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## THEY SAID IT

There's another reason for working inside the system. Dostoevski said that taking a new step is what people fear most. Any revolutionary change must be preceded by a passive, affirmative, non-challenging attitude toward change among the mass of our people. They must feel so frustrated, so defeated, so lost, so futureless in the prevailing system that they are willing to let go of the past and change the future. This acceptance is the reformation essential to any revolution. To bring on this reformation requires that the organizer work inside the system, among not only the middle class but the 40 per cent of American families - more than seventy million people - whose income range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year [in 1971]. They cannot be dismissed by labeling them blue collar or hard hat. They will not continue to be relatively passive and slightly challenging. If we fail to communicate with them, if we don't encourage them to form alliances with us, they will move to the right. Maybe they will anyway, but let's not let it happen by default.

Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, 1971.

## MEANS AND ENDS.

This is a difficult time for seers, whether they are, like we, in search of insights into the future of American politics, or like most of you, dear readers, who are absorbed with questions about the future of the economy and the financial markets. For one thing, the problems facing the nation have grown unusually complex during the past few decades, due to a variety of familiar factors, including but not limited to globalization and the spread of technology.

This week, we would like to briefly discuss something that we consider to be a new, complicating barrier to accurate prognostication that few if any observers have analyzed or even noted, but which many Americans seem to feel in their gut, so to speak. We are referring to the uncertainties associated with what to expect from the incoming President.

In the past, we have always begun the task of anticipating the ramifications of a new president with the assumption that all new presidents will make changes, and that these changes will reflect his and his party's governing philosophy and view of the world. But we have never had any reason at any past time to think that any incoming president's displeasure with the existing social and economic order was so intense that he might attempt to radically upset it, rather than to simply modify it. This time we are not so certain.

Barack Obama is, after all, a man who built his entire campaign for the presidency on the need for a host of substantial changes, up to and including a promise to use the power of the federal establishment to aggressively redistribute private wealth among social classes, and to do so according to an arbitrary determination of "fairness."

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This is a man whose wife has publicly stated that her distaste for the existing social system in the United States is so profound that she has only had one occasion in her entire adult life to be proud of her country. This is a man whose minister and friend of 20 years is so distressed by American society as it is today that he called upon God from the pulpit to “damn” it. This is a man who is friends with a fellow who hates America so much that he once tried to blow up the Pentagon and refuses to this day to apologize for this heinous act.

This is also a man who National Public Radio recently noted can, along with Hillary Clinton, trace his “political character to teachings handed down indirectly from [Saul] Alinsky, a community organizer from Chicago, who died in 1972.”

Alinsky, in case you are not familiar with him, is widely recognized as the father of “community organizing,” and author of a 1971 book entitled *Rules for Radicals*, which opens with the following notation: “What follows is for those who want to change the world from what it is to what they believe it should be.”

Now let us make it clear that we are not implying that Barack Obama has anything but love for the nation that he is about to lead. Our point is that, given his apparent sympathy and alliance, throughout his adult life, with individuals who are intensely dissatisfied with social justice in America today, it might be wise to assume that his approach to solving the many problems that lay ahead will not be directed toward restoring things to the *status quo ante*.

For example, someone who has evidenced such a passionate distaste for “the way we were,” or are, and appears to have some rather strong ideas about how “it should be,” might not view a severe tear in the social fabric or a serious disruption in the economic system as a “crisis,” but look upon it instead as an opportunity to fulfill a long-standing goal to make some radical changes, even if that means letting the situation remain as it is for quite some time, or even worsen.

As another example, we would ask whether a person who is schooled in the art of “community organizing,” as taught by Saul Alinsky, would look upon labor

unrest or continued high unemployment as a problem to be solved, or as a vehicle for the leftist community to create social unrest as a justification for radical change? Or whether a person schooled in the art of “community organizing,” as taught by Saul Alinsky, would view a recession, a depression, or a catastrophic stock market crash as a national catastrophe or a chance to build a new platform of regulatory power in Washington?

Your guess is as good as ours, as the saying goes. In any case, we will have plenty of time to consider the matter before Barack assumes office in January. In the interim, anyone wishing to investigate a little further might want to mull over the following excerpts from *Rules for Radicals*, the book to which National Public Radio said Barack can trace his “political character.”

The first step in community organization is community disorganization.

