

Fundamentally Transforming America

The Left's Attack on America

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Fundamentally Transforming America

We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America. - Barack Obama prior to the 2008 election

As socialists of the Democratic Left, we stand for fundamental change, for socialism, and for every immediate gain which can be achieved by the largely non-socialist mass movements in which we loyally and enthusiastically participate: unions, minority and women's organizations, the student movement, the liberal wing of the Democratic Party among them. We do not compartmentalize the two aspects of our commitment, segregating vision and practical politics from one another. It is precisely because we are socialists that we feel we have a unique contribution to make to the democratic Left, showing how increments of change must be turned toward structural transformation of the society itself. - From the founding statement of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, October 1973¹

On March 17, 1998, Elaine Donnelly, the founder of the Center for Military Readiness, presented testimony concerning co-ed basic training before the House National Security Sub-committee of Personnel. "In 1992, the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, on which I served, found that gender-integrated basic training was a failure," Donnelly said. "After a five year trial, the experiment was ended in 1982 for two basic reasons: Men were not attaining their full potential because they were not being physically challenged enough, and women were suffering injuries at far greater rates than men."²

"That should have settled the issue," Donnelly continued. "But in 1994, civilian Pentagon appointees led by Army Secretary Togo D. West, Jr., and Sara Lister, then-Assistant Secretary for Man-

power and Reserve Affairs, decided to revive the failed experiment.”

While the Army, Navy, and Air Force moved to co-ed basic training, the Marine Corps refused to scrap its traditions and go along with the rest of the armed services. Lister, upset with the Marines’ recalcitrance, attacked the Marines at an October 26, 1997, conference. “The Marines are extremists,” she said. “Whenever you have extremists, you have some risks of total disconnection with society. And that’s a little dangerous.” Three weeks later, Lister was forced to resign.³

The word “tradition” comes from the Latin *traditio*, which means “delivery, surrender, handing down.” “Tradition” is defined as “the passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, esp. by oral communication.”

Those on the left, such as Lister, often characterize those who hold on to traditions as “extremists.” In the case of Marines, they have been handing down traditions generation after generation since the founding of the Marine Corps on November 10, 1775. However, who is *really* the extremist?

In 1964, Paul A. Sexson, an assistant to Senator Barry Goldwater, and Stephen B. Miles, Jr. published *The Challenge of Conservatism* and outlined the differences between conservatives and liberals. “‘Extreme,’ as the lexicographer points out, is derived from *exterus*, meaning ‘foreign,’” Sexson and Miles wrote. “The extremist is one who sacrifices his native common sense and institutions, as well as the traditions and conventions of his society, in the service of emotional orgy or intellectual sophistication.”⁴

Of course, there are good reasons to maintain the tradition of separate basic training for men and women, including the reasons Donnelly noted in her testimony. In addition, co-ed training has led to numerous cases of sexual harassment and sexual assault. In 1997, Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson was convicted of raping six female trainees a total of eighteen times. One of Simpson’s attorneys suggested that the women made up the accusations to get back at the drill instructor. This atmosphere created a chilling effect amongst other drill instructors, who believed they could no longer be as tough on recruits as they once were. “We’re not as aggressive anymore toward the trainees,” said Staff Sgt. Mariana Shorter, a female drill instructor at Aberdeen. “Because the trainees know now that if they cry to a certain degree, we’re removed.”⁵

In 1998, five instructors at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center were accused of sexual misconduct involving recruits. The Navy recommended courts-martial for three of them. CNN reported that morale at the center, which, just eight months earlier, Defense Secretary William Cohen cited as a role model for coed training, was low.⁶

In 2012, the Air Force relieved Colonel Glenn Palmer as commander of the 737th Training Group at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, and replaced him with a female commander after thirty-eight women came forward with complaints of being the victims of improper sexual contact at the hands of trainers. According to Reuters, “Seventeen male military training instructors have been implicated in an investigation into sexual contact between instructors and female recruits. Four were convicted or pleaded guilty before courts-martial at Lackland.”

For more than fifteen years now, the Air Force, Army, and Navy have suffered through scandals related to coed basic training. The Marine Corps has not. The tradition of separate training for men and women has prevented the Marines from experiencing similar scandals and the loss of morale resulting from them.

Of course, we shouldn’t follow a tradition if it is no longer based on correct grounds. Just because something has always been done a certain way is not necessarily a good reason to continue doing it that way. At the same time, we don’t discount a tradition simply because it is “old.” When it comes to maintaining or discarding traditions, we would be wise to follow what William Blackstone, an eighteenth century English jurist, considered the doctrine of the law: “[T]hat precedents and rules must be followed, unless flatly absurd or unjust: for though their reason be not obvious at first view, yet we owe such deference to former times as not to suppose they acted wholly without consideration.”⁷

According to Sexson and Miles, liberals “seem to believe that their most potent weapon against conservatism is to accuse the conservative of being content with the *status quo*, or of being the party of memory rather than hope, or of revering tradition.”

“No conservative wants to, or believes he can stop change,” Sexson and Miles continued. “Change is an inherent feature of the Divine Plan. But change of the intensity of the last fifty years threatens man’s social and individual identity. And identity, the conservative knows, is one thing he must fight to preserve. When it is not necessary to change, the conservative knows it is necessary

not to change.” Further, “When we do what is not necessary, the ultimate result is divisiveness.”⁸

Our Founders were conservatives, yet they were not content with the status quo. Hence the Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War. According to Edmund Burke, considered the philosophical father of modern conservatism, “a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.” However, Burke noted that not all change is worthy of support:

There is a manifest, marked distinction, which ill men with ill designs, or weak men incapable of any design, will constantly be confounding,—that is, a marked distinction between change and reformation. The former alters the substance of the objects themselves, and gets rid of all their essential good as well as of all the accidental evil annexed to them. Change is novelty; and whether it is to operate any one of the effects of reformation at all, or whether it may not contradict the very principle upon which reformation is desired, cannot be known beforehand. Reform is not change in the substance or in the primary modification of the object, but a direct application of a remedy to the grievance complained of. So far as that is removed, all is sure. It stops there; and if it fails, the substance which underwent the operation, at the very worst, is but where it was.⁹

Before he was elected president in 2008, Barack Obama delivered a campaign speech in which he proclaimed, “We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America.”¹⁰ Consider the words “fundamentally transforming.” “Fundamental” is defined as “forming a necessary base or core; of central importance.”¹¹ “Transformation” is defined as “a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance.”¹² In other words, Obama was calling for a thorough or dramatic change of the necessary base or core of America. How would this be done?

In a campaign speech delivered in Puerto Rico several months earlier, Obama’s wife, Michelle, offered a clue: “Barack knows that we are going to have to make sacrifices; we are going to have to change our conversation; we’re going to have to change our traditions, our history; we’re going to have to move into a different place as a nation.”¹³

Sexson and Miles offered the following warning concerning those who advocate transforming society and “changing” traditions:

FUNDAMENTALLY TRANSFORMING AMERICA

Every welfare state has been introduced by wholesale trampling of traditions—which *have* grown naturally. The German Nazis under Hitler, the Russian Communists under Lenin, and the American New Dealers under Roosevelt have all sneered at the old ways of doing things. Religious, political, and economic traditions all come in for a drastic overhaul—or an attempt at drastic overhaul. Change in many cases seems to have been made for change’s sake itself, with the newcomers to high places sometimes behaving like guilty youngsters climbing up to the cookie jar, who want to see how much they can get away with.¹⁴

Just two years after Sexson and Miles wrote these words, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) set out to “fundamentally transform” their country by launching the Cultural Revolution. According to Encyclopædia Britannica, the Cultural Revolution would entail “a transformation from a bureaucratically run machine to a more popularly based system led personally by Mao and a simplified administration under his control.” Further:

When Mao formally launched the Cultural Revolution in August 1966, he had already shut down the schools. During the following months, he encouraged the Red Guards to attack all traditional values and “bourgeois” things and to put CCP officials to the test by publicly criticizing them. These attacks were known at the time as struggles against the Four Olds (i.e., old ideas, customs, culture, and habits of mind), and the movement quickly escalated to committing outrages. Many elderly people and intellectuals were physically abused, and many died. Nonetheless, Mao believed that this mobilization of urban youths would be beneficial for them and that the CCP cadres they attacked would be better for the experience.¹⁵

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge took power in Cambodia and immediately began to “fundamentally transform” their country:

The Khmer Rouge also began to implement their radical Maoist and Marxist-Leninist transformation program at this time. They wanted to transform Cambodia into a rural, classless society in which there were no rich people, no poor people, and no exploitation. To accomplish this, they abolished money, free markets, normal schooling, private property, foreign clothing styles, religious practices, and traditional Khmer culture. Public schools, pagodas, mosques, churches, universities, shops and government

buildings were shut or turned into prisons, stables, reeducation camps and granaries. There was no public or private transportation, no private property, and no non-revolutionary entertainment. Leisure activities were severely restricted.¹⁶

Of course, the Soviets, Nazis, CCP, and the Khmer Rouge went to extremes, including the slaughter of millions, when they worked to “fundamentally transform” their countries. No one should expect genocide any time soon in the United States. However, we are certainly witnessing “parricide” on a large scale. “First of all, I would maintain that modern man is a parricide,” Richard Weaver wrote in *Ideas Have Consequences*. “He has taken up arms against, and has effectually slain, what former men have regarded with filial veneration. He has not been conscious of the crime but has, on the contrary—and certainly this is nothing new to students of human behavior—regarded his action as a proof of virtue.”¹⁷

America’s Christian tradition has been under relentless attacks from the left for several decades now. Barack Obama joined in on these attacks as a presidential candidate in 2008 while speaking at a fundraiser in San Francisco. “It’s not surprising, then, they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations,” he said of working-class voters.¹⁸

Of course, when Obama referred to religion, he was not talking about Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism. Those he characterized as “bitter clingers” are Christians, which leads me to question whether he is actually a Christian or adherent of any other religion. After all, “adhere” and “cling” are synonyms. By definition, an adherent of a religion clings to that religion.

