

No Longer JFK's Party

**How Socialists Took Control of a
Major U.S. Political Party**

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At one time I agreed with Socialism, because it was simple. Now I disagree with Socialism, because it is too simple. - G. K. Chesterton¹

Back in 1936, Mr. Democrat himself, Al Smith, the great American, came before the American people and charged that the leadership of his Party was taking the Party of Jefferson, Jackson, and Cleveland down the road under the banners of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. And he walked away from his Party, and he never returned til the day he died—because to this day, the leadership of that Party has been taking that Party, that honorable Party, down the road in the image of the labor Socialist Party of England. – Ronald Reagan, A Time for Choosing (1964)²

In April 2012, former Rep. Allen West (R-Fla.) responded to the following question during a town hall event: “What percentage of the American legislature do you think are card-carrying Marxists or International Socialists?” “That’s a fair question,” West responded. “I believe there’s about 78 to 81 members of the Democratic Party that are members of the Communist Party.” West went on to add, “It’s called the Congressional Progressive Caucus.”³

West’s answer did not sit well with the mainstream media. Darius Dixon of Politico wrote that West “had channeled Joe McCarthy.”⁴ “It’s not the 1940s or the 1950s, Joe McCarthy is no longer rooting out alleged Soviet-supporters in the Legislature and the country is not entangled in the Cold War, but don’t tell Rep. Allen West,” wrote ABC News’ Amy Bingham. “In 1950, another newly elected Republican member of Congress claimed there were 205 known Communists who worked at the State Department,” wrote NPR’s David Melna. “Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin never proved that charge but quickly gained notoriety. The accusations prompted a formal Senate censure of McCarthy in 1954.”⁵

For the record, the Senate did not censure McCarthy because of his accusations; he was censured for his behavior towards his fellow senators.⁶

Of course, the “fact checkers” took West to task. “West is using guilty by association here, and has failed to prove that any member of Congress is a communist,” PolitiFact Florida said. “Pants on Fire!”⁷ PolitiFact Florida also linked to an earlier item concerning a claim from bloggers that three Florida Democratic members of Congress are socialists. PolitiFact Florida also rated that claim “Pants on Fire!” “The list—actually a roster of Congressional Progressive Caucus members (mostly) from Wikipedia—includes Florida Democrats Corrine Brown, Alcee Hastings and Frederica Wilson,” PolitiFact Florida noted. The “fact checkers” checked in with Brad Bauman, executive director of the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), who said “none of the group’s members are Socialists.”⁸ Of course, that’s not true. The list of caucus members on CPC’s website includes Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.⁹ Sanders is a self-described “democratic socialist.”¹⁰ Sanders was also one of the six members of the House of Representatives who established CPC in 1991.¹¹

Congressional Progressive Caucus Members¹²

Keith Ellison, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Rosa DeLauro	Gwen Moore
Raúl Grijalva, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Donna Edwards	Jim Moran
Judy Chu, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Sam Farr	Jerrold Nadler
David Cicilline, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Chaka Fattah	Rick Nolan
Michael Honda, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Lois Frankel	Eleanor Holmes Norton
Sheila Jackson-Lee, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Marcia Fudge	John Olver
Jan Schakowsky, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Alan Grayson	Frank Pallone
Barbara Lee, <i>Whip</i>	Luis Gutierrez	Ed Pastor
Bernie Sanders, <i>Senate Member</i>	Janice Hahn	Chellie Pingree
Karen Bass	Maurice Hinchey	Mark Pocan
Xavier Becerra	Jared Huffman	Jared Polis
Earl Blumenauer	Rush Holt	Charles Rangel
Suzanne Bonamici	Hakeem Jeffries	Lucille Roybal-Allard
Corrine Brown	Eddie Bernice Johnson	Linda Sanchez
Michael Capuano	Marcy Kaptur	Jose Serrano
Andre Carson	Joe Kennedy III	Louise Slaughter
Donna Christensen	Ann McLane Kuster	Mark Takano
Yvette Clarke	John Lewis	Bennie Thompson
William “Lacy” Clay	David Loebsack	John Tierney
Emanuel Cleaver	Ben Ray Lujan	Nydia Velazquez
John Conyers	Carolyn Maloney	Maxine Waters
Steve Cohen	Ed Markey	Mel Watt
Elijah Cummings	Jim McDermott	Peter Welch
Danny Davis	James McGovern	
Peter DeFazio	George Miller	

PolitiFact Florida linked to a PolitiFact Georgia item concerning a similar claim about Democratic members of Congress and CPC. Again, the claim was rated “Pants on Fire.” PolitiFact Georgia also quoted Bauman. “[CPC] was not started by any socialist organization,” he said. “It was not started by any socialists. The fact that anyone would call into question [the caucus members’] patriotism is shocking to me.”¹³ Again, this is not true. Sanders started CPC and he is a self-described democratic socialist, a fact that PolitiFact Georgia acknowledges in the very same item. In addition, PolitiFact Oregon notes that Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.), who left the House of Representatives in 1998, was a card-carrying member of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).¹⁴ Like Sanders, Dellums was a founding member of CPC.

PolitiFact also spoke with Frank Llewellyn, who served as national director of DSA for ten years until stepping down in 2011. According to PolitiFact, “There is not one member of Congress who is a formal member of DSA, Llewellyn said.”¹⁵ If that’s the case, one wonders how Llewellyn would explain this sentence from the Summer 2006 issue of *Democratic Left*, DSA’s newsletter: “DSA has also endorsed DSAer and Congressman Danny Davis in his bid for re-election in Chicago.” The same article noted that Rep. Major Owens (D-NY), who was retiring from Congress, was also a DSA member. The article was written under Llewellyn’s byline.¹⁶

In February 2012, Danny Davis received People’s World “Chris Hani & Rudy Lozano Social Justice Award” at the Communist Party USA headquarters in Chicago. People’s World apparently has no record on its website concerning Davis’ award. Breitbart.com posted a video of Davis with his award along with a 2004 clip of Barack Obama telling a group of Teamsters that Davis is “one of the best congressmen in the whole country.... because he shares our values.”¹⁷

And then there is Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), who is a current vice-chair of CPC. Stanley Kurtz, a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, has found documentation showing that Schakowsky was an active member of DSA. For example, in the February/March 1983 of *Chicago Socialist*, the future congresswoman reported on Illinois Public Action (IPA), which is now known as Citizen Action/Illinois, its political program, and the role of DSA members on IPA’s board.¹⁸ Schakowsky, who served as IPA’s program director, eventually married IPA head Robert

Creamer, who, in 2006, served five months in the Federal Prison Camp at Terre Haute, Indiana, for bank fraud and tax invasion.¹⁹ While in prison, Creamer wrote *Listen to Your Mother: Stand Up Straight! How Progressives Can Win*, which, in part, served as a blueprint for Democrat proposals for universal health care.²⁰ Kurtz also found a 1986 copy of *DSA News*, which reported on Schakowsky's electoral forays in a section titled "DSAers on the Move."²¹ In addition, Schakowsky was an honoree at Chicago DSA's Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner in 2000 and was a featured speaker during DSA's 2004 dinner.²² Obviously, Schakowsky was a DSA member in the 1980s, and has continued her association with DSA.

Further evidence that CPC members are socialists comes from DSA itself. According to *New Ground*, the Chicago DSA's newsletter, in 1997 Political Director Chris Riddiough stated, "DSA goals by 2017 include: a U.S. President from the Progressive Caucus, a 50 member socialist caucus in Congress, successful programs of the likes of universal health care, progressive taxation, social provision and campaign finance reform."²³ Some might read that and claim that a president from CPC and a 50-member socialist caucus in Congress are two separate goals. However, I believe "a 50 member socialist caucus in Congress" is a descriptive clause that is referring to CPC. After all, why would DSA desire a president from the Progressive Caucus rather than one from a socialist caucus? In addition, CPC already had fifty members in 1997. Shooting for the same number in 2017 wouldn't have been much of a goal. Obviously, DSA considers CPC members to be fellow socialists even if they are not "formal" DSA members.