He who sacrifices the mass good for his personal conscience has a peculiar conception of ‘personal salvation’; he doesn’t care enough for people to ‘be corrupted’ for them.

The man of action views the issue of means and ends in pragmatic and strategic terms. He has no other problem; he thinks only of his actual resources and the possibilities of various choices of action. He asks of ends only whether they are achievable and worth the cost; of means, only whether they will work. To say that corrupt means corrupt the ends is to believe in the immaculate conception of ends and principles.

Any effective means is automatically judged by the opposition as being unethical.

One’s concern with the ethics of means and ends varies inversely with one’s personal interest in the issue, and one’s distance from the scene of conflict.

The judgment of the ethics of means is dependent upon the political position of those sitting in judgment.

Our cause had to be all shining justice, allied with the angels; theirs had to be all evil, tied to the Devil; in no war has the enemy or the cause ever been gray.

The judgment of the ethics of means must be made in the context of the times in which the action occurred and not from any other chronological vantage point

The morality of a means depends upon whether the means is being employed at a time of imminent defeat or imminent victory.

You do what you can with what you have and clothe it with moral garments.

Power is not only what you have, but what an opponent thinks you have.

Whenever possible, go outside the experience of an opponent. Here you want to cause confusion, fear, and retreat.

Keep the pressure on. Use different tactics and actions and use all events of the period for your purpose.

Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it. Don't try to attack abstract corporations or bureaucracies. Identify a responsible individual. Ignore attempts to shift or spread the blame.

## TOWARD THE RESTORATION?

The Republican Party is in shambles. Barack Obama has beaten John McCain. Chuck Schumer and Harry Reid have expanded the Democratic majority in the Senate by a handful of seats and are still within striking distance of the fabled, filibuster-proof, 60-seat cushion, pending the outcome of a recount in Minnesota, a runoff in Georgia, and the final tally of absentee ballots in Alaska. Even Nancy Pelosi, the vapid, weakest link in the Democrats' power chain, has a freshly expanded majority and, with it, even greater power. All things considered, the GOP hasn't been this bad off since at least 1992, and more likely since 1976, in the aftermath of two, post-Watergate tidal waves.

Unfortunately, things are only going to get worse.

After the beating that Republicans endured at the hands of the Democrats and the voters, they now prepare for the customary, post-loss ritual, i.e., a beating at the hands of their fellow Republicans. The recriminations started simply enough. The loss was George Bush's fault. Sarah Palin caused it. McCain ran a stupid campaign. And so on. But in the grand tradition of the Grand Old Party, it would not, could not, stop there. Now and for the foreseeable future, we will all be treated to the spectacle of various factions of the "big tent" attacking one another, pinning blame, and insisting that they, and only they, have the real and true gnosis for Republican redemption.

According to various commentators, politicians, and political operatives, the Republican Party needs to be more conservative, less conservative, more socially conservative, less socially conservative, more free market oriented, less free market oriented, more fiscally restrained, less fiscally restrained, more libertarian, less libertarian, more willing to talk about expanding social welfare programs, less willing to expand social welfare programs . . . etc. Everyone has a cure for the party's woes, none of which, in our humble opinion, is worth a tinker's damn.

Over the weekend, Karl Rove, the man who just four years ago constructed the "permanent Republican majority," offered the sage advice that "Republicans must regain ground among critical voting groups." Really? Thanks, Karl. It's no wonder the left considers you an evil genius. Regain lost ground, you say? Why didn't we think of that?!

The problem, as we see it, is that none of what we've read so far, including Mr. Rove's observation, has addressed the truly critical challenges facing the Republican Party, republicanism in general, and conservatism. Yes, there appears to be universal agreement that the "big government" conservatism of George W. Bush was a failure and should be abandoned. Yet, there is no acknowledgment, even tacit, of the elephant in the room, namely the fact that while big government conservatism may be a disaster, small government conservatism is dead and gone, never to return.

For years now, we have noted that the battle between big government and small government is over, and that big government won. Never has this point been so patently obvious, although it seems few will admit it. The real challenge for Republicans, now that they are wandering in the political wilderness, is to learn to live with and to govern big government competently. Relatedly, the challenge for *conservatives* is to understand that while they are a faction of the GOP, they are a semi-autonomous one, which means that they will have to expand their conception of success and effectiveness beyond those definitions that include governance. Let us explain.