Some might dismiss the comment of a presidential candidate at a fundraiser. However, what do we do when a government agency characterizes certain adherents of Christianity as “extremists.” This was done recently in a U.S. Army Reserve Equal Opportunity training brief entitled “Extremism & Extremist Organizations.” Under the headline “Religious Extremism,” the brief lists several organizations, including the Ku Klux Klan, al Qaeda, Hamas, and the Nation of Islam. However, it also lists Catholicism.¹⁹ The world’s largest Christian church, with 1.2 billion members, is an extremist organization on par with the KKK and al Qaeda? Sara Lister characterized the Marines as extremists because they refused

to discard their traditions and go along with change during the 1990s. It appears that Catholics are being characterized as extremists for the same reason.

The changes required by Obamacare entail unconscionable attacks on Catholic beliefs. “It is now a requirement of Obamacare that every Catholic institution larger than a single church—and even including some single churches—must pay for contraceptives, sterilization, and morning-after abortifacients for its employees,” noted the *Weekly Standard’s* Jonathan V. Last. “Each of these is directly contrary to the Catholic faith. But the Obama administration does not care. They have said, in effect, *Do what we tell you—or else.*”²⁰

We’ve seen this movie before. “The Catholic clergy refused to co-operate with laws requiring them to undergo training at state institutions and submit clerical appointments to state approval,” wrote Richard J. Evans in *The Coming of the Third Reich*. “Before long, those who contravened the new laws were being hounded by the police, arrested and sent to gaol. By the mid-1870s, 989 parishes were without incumbents, 225 priests were in gaol, all Catholic religious orders apart from those involved in nursing had been suppressed, two archbishops and three bishops had been removed from office and the Bishop of Tier had died shortly after his release from nine months in prison. What was even more disturbing was that this massive assault on the civil liberties of some 40 per cent of the population of the Reich was cheered on by Germany’s liberals, who regarded Catholicism as so serious a threat to civilization that it justified extreme measures such as these.”²¹

Other attacks on Christianity in the United States entail denunciations of any constitutionalist in office who offers positive comments concerning God. An example of these attacks occurred after Gov. Sam Brownback of Kansas proclaimed December 8, 2012 as “National Day of Restoration.” Micheline Burger, president of the so-called MAINstream Coalition, a Kansas organization, wrote to several Kansas newspapers to complain that Brownback was exhorting all Kansans to “repent” and pray to a “holy God.” “The official proclamation by our sitting governor cannot go unchallenged as our constitutional republic is built on the foundation that religion and government should be separate,” Burger wrote. Further, “If our founders could read Brownback’s proclamation, I am certain they would hang their heads in shame.”²²

Would the Founders really hang their heads in shame? Consider that on September 25, 1789, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on President George Washington to issue a proclamation designating a national day of prayer and thanksgiving. The Senate agreed to the resolution the next day.²³ Washington issued that proclamation on October 3: “Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor—and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me ‘to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.’”²⁴

Interestingly, the House of Representatives passed the prayer and thanksgiving resolution on the *very same day* that they sent twelve amendments to President Washington to be transmitted to the states for ratification.²⁵ Those amendments included what became the First Amendment. That would be the same First Amendment that Burger claimed laid the “foundation that religion and government should be separate,” and, hence, should have prohibited Brownback from issuing his proclamation.

Washington Post columnist E. J. Dionne, Jr. addressed the growth of Christian churches in *Why Americans Hate Politics* (1991). “The United States, at last prosperous and at peace after the challenges of the Depression and war, experienced a religious boom during the Eisenhower era,” he wrote. “In 1940, only 64.5 million Americans belonged to churches—50 percent of the population. By the end of the 1950s, there were 114.5 million church members, 63 percent of the population. The new religiosity affected Congress, which accorded God new forms of official recognition. It was in the 1950s that the words *under God* were inserted into the Pledge of Allegiance and that ‘In God We Trust’ was stamped onto coins.”²⁶

While it is true that the words under God were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950s, “In God We Trust” was stamped onto coins long before that decade. In 1864, Congress authorized the use of “In God We Trust” on two-cent coins. According to the U.S. Mint, “The motto was omitted from the new gold coins issued in 1907, causing a storm of public criticism. As a

result, legislation passed in May 1908 made ‘In God We Trust’ mandatory on all coins on which it had previously appeared.”²⁷

Unfortunately, Burger and Dionne are not the only leftists to misrepresent our history. In fact, the revision of American history has become a major enterprise of the socialists.

CHANGING OUR HISTORY

In addition to saying that we have to change our traditions, Michelle Obama said we have to change our history. It is interesting to note the final sentence of Michael Harrington’s *Socialism*: “Under socialism, there will be no end to history—but there may be a new history.”²⁸

How do we change our history or create a new history? We simply revise history. The late Howard Zinn, a political science professor at Boston University, did exactly that for many decades, especially with *A People’s History of the United States*, which was published in 1980. In fact, on the cover of the 2005 paperback version of this book, there is a blurb from Eric Foner, a Columbia University professor, in which he says, “Historians may well view it as a step toward a coherent new version of American history.”

After Zinn died in 2010, John Perazzo of FrontPageMag.com wrote, “Indeed, few academicians did more than the late Boston University professor to poison the minds of so many young Americans with a vulgar narrative of history in which the United States was forever cast as the villain.”²⁹

Zinn’s “new version of American history” is replete with attacks on Europeans, the rich, and capitalism. He was essentially Occupy Wall Street decades before there was an Occupy Wall Street. Here are several examples:

- “Behind the English invasion of North America, behind their massacre of Indians, their deception, their brutality, was that special powerful drive born in civilizations based on private property.”³⁰
- “The concept of private ownership of land and homes was foreign to the Iroquois.”³¹
- “By 1770, the top 1 percent of property owners owned 44 percent of the wealth.”³²
- “Earlier societies—in America and elsewhere—in which property was held in common and families were extensive

and complicated, with aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers all living together, seemed to treat women more as equals than did the white societies that later overran them, bringing ‘civilization’ and private property.”³³

Incredibly, casting the United States as a villain brought Zinn fame and fortune. There are more than two million copies of *A People’s History of the United States* in print. A week after Zinn died, his thirty-year-old book was number seven on Amazon’s bestseller list.³⁴ Not bad for a book that readers of the History News Network (HNN) picked as runner-up in HNN’s “least credible history book in print” poll. David Barton’s *The Jefferson Lies: Exposing the Myths You’ve Always Believe About Thomas Jefferson* edged out *A People’s History* by just nine votes.³⁵

In 2008, the National Council for the Social Studies invited Zinn to address its annual conference, which is the largest gathering of social studies teachers in the country. According to Sam Wineburg, the Margaret Jacks Professor of Education and a professor of history (by courtesy) at Stanford University, Zinn’s speech was met with “raucous applause.” “Back in 1980, who could have predicted that a book that cast the Founding Fathers as a shadowy cabal who foisted on the American people ‘the most effective system of national control devised in modern times’ would one day be featured on the National History Education Clearinghouse’s website, an initiative funded by the US Department of Education?” Wineburg asked.³⁶

In 2007, William Holtzman, a former student of Zinn’s at Boston University, watched *You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, a film about Zinn. “I contacted Howard and said that I wanted to honor him and extend the reach of his work,” Holtzman said. “Howard didn’t care about the former, but was very open to the latter.” Zinn introduced Holtzman to two non-profit organizations, Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change, both of which provide “social justice resources and professional development for pre-K-through-12 classroom teachers and teacher educators.” The organizations partnered to launch the Zinn Education Project. The goal of the project “is to introduce students to a more accurate, complex, and engaging understanding of United States history than is found in traditional textbooks and curricula.”³⁷

Both Teaching for Change and Rethinking Schools are associated with many radical groups and individuals. For example, in March 2009, Teaching for Change, whose website includes the slogan “Building Social Justice Starting in the Classroom,”³⁸ hosted Bill Ayers, the Weather Underground terrorist, when he discussed two books he co-edited, *City Kids*, *City Teachers* and *City Kids, City Schools*.³⁹