Let me be clear. West overstated his case when he suggested that members of CPC are card-carrying members of the Communist Party. However, if the media and the "fact checkers" had done a little research, they would have found much evidence to support the contention that CPC members are socialists.

Before his death in 2003, Balint Vazsonyi did a great deal of research concerning CPC and DSA. "'What?' I hear you say. 'socialists in the Congress of the United States?'" he asked in the *Washington Times* in April 2002. "Dozens, dear reader, dozens. And they make no secret of it. Although of late it has been refurbished and the address altered, they have their own web site. They call themselves the 'Progressive Caucus,' until recently an arm of the Democratic Socialists of America, itself an arm of the Socialist International. The Progressive Caucus may be a separate entity

now, but the details of its program, as advertised on the web site (www.dsausa.org/pc/pc.caucus.html), are indistinguishable from that of the Socialist International.”²⁴ Note that CPC’s original “own web site,” which is now defunct, was actually a page on DSA’s website. After Vazsonyi and others exposed the connection between CPC and DSA, the CPC page was moved to Sanders’ congressional website.

If you visit DSA’s website (www.dsausa.org), you’ll find that DSA “is the largest socialist organization in the United States, and the principal U.S. affiliate of the Socialist International.”²⁵ According to Michael Harrington, who was the chair of DSA from its founding until his death in 1989, the Socialist International claims “direct descent from Marx’s International Workingmen’s Association.”²⁶ Other affiliates of the Socialist International include the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua and Fatah, the Palestinian political party that was classified as a terrorist organization by the United States Department of State and United States Congress until it renounced terrorism in 1988.

On DSA’s website, you can also find a 2009 PDF file entitled “What is Democratic Socialism?” Oddly, while CPC denies that it works with DSA, we find the following question and answer on the third page:

Q: Aren’t you a party that’s in competition with the Democratic Party for votes and support?

No, we are not a separate party. Like our friends and allies in the feminist, labor, civil rights, religious, and community organizing movements, many of us have been active in the Democratic Party. We work with those movements to strengthen the party’s left wing, represented by the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

The process and structure of American elections seriously hurts third party efforts. Winner-take-all elections instead of proportional representation, rigorous party qualification requirements that vary from state to state, a presidential instead of a parliamentary system, and the two-party monopoly on political power have doomed third party efforts. We hope that at some point in the future, in coalition with our allies, an alternative national party will be viable. For now, we will continue to support progressives who have a real chance at winning elections, which usually means left-wing Democrats.²⁷

In other words, why does DSA need its own political party when it has CPC working for them in Congress? The policy of DSA working as part of the Democratic Party rather than sponsoring its own candidates is known as the “Shachtmanite Strategy,” which Harrington epitomized when he was elected a delegate to the Democratic Party convention in 1974.²⁸ The strategy is named after Max Shachtman, who was a Marxist theorist and adviser to the AFL-CIO bureaucracy under George Meany.²⁹ (On the acknowledgement page of *Socialism*, Harrington thanks Shachtman, who “introduced me to the vision of democratic Marxism and whose theory of bureaucratic collectivism is so important to my analysis.”) As Harrington noted in *Socialism*, socialists who want their own party in the U.S. “have not recognized the belated fulfillment of the ‘English policy’ in the emergence of a de facto social democratic party based upon the unions and operating within the Democratic Party.”³⁰ DSA reaffirmed this strategy in 2008 when it endorsed Obama for president: “Given the U.S.’s restrictive election laws, the only electoral fight possible against corporate domination has to happen in and around the Democratic Party, on the federal, state, and (allowing for the rare exception) county and city levels.”³¹

Obviously, there are socialists in Congress. PolitiFact either didn’t look into CPC-DSA connections or they deliberately misled its readers.

Another organization, Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), shared a blatant lie on its website after Rep. West made his comment concerning communists in Congress. In an article entitled “What Allen West Does Not Know About Communists and Congress,” *The Nation’s* John Nichols wrote, “The Congress is not currently a haven for followers of Karl Marx. And there are none to be found in the Congressional Progressive Caucus.” Further, “The Congressional Progressive Caucus has over the years included a few friends of democratic socialism—which espouses an economic and social justice vision every bit as far removed from the Stalinist excesses that West seems to be decrying as the current Republican Party’s views are from those of its radical founders.”³² Did you catch the switch there? Members of DSA, who are definitely followers of Marx, do not see the Stalinist excesses as part of Marx’s vision. “This human and agricultural catastrophe was provoked by a savage war against the peasantry which had no rationale in all of Marxist literature,” Michael Harrington wrote concerning Stalin’s collectivization and purges.³³

“The democratic socialist connections and tendencies that exist are no secret,” Nichols continued. “The CPC was once led by US Senator Bernie Sanders, who has always identified as a socialist, and it includes as a longtime member former House Judiciary Committee chairman John Conyers, who (like former US Senator Ted Kennedy and the Reverend Jesse Jackson before him) has worked with groups such as Democratic Socialists of America to advance proposals for single-payer ‘Medicare for All’ healthcare reforms.” Again, DSA is an arm of the Socialist International, which claims “direct descent from Marx’s International Workingmen’s Association.”

THE INSIDE/OUTSIDE STRATEGY

In addition to the Shachtmanite Strategy, CPC, PDA, and other socialist groups employ the “inside-outside strategy.” Cole Stangler of *In These Times* explained this strategy when writing about a January 2013 meeting in which PDA “gathered with left-leaning members of Congress and social movement leaders to lay out the organization’s agenda for the next four years”:

PDA, whose allies in Congress come from the activist wing of the 76-member Congressional Progressive Caucus, engages in what it calls an “inside-outside” strategy of connecting the demands of progressive social movements to legislative action from members of Congress. Saturday afternoon’s “Progressive Central,” the third such gathering in the group’s eight-year existence, embodied that “inside-outside” spirit, as PDA-backed members of Congress spoke on panels with activists from the labor, peace and environmental movements at the University of the District of Columbia’s law school. At other times during the conference, attendees mingled outside in a hall that featured tabling from groups like CODE PINK, Public Citizen and Democratic Socialists of America.³⁴

Stangler interviewed Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), who is a co-chair of CPC, for his article. “I’m a Saul Alinsky guy, you know, that’s where I learned this stuff,” Grijalva said.”³⁵ Indeed, Grijalva has been a radical for many years. As a young man, he was a member of El Movimiento, the Chicano civil rights movement, and wrote for the group’s newspaper, *Coraje!*, which featured the words “My race first” on the front page.³⁶ Grijalva was also active in the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA).³⁷ Ac-

ording to MEChA's website, "El Plan de Aztlán" is "fundamental to the MEChA Philosophy."³⁸ This document begins with these words:

In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal "gringo" invasion of our territories, we, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, declare that the call of our blood is our power, our responsibility, and our inevitable destiny.

We are free and sovereign to determine those tasks which are justly called for by our house, our land, the sweat of our brows, and by our hearts. Aztlán belongs to those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not to the foreign Europeans. We do not recognize capricious frontiers on the bronze continent

Brotherhood unites us, and love for our brothers makes us a people whose time has come and who struggles against the foreigner "gabacho" who exploits our riches and destroys our culture. With our heart in our hands and our hands in the soil, we declare the independence of our mestizo nation. We are a bronze people with a bronze culture. Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free pueblos, we are Aztlán.

Por La Raza todo. Fuera de La Raza nada.³⁹

Those last words mean "For the Race, Everything; Outside the Race, nothing."