You see, George Bush was a symptom, not a cause. He was a guy who saw the proverbial handwriting on the wall and did what he could to bring conservative values into line with the reality of big government. That he failed is hardly a surprise. That so few otherwise smart and valuable conservatives understood the inevitability of such an endeavor is disheartening, in part because it suggests that other, future such attempts to reconcile reality with partisan politics will be equally ad hoc and equally disastrous.

We hate to be the bearer of bad news, here, but since we've been bearing this same bad news for more than a decade now, the sorrow involved is notably dulled. In a modern, post-industrial, "developed" nation, small government is not merely improbable, but very nearly impossible. As we have noted *ad nauseum*, the necessity of specialized knowledge and of complex organizational structure, along with the populace's general preference for security and comfort over true liberty, all combine to make a highly bureaucratized, massive federal government a virtual certainty, an inevitability in fact.

As we've noted in these pages previously, one Republican who understands the inescapability of the federal Leviathan is former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, who is currently running a proxy campaign for the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee. Newt's book, *Real Change: From the World that Fails to the World that Works*, is, essentially, an attempt to make his peace with the administrative state and to lay claim to "conservative" management of it. While we respect his foresight in identifying the problem, we think he has missed the mark entirely in his proposed solution: that is, promising

to incorporate private sector principles into public sector solutions. That's all well and good and might be beneficial, but it's not *conservatism*. It's actually more akin to Al Gore's "reinventing government." Besides, conflating business and government doesn't lead to free enterprise and liberty, it leads to corporatism.

If Republicans really want to improve their lot with the electorate and make a positive contribution to the administrative state, then they will exploit the seam given them by the Democrats. You see, the Democrats have forgotten the crucial first principle underpinning the bureaucratic organizational structure, namely that it is the most effective and most successful means for organizing modern governmental operations because it is the most *rational*. Too many left-leaning career bureaucrats and too many of their political masters have fallen prey to believing that the bureaucracy exists expressly to promote their preferred political ends, *which it most definitely does not*.

Again, as we have noted time and again in these pages, the governing ethos of the Democratic Party as it currently exists is post-modernism, which is to say that the party rejects reason, rationality, and science in much the same way that pre-modern religious fundamentalists did. This rejection of reason and science can be seen in a host of Democratic policies and in the bureaucratic schemes and regulations they have employed or will employ. Climate change, for example, has less to do with science than with deep-seated religious antipathy to capitalism and to modernism; and the implementation of purportedly corrective measures will do little to alter the environment but will cost the United States, and the West in general, a great deal, both financially and in terms of global power.

If the Republicans truly want to be regain power and to do so while maintaining some semblance of their erstwhile conservative temperament and policy proclivities, then they will make the re-rationalization of the federal bureaucracy their principle goal. In a much discussed and freshly rediscovered speech, the recently deceased author Michael Crichton discussed the abuse of science by policy makers and warned that the failure to re-differentiate science from policy would have serious repercussions. With regard to the aforementioned spectacle of global warming, Crichton concluded the following:

It is impossible to ignore how closely the history of global warming fits on the previous template for nuclear winter. Just as the earliest studies of nuclear winter stated that the uncertainties were so great that probabilities could never be known, so, too the first pronouncements on global warming argued strong limits on what could be determined with certainty about climate change. The 1995 IPCC draft report said, "Any claims of positive detection of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of the climate system are reduced." It also said, "No study to date has positively attributed all or part of observed climate changes to anthropogenic causes." Those statements were removed, and in their place appeared: "The balance of evidence suggests a discernable human influence on climate."

What is clear, however, is that on this issue, science and policy have become inextricably mixed to the point where it will be difficult, if not impossible, to separate them out. It is possible for an outside observer to ask serious questions about the conduct of investigations into global warming, such as whether we are taking appropriate steps to improve the quality of our observational data records, whether we are systematically obtaining the information that will clarify existing uncertainties, whether we have any organized disinterested mechanism to direct research in this contentious area.

The answer to all these questions is no. We don't.

In trying to think about how these questions can be resolved, it occurs to me that in the progression from SETI to nuclear winter to second hand smoke to global warming, we have one clear message, and that is that we can expect more and more problems

of public policy dealing with technical issues in the future-problems of ever greater seriousness, where people care passionately on all sides.

And at the moment we have no mechanism to get good answers.