Ayers was the special guest and keynote speaker at Rethinking Schools’ “25th Anniversary Celebration & Fundraiser” in 2011.⁴⁰ Rethinking Schools noted that Ayers “has been a long-time supporter of Rethinking Schools” and “has been a loyal donor to our organization.”⁴¹ According to Discover the Networks, Ayers has also contributed money to Teaching for Change.⁴² In October 2008, Deborah Menkart, the executive director for Teaching for Change, signed a statement in support of Ayers after Obama’s friendship with the domestic terrorist became an issue in the presidential campaign. Rethinking Schools’ Wayne Au, Bill Bigelow, Linda Christensen, Michael A. Datsko, Stan Karp, Bob Peterson, and Ann Veu also signed the statement.⁴³

Teaching for Change operates a bookstore at the Busboys and Poets at 14th and V Streets NW in Washington, D.C.⁴⁴ Busboys and Poets is owned by Andy Shallal, who is a former Teaching for Change board member and a current member of the socialist-dominated advisory board for Progressive Democrats of America (PDA).⁴⁵ Since October 2009, public readings and presentations at Busboys and Poets have featured leftists such as Van Jones, Ralph Nader, Cornel West, Amy Goodman, Barbara Ehrenreich, Naomi Klein, Phyllis Bennis, Eve Ensler, Alice Walker, Norman Finklestein, Tariq Ali, Ted Rall, Amiri Baraka, Eric Alterman, Bernie Sanders, Mike Farrell, Gloria Feldt, James Zogby, and Julianne Malveaux.⁴⁶

On September 21, 2011, the Busboys and Poets location in Hyattsville, Md., held a fundraiser for the Zinn Education Project and the dedication of the Zinn Room. Among the presenters were Democratic Socialists of America members Barbara Ehrenreich and Cornel West. Code Pink’s Medea Benjamin, another PDA advisory board member, was also a presenter.⁴⁷ Shallal painted a mural in the Zinn Room that is dedicated to Zinn. According to the Busboys and Poets website, the mural “draws inspiration from Langston Hughes’ poem, ‘The Negro Speaks of Rivers.’”

Zinn's book has entered the popular culture. In HBO's *The Sopranos*, A. J. Soprano tells his parents that his history teacher compared Christopher Columbus to Slobodan Milosevic. When Tony fumes "Your teacher said that?" A. J. responds, "It's not just my teacher—it's the truth. It's in my history book." The camera then shows A. J. holding a copy of *A People's History*.⁴⁸ In *The Simpsons* episode entitled "That '90s Show," Marge reads *A People's History* while Homer watches *Seinfeld*.⁴⁹ In *Good Will Hunting* (1997), Matt Damon's character, Will Hunting, says, "You wanna read a real history book? Read Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States*. That book will ... knock you on your ass." Damon, along with fellow actor Ben Affleck, wrote the script for *Good Will Hunting*.

Damon and Affleck were introduced to *A People's History* while high school students at the Cambridge Latin and Rindge School (CLRS) in Massachusetts. "Rindge was one of the very first US urban high schools to allow teachers to use the controversial revisionists [sic] history book," Larry Aaronson, the former chair of the social studies department at CLRS, wrote after Zinn died in 2011. "I was one of the very first history teachers allowed to teach Zinn's revisionist history in an American public high school. The year was 1981, less than a year after the book appeared. I taught 20-some years at The Pilot School, the progressive alternative school program housed in CRLS. I taught extensively from 'The Peoples' History' for the next two decades." According to Aaronson, "Damon grew up next door to the Zinns. Both households equally sharing progressive politics, they became life long 'family.'" ⁵⁰

Damon's neighbor greatly influenced the young actor. Damon has done work on two documentaries about Zinn, *Howard Zinn: You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train* and the History Channel's *The People Speak*. He also did the reading for the audio version of *A People's History*. In 2011, Damon attended Rethinking Schools' "Save Our Schools" rally in Washington, D.C., and delivered a speech in which he attacked standardized testing. "Now, don't get me wrong, I did have a brush with standardized tests at one point," he told the crowd. "I remember because my mom went to the principal's office and said, 'My kid ain't taking that. It's stupid, it won't tell you anything and it'll just make him nervous.'" ⁵¹ Aaronson attended the rally and even appeared on television with his former student. ⁵²

When Aaronson retired from CRLS in 2007, he billed his retirement party as a fundraiser for Social Justice Works! The Aaronson Fund, which is affiliated with the Cambridge Community Foundation. Damon was named honorary chairperson of the fund.⁵³ Zinn was the keynote speaker at the fund's first awards dinner in 2008.⁵⁴

While Damon and Affleck are CRLS's most famous graduates, the school's most infamous graduates were unknown to most of the world before April 19, 2013. On that day, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his older brother, Tamerlan, set off pressure-cooker bombs during the Boston Marathon, killing three people and injuring more than 260 others. The brothers also killed an MIT police officer. Tamerlan was killed during a shootout with the police, while Dzhokhar was found hiding in a boat in Watertown, Mass. Inside the boat, Dzhokhar scrawled several messages, including, "The U.S. government is killing our innocent civilians," "We Muslims are one body, you hurt one, you hurt us all," "I can't stand to see such evil go unpunished," and "F**k America."⁵⁵

Tamerlan was born in the Kalmyk Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1986, and Dzhokhar was born in Kyrgyzstan in 1993. The brothers emigrated to the United States with their family and settled in Cambridge in 2002. According to the *Boston Herald*, "The Tsarnaev family, including the suspected terrorists and their parents, benefited from more than \$100,000 in taxpayer-funded assistance—a bonanza ranging from cash and food stamps to Section 8 housing from 2002 to 2012."⁵⁶

As the controversial *Rolling Stone* cover story in July 2013 noted, Dzhokhar appeared to assimilate into American society much more easily than his older brother:

Though he'd arrived in America speaking virtually no English, by high school he was fluent, with only a trace of an accent, and he was also fluent in the local patois. (Among his favorite words, his friends say, was "sherm," Cambridge slang for "slacker.") Jahar, or "Jizz," as his friends also called him, wore grungy Pumas, had a great three-point shot and became a dedicated pot smoker—something a number of Cambridge teens tell me is relatively standard in their permissive community, where you can score weed in the high school bathrooms and smoke on the street without much of a problem. A diligent student, he was nominated to the National Honor Society in his

sophomore year, which was also when he joined the wrestling team.

As a senior at CRLS, Dzhokhar received a \$2,500 City Scholarship from the City of Cambridge. The scholarship was made possible through contributions from businesses and citizens.⁵⁷

After the terrorist attack, many wondered how Dzhokhar became radicalized. Many believed Tamerlan was responsible. “The increasing signals are that these were individuals who were radicalized, especially the older brother, over a period of time—radicalized by Islamist fundamentalist terrorists, basically using Internet sources to gain not just the types of philosophical beliefs that radicalized them, but also learning components of how to do these sorts of things,” Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Texas) told reporters after he attended a two-hour classified briefing with FBI and intelligence officials.⁵⁸ Elmirza Khozhugov, the ex-husband of the Tsarnaev brothers’ sister, Ailina, said that Tamerlan “was angry that the world pictures Islam as a violent religion.”⁵⁹

It may very well be true that Tamerlan’s influence contributed to the radicalization of his younger brother. However, the media failed to consider that another source may have also played a significant role.

After the terrorist attack, a neighbor who lived three houses down from the Tsarnaevs noted that he knew Dzhokhar as “nothing but sociable, compassionate, friendly, athletic, just a wonderful kid.” He last saw Dzhokhar in January 2013. “He was coming out of his house and I was walking down the street and he said, ‘Hi Larry,’” the neighbor said. “We talked and I said ‘Listen, if you ever get stuck on a history paper, you should call. Next time you get back to town, we’ll get together.’”

That neighbor was Larry Aaronson, CRLS’s retired history teacher.⁶⁰

Aaronson earned a master’s degree in journalism from Columbia University and dreamed of becoming a “crusading journalist.” However, according to the *Washington Post* in 2008, “with the draft board breathing down his neck in summer 1965, Larry Aaronson was finding it difficult to land a job.” So he took a teaching job in Washington, D.C., “intending to stay in the classroom for a year or so before beginning his real career with the *Washington Star* or *The Washington Post*, maybe as an education reporter.”