Perhaps CPC's other co-chair, Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) is a little less radical than Grijalva? Sadly, that is not the case. "After he unexpectedly won the endorsement of the [Democratic Farmer Labor Party] nominating convention for Minnesota's Fifth District congressional seat on May 6, 2006, Keith Ellison faced a serious problem," Scott Johnson of Powerline wrote. "The problem was how to deal with his well-known involvement with the Nation of Islam. Had Ellison not managed to dispose of the problem, his candidacy would likely have been irreparably weakened in the competitive DFL primary field." To get around this problem, Elli-

son simply lied about his involvement with Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, and, according to Johnson, "the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* has simply reported the assertions and repeated them as facts ever since."⁴⁰

Johnson wrote the following about Ellison and his involvement with the Nation of Islam in an October 2006 *Weekly Standard* article entitled "Louis Farrakhan's First Congressman":

Ellison was born Catholic in Detroit. He states that he converted to Islam as an undergraduate at Wayne State University. As a third-year student at the University of Minnesota Law School in 1989-90, he wrote two columns for the *Minnesota Daily* under the name "Keith Hakim." In the first, Ellison refers to "Minister Louis Farrakhan," defends Nation of Islam spokesman Khalid Abdul Muhammad, and speaks in the voice of a Nation of Islam advocate. In the second, "Hakim" demands reparations for slavery and throws in a demand for an optional separate homeland for American blacks. In February 1990, Ellison participated in sponsoring Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) to speak at the law school on the subject "Zionism: Imperialism, White Supremacy or Both?" Jewish law students met personally with Ellison and appealed to him not to sponsor the speech at the law school; he rejected their appeal, and, as anticipated, Ture gave a notoriously anti-Semitic speech.⁴¹

Ellison admitted that he worked on behalf of the Nation of Islam in 1995. "At a rally for the Million Man March held at the University of Minnesota," Johnson wrote, "Ellison appeared on-stage with Khalid Abdul Muhammad, who ran true to form: According to a contemporaneous *Star Tribune* article, 'If words were swords, the chests of Jews, gays and whites would be pierced.'"⁴²

Given the radicalism of Grijalva and Ellison, one might suspect that the folks behind PDA are also radicals. A look at PDA's advisory board confirms that suspicion.⁴³ In addition to CRC's co-chairs, other board members include the following individuals:

- **Mimi Kennedy, Advisory Board Chair:** Kennedy, a 9/11 "Truther," signed 911Truth.org's statement alleging that the Bush administration allowed the al Qaeda attack to happen.⁴⁴ Kennedy also participated in a 2006 fundraiser for Rep. Lynn Woolsey, a CPC member, at

the Brentwood home of Stanley and Betty Sheinbaum, who have been DSA members.⁴⁵

- **Medea Benjamin:** Benjamin is a co-founder of Code Pink and the founding director of Global Exchange. In 1992 she endorsed the Committees of Correspondence's "Conference on Perspectives for Democracy and Socialism in the 90s," which was held at Berkeley, California, on July 17-19.⁴⁶ The Committees of Correspondence began in 1991 when approximately one third of the Communist Party USA membership split from the party to form a new organization.⁴⁷ Benjamin also signed the 911Truth.org statement.
- **Steve Cobble:** According to KeyWiki, Cobble served in an advisory role during the first strategic meetings to plan the New Party. The first meeting included Gerry Hudson from DSA and Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The Fall 1994 issue of *New Party News* listed over 100 New Party activists, including Cobble.⁴⁸
- **Rep. John Conyers:** CPC member. According to KeyWiki, "Conyers was a special guest on day one of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee/New American Movement Unity Convention in Detroit March 21/22 1982, that resulted in the formation of Democratic Socialists of America."⁴⁹ In 2003, Conyers was a keynote speaker at the DSA conference in Detroit. Conyers opened by saying that "with a crypto-fascist administration, there's no singular purpose more important than unelecting the unelected president."⁵⁰ In December 1998 I emailed DSA and asked if any CPC members (there were just 58 at that time) are also DSA members. I received this reply from Solveig Wilder, membership services: "Ron Dellums (who recently retired from Congress) is a Vice Chair of DSA, and Danny Davis, John Conyers, and Major Owens are all DSA Members. Bernie Sanders is identified as a 'friend of DSA,' and several of the Congressional Progressive Caucus members have worked with DSA on various issues."⁵¹
- **Rep. Donna Edwards:** CPC member. Edwards was a lobbyist for Public Citizen.⁵² In 2008, Bill Fletcher, Jr., another PDA advisory board member, wrote about Ed-

wards and other progressive candidates. “The radical Left can engage in electoral work to raise issues,” he wrote. “This can take place at the level of local or state-wide initiatives or referenda, or it can take place in the context of battling over the platform of a particular candidate. Initiatives and referenda are very straight to the point. With candidates such as that of Democratic nominee for Congress Donna Edwards (from Maryland), their candidacy can become a means to push a very progressive agenda—in her case, around the war.”⁵³

- **Jodie Evans:** Like Medea Benjamin, Evans co-founded Code Pink and signed the 911Truth.org statement.⁵⁴ She, Van Jones, and a third signatory later requested to have their names removed from the statement. In June 2008, Politico reported that Evans had “pledged to raise at least \$50,000 for Obama, according to the Democrat’s campaign site.”⁵⁵
- **Bill Fletcher, Jr.:** Fletcher is a leading U.S. Marxist. In 1990 he was an associate editor of the socialist magazine *Forward Motion* and a member of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.⁵⁶ He later served in leadership and staff positions in District 65-United Auto Workers, National Postal Mail Handlers Union and Service Employees International Union.⁵⁷
- **Lila Garrett:** According to KeyWiki, Garrett “hosts ‘Connect the Dots’ on Pacifica’s KPFC in Los Angeles. She was Southern California Chair of the 2004 Kucinich campaign, and past president of Southern California Americans for Democratic Action. She has served on the boards of the ACLU, the Venice Family Clinic and the Writers Guild of America. She founded Americans against War in Iraq, and is a founding board member of the California Clean Money Campaign.”⁵⁸
- **Thom Hartmann:** Hartmann is an author and TV/radio host who signed the 911Truth.org statement. Hartmann is also a self-described “democratic socialist” and “old leftover hippie activist,” and says the “one politician in Washington whose beliefs line up squarely” with his is Sen. Bernie Sanders, the only openly socialist member of the U.S. Congress.⁵⁹ According to Accuracy in Media (AIM), “The Russia Today (RT) Moscow-funded

propaganda channel, which is backing the murderous regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, aired a special program on [February 22, 2012] on how progressives in the U.S. can ‘Take Back the American Dream’ by defeating Republicans. The propaganda effort was broadcast throughout the United States and produced in collaboration with major liberal groups such as the Campaign for America’s Future, MoveOn.org and Demos, all of them [George] Soros-funded.” Thom Hartmann served as host of the program.⁶⁰ Hartmann’s television program, *The Big Picture*, is produced in Russia Today’s studios in Washington, D.C.⁶¹ When AIM’s Cliff Kincaid asked Hartmann how much the Russians were paying him to air *The Big Picture*, Hartmann reportedly refused to answer and grabbed Kincaid’s camera.⁶²

- **Tom Hayden:** Hayden was one of the founders of the leftist student activist group Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and drafted SDS’s manifesto, the Port Huron Statement.⁶³ According to Wikipedia, “SDS developed from the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the youth branch of a socialist educational organization known as the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). LID descended from the Intercollegiate Socialist Society.”⁶⁴ Hayden was a speaker at DSA’s national convention, “Come Out Swinging: Socialism in the Age of Obama,” in 2013.⁶⁵
- **Jim Hightower:** Hightower received the Eugene V. Debs (named after the socialist presidential candidate) award in 1995.⁶⁶ According to KeyWiki, “On 1995, four young Democratic Socialists of America members, Maggie Dyer and Jason Murphy of Little Rock, Arkansas, Matt Mayers Cambridge, Massachusetts and Eric Olson of College Park, Maryland, wrote a letter to *Democratic Left*, July/August issue, advocating that DSA support the New Party. They claimed Ralph Nader and Jim Hightower were New Party supporters.”⁶⁷
- **Former Rep. Dennis Kucinich:** CPC member when he was in Congress. According to Patrick Martin on the World Socialist Web Site, Kucinich, a former mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, “was closely allied with the Stalinists

of the CPUSA, who still had significant influence in the working class of Cleveland, particularly in such unions as the UE and UAW.”⁶⁸ Kucinich was a speaker at the 2003 Take Back America conference, which was organized by the Institute for Policy Studies, and the DSA-dominated Campaign for America’s Future.⁶⁹ Kucinich spoke at a DSA PAC party in Washington, D.C., in 2006.⁷⁰ In 2009, Kucinich endorsed Rick Nagin in his city council race in Cleveland.⁷¹ Prior to the election, CNN noted that Nagin was a registered Democrat and a member of the Communist Party.⁷²