If the GOP wants to regain it's share of voters; if it wants to maintain it's historical reputation for introspection and prudence; if it wants to counter the fallacious but widespread image that it caters to religious superstition and fantasy, then it will accept the reality of the bureaucratic state and embrace the rationalism and reason that is the Western world's true legacy. It will have to develop Crichton's "mechanism," among other things.

Not that this will be easy, mind you. The challenge for the GOP will be to manage and neutralize bureaucracy's secondary and deleterious characteristics. For example, reason will often dictate that an entity proceed cautiously and, occasionally do nothing as a potential problem unfolds. But this is contrary to the modern bureaucracy's penchant for action over inaction. As William Niskanen, the eminent critic of bureaucracy and the chairman of the Cato Institute, has demonstrated, bureaucracies are budget-maximizers, suggesting that they will always and everywhere engage in unnecessary spending and unnecessary action. Countering this tendency will be no small task.

Still, if the GOP has any hope of surviving the administrative state and making a positive contribution to its management, then it will do what it can and counter the putrefaction of bureaucratic principles by the left and embrace the principles of reason, rationalism, and caution.

As for conservatives, that all but forgotten faction of the Republican coalition, the news is grimmer still, at least where governance is concerned. As the bureaucratic Leviathan grow, as government grows, and as Americans' dependence on government concomitantly grows, the idea of conservative governance will seem quainter and quainter. Small government, liberty, individualism, personal reliance, responsibility, and the like are all as likely to be concerns of 21<sup>st</sup> century governance as is the preservation of the Dodo bird.

If we have learned nothing else from the election season just ended, it is this: It's the culture, stupid. The institutions of American culture no longer value those things that matter to conservatives and that would make conservative governance both possible and palatable to the majority of American voters. As we noted a few weeks back, the left effectively heeded Gramsci's call and made the long march through the institutions. And now the left controls the institutions, which is to say that it effectively controls the culture as well.

Fortunately for American conservatives – as opposed their European brethren – they have their own cultural institutions and understand the importance of maintaining them. The catch will be convincing conservatives that their efforts will be better spent strengthening and buttressing the culture and leaving governance to the bureaucrats and their enablers.

We have long maintained that Washington is not where the important decisions in American life are made, but merely where the score is kept. And conservatives will have to come to this understanding as well and accept that changing the score will require changing the culture, and changing the culture will require focusing on those aspects of life that truly matter and over which they can maintain control.

The inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are the foundation of the American system and are famously and explicitly itemized in the Declaration of Independence. If the predominant culture no longer believes in the practicality and necessity of those rights, then conservatives will have to ensure, preserve, and promote them in those aspects of their lives that remain independent of the predominant culture and its masters – that is in private education, home schooling, local government, religion, community organizations, and other similar institutions and activities.

We hate to sound as if we are saying that conservatives must take to the proverbial catacombs, but that is the way it is. Conservatives must take to the catacombs.

The elections results two weeks ago showed a very unusual and highly unlikely dichotomy: while the electorate favors statist government, it remains at least marginally interested in the trappings of conservatism and of the values of individualism and liberty. This means that the dominant culture has not yet achieved total victory and can still be reversed. And this, in turn means that a conservative retreat to the catacombs would not constitute surrender but merely the realization that the culture can and must be changed before politics can be changed. Moreover, it means that the culture is still amenable to change.

Pope Benedict XVI has made the restoration of Western religious and culture values one of the preeminent goals of his papacy. A return to respect for and appreciation of every human life; a return to the values of reason and rationalism; a return to the belief that culture matters and that religious values can positively inform the culture, are all interim goals that the Pope has set in his attempt to restore the efficacy and the allure of the Church and of the values and ideals for which the Church and indeed all of Western civilization stand.

A similar plan now seems the most sensible solution for disgruntled and beaten conservatives. The values promoted by the Church and by Pope Benedict may be religious in origin, but then again, so are the foundational values of Western civilization. Conservatives, libertarians, Republicans, and others who appreciate the traditions and the institutions of the West and of the American founding – life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – can and should understand that restoring reason to governance through management of the bureaucracy and restoring the values of American life through a renewal of the culture together constitute the most effective path back to power and back to American exceptionalism.

Karl Rove can spend all the time he wants on “market-oriented green initiatives,” but those concerned with conservatism and conservative values would be better served by focusing on the things that really matter.

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