Aaronson was still in the classroom three years later when Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. “What he experienced in the aftermath of King’s assassination radicalized him, he said recently from his home in Cambridge, Mass., where he taught for the bulk of his career,” the *Washington Post* reported. “That ‘transformative moment’ in the District, he recalled, convinced him that teaching was his life’s mission.”⁶¹

Aaronson apparently still considered himself a radical forty-three years after the assassination of King. In 2011, he penned a favorable review of Paul Atwood’s *War and Empire: The American Way of Life for Radical Teacher*, which bills itself as “a socialist, feminist, and anti-racist journal dedicated to the theory and practice of teaching.”⁶² “... Paul Atwood’s *War and Empire: The American Way of Life* explodes the hypocritical nonsense of U.S. triumphalism that pervades conventional American history texts,” Aaronson wrote. “How I wish I could have assigned Atwood’s stirring and provocative book to my students when I was teaching.” “All American regimes, pre- and post colonial, have consistently chosen to grab all the booty from the most vulnerable peoples, beginning with the earliest foreign wars against aboriginal nations, from the Iroquois and the Cherokee to the Sioux and Apache, through the U.S-Mexico War and beyond to the shores of the Caribbean and the islands of the Pacific realm,” he continued. “Furthermore, Atwood’s book shows that the historical record demonstrates that America has only picked wars with ‘foreign enemies’ that could never strike back with direct collateral damage.”⁶³

Aaronson noted that Atwood’s “revisionist history” is “steeped in the long-established historiographic traditions of William A. Williams and Howard Zinn.”⁶⁴ As noted above, Aaronson began introducing his students at CRLS to Zinn’s *A People’s History* in 1981.

Zinn wrote several books, including *A People’s History*, in which he portrayed the United States as a villain. Aaronson offered a favorable review for a book that portrayed the United States as a villain, and even wished that he could have assigned that book to his students when he was teaching at CRLS. Is it possible that the anti-Americanism found at CRLS could have radicalized Dzhokar, who became a naturalized U.S. citizen on September 11, 2012, to the point that he decided he wanted to kill his fellow Americans?

Of course, thousands of students have graduated from CRLS since its founding, yet the Tsarnaev brothers are the only graduates who became terrorists. The *Rolling Stone* article on Dzhokar quoted a friend from CRLS saying of Dzhokar, “In terms of politics, I’d say he’s just as anti-American as the next guy in Cambridge.” Obviously, that is not true. After all, Ben Affleck and Matt Damon’s bomb-making has been limited to movies such as *Gigli* and the anti-fracking *Promised Land*.

But what if a young and impressionable young man is influenced by *both* radical Islam and the radical left? Should we really be surprised when such a young man commits an act of terrorism, and, in what he must have thought were going to be his dying words, scrawls the message “F**k America”?

ZINN AND THE ART OF RADICALIZING TEACHERS

It’s a small world. When I finished college, my first job in the early 1990s entailed supervising dozens of youth carriers for the *Lawrence Journal-World* in Lawrence, Kansas. Evar, a young man I signed up for a paper route, was the son of immigrants from Nigeria. He was a hard worker who took his responsibilities seriously.

While doing research for this book, I came across a September 2012 report from the Lexington Institute entitled “Radicalization of Teacher Education Programs in the United States.” The nine essays found in the report discuss Howard Zinn, Bill Ayers, and Paulo Freire, the Brazilian Marxist who is best known for his influential work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. My jaw dropped when I got to the final essay. It was about “Transformative Learning” and one of its leading advocates, Omiunota Nelly Ukpokodu. Dr. Ukpokodu is Evar’s mother.

Ukpokodu earned her national certificate in education from Bendel State University in Nigeria in 1979, and then became a lecturer at Bendel State Teacher Training College. After coming to the U.S., she earned a B.S. Ed., M.A. Ed., and M.S. Ed. from the University of Kansas. In 1991, she earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction from the same university. She is currently an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. According to the University of Missouri website, “Dr. Ukpokodu’s research interests include transformative pedagogy and learning, quality teacher preparation, multicultural education—teaching for diversity, equity, and social justice, urban education,

citizenship and global education.”⁶⁵ In 2012, Ukpokodu was elected co-chair of Critical Educators for Social Justice, which is a special interest group of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).⁶⁶ Founded in 1916, AERA has more than 25,000 members, including “faculty, researchers, graduate students, and other distinguished professionals with rich and diverse expertise in education research.”⁶⁷

In a 2009 article in the *Journal of Praxis in Multicultural Education*, Ukpokodu discussed “pedagogies that foster transformative learning in a multicultural education course.” “The importance of fostering teachers’ transformative learning cannot be underscored given that many teachers who are European Americans, middle-class who view themselves as cultureless, culturally encapsulated, socialized to conservative ideologies and mind frames that negate their abilities to engage in effective cross-cultural and culturally responsive teaching,” Ukpokodu wrote.⁶⁸

Ukpokodu then went on to discuss a “qualitative study situated in a graduate course of a teacher education program at one university, located in a Midwestern community of the United States.” The study involved forty-five students in the 2006 winter and 2007 summer semesters. The teaching experience of the participants ranged from three to twenty years, while their ages ranged between twenty-six and fifty-five. The course purportedly fostered the teachers’ “learning transformation and moved them from color-blindness to color-vision.”

Ukpokodu’s article included “reflective narratives” from several of her students. “I liked the learning community that made us feel comfortable discussing ‘hard’ and difficult issues, what you called ‘the undiscussables’ and sharing personal issues,” Jessy, a “European American,” wrote. “This was why it was so easy for me to share with the class about my racist family and dating out of my race.”

“Before taking this course and learning about white privilege and social justice, I would have never considered myself to be privileged,” wrote Clarisa, a “White American.” “I have always thought of myself, and my family as normal. As I read over my pre-autobiographical narrative I could see that I was too comfortable before. I was comfortable in my ignorance, and unawareness that social injustice is still very prevalent in our society. This course has now empowered me to take these strong feelings of guilt, shame and anger, and turn them into something proactive,

instead of reactive.... From my own racial identity development, from dealing with issues that I have had inside me and interacting with those in class who, like me have been dealing with their own racial identity struggles, and maybe, until this class have been unaware of them and having had the opportunity, for once in my life, to be in such a multi-culturally diverse class, has helped me see how I have been racist and segregated.”

“I really liked the activity where we started on the same line and then moved based on our cultural and social experiences,” wrote Michael, a “European American Male.” “I saw the difference between each person and where they stood based on the experiences that they have had. I know that when the exercise was over, I felt guilty about where I was compared to other students in my classroom. I was never made aware of the differences of cultures and the different experiences that they had just based on their race or culture.”

Ukpodoku’s article makes it clear that transformative learning includes making “European American” teachers realize that they are racist and making them feel guilty because they benefit from “white privilege.” “White privilege” is an odd term when you consider that “privilege” comes from the Latin *privilegium*, which means “law applying to one person, bill of law in favor of or against an individual.” Ukpodoku has taken a term meant for an individual and has applied it to an entire race. In the process, she has turned the message of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech on its head. “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character,” King said fifty years ago. In Ukpodoku’s world, “European Americans” are not to be judge individually by the content of their character. Instead, they are judged to be racist as a group merely because of the color of their skin. To her, the word “colorblind” is, as former Weather Underground terrorists Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn wrote in 2009, “A new code word in defense of the status quo, of power relations as they are, of white supremacy.”⁶⁹ While King dreamt of a colorblind society, Ukpkodou wants to move teachers “from color-blindness to color-vision.”

Lady Justice wears a blindfold, which represents her impartiality. Progressives have long rejected that impartiality. One hundred years ago, Herbert Croly, a founder of the *New Republic* magazine, wrote that, instead of having her eyes blindfolded, Lady Justice—

the “figurative representation of social justice”—“would wear perched upon her nose a most searching and forbidding pair of spectacles, one which combined the vision of a microscope, a telescope, and a photographic camera.”⁷⁰ Since Croly and Ukpokodu would have us remove Lady Justice’s blindfold, it is obvious that the “social justice” they advocate is quite different from actual justice.

In *The Next American Civil War*, Lee Harris explained the difference between education and re-education:

The underlying metaphor of education starts with a blank slate that represents the student’s fresh and open mind, so that the teacher’s mission is simply to fill him full of knowledge and information. But the premise of re-education is quite different. It assumes that the student’s mind is already cluttered with ignorance and prejudices, normally those he has picked up from his family’s inherited traditions. This means that the first task of the re-educator is to cleanse and purge the student’s mind of those traditions he has been taught to accept by his family. Only then can the re-educator fill his student’s mind with the right ideas and opinions—namely, the ideas and opinions to which the re-educator subscribes. But this kind of re-education seems suspiciously like straightforward indoctrination.⁷¹

Harris’ description of a re-educator fits Ukpokodu to a tee. But did any of her students resist this indoctrination? In fact, Ukpokodu noted that five of her students “exhibited passive resistance.” According to her, “two students resulted [sic] to plagiarism in one assignment in which they were to analyze the book *We Can’t Reach [sic] What We Don’t Know*. The students expressed to me that they were ‘literarily [sic] sick as they read the first three chapters that made them feel guilty and ashamed of being white.’” The actual title of the book is *We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*. Written by Gary R. Howard, a “social justice educator,” the title was borrowed from the words of Malcolm X: “We can’t teach what we don’t know, and we can’t lead where we can’t go.”⁷²

One of the students who exhibited passive resistance still had a “positive” experience from the course. “[S]he realized, upon reflection, that she did not have what it takes to teach diverse students and so decided to resign from teaching,” Ukpokodu wrote. In this sense, transformational education reminds me of the Borg in

Star Trek: “Your culture will adapt to service us. Resistance is futile.”