- **Rep. Barbara Lee:** CPC member. According to Key-Wiki, Lee was an executive board member of the Communist Party USA dominated U.S. Peace Council from 1983-1985.⁷³ At the Committees of Correspondence (CoC) founding conference in 1992, Lee, then a Democratic assemblywoman in California, was a candidate for the CoC National Coordinating Committee.⁷⁴ In September 1999, Lee co-sponsored a Communist Party USA fundraising event in Berkeley.⁷⁵ For several years, Lee has given certificates of appreciation to honorees at the Northern California People’s Weekly World (PWW)/Nuestro Mundo banquet. PWW is the newspaper of the Communist Party USA.⁷⁶
- **Michael Lighty:** Lighty became the national organizational director of DSA on July 1, 1990. He was elected to DSA’s National Political Committee in 1997.⁷⁷
- **Rep. Jim McGovern:** CPC member. The September-October, 2002 issue of *The Radical Yankee*, the newsletter of the Boston-area DSA, thanked McGovern and others for making its “DSA Awards Night” a success.⁷⁸ McGovern also worked with DSA members to alter U.S. policy vis-à-vis Iraq.⁷⁹
- **Andy Shallal:** According to Wikipedia, “In 2005, Shallal spoke at the counter-inaugural of President George W. Bush held at Malcolm X Park. Later that year, he provided catering at Cindy Sheehan’s Camp Casey protest in Crawford, Texas. Sheehan later participated in an Impeachment Forum sponsored by Democracy Rising at the U Street Busboys location.” Shallal owns the Busboys and Poets restaurant chain.⁸⁰

These are some of the “outsiders” who are aligned with the “insiders,” i.e., the “activist wing of the 76-member Congressional Progressive Caucus” and, now, Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), whom PDA endorsed in 2012.⁸¹ They’re socialists, communists, 911 Truthers, and other radicals who are clearly out of the mainstream in America. All Americans who believe in the principles of our Founders should be extremely concerned that more than one-third of the Democratic Party caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives belong to CPC. Even more troublesome is the fact that dozens of other House Democrats who are not CPC members share CPC’s socialist beliefs.

OBAMA’S SOCIALISM

There is yet another Democrat in Washington whose extensive socialist connections escaped the scrutiny of “fact checkers” and the mainstream media: Barack Obama.

The mainstream media have displayed an unconscionable lack of curiosity concerning Obama’s early years. However, in *Dreams From My Father*, Obama’s 1993 autobiography, Obama wrote about being mentored by an African-American man named “Frank” in Honolulu. It has now been established that he was Frank Marshall Davis, who was a friend of Stanley Dunham, Obama’s grandfather. “Our grandfather ... thought (Frank) was a point of connection, a bridge if you will, to the larger African-American experience for my brother,” Maya Soetoro-Ng, Obama’s half-sister, said in a 2008 interview.⁸² Davis, who was a literal card-carrying member of the Communist Party USA (number 47544⁸³), advised the college-bound Obama to “keep your eyes open” and “Stay awake” otherwise he would be “trained” against his own interests.⁸⁴ Obama explained how he carried out Davis’s advice. “To avoid being mistaken for a sellout, I chose my friends carefully,” he wrote in *Dreams*. “The more politically active black students. The foreign students. The Chicanos. The Marxist professors and structural feminists and punk-rock performance poets.”⁸⁵

In a 2012 interview, Dr. John C. Drew, a former Marxist, said he had met Obama through his girlfriend, Caroline Boss, when she was a student at Occidental College. Boss was co-president of the Occidental Democratic Socialist Alliance and introduced Obama to him as “one of us.” “The young Obama was a garden variety

Marxist-Leninist,” Drew said. “He and Boss and his sophomore year roommate, Hasan Chandoo, believed that social forces were creating an inevitable Communist revolution in the U.S. and that it was important to have a highly trained elite of educated leaders guide this revolutionary process and oversee it once the revolution took place.”⁸⁶

Drew’s story has been largely, if not entirely, dismissed by the mainstream media. However, Obama biographer David Remnick wrote that in 1981 the Democratic Socialist Alliance at Occidental College played a central role in planning a campus rally against apartheid in South Africa, and noted that Obama delivered a speech at that rally.⁸⁷ (During his 2013 visit to South Africa, Obama himself referred to his involvement with the anti-apartheid movement when he said, “I actually took my first step in the political life because of South Africa.”⁸⁸) Unlike Drew, Remnick is a prominent member of the mainstream media. He is the editor of *The New Yorker*, a magazine that endorsed Obama in both 2008⁸⁹ and 2012.⁹⁰

After graduating from Columbia and going to Chicago to work as a community organizer in 1985, Obama took notice of a “Free South Africa” sign planted on the lawn of Trinity United Church of Christ. “Obama, was not a churchgoer at the time, but he found himself returning to the sanctuary of Trinity United,” the *Chicago Tribune* reported in January 2007. “In [Rev. Jeremiah Wright] he had found both a spiritual mentor and a role model.” The *Chicago Tribune* also reported that Wright “warned the community activist that getting involved with Trinity might turn off other black clergy because of the church’s radical reputation.”⁹¹

Why would other black clergy consider Trinity United to be “radical”? According to Wright, “The vision statement of Trinity United Church of Christ is based upon the systematized liberation theology that started in 1969 with the publication of Dr. James Cone’s book, *Black Power and Black Theology*.”⁹²

Cone also expressed his views on black liberation theology in a 1980 essay entitled “The Black Church and Marxism: What Do They Have To Say To Each Other?” Cone’s essay was written for the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee’s seminar on “Religion, Socialism, and the Black Experience,” held at Asbury United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., and included comments by Michael Harrington. “I think that blacks can overcome the problem of marxism being white and racist the same way we overcame the problem of Christianity being white and racist,”

Cone wrote. “We can indigenize marxism, that is, reinterpret it for our situation. We do not refuse to ride in cars or airplanes, nor do we reject any other useful instrument just because they were invented by whites. Why then should we reject marxism if it proves to be of use in our struggle for freedom?” Further, “Together black religion and marxist philosophy may show us the way to build a completely new society. With that combination, we may be able to realize in the society the freedom of which we sing and pray for in the black church.”⁹³

In other words, Obama made the conscious effort during the 1980s to join a church whose vision statement embraced Marxism as route to freedom. He and his family continued to be members of that church until Wright proved to be a liability to Obama’s presidential campaign.

Obama continued to associate with Marxists after completing law school and returning to Chicago. Shortly before Obama’s election as president in 2008, Stanley Kurtz reported, “During his first campaign for the Illinois state senate in 1995-96, Barack Obama was a member of, and was endorsed by, the far-left New Party. Obama’s New Party ties give the lie to his claim to be a post-partisan, post-ideological pragmatist. Particularly in Chicago, the New Party functioned as the electoral arm of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN).” At that time, Kurtz was not yet prepared to say that Obama was a socialist. However, he did conclude that the New Party was far to the left of the American mainstream.⁹⁴

The Obama campaign responded by calling Kurtz a “Right-wing hatchet man and conspiracy theorist.” According to the campaign’s Fight the Smears website, “Stanley Kurtz is pushing a new crackpot smear against Barack falsely claiming he was a member of something called the New Party. But the truth is Barack has been a member of only one political party, the Democratic Party. In all six primary campaigns of his career, Barack has has [sic] run as a Democrat. The New Party did support Barack once in 1996, but he was the only candidate on the ballot in his race and never solicited the endorsement.”⁹⁵

