

BACKGROUND

Following is a hurried background on community organizing, Saul Alinsky and the Industrial Area Foundation (IAF). This note is by no means offered as a scholarly synopsis. If you find some of the assertions incredulous, I encourage you to do your own research and reach your own conclusions.

The late Saul Alinsky, author of "Reveille for Radicals" and "Rules for Radicals", is credited with having coined the term "community organizer". Alinsky adopted the mantle of community organizer because he couldn't get a foot in the door when introducing himself as a militant socialist. Alinsky defined a radical as a liberal who was willing to fight. In "Rules for Rebels" Alinsky gives an acknowledgment to the very first radical -Lucifer. The Alinsky rules were designed to promote conflict as a means of obtaining power. He preached that the ends justify the means. Alinsky defined his organizers as agitators trained to "rub raw the sores of resentment" and "fan hostilities". He taught his disciples that changing the American power structure was so important that it was justifiable to scheme, manipulate and deceive. Alinsky avoided substantive challenges to his philosophy by dismissing, demeaning and ridiculing his opponents (Rule #5), a tactic now referred to as the politics of personal destruction. His acolytes include Bill and Hillary Clinton. Hillary's college thesis was on the Alinsky model. Alinsky formed the Industrial Area Foundation (IAF) in 1940. Organizers associated with the IAF contributed to the training of Barack Obama in the Alinsky method. ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, was formed in 1970 in Arkansas by Wade Rathke. He was a member of the SDS Weather Underground along with Bill Ayers, the unrepentant radical leftist who bombed the Pentagon and a New York City Police Station. Ayers is credited with having launched the political career of Barack Obama. ACORN and the IAF are legally distinct entities, but they share common goals and Alinsky's methodology. ACORN is an organization of individuals. The IAF is comprised of institutions and organizations.

The Alinsky model infiltrates an institution by appealing to the institution's core values. In the case of the Catholic Church, the IAF plays on our compassion for the poor. The irony is that Alinsky was opposed to Christian charity because it ameliorated the conditions needed for revolution. Alinsky didn't want to feed the poor; he wanted to "empower" the poor in order to change the American power structure. Catholic ministries serve the poor and are spiritually motivated. The Alinsky model exploits the poor to achieve political change (there's that word again).

The IAF charges parishes for training organizers. The new parish organizers cut their teeth on worthwhile, innocuous projects which appeal to Catholics. The payment for training sometimes comes directly from the parish budget and sometimes indirectly through parishioners who dictate how their contribution to the church must be spent. The parish payments for training exceed the cost of training. The profits go to the IAF in Chicago for causes, which many would argue, are contrary to Catholic doctrine. If permitted, the IAF will politicize our ministries and many parishioners will be forced against their will to directly or indirectly subsidize the political agenda of the IAF. The prospect of a forced affiliation with the IAF has already begun to polarize the congregation.

Oh, I almost forgot. His nefarious qualities aside, Saul Alinsky was recognized by friend and foe alike as being a really charming guy. Please take a minute to read Sirach, Chapter 12, 10-18.

Steve Nash, September 12, 2009