Despite the resistance offered by the now former teacher, Ukpokodu believes she was successful with the other teachers:

Freire (1987) suggests that, in the final analysis, liberatory education must be understood as a moment or process or practice where we challenge people to mobilize or organize themselves to get power. I would submit that participants in this course were engaged in the moment, and even process of organizing to gain power. Through varied opportunities for authentic learning, rational discourse, and collaborative learning, the participants embraced the challenge of self-examination and reframed their limited prior perspectives about self, society, and humanity while developing insights and theory about praxis (Giroux, 1992; McLaren, 1998). Additionally, I believe that, students who have been empowered by new knowledge have the potential to envision personal and social transformation. Some of the students in this study had begun to envision transformative practice and agency. During the interview some participants shared about their passion and plans for change agency such as classroom curricular and pedagogical transformation, serving on committees for textbook adoption and professional development and advocacy.

Do you think these teachers might be inclined to adopt Zinn’s “textbook”? As I noted above, Bill Ayers is a supporter of Teaching for Change and Rethinking Schools, which partnered to launch the Zinn Education Project. In 2008, the Zinn Education Project began offering free Zinn Education packets to over 31,000 teachers and teacher educators. These packets included *A People’s History of the United States*, the teacher’s guide *A People’s History for the Classroom*, and the DVD *Howard Zinn: You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train*. The outreach was done by thirty-two organizations, including the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME).⁷³

In November 2011, NAME held its annual convention in Chicago. Co-sponsors included Rethinking Schools, Teachers for Social Justice, and my alma mater, Northern Illinois University. Bill Ayers was one of the keynote speakers. Ukpokodu was also there, presenting “Breaking through Student Resistance in Multicultural Education Courses.”⁷⁴

Ukpokodu currently serves as chair of NAME's International Connections Committee, while an Ayers serves as NAME's co-president. This Ayers is Rick, Bill's younger brother. Conveniently, Bill was on the co-president nomination team.⁷⁵

Rick is not as well known as his brother, but his background and politics are just as radical. In addition to being a cadre in the Weather Underground, Rick was a military deserter during the Vietnam War.⁷⁶ In 1997, he founded the Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) small school at Berkeley (Calif.) High School. According to the high school's website, CAS is distinguished by its "focus on critical thinking, social justice, media literacy, and service learning." The students also "travel to museums, theaters, cultural centers, colleges and to countries like Cuba, Mexico and Viet Nam."⁷⁷

Rick wasn't the first Ayers to promote the "small schools" concept. Along with Mike Klonsky, Bill founded the Small Schools Workshop (SSW) in Chicago in 1991. According to SSW's website, "The Workshop provides schools and school districts with an experienced team of school design coaches and teacher professional development experts that can guide the school transformation process from beginning to end."⁷⁸ In 1995, the Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC), with Obama as its chairman, gave SSW a grant of \$175,000. The CAC provided another \$482,662 to SSW over the next few years.⁷⁹ Incidentally, like Ayers, Klonsky was also a Students for a Democratic Society leader. During the 1970s, Klonsky chaired the October League, a Maoist organization that later became the Communist Party (Marxist Leninist).⁸⁰ Klonsky's father, Robert, a member of the Communist Party USA, was convicted in 1954 of violating the Smith Act, which outlawed "teaching or advocating the overthrow of the American government by force."⁸¹

Rick is currently a professor in teacher education at the University of San Francisco and blogs for the Huffington Post. In an April 2013 piece about *The Company You Keep*, a Robert Redford movie about the Weather Underground, Rick used language that could have come straight out of *A People's History* or Ukpokodu's course:

In this regard Redford betrays that white blind spot. To tell the real story you have to recognize that everything progressive that happens in this country has to look at the fundamental

wound in our body politic, the legacy of stolen Indian land, of slavery and its new iterations, and at the forced tribute from peoples around the world. The critique from this reality, from these people, is what powers the resistance. It is, after all, a hard thing for an American, particularly one with white privilege, to break with the common sense of American culture which accepts militarism, accepts a rigid caste system in housing and education, accepts our current engagement in three wars, accepts the idea that we are always bringing freedom, accepts drone killings, accepts the need for secret government powers.⁸²

Bill and Rick Ayers were both in the Weather Underground, which, according to Weatherman Mark Rudd, “had as its goal the violent overthrow of the United States government.”⁸³ In just a few decades, they have gone from being members of “an underground revolutionary guerrilla band” to leaders in the field of education. As noted above, Rick serves as NAME’s co-president. In 2008, Bill was elected to serve as an AERA vice-president.⁸⁴

The Ayers brothers were not the only Weather Underground members to later get involved with education. In 1991, Bernardine Dohrn, Bill’s wife, was hired by Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago as an adjunct professor of law, with the title “Clinical Associate Professor of Law.”⁸⁵

Rudd is a retired community college teacher in New Mexico.⁸⁶ Marla Painter, who was not part of the Weather Underground, is Rudd’s second wife. Her LinkedIn profile says she is a “public school teacher,” “teacher trainer in environmental education curriculum,” and a “community organizer at the local, regional and national level.”⁸⁷

Cathy Wilkerson was a math teacher in New York City schools for more than twenty years.⁸⁸ In 2003, Wilkerson said that the Weather Underground’s legacy of violence must be seen in the context of the times. “We were way not the first,” she said. “It was a mass phenomenon. In 1969, national liberation was sweeping the world and looked like it was going to be the main vehicle for ushering in popular governments. Now the wave of violence sweeping the world is reactionary.”⁸⁹

Kathy Boudin is now a faculty member at Columbia University’s School of Social Work. Her profile on the university’s website notes that she “has been an educator and counselor with experience in program development since 1964, working within

communities with limited resources to solve social problems, and supporting individuals to overcome their own odds and develop a sense of strength and direction.”⁹⁰ The profile does not mention that Boudin spent twenty-two years in prison for her role in a 1981 armored car robbery in which Brinks guard Peter Paige and police officers Waverly Brown and Edward O’Grady, Jr. were murdered. According to Rudd, “Between them they left nine children without fathers.”⁹¹

The Weather Underground does have a legacy of violence. Therefore, the average person might consider it a bit inappropriate that former members of this terrorist organization are now in classrooms and influencing young minds. However, to Ayers and the other Weathermen, it makes perfect sense. In fact, they advocated this at the same time that they were promoting a violent communist revolution. “We believe that radical teachers should work in schools in working class neighborhoods, in community or junior colleges,” Ayers, et. al., wrote in *Prairie Fire*, their 1974 political manifesto. “Radicalize other teachers, organize the parents, teach and encourage your students.”⁹² Ayers’ opinion was unchanged four decades later. “Revolutionaries want to change the world, of course, and teachers, it turns out, want to change the world too—typically one child at a time,” he wrote in *Public Enemy: Confessions of an American Dissident*. “It wasn’t as much of a reach as you might imagine.”⁹³ As Vladimir Lenin reputedly said, “Give us the child for eight years and it will be a Bolshevik forever.”

Of course, Lenin was not the first to suggest the radicalization of children. “[A] phalanx of progressive reformers saw the home as the front line in the war to transform men into compliant social organs,” Jonah Goldberg wrote in *Liberal Fascism*. “Often the answer was to get children out of the home as quickly as possible. An archipelago of agencies, commissions, and bureaus sprang up overnight to take the place of the anti-organic, contra-evolutionary influences of the family. The home could no longer be seen as an island, separate and sovereign from the rest of society. John Dewey helped create kindergartens in America for precisely this purpose—to shape the apples before they fell from the tree....”⁹⁴

According to his obituary in the *New York Times* in 1952, Dewey was “the philosopher from whose teachings has grown the school of progressive education and ‘learning by doing.’” The obituary also noted that Dewey was active in the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). In addition, “From 1894 to 1904 Professor

Dewey was head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago and for two years he was director of the School of Education of the same institution. In 1904 he was appointed Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. Besides his regular work there Dr. Dewey taught at Teachers College.”⁹⁵

Interestingly, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) developed from the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the youth branch of LID. LID, which descended from the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, was founded in 1905 by notable socialists Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Clarence Darrow, and Norman Thomas.⁹⁶ The Weather Underground was a faction of SDS. In addition, Weathermen Bill Ayers and Kathy Boudin both received their Ed.D.s from Columbia University’s Teachers College. Of course, Dewey had died decades before Ayers and Boudin attended Columbia. However, Dewey’s philosophy and influence are still evident at the Teachers College. In fact, the Teachers College has a John Dewey Circle, which “brings together Teachers College’s most generous and loyal alumni and friends who support the College through a yearly contribution of \$1,000 or more to the Annual Fund.”⁹⁷

In 1896, the Dewey School, now known as the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools (UCLS), opened. According to UCLS’s website, “Conceived by the world-famous educator, John Dewey, the school was truly a laboratory from its inception—an experimental school where his theories of education could be put into practice, tested, and scientifically evaluated.”⁹⁸

After Obama’s reelection in 2012, Bill Ayers penned an open letter to the president in which he noted that his three sons attended UCLS.⁹⁹ Two of the sons are Ayers and Dohrn’s biological children. They adopted the third, Chesa Boudin, after his parents, Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert, went to prison for their roles in the 1981 Brinks robbery and murders. Gilbert, a founding member of Columbia University’s SDS, continues to be imprisoned at the Auburn Correctional Facility in New York.