Kurtz went on to publish a well-documented, 485-page book entitled *Radical-In-Chief: Barack Obama and the Untold Story of American Socialism* in 2010. According to Kurtz, “The president has systematically disguised the truth about his socialist convictions, sometimes by directly misrepresenting his past and sometimes omitting or parceling out damaging information to dis-

guise its real importance. Jeremiah Wright, Bill Ayers, and ACORN—all of Obama's well-known radical ties are entry points into the much larger and still unknown socialist world where Obama's career was nurtured. That is why the president has dis-guised and withheld the truth about these political partnerships."⁹⁶

Fight the Smears' denial that Obama was ever a member of the New Party is an example of Obama withholding the truth. In June 2012, Kurtz reported, "Recently obtained evidence from the updated records of Illinois ACORN at the Wisconsin Historical Society now definitively establishes that Obama was a member of the New Party." In addition, the records showed that Obama signed a contract "promising to publicly support and associate himself with the New Party while in office." Minutes from the New Party's Chicago chapter's meeting on January 11, 1996, read as follows: "Barack Obama, candidate for State Senate in the 13th Legislative District, gave a statement to the membership and answered questions. He signed the New Party 'Candidate Contract' and requested an endorsement from the New Party. He also joined the New Party." In addition, "Consistent with this, a roster of the Chicago chapter of the New Party from early 1997 lists Obama as a member, with January 11, 1996, indicated as the date he joined."⁹⁷

It is very possible that Obama joined the New Party earlier than 1996. According to DSA Chicago's September/October 1995 newsletter, Obama attended a New Party membership meeting in July 1995. According to the newsletter, "Although ACORN and SEIU Local 880 were the harbingers of the NP there was a strong presence of CoC and DSA (15% DSA)."⁹⁸ "CoC" is the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism, which is a Communist Party USA breakaway group.

An October 1996 New Party document retrieved using the non-profit Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine" also noted Obama's membership in the New Party: "Illinois: Three NP-members won Democratic primaries last Spring and face off against Republican opponents on election day: Danny Davis (U.S. House), Barack Obama (State Senate) and Patricia Martin (Cook County Judiciary)."⁹⁹

An article in the November 1996 issue of *Progressive Populist* also mentioned Obama's New Party membership: "New Party members and supported candidates won 16 of 23 races, including an at-large race for the Little Rock, Ark., City Council, a seat on the county board for Little Rock and the school board for Prince George's County, Md. Chicago is sending the first New Party

member to Congress, as Danny Davis, who ran as a Democrat, won an overwhelming 85% victory. New Party member Barack Obama was uncontested for a State Senate seat from Chicago.”¹⁰⁰

We know that Obama ran for the Illinois state senate as a Democrat in 1996. So how is it possible that he could have also been a member of the New Party? Obama took advantage of a concept known as “fusion.” “Fusion is a pretty simple concept,” wrote Erick Erickson in 2008. “A candidate could run as both a Democrat and a New Party member to signal the candidate was, in fact, a left-leaning candidate, or at least not a center-left DLC type candidate. If the candidate—let’s call him Barack Obama—received only 500 votes in the Democratic Party against another candidate who received 1000 votes, Obama would clearly not be the nominee. But, if Obama also received 600 votes from the New Party, Obama’s New Party votes and Democratic votes would be fused. He would be the Democratic nominee with 1100 votes.”¹⁰¹ The U.S. Supreme Court has since ruled that fusion is unconstitutional.

The New Party was closely aligned with the Chicago chapter of DSA, and Obama was close to DSA and its members. In 1995, Illinois State Senator Alice Palmer introduced Obama as her successor at the home of Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn, co-founders of the Weather Underground, a self-described communist revolutionary group. Dr. Quentin Young, a former communist, advocate for single-payer health care, and DSA leader, was also present.¹⁰² The Chicago DSA honored Young at its Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner in 1992 for the decades he spent in the “the forefront of the campaign for universal and comprehensive health care for all Americans.”¹⁰³ Young was not unfamiliar with the Weather Underground leaders. After the Days of Rage in Chicago in 1969, Young, who headed the Chicago Medical Committee for Human Rights, treated Weatherman Mark Rudd’s wounds.¹⁰⁴ In addition, Obama almost certainly knew Young before this meeting. After all, Young’s partner for thirty years in his Hyde Park medical practice was David Scheiner. Scheiner served as Obama’s personal doctor from 1987 until 2009.¹⁰⁵ He is also a member of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP), which is “a single issue organization advocating a universal, comprehensive single-payer national health program.”¹⁰⁶ Young serves as PNHP’s treasurer and national coordinator.¹⁰⁷

Obama later participated in a student-sponsored DSA “Economic Security Forum” at the University of Chicago on February 25, 1996. According to Kurtz, when Obama unsuccessfully chal-

lenged Bobby Rush for his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2000, DSA remained technically neutral. However, DSA's newsletter, *New Ground*, clearly tilted towards Obama. According to the newsletter, Bobby Rush "hasn't always been the ideal Congressman from a left perspective ... When Obama participated in a 1996 [University of Chicago Young DSA] Townhall Meeting on Economic Insecurity, much of what he had to say was well within the mainstream of European social democracy."¹⁰⁸

"Social democracy" is defined as "a political movement advocating a gradual and peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism by democratic means."¹⁰⁹

"Professor" Obama also demonstrated an affinity for socialism while teaching at the University of Chicago Law School. *New York Times* correspondent Jodi Kantor has noted that Obama's "signature legal course was on racism and law." In that course, he assigned readings by W.E.B. Du Bois.¹¹⁰ Du Bois, one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, was a strident socialist. "American Negroes must study socialism, its rise in Europe and Asia, and its peculiar suitability for the emancipation of Africa," he wrote in 1958. "They must realize that no system of reform offers the American Negro such real emancipation as socialism. The capitalism which so long ruled Europe and North America was founded on Negro slavery in America, and that slavery will never completely disappear so long as private capitalism continues to survive."¹¹¹ At the age of 93, Du Bois joined the Communist Party USA.

Other founders of the NAACP were also socialists. William English Walling, a descendant of Kentucky slaveholders, was a founder of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society and the Social Democratic League.¹¹² Henry Moskowitz, an associate of Walling's, was also a socialist.¹¹³ Charles Edward Russell was a leader of the Socialist Party.¹¹⁴ Mary White Ovington joined the Socialist Party in 1905.¹¹⁵

"Not many people know that the NAACP was actually started by white socialists who invited blacks into the organization," Dr. Melvin L. Johnson, the black pastor of the Heart of Christ Community Church of Brazoria, Texas, said in a 2007 interview. Johnson maintains that socialists continue to lead the NAACP:

Simply put, the NAACP of today serves as the clearinghouse for the modern socialist movement. On the national front, this

specifically applies to the Congressional Black Caucus. No black person who does not follow the NAACP's leftist philosophy will get support from the organization, especially when it comes to freeing struggling inner-city black and Hispanic kids from the clutches of the failing public schools. It is the legacy of socialism I believe that they are loyal to. To many blacks, its evils are not realized, and are seen as a virtue.

Today's black liberals hide behind the new term "Progressive," but that ideology is no different from that of socialists Daniel Ortega and Hugo Chavez. If you would simply look at the present-day national leadership of the NAACP and other black leftist groups, they are positioned by the white liberals as the vanguard of black America.¹¹⁶

Interestingly, of the thirty-nine voting representatives and two non-voting delegates in the Congressional Black Caucus in 2012, twenty-four are also members of the DSA-aligned Congressional Progressive Caucus. Julian Bond, the NAACP chairman from 1998 to 2010, was a DSA member during the 1980s.¹¹⁷ The Chicago DSA also honored Bond at its annual Eugene V. Debs-Norman Thomas-Michael Harrington Dinner in 1993.¹¹⁸ Obviously, many blacks involved with the Democratic Party, including Obama, share Du Bois' belief in socialism.

Some might argue that Obama left his socialist connections in the past and that he became much more moderate when he ran for the U.S. Senate and, later, for president. That argument would be incorrect.

