making it really happen. Obama learned his lesson well.

Obama's questionable links to various radicals are now well-known: the black power racists Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Fr. Michael Pfleger, the former Weather Underground terrorism supporters Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dorn. On CNN's [Glenn Beck](#) show a few days ago Jerome Corsi, author of *Obama Nation*, observed:

Obama began his career, his coming out party in 1995, and Ayers and Bernadine Dorn's home. And then for, you know, some 20 years, Obama has been working with Ayers, certainly since 1995, on a series of foundations: the Annenberg Foundation and the Woods Foundation. The boards of directors together, or in the Annenberg Foundation, Ayers created it, and Obama was on it. And together they spent the money of these foundations to implement their radical socialist agenda.

As EM Forster wrote in a somewhat different context, *only connect*.

When Hillary Clinton was fighting Obama for the Democratic candidacy, her camp implied that the party would be making a terrible mistake in selecting Obama because, unlike centrist Hillary, he was a left-winger. But Hillary is an even more fervent Alinsky acolyte. In their book *The Shadow Party*, David Horowitz and Glenn Poe recount how Hillary first met Alinsky through a left-wing church group to which she belonged in high school, and stayed close to him until his death. Indeed, so

impressed was she with his beliefs that she wrote a 75-page salute to him in her senior thesis at Wellesley College in 1969, which contained excerpts of the not-yet published *Rules for Radicals*. She wrote:

If the ideals Alinsky espouses were actualized, the result would be social revolution. Ironically, this is not a disjunctive projection if considered in the tradition of Western democratic theory. In the first chapter it was pointed out that Alinsky is regarded by many as the proponent of a dangerous socio/political philosophy. As such, he has been feared -- just as Eugene Debs or Walt Whitman or Martin Luther King has been feared, because each embraced the most radical of political faiths -- democracy.

That's not democracy as we know it, more a Marxist conception of people power. On FrontPage, Perazzo writes:

During her senior year, Hillary was offered a job by Alinsky but chose instead to enrol at Yale Law School. Alinsky's teachings, however, would remain close to her heart throughout her adult life. *According to a Washington Post report*, 'As first lady, Clinton occasionally lent her name to projects endorsed by the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Alinsky group that had offered her a job in 1968. She raised money and attended two events organized by the Washington Interfaith Network, an IAF affiliate.'

Alinsky was a radical straight out of the Gramsci playbook. In both America and Britain, Gramsci's acolytes have been conducting a decades-long march through the institutions. In Britain, they have substantially achieved their aim of subverting western morality and changing the face of British society. No political party stands against this. In the US, they have made huge inroads but haven't yet won. With Palin on one side and Obama on the other, it is now clear that this US presidential election has taken the culture war to the gates of the White House itself.