Given that UCLS is a private school, we have to assume that Ayers and Dohrn approve of its curricula. The homework assignments for Peggy Doyle’s seventh-grade humanities class (2011-2012) gives us an idea of what types of material the Ayers children might have encountered:

FUNDAMENTALLY TRANSFORMING AMERICA

- For Wednesday, September 7: Read “Theme for English B” in *Social Justice in a Democratic Society* and make a list of as many cultural identifiers as you can for the narrator of the poem, using specific language from the poem to support your ideas.
- For Thursday, September 8: Start work on Identity Collage, due on September 14th. Read “High Yellow White Trash” by Lisa Page in *Social Justice in a Democratic Society* and annotate as you read.
- For Tuesday, October 11: Begin reading “America Before Columbus” on pages 62-70 in *Social Justice Reader* and start answering the questions for “America Before Columbus” due in class on Wednesday.
- For Thursday, October 13: Read the handout “Why Textbooks Lie” and write a one-two paragraph summary of the main ideas and arguments that Lowen (the author of the article) uses.
- For Wednesday, November 30: Read “Che: The Man Behind the Myth” in SJDS and annotate.
- IN CLASS Tuesday, December 13: Using your ear buds, listen to some of the following Protest Songs plus links and complete Rockin’ the World: Questions about Protest Songs.¹⁰⁰

In past years, Doyle and another seventh-grade humanities teacher at UCLS, Sam Nekrosius, instructed the students to read “Columbus and Western Civilization” by Howard Zinn.^{101 102}

Of course, it should surprise no one that radicals such as Ayers and Dohrn sent their children to a radical school such as UCLS. However, shouldn’t we be a little concerned when top advisors to Obama also sent their children to the same school? As Ayers noted in an April 2013 piece published by the *Washington Post*, Obama’s former chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan sent their children to UCLS. Duncan himself attended UCLS for twelve years.¹⁰³ (In *Reading Obama*, James T. Kloppenberg, the chair of the history department at Harvard University, writes that David Axelrod, who served as Obama’s chief strategist, also attended UCLS.¹⁰⁴ While Axelrod attended the University of Chicago, he spent his K-12 years in New York.)

And there is one more member of the Obama administration who sent his children to UCLS. When Bill Ayers became an issue during the 2008 presidential campaign, Axelrod tried to downplay the relationship between the domestic terrorist and Obama. “Bill Ayers lives in [Obama’s] neighborhood,” Axelrod said. “Their kids attend the same school. They’re certainly friendly, they know each other, as anyone whose kids go to school together.”¹⁰⁵ That’s right. The Obamas’ daughters, Malia and Sasha, attended UCLS, although years after the Ayers children did. Michelle Obama was even on UCLS’s board of directors before her husband was elected president.¹⁰⁶ Her brother, Craig Robinson, was the head basketball coach at the school before he started coaching at the college level.¹⁰⁷

Coincidentally, while the Obamas’ daughters attended a school founded by John Dewey, Barack Obama’s mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, worked with another Dewey while writing her dissertation at the University of Hawaii (UH). In 2009, Duke University Press published a shorter version of Dunham’s dissertation as a book entitled *Surviving Against the Odds: Village Industry in Indonesia*. Alice G. Dewey edited and wrote the preface for the book. UH professor emeritus Alice G. Dewey was Dunham’s graduate anthropology adviser. She is also John Dewey’s granddaughter.¹⁰⁸

The Obama girls may have been too young to have been exposed to Zinn’s revisionist history while they were at UCLS. However, if they had continued to attend that school through high school, would Obama have approved of their exposure to Zinn? I think it is clear that he would have.

When Obama arrived in Chicago to become a community organizer in 1985, one of his mentors was Michael Kruglik with the Gamaliel Foundation. According to Kloppenberg, “Kruglik recalls that Obama had a special interest in the work of the radical historian Howard Zinn.”¹⁰⁹

Ayers and Obama also worked together on the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, which was a Chicago public school reform project from 1995 to 2001. In 1997, Ayers published a book about juvenile justice, *A Kind and Just Parent*, which Obama blurbed as “a searing and timely account.” Ayers returned the favor the following year when, as one of the editors of *Teaching for Social Justice* (a book written by, for, and about socialists), he included Obama’s 1995 memoir, *Dreams From My Father*, on a list of books that are

“resources for teaching for change.”¹¹⁰ Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States* is also on the list. In fact, the publisher of *Teaching for Social Justice*, The New Press, also published Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States: Abridged Teaching Edition* and *A People’s History of the United States: The Wall Charts*.¹¹¹

Ayers and the other editors of *Teaching for Social Justice* offered the following dedication: “To the fighting poet spirits of Paulo Freire, Haywood Burns, and Allen Ginsberg—fallen teachers who combined fire with grace as they danced into battle—we dedicate this book.” As noted above, Freire is the Brazilian Marxist who is best known for his influential work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Haywood Burns, an attorney, successfully defended Communist Party USA member Angela Davis during her trial for murder. He was also married to Jennifer Dohrn, Bernardine’s sister. At the time of his death in 1996, Burns was teaching courses like “Race and Law” and “Critical Race Theory” (CRT) at the City University of New York School of Law at Queens College.¹¹² What is CRT? The UCLA School of Public Affairs answers this question:

CRT recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of the American society. The individual racist need not exist to note that institutional racism is pervasive in the dominant culture. This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining existing power structures. CRT identifies that these power structures are based on white privilege and white supremacy, which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color. CRT also rejects the traditions of liberalism and meritocracy. Legal discourse says that the law is neutral and colorblind, however, CRT challenges this legal “truth” by examining liberalism and meritocracy as a vehicle for self-interest, power, and privilege.¹¹³

CRT is essentially the legal version of what Ukpokodu advocates in her multicultural education course. As Robert Holland noted in the Lexington Institute report, CRT “is a radical academic doctrine that gained currency in elite U.S. law schools in the 1980s and 1990s, and has more recently taken hold with multiculturalism advocates in teacher-training instructions.” “One of the progenitors of CRT, the late Derrick Bell, a Harvard University law professor, berated liberal civil-rights scholars for their championship of a co-

lorblind society,” Holland continued. “Like many of his allies, he relied largely on narrative and anecdote to advance his arguments, and argued for sweeping societal transformation generated more by political organizing than rights-based legal remedies.”¹¹⁴

Interestingly, Bell was one of Obama’s law professors at Harvard. When Obama was later a lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School, one of the courses he taught was a seminar entitled “Current Issues in Racism and Law.” Bell was one of the writers Obama required his students to read.¹¹⁵ Bell’s *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* is also on *Teaching for Social Justice*’s list of books that are “resources for teaching for change.”

Allen Ginsberg was the poet laureate of the Beat Generation. Ginsberg’s mother was a Russian émigré and fervent Marxist. His brother, Eugene, was named for Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist Party’s candidate for the presidency in 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920. According to the *New York Times*, “A ubiquitous presence at the love-ins and be-ins that marked the drug-oriented counterculture of the Flower Children years, Mr. Ginsberg was also in the vanguard of the political protest movements they helped spawn.”¹¹⁶

In the Lexington Institute report, Holland observed that advocates of social justice typically fail to define the term “social justice.” Therefore, Holland provided a definition of his own: “[F]rom the writings of long-time University of Illinois/Chicago education professor Bill Ayers, and teacher workshops conducted by organizations like the National Association for Multicultural Education, the premise is clear: The United States is a culturally and economically oppressive nation in dire need of radical transformation. The objective is the redistribution of wealth and power by means of government action.”¹¹⁷

The editors of *Teaching for Social Justice* are no exceptions to Holland’s observation. Their words strongly suggest that they agree with the Democratic Socialists of America’s contention that “American movements for social justice must of necessity adopt the internationalism of the socialist tradition.”¹¹⁸ Let’s consider these words from Ayers’ foreword: “Teaching for social justice is teaching that arouses students, engages them in a quest to identify obstacles to their full humanity, to their freedom, and then to drive, to move against those obstacles. And so the fundamental message of the teacher for social justice is: You can change the world.”¹¹⁹

Compare Ayers' words with Karl Marx's words from "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845): "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."¹²⁰

By the way, immediately after Ayers wrote "You can change the world," he wrote, "Education, of course, is an arena of hope and struggle." Ayers used the "hope and change" message a decade before Obama did. He repeated that message in 2013 at the very end of *Public Enemy*. "I've never been more hopeful for young activists the world around," he wrote. "For humanity and for the future, we must change ourselves; we can change the world."¹²¹

Maxine Greene, professor emeritus at the Teachers College at Columbia University (and Ayers' mentor), wrote the introduction to *Teaching for Social Justice*. According to her, "Teaching for social justice, we must remember, is teaching what we believe ought to be—not merely where moral frameworks are concerned, but in material arrangements for people in all spheres of society."¹²²