Writing about Obama's campaign for the U.S. Senate in 2004, Edward McClelland, a veteran Chicago journalist, noted that "there was no better place to see Obama work both his bases than the Heartland Café, a restaurant in Rogers Park, Chicago's most integrated neighborhood. Founded by hippies, the Heartland was renowned for its vegan dishes, its folk music concerts, and a magazine rack that carried *Dissent* and the *Nation*."¹¹⁹ One of the founders of the cafe, Michael James, is more than just a hippie. He was an SDS national officer during the 1960s. One of James' former girlfriends has written that he brought her to her first SDS meeting. She also noted that her status as his new girlfriend at the meeting gave her "a certain cache." That girlfriend was Bernardine Dohrn, who later became a leader of the Weather Underground.¹²⁰

When the Heartland Café celebrated its 32nd anniversary on August 11, 2008, the cafe suggested that celebrants make dona-

tions to “Obama for President or to the Heartland Green Roof Fund.”¹²¹ Kathleen Hogan, who co-founded Heartland Café with James, notes on LinkedIn that she has taught community organizing at the college level and was an “Obama Fellow ‘12 at Campaign for Change.”¹²²

In 2008, Peter Dreier was an adviser to Obama’s presidential campaign.¹²³ According to Kurtz, Dreier was a member of DSA’s National Executive Committee. In addition, “Dreier would later serve as a key strategist in ACORN’s campaign to pressure banks into funding high-risk mortgages to low-credit customers.”¹²⁴ Dreier is currently the Dr. E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics, and director of the Urban and Environmental Policy Department at Occidental College in Los Angeles.¹²⁵ He recently wrote *The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame*, which is described as “a colorful and witty history of the most influential progressive leaders of the twentieth century and beyond.”¹²⁶ The list of progressive leaders includes DSAers Michael Harrington, Gloria Steinem, and Barbara Ehrenreich, as well as socialist presidential candidates Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas. Saul Alinsky, Howard Zinn, and Michael Moore are also on the list.¹²⁷

In addition to Dreier, the following individuals have served in the Obama administration and have connections to socialist or Marxist groups:

- **Ron Bloom:** In February 2009 Bloom was named Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury on the President’s Task Force on the Automotive Industry. Obama introduced Bloom as his senior counselor for manufacturing policy the following Labor Day.¹²⁸ From February 2011 until he left the White House the following August, Bloom served as the Assistant to the President for Manufacturing Policy. In May 1979, Bloom wrote an article for *Democratic Left*, which identified him as an activist with the Boston local of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). The DSOC and New American Movement merged in 1982 to form DSA.¹²⁹ Bloom also served as a research and negotiating specialist for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).¹³⁰ SEIU is closely aligned with DSA. In fact, Eliseo Medina, who resigned as the

union's secretary-treasurer in October 2013, is a DSA honorary chair.¹³¹

- **Rosa Brooks:** From April 2009 to July 2011, Brooks served as Counselor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. In May 2010 she also became Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and then Special Coordinator for Rule of Law and Humanitarian Policy.¹³² Before joining the Obama administration, Brooks served as special counsel to the president at George Soros' Open Society Institute.¹³³ Brooks' mother, Barbara Ehrenreich, became co-chair—alongside Michael Harrington—of DSA in 1983.¹³⁴ She is currently a DSA honorary chair.¹³⁵ Ehrenreich reportedly named her daughter after Rosa Parks and Rosa Luxemburg.¹³⁶ Luxemburg and other Independent Social Democrats founded the German Communist Party in 1918.
- **Carol Browner:** Browner served as director of the White House Office of Energy and Climate Change Policy in the Obama administration from 2009 to 2011.¹³⁷ At the beginning of 2009, Browner was still listed as a member of the Socialist International Commission for a Sustainable World Society. "Browner's name and biography have been scrubbed from the Web site of Socialist International, the umbrella group for 170 'social democratic, socialist and labor parties' in 55 countries," Fox News reported on January 15, 2009. "But a photo of Browner speaking in Greece to the group's Congress on June 30 was captured." DSA is one of the organizations under Socialist International's umbrella.¹³⁸
- **Heather Higginbottom:** Higginbottom served as the Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy from 2009 to 2010 after serving on the Obama for America campaign. In October 2011, she became Deputy Director of the federal Office of Management and Budget.¹³⁹ On October 30, 2001, while working for Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.), Higginbottom addressed a Boston DSA-organized forum entitled "Welfare, Children and Families: The Impact of Welfare Reform." Another panelist, William Julius Wilson, was

also a panelist on the DSA-sponsored forum in which Obama participated in 1996.¹⁴⁰

- **Van Jones:** Jones served as special advisor for Green Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation at the White House Council on Environmental Quality from March to September 2009. Jones was involved with the Bay Area radical group Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement (STORM), which had Marxist roots. In February 2010, Jones became a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, where he leads their Green Opportunity Initiative.¹⁴¹
- **Hilda Solis:** Solis served as Secretary of Labor from 2009 to 2013. According to *Democratic Left*, at DSA's 2005 national convention in Los Angeles, "...delegates recognized the contributions of DSA vice chair and *Washington Post* columnist Harold Meyerson, Occidental College sociologist and longtime DSAer Peter Dreier and insurgent California Congress member Hilda Solis (D) who in turn provided in-depth perspectives of the political scene."¹⁴² In 2008 Hilda Solis served on Obama's National Latino Advisory Council alongside DSA honorary chair and SEIU's then executive vice president Eliseo Medina. Congressman Raúl Grijalva, a current co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, also served on that council.¹⁴³

As president, Obama has also honored DSA members. He presented DSA member, former SEIU head, and AFL-CIO President Emeritus John Sweeney with the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, in February 2011.¹⁴⁴ Dolores Huerta received the Medal of Freedom in May 2012. According to *USA Today*, "Dolores Huerta helped organize migrant farm workers along with Cesar Chavez. Obama noted that Huerta pointed out before the event that his 2008 campaign had 'stolen' a slogan from the farm movement: 'Yes, we can.'"¹⁴⁵ Huerta is a DSA honorary chair.¹⁴⁶ Obama presented Gloria Steinem, also a DSA honorary chair, with the Medal of Freedom in November 2013.¹⁴⁷

On January 10, 2012, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and other senior Obama administration officials joined with "people of different backgrounds and views—including college presidents, students, and leaders in business and philanthropy—for a national

convening at the White House—‘For Democracy’s Future: Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission.’” “For Democracy’s Future seeks to change the long term dynamic that has led to an ‘ivory tower’ culture in many colleges and universities,” said Harry Boyte, director of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College. Boyte also prepared the discussion guide for the event.¹⁴⁸ In 1969, Boyte co-authored a pamphlet entitled “Socialism and the Coming Decade,” which envisioned “using community organizing to create and manage a radical mass movement capable of bringing socialism to the U.S. in the long term.”¹⁴⁹ He was also involved in the DSOC and NAM, which merged in 1982 to become DSA.¹⁵⁰

It is also interesting to note the groups that have endorsed Obama. In September 2008, Social Democrats USA-Socialist Party USA endorsed Obama for president. “Our endorsement of the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama is aimed solely at our own members and supporters,” the group’s website said. “We hope that our members can work locally to support the Obama campaign by filling in the gaps that the Democratic Party is leaving open.”¹⁵¹ The Communist Party USA, which hasn’t fielded its own presidential candidate since 1984, urged its members to vote for Obama in 2012. After lamenting that “Tea Party Republicans won a sweep” in 2010, the website noted that “President Obama—and all the rest of us—have been fighting a defensive battle ever since.”¹⁵² And, of course, DSA endorsed Obama. “While recognizing the critical limitations of the Obama candidacy and the American political system, DSA believes that the possible election of Senator Obama to the presidency in November represents a potential opening for social and labor movements to generate the critical political momentum necessary to implement a progressive political agenda,” DSA noted during the summer of 2008. “We know that a proactive and progressive government can come only on the heels of a broad coalition for social justice united against a reactionary Republicanism as well as a Democratic neo-liberalism.”¹⁵³