Greene expressed a Marxist concept. Michael Harrington, the chair of the Democratic Socialist of America until his death in 1989, noted in *Socialism*, "There was, the nineteen-year-old Karl Marx wrote to his father, a basic contradiction in German philosophy between 'what is and what should be.'"¹²³ Harrington also noted that "... Marx claimed to have solved that contradiction between 'what is and what should be' which he first confronted as a young philosophy student.... The truth was not to be discovered in a Hegelian retrospect upon the past; it was to be created by means of a social revolution which would make the future."¹²⁴

Both Barack and Michelle Obama have made speeches in which they compared the positive "what is" with the normative "what should be." "There must be no doubt that the United States of America welcomes change that advances self-determination and opportunity," Barack Obama said in a May 2011 speech. "Yes, there will be perils that accompany this moment of promise. But after decades of accepting the world as it is in the region, we have a chance to pursue the world as it should be."¹²⁵ In an April 2009 speech at a London girl's school, Michelle Obama noted that, before they were married, Barack Obama took her on a date to a "community meeting." "As he talked to the residents in that community center, he talked about two concepts," she stated. "He talked about 'the world as it is' and 'the world as it should be.' And I talked about this throughout the entire campaign."¹²⁶ She

related the same story a few months earlier at the Democratic National Convention: “Barack stood up that day, and spoke words that have stayed with me ever since. He talked about ‘The world as it is’ and ‘The world as it should be.’” She concluded her speech at the convention by declaring that she and her husband had committed themselves “to building the world as it should be.”¹²⁷

I don’t believe it is a coincidence that both Obamas have echoed Marx’s “what is and what should be.” I don’t believe that Bill Ayers was merely “some guy in the neighborhood” to the Obamas. And I believe the Obamas, Ayers, and other advocates of “social justice” believe Howard Zinn’s version of American history can facilitate the transformation of America to “what it should be.” If students exposed to Zinn come to believe that the Founders Fathers were a “shadowy cabal” who gave us a system that was corrupt and exploitative from the beginning, they will lose respect for the Constitution and our founding principles and ideals. Once that respect is lost, it will be much easier to put a new system in place, i.e., build a world as the socialists believe it should be.

At the Boston Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) Socialist School in 1989, Zinn taught the “History of Socialism.”¹²⁸ He was a recipient of the Eugene V. Debs award in 1998.¹²⁹ He served on the advisory board of *The World Can’t Wait* (WCW), which sought to force President George W. Bush from office.¹³⁰ WCW was initiated in part by supporters of the Revolutionary Communist Party.¹³¹ Along with DSAsers Michael Eric Dyson, Barbara Ehrenreich, Frances Fox Piven, and Cornel West, Zinn was a sponsor of *New Politics* (NP). Derrick Bell, Obama’s former law professor, was also a sponsor. According to that magazine’s website, “During the Cold War, *NP* was a beacon of principled socialist clarity.”¹³²

Zinn was also an original board member of the Movement for a Democratic Society, which is affiliated with the new Students for Democratic Society. Former Weathermen Bernardine Dohrn and Mark Rudd were also on the board.¹³³ It is possible that Zinn was close to the Weathermen as far back as the 1970s. While reading *Prairie Fire*, the Weathermen’s 1974 political manifesto, I noticed that the third section, “On the Road: Impressions of US History,” is essentially an abridged version of Zinn’s *A People’s History*, which was published six years later. In fact, this section begins with the following sentence: “A people’s history is a powerful weapon.”¹³⁴ Interestingly, as of the autumn of 2013, Zinn’s entire book was available on a website entitled “History is a Weapon.”¹³⁵

The website is privately registered, so I was not able to determine who operates it.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., an actual historian, had a chapter entitled “History the Weapon” in *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. “[A] nation denied a conception of its past will be disabled in dealing with its present and its future,” Schlesinger wrote. “As a means of defining national identity, history becomes a mean of shaping history. The writing of history then turns from a meditation into a weapon. ‘Who controls the past controls the future,’ runs the Party slogan in George Orwell’s *1984*; ‘who controls the present controls the past.’”¹³⁶ Or, as Eric Foner, who is quoted on the cover of Zinn’s book, once said, “A new future requires a new past.”¹³⁷

Shortly after Zinn died in 2010, the FBI released its files on the radical historian. Although Zinn denied being a member of the Communist Party USA, informants contradicted Zinn’s denial. One informant, T-1, provides an example on page 50 of Part 1:

T-1, who has admitted his Communist Party (CP) membership from about 1948 to 1951 in the Manhattan-Brooklyn, New York, area, advised on October 4, 1956, that HOWARD ZINN was a CP member about 1950-1951, and is believed to be a member currently due to the past knowledge the source had of him. Informant advised he could not substantiate current membership on the part of ZINN. T-1 also made available a photograph of ZINN taken in about 1951 which showed him instructing a class in Basic Marxism at the Twelfth Assembly District, CP Headquarters, Brooklyn, New York.¹³⁸

Zinn’s daughter, Myla Kabat-Zinn, attempted to cast doubt on the FBI files by saying that her father did not have a sister, as claimed by the FBI.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, I believe the record shows that Zinn was clearly a Marxist well into the 2000s. In fact, when the *Los Angeles Times* reviewed Zinn’s play, “Marx in Soho,” in 2001, the reviewer noted that the play “uses the character of Karl Marx to restate the case for Communism, the death of which, in Zinn’s view, has been greatly exaggerated.”¹⁴⁰

Am I overstating Zinn’s influence amongst American schools and educators? In July 2013, the Associated Press (AP) reported that, when he was the governor of Indiana, Mitch Daniels “tried to ensure Zinn’s book was not used in Indiana’s K-12 and college classrooms and that he worked to ‘disqualify the propaganda’ he

said was being taught to teachers in training at Indiana's colleges." "This terrible anti-American academic has finally passed away," Daniels wrote, referring to Zinn, in an exchange of emails between top state education officials on February 9, 2010. "The obits and commentaries mentioned his book, 'A People's History of the United States,' is the 'textbook of choice in high schools and colleges around the country.' It is a truly execrable, anti-factual piece of disinformation that misstates American history on every page. Can someone assure me that it is not in use anywhere in Indiana? If it is, how do we get rid of it before more young people are forced a totally false version of our history?"

Daniels' education adviser responded by noting that *A People's History of the United States* was being used at Indiana University in a course for teachers. After the emails became public, Daniels told the AP that he found it "encouraging" that there was no evidence that Zinn's book was being used in K-12 classrooms.¹⁴¹

Daniels may have spoken too soon. "Governor Daniels' advisers evidently found no evidence that Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* was in use in K-12 schools in Indiana," wrote Bill Bigelow, the curriculum editor of Rethinking Schools and the co-director of the Zinn Education Project. "I guess they didn't look hard enough. There are more than 300 Indiana teachers registered at the Zinn Education Project to access people's history curriculum materials to 'teach outside the textbook.' And these are only the teachers who have formally registered at the site; many more share people's history-inspired lessons."¹⁴²

WHY ZINN'S REVISIONIST HISTORY IS DANGEROUS

I am certain that there are those who have no problem with Zinn's socialism. However, can they as easily dismiss the consequences of his portrayal of America as an evil country in which Americans of European descent continue to enjoy "white privilege" and use racist practices to exploit minorities?

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. was an associate professor of history at Harvard University, taught at the graduate school at University Center or City University of New York, and received two Pulitzer Prizes during his career. Schlesinger was also a liberal Democrat. Along with Eleanor Roosevelt, John Kenneth Galbraith, Walter Reuther, and Reinhold Niebuhr, he was a founding member of Americans for Democratic Action.¹⁴³ In addition, he was a

speechwriter for Governor Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois, a special advisor to President John F. Kennedy, and a supporter of Senator Robert F. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1968.

Yet, although he was a man of the left, Schlesinger also had concerns about multiculturalism and "underdog history," which is "designed to demonstrate what Bertrand Russell called the 'superior virtue of the oppressed' by inventing or exaggerating past glories and purposes."¹⁴⁴ He expressed these concerns in *The Disuniting of America*, which was originally published in 1991.

"What happens when people of different ethnic origins, speaking different languages, and professing different religions, settle in the same geographical locality and live under the same political sovereignty?" Schlesinger asked. "Unless a common purpose binds them together, tribal hostilities will drive them apart."¹⁴⁵

Schlesinger continued by noting that ethnic tensions have disturbed and divided many nations, including Sri Lanka, Burma, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, and Nigeria. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has more than 250 ethnic groups and over 500 indigenous languages. Muslims make up about half of the country's population, while about 40 percent are Christians.¹⁴⁶ The people lack a common purpose and, thus, tribal hostilities drive the people apart. According to *Time* magazine, "Rioting in 2001 killed more than 1,000 people, and subsequent outbreaks in 2004 and 2008 killed another thousand. Smaller but no less vicious attacks in 2009 claimed dozens of lives."¹⁴⁷ Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group in northern Nigeria, has killed hundreds, including dozens killed in Christmas Day bombings in 2011. Incidentally, loosely translated, "Boko Haram" means "Western education is forbidden."¹⁴⁸

This is the Nigeria that Omiunota Nelly Ukpokodu left. Yet she stands in a University of Missouri classroom today and tells students that they must reject Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream that his "four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Instead, her course is designed to move teachers "from color-blindness to color-vision." Derrick Bell's "Critical Race Theory" also rejects color blindness. In the process, Americans are divided into tribes of African-Americans, European-Americans, Latino-Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.