Obama’s mentors were socialists. He chose Marxist professors while in college. He associated with socialists while he was a community organizer in Chicago. He worked with socialists when he headed Project Vote in Chicago (DSAer Frances Fox Piven was on the national board of directors of Project Vote in 2010-2011¹⁵⁴). He ran as a DSA-affiliated New Party-Democratic Party fusion candidate in 1996. DSA, Social Democrats USA—Socialist Party USA, and the Communist Party USA all endorsed his presidential

runs. A prominent DSAer was an adviser to his 2008 campaign. He appointed DSAers or their relatives to serve in his administration. He has presented DSAers with the Medal of Freedom. And, as noted by Dr. John C. Drew, Obama has never shared a conversion story. "I'd really like to hear whether or not he has a conversion story," Drew said. "David Horowitz has a conversion story. Whittaker Chambers had a conversion story. I have a conversion story. I'd really like Obama to share the moment when he turned to Bill Ayers or Rev. Wright or Alice Palmer and said, 'Hey—you guys are wrong.' I want to know what it was like when Obama shared with these folks that he no longer believed in their revolutionary ideology."¹⁵⁵

Instead of telling Ayers that he was wrong, Obama worked with Ayers for years after Alice Palmer introduced him to Ayers and other leftists at Ayers' home in 1995. After Ayers secured nearly \$50 million for an entity called the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, he devised a structure made up of three connected elements, of which the main two were the Collaborative, or operational center, and the Board, with overall financial control. According to Joshua Muravchik, "Ayers named himself to head the Collaborative; Barack Obama, apparently by Ayers's choice, became chairman of the Board" in 1995. Ayers and Obama worked together for the next four to five years. In addition, "In 1997, Ayers published a book about juvenile justice, *A Kind and Just Parent*, which Obama blurbled as 'a searing and timely account.' The two also served together on the board of the leftist Woods Fund from 1998 until 2001."¹⁵⁶

In *Public Enemy*, Ayers acknowledged that he voted "happily and without any illusions" for Obama in 2008, and that he "could only stand to vote for a national Democrat once before, in 1972 when I voted against war and for George McGovern." (Ayers was a fugitive in 1972 and was hiding under an assumed identity, so, apparently, he committed voter fraud when he voted for McGovern.) According to Ayers, he "typically voted Green or Socialist if either party had a candidate on the ballot."¹⁵⁷

Despite all of Obama's connections to Ayers and other socialists during the past three decades, his defenders claim that he is not—and has never been—a socialist.

WHAT IS A SOCIALIST?

Shortly after Obama's inauguration in 2009, the cover of *Newsweek* declared, "We Are All Socialists Now."¹⁵⁸ "We're all socialists from the day we're born," *Time* magazine Executive Editor Michael Duffy said on the *Chris Matthews Show* on March 3, 2013. "You know, you don't have to be poor or unemployed to be on welfare. We're all at the trough. We're all welfare queens. Your house, and your healthcare, and your childcare. Well, maybe not your childcare. You know, my parking is subsidized. You know, you're very subsidized. You know, and the whole country is built essentially on a series of assistance programs."¹⁵⁹ A November 18-19, 2012 Gallup poll found that 53 percent of Democrats/Democratic leaners had a positive image of socialism. A slightly higher percentage (55 percent) of Democrats/Democratic leaners had a positive view of capitalism.¹⁶⁰

Oddly, at a time when major newsmagazines can declare that we're all socialists now and a majority of Democrat/Democratic leaners have a positive image of socialism, any suggestion that an elected Democrat is a socialist is vigorously denied and the "sug-gester" denounced by the media and "fact checkers." For example, the Associated Press (AP) addressed the question "Is Obama a Socialist" in June 2012. "He's widely seen as a pragmatist within the Democratic Party mainstream who's had ample success raising campaign funds from wealthy Wall Street capitalists," the AP noted. "Even some of his strongest critics acknowledge that his administration hasn't sought one of the classic forms of socialism—government control of the nation's means of production."¹⁶¹

That's one form of socialism. However, it is not the form of socialism that DSA currently advocates. Consider this question and answer from DSA's "What is Democratic Socialism?" document:

Q: *Doesn't socialism mean that the government will own and run everything?*

Democratic socialists do not want to create an all-powerful government bureaucracy. But we do not want big corporate bureaucracies to control our society either. Rather, we believe that social and economic decisions should be made by those whom they most affect.

NO LONGER JFK'S PARTY

Today, corporate executives who answer only to themselves and a few wealthy stockholders make basic economic decisions affecting millions of people. Resources are used to make money for capitalists rather than to meet human needs. We believe that the workers and consumers who are affected by economic institutions should own and control them.

Social ownership could take many forms, such as worker-owned cooperatives or publicly owned enterprises managed by workers and consumer representatives. Democratic socialists favor as much decentralization as possible. While the large concentrations of capital in industries such as energy and steel may necessitate some form of state ownership, many consumer-goods industries might be best run as cooperatives.

Democratic socialists have long rejected the belief that the whole economy should be centrally planned. While we believe that democratic planning can shape major social investments like mass transit, housing, and energy, market mechanisms are needed to determine the demand for many consumer goods.¹⁶²

Sen. Bernie Sanders on July 23, 2012 introduced two bills to promote this form of socialism. Under the first bill, “the U.S. Department of Labor would provide funding to states to establish and expand employee ownership centers.” The second bill would “create a U.S. Employee Ownership Bank to provide loans to help workers purchase businesses through an employee stock ownership plan or a worker-owned cooperative.” Both bills were cosponsored by Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Daniel Akaka (D-Hi.). As a member of the House of Representatives, Brown was also a CPC member.¹⁶³

Of course, there are also many other forms of socialism. “Self-preservation and self-development are common aspirations among all people,” Frederic Bastiat wrote in *The Law*. “And if everyone enjoyed the unrestricted use of his labor, social progress would be ceaseless, uninterrupted, and unending.” That’s essentially the type of system our Founders devised when they wrote the Constitution.

“But there is also another tendency that is common among people,” Bastiat continued. “When they can, they wish to live and prosper at the expense of others.” Bastiat characterized this tendency as a “fatal tendency of mankind.”¹⁶⁴

Those who wish to prosper at the expense of others engage in what Bastiat called “legal plunder,” which occurs when “the law

takes from some persons what belongs to them, and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if the law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizen himself cannot do without committing a crime.”¹⁶⁵

According to Bastiat, legal plunder has many names, including “tariffs, protection, benefits, subsidies, encouragements, progressive taxation, public schools, guaranteed jobs, guaranteed profits, minimum wages, a right to relief, a right to the tools of labor, free credit, and so and so on. All of these plans as a whole—with their aim of legal plunder—constitute socialism.”¹⁶⁶

At the time Bastiat wrote *The Law* (1850), he spoke fondly of the United States. “There is no country in the world where the law is kept more within its proper domain: the protection of every one’s liberty and property,” he wrote. “As a consequence of this, there appears to be no country in the world where the social order rests on a firmer foundation. But even in the United States, there are two issues—and only two—that have always endangered the public peace.”¹⁶⁷

One of these issues was the tariff. This was a relatively mild form of legal plunder. “During America’s first seventy-odd years, it was possible to pay for our limited government primarily by a tariff on imported goods,” Lee Harris noted in *The Next American Civil War: The Populist Revolt Against the Liberal Elite*. “Of course, in one sense, this was a tax—a means by which the government raised revenues from its citizens. But no citizen was forced to buy imported goods.”¹⁶⁸ As Henry David Thoreau put it in 1849, “If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them.”¹⁶⁹

The second issue, slavery, did entail force. According to Bastiat, slavery, which he characterized as a “double *legal crime*” inherited from the Old World, “should be the only issue which can, and perhaps will, lead to the ruin of the Union.”¹⁷⁰

Of course, slavery nearly did lead to the ruin of the Union. Thankfully, this country abolished the evil of slavery, although President Abraham Lincoln enacted another, much less evil form of legal plunder, i.e., the income tax, to wage the Civil War that ultimately led to the abolition of slavery. After the war, the income tax was scrapped and later declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1895.¹⁷¹

The income tax returned in 1913 with the 16th Amendment during the so-called "Progressive Era." Unfortunately, that has been far from the only form of legal plunder the socialists have forced on us since then. In doing so, they have effectively declared war on the system our Founders wisely devised.

SOCIALISTS: OUTFLANKING THEIR ENEMIES

So if Obama and many other Democrats are socialists, why don't they come out of the closet and admit it? Consider the following quote, which is often attributed to Norman Thomas, six-time presidential candidate for the Socialist Party of America: "The American people will never knowingly adopt Socialism. But under the name of 'liberalism' they will adopt every fragment of the Socialist program, until one day America will be a Socialist nation, without knowing how it happened." According to Snopes.com, it is very unlikely that Thomas uttered those words. As Snopes.com notes, "As far as we know, the closest connection yet found between Norman Thomas and the substance of the words attributed to him is something that was written to (not by) him, a 1951 letter from Upton Sinclair, the noted American author (best known for his 1906 muckraking novel *The Jungle*) who twice (unsuccessfully) ran for Congress on the Socialist ticket and (also unsuccessfully) ran for the governorship of California as a Democrat in 1934":

The American People will take Socialism, but they won't take the label. I certainly proved it in the case of EPIC. Running on the Socialist ticket I got 60,000 votes, and running on the slogan to 'End Poverty in California' I got 879,000. I think we simply have to recognize the fact that our enemies have succeeded in spreading the Big Lie. There is no use attacking it by a front attack, it is much better to out-flank them.¹⁷²

Sinclair used the "End Poverty in California" slogan while running for governor as a Democratic Party candidate. Interestingly, Saul Alinsky began his career as a community organizer in the Back of the Yards area in Chicago, which is the neighborhood made famous in Sinclair's *The Jungle*.

In *Socialism*, Michael Harrington included a chapter entitled "The American Exception." "Most of the people in the world today call the name of their dream 'socialism,'" Harrington wrote. "The

word, to be sure, has many, and even contradictory, definitions. Yet its tremendous resonance obviously tells of a deep yearning for fundamental change among hundreds of millions of people.”¹⁷³

Note that when Obama in October 2008 said, “We are five days away from fundamentally transforming the United States of America,” he did not call his dream “socialism.” Why not? Because, as Harrington wrote, “America is the great exception”:

The American worker, unlike his counterpart in all the other advanced nations, thinks and speaks well of capitalism. Even in the 1930s, when the system was in even more of a shambles here than in Europe, there was still no socialist outburst. And though many students and intellectuals in the sixties and early seventies have begun to subject the society to an explicitly radical critique, there is certainly no mass movement in that direction. The United States is thus almost the only country on the face of the globe where “socialism” is a bad word.

Scholars have been explaining this situation for more than half a century. As early as 1906, when the Socialist Party of Eugene Victor Debs was still in its ascendancy, Werner Sombart developed what was to become the most popular theory to account for it. In the United States, Sombart said, “all the socialist utopias have floundered upon roast beef and apple pie.” Sombart himself thought that this phenomenon was temporary and that the moment would eventually come when socialism would be a force among the millions. But those who restated his basic insight usually made it absolute: Because of its enormous wealth, America was in the past, is in the present, and will be in the future, immune to socialism.¹⁷⁴

Balint Vazsonyi, a conservative, also addressed “The American Exception” in 1998:

The package is *The Idea*, which has gone through countless transformations and as many versions. It has been “Bolshevism” in Russia, “Fascism” in Italy, “National Socialism” in Germany, “Democratic Socialism” in Sweden, and the “Long March” and “Cultural Revolution” in China. But as The Idea circled the globe, it kept finding America standing in the way. America, the impenetrable target, was on the other side.¹⁷⁵

NO LONGER JFK'S PARTY

Unfortunately, Vazsonyi also noted that the “advocates of ‘change’” had finally penetrated America with an Americanized version of The Idea, i.e., “The Search for Social Justice”:

The Idea has been successfully installed in America’s schools, as well as in most of the information and entertainment media. Academia, Hollywood, the news media, the National Education Association, and the environmental movement are far more effective than any political party. And, as high school textbooks, college courses, television newscasts, or national newspapers attest, the purpose is the *transformation* of America. (Vazsonyi’s emphasis)¹⁷⁶

Of course, The Idea’s goal is to do away with American exceptionalism, which might explain why Obama seemed to bristle a bit when, in 2009, he was asked if he believed in American exceptionalism. “I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism, and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism,” he responded. Interestingly, the leaders of the Weather Underground were also not fond of American exceptionalism. In their 1974 political manifesto, *Prairie Fire*, the group wrote that American exceptionalism and reformism “are two currents of thought and activity that conspire to hold back the power of the movement.”¹⁷⁷ “In preparing for extreme choices, thinking we were severing the bonds to a predictable life of educated apathy, militant activists appropriated the rhetoric of Third World revolutionaries in a determined effort to reject American exceptionalism,” Bernardine Dohrn wrote in 2006. “We thought it irresponsible not to go for revolutionary/radical/fundamental transformation in North America.”¹⁷⁸

In a September 20, 2012 speech delivered as Hillsdale College’s annual Constitution Day Dinner, Norman Podhoretz noted that socialists have demonstrated their animus towards American exceptionalism for many decades:

[I]n the 20th century, social scientists began speculating as to why America was the only country in the developed world where socialism had failed to take root. As it happens, I myself first came upon the term “American exceptionalism” not in Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, where it has mistakenly been thought to have originated, but in a book by the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, who used it in connection with the absence in America of a strong socialist party.

More recently I have discovered that the term may actually have originated with Joseph Stalin, of all people, who coined the term in the same connection but only in order to dismiss it. Thus, when an American Communist leader informed him that American workers had no intention of playing the role Marx had assigned to the worldwide proletariat as the vanguard of the coming socialist revolution, Stalin reputedly shouted something like, “Away with this heresy of American exceptionalism!”¹⁷⁹

The book Podhoretz referred to may be *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States*, which Lipset co-wrote with Gary Marks. In a 2001 review of the book in *New Ground*, the newsletter of the Chicago DSA, Robert Roman offered an argument concerning labor unions. “Their analysis greatly parallels Michael Harrington’s argument in his book *Socialism*,” Roman wrote. “In this context, it’s interesting that the authors, while referring to Michael Harrington frequently in the first chapter and to that particular book, do not choose to examine Harrington’s thesis that the U.S. labor movement represents a sort of crypto social democracy, which of course would be an argument that the U.S. is not all that exceptional after all.”¹⁸⁰

Podhoretz concluded his speech by noting that Obama’s desire to fundamentally transform American “would entail the wiping away of as many more traces of American exceptionalism as it will take to turn this country into a facsimile of the social-democratic regimes of western Europe.”¹⁸¹

As noted above, a November 18-19, 2012 Gallup poll found that 53 percent of Democrats/Democratic leaners now have a positive image of socialism. Overall, 39 percent of Americans had a positive image of “socialism,” while 54 percent had a negative image. Sixty-one percent had a positive image of “capitalism,” while 31 percent had a negative image. (Eighty-nine percent had a positive image of “free enterprise,” which strongly suggests that constitutionalists should use this term instead of “capitalism.”)¹⁸² More than half of Americans still have a negative image of “socialism.” However, the positive image of “socialism” has increased by three percentage points (and six percentage points amongst Republican/Republican leaners!) since Gallup’s January 2010 poll, while the positive image of “capitalism” has decreased by five percentage points.¹⁸³

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As Obama's election and reelection painfully demonstrate, the socialists are outflanking constitutionalists. If constitutionalists wish to regain the advantage that they have lost, they have to remind Americans of the evils of socialism, and point out that there are indeed socialists in our midst, including Obama and a large percentage of his fellow Democrats. Will constitutionalists be accused of McCarthyism, as Rep. Allen West was? Absolutely. Consider that when Angela Davis, who was the vice presidential candidate on the Communist Party USA ticket twice during the 1980s, spoke at Stanford University, the student newspaper did not mention that she was a communist. When asked why the newspaper did not identify her with her own chosen party affiliation, the editor responded, "That would be McCarthyism."¹⁸⁴ Much that is labeled "McCarthyism" is actually the truth, and we should never shy away from the truth.

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