Schlesinger shared a pertinent quote from Theodore Roosevelt: "The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of

preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all, would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities, an intricate knot of German-Americans, Irish-Americans, English-Americans, French-Americans, Scandinavian-Americans or Italian-Americans, each preserving its separate nationality.”¹⁴⁹

In Nigeria, Boko Haram says “Western education is forbidden.” In America, Jesse Jackson, says, “Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Civ has got to go!”¹⁵⁰ The “tangle of squabbling nationalities” has led to the deaths of thousands in Nigeria. In America, the deaths have been fewer, but they still occur.

In 2011, Nkosi Thandiwe, a black man, shot three young women in Atlanta. One woman was killed and another was left paralyzed. Why did Thandiwe shoot them? “I was trying to prove a point that Europeans had colonized the world, and as a result of that, we see a lot of evil today,” he said. “In terms of slavery, it was something that needed to be answered for. I was trying to spread the message of making white people mend.” Thandiwe claimed that he had developed his beliefs about white people during his years as a student at the University of West Georgia.¹⁵¹ Interestingly, Thandiwe’s mother was once an attorney for the Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR), which provides legal representation to people facing the death penalty.¹⁵² Charles J. Ogletree, Jr. is listed as SCHR’s “Chairperson Emeritus of the Board.” Ogletree is the director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute of Race and Justice at Harvard Law School. He is also the author of *The Presumption of Guilt: The Arrest of Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Race, Class, and Crime in America*.¹⁵³ Gates, you may recall, is the Harvard University professor who was arrested for disorderly conduct after police responded to a call that a man was seen forcibly entering the Gates home. In that case, Barack Obama, after acknowledging that he wasn’t there and didn’t know all the facts, declared that the Cambridge police “acted stupidly” when they arrested his friend.

Ogletree was also one of Obama’s law professors at Harvard and still advises the president. In 2013, Ogletree was working on a book about his former student. The book, *Obama: Our First Black President?*, focuses on Obama’s evolution from “Hawaiian multi-racial child to black American male.”¹⁵⁴

We also saw the “tangle of squabbling nationalities” in the George Zimmerman-Trayvon Martin case, which, unlike the Thandiwe case, received extensive, national coverage. In that case,

Zimmerman, a member of the newly discovered “white Hispanic” tribe was charged with murdering the seventeen-year-old Martin, a black male. After Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges, a majority of whites agreed with the verdict, while 86 percent of blacks disagreed with the verdict. There was also partisan divide regarding the verdict. While 70 percent of Republicans agreed with the verdict, only 30 percent of Democrats did.¹⁵⁵

Eric Liu, a speechwriter and policy adviser to President Clinton, was with the majority of Democrats who disagreed with the verdict. According to Liu, “Martin died not because he was wearing a hoodie but because he was wearing a hoodie while black. Blackness was the fatal variable.”¹⁵⁶ Of course, that is not true. The fatal variable was the fact that Martin sucker punched Zimmerman and then proceeded to beat him violently. Liu and others might say that that is merely Zimmerman’s account, and that we did not hear Martin’s side of the story because he is dead. I would ask them to consider one facet of the case that the media largely ignored. In Zimmerman’s fourth interview with the police, Chris Serino, the lead detective in the case, teamed up with Officer Doris Singleton for “a more aggressive line of questioning.” After Serino suggested that surveillance cameras in the area of the shooting could have captured the attack, Zimmerman responded, “Thank God, I was hoping somebody videotaped it.”¹⁵⁷ Those are not the words of a man who believed surveillance cameras could have shown that he was lying about acting in self defense.

Liu did not allow this fact to get in the way of his argument. “Much has been made about the fact that Zimmerman is white and of Hispanic ethnicity, as if he therefore couldn’t possibly embody white privilege,” he wrote. “This is a deep misreading of the dynamics of race and the media in America.” Further, “As an Asian American, I am endlessly frustrated by how binary and black-and-white—literally and figuratively—the portrayal of race is in our country. Much of the time Asian Americans are an afterthought, or simply presumed foreign. But I assume that had I been the neighborhood watchman that day in Florida, I would have been understood in the media as the nonblack actor. Which is to say, for the limited purposes of this trial, I would have been granted ‘honorary white’ status—whether or not I wanted it.”

Liu did identify one “good thing” about the Zimmerman case: “If there is one hopeful note amid all the anguish and recrimination from the acquittal of George Zimmerman, it’s that growing num-

bers of white people have come to appreciate whiteness for what it is: an unearned set of privileges.”

Liu’s language is straight out of the multiculturalists’ handbook. Compare his words those of Paul Gorski, a NAME activist and associate professor of integrative studies at George Mason University:

I must acknowledge that, as a white, heterosexual, first-language-English-speaking man in the U.S., I have access to a degree of institutional likability that most people of color, lesbians and gay men, people who speak first languages other than English, and women, do not enjoy, and that this discrepancy is based on nothing more than unearned privilege.¹⁵⁸

“The doctrine of White Privilege organizes all individuals, regardless of their circumstances or goodness of heart, into one of two groups: oppressor or the oppressed,” wrote Robert Holland of the Lexington Institute. “Non-whites are supposed to think of themselves as perpetual victims, while whites are to atone for their sins by acceding to any social remedies prescribed by the left-liberal intelligentsia.”¹⁵⁹

Liu expands the category of “non-white oppressor” by claiming that, “for the limited purposes of this trial,” both he, an Asian American, and George Zimmerman, whose mother is Peruvian with some black ancestry, would have “honorary white” status. That suggests that their “honorary white” status, i.e., their role as the oppressor or the oppressed depends on the situation. It also suggests that a white person should always be considered the oppressor, while a black person should always be considered the oppressed. (Presumably, if Obama had not evolved from a “Hawaiian multiracial child to black American male,” he, too, like the multiracial Zimmerman, could have had “honorary white” status in certain scenarios.)

Unfortunately, the incorrect portrayal of Zimmerman as the oppressor and Martin as the oppressed resulted in “tribal” strife during and after the trial. In Washington, D.C., three black men robbed and beat a white man. One of the black men reportedly said, “This is for Trayvon Martin.”¹⁶⁰ In Baltimore, a group of black youths beat a Hispanic man, while, according to a witness, saying, “This is for Trayvon.”¹⁶¹ In addition, Zimmerman, his family, his attorneys, and even the daughters of one of his attorneys

received threats of violence. I believe such threats are inspired by those who have revised our history to focus on our warts.

I believe our children should be taught about slavery, the mistreatment of Indians, and other sins that Zinn wrote about in *A People's History* and Oliver Stone, another “Zinnist,” has focused on in the more recent ten-part documentary, *An Untold History of the United States*. However, they must also be taught about the far greater number of positives associated with our European legacy. According to Schlesinger the “sins of the West are no worse than the sins of Asia or of the Middle East or of Africa.” However, he saw a “crucial difference between the Western tradition and the others”:

The crimes of the West have produced their own antidotes. They have provoked great movements to end slavery, to raise the status of women, to abolish torture, to combat racism, to defend freedom of inquiry and expression, to advance personal liberty and human rights.

Whatever the particular crimes of Europe, that continent is also the source—the *unique* source—of those liberating ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom that constitute our most precious legacy and to which most of the world today aspires. These are *European* ideas, not Asian, nor African, nor Middle Eastern ideas, except by adoption.¹⁶²

These ideas should unite all Americans. Portraying them as evil, racist, and outdated only divides us. Unfortunately, division is the goal of the socialists. “If you want fundamental change, tie your fate to the most oppressed,” Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn wrote in *Race Course Against White Supremacy*. Dividing the world into the oppressed and the oppressor goes back to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the first words of *The Communist Manifesto*:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time

ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.¹⁶³

You can hear Robert Creamer echo Marx in *Listen to Your Mother: Stand Up Straight! How Progressives Can Win*. In Chapter 22, Creamer offered “six motivational messages” for getting out the vote. Message #4 is “It’s Us Versus Them.” “To motivate mobilizable voters, we have to make them feel like part of our ‘team,’” he wrote. “We want them to start rooting for our guy—not to persuade them (presumably they are already persuaded)—but to give them an emotional investment in victory.”

“Candidates who understand that ‘the fight’s the thing’ provoke that reaction,” Creamer continued. “‘Us versus them’ is the second major reason why Harold Washington got out 82% of the African-American vote in 1983.” (Creamer listed “inspiration” as the top reason.)¹⁶⁴

Harold Washington, who was black, won the race for mayor of Chicago in 1983. It was Washington’s victory that inspired Barack Obama to go to Chicago in 1984 to become a community organizer.¹⁶⁵ Ever since then, Obama has used “It’s Us Versus Them” to motivate his followers to join him in “fundamentally transforming the United States of America.”

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