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Radical Political Change The Obama Strategy to Destroy American Capitalism

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An alarming number of Americans remain clueless as President Obama moves rapidly forward with his strategy to nationalize the private sector, overwhelm the nation with debt, destroy prosperity through catastrophic levels of taxation, and force government-controlled health care on all American citizens.¹

As to how we reached this current nightmare of economic and political chaos, the standard answer seems to be, “Wall Street greed.” The truth is, Wall Street played a role, but it was a secondary factor. The collapse didn’t just happen. It wasn’t the result of unpredictable, uncontrollable forces. And—contrary to what far-left members of the current administration want us to believe—it did not happen because our economy is a capitalistic system of free enterprise.

It resulted, to a large degree, from a calculated “deconstruction” program, systematically implemented over a period of several decades. Simply put, there is a strategy in play that seeks the destruction of capitalism; the tactic is to overload government bureaucracy with an overwhelming flood of demands, thus pushing society into crisis and economic collapse. That strategy is one of the significant factors underlying our current economic chaos.

Robert Chandler, writing for *The Washington Times*, stated it in terms of what we have actually observed: “Its supporting tactics include flooding government with impossible demands until it slowly cranks to a stop; overloading electoral systems with successive tidal waves of new voters, many of them bogus; shaking down banks, politicians in Congress, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development for affirmative-action borrowing; and [most recently], pulling down the national financial system by demanding exotic, subprime mortgages for low-income Americans with little hope of repaying their loans.”²

The objective: break the budget, jam the bureaucratic gears into gridlock, and bring the system down. The ultimate result: fear, turmoil, and economic collapse—the perfect conditions for fostering radical change.

Cloward-Piven

The strategy described above was proposed in 1966 by two radical sociologists, Richard Andrew Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, then both sociologists and political activists at the Columbia University School of Social Work. The Cloward-Piven Strategy, as it became known, was published May 2, 1966, in *The Nation* magazine. However, it has cropped up again as current economic chaos in the United States deepens; many believe that this strategy (whether they know it by name or not) is behind the radical social policies that President Obama is pressing forward with an alarming degree of speed and urgency.

Basically, the Cloward-Piven strategy postulates that social safety nets (i.e., government-supplied welfare benefits) actually do more harm than good by keeping the population complacent and giving them little reason to press for reform. Therefore, according to Cloward-Piven, it is necessary to hobble that system via mass overload in order to incite a spirit of revolution that will force a “fair redistribution” of the nation’s collective wealth.

¹ Actually, not all Americans: members of Congress, the President, and all others in top-level federal jobs would be allowed to keep the premium-quality healthcare plans they have now.

² Robert Chandler, “The Cloward-Piven Strategy: Using the Poor to Tear Down Capitalism,” *The Washington Times*, October 15, 2008.

This theory is often met with confusion when people mistakenly believe it makes a case against social safety nets in general. It does not. Theoretically, an ideal “Cloward-Piven world” would no longer require the social safety net because the system would have adjusted to maintain a minimum annual income for all citizens. Cloward and Piven believed that welfare states suppress the flames of rebellion, so to speak, and thus prevent economies from reaching this [so-called] “natural equilibrium.”

This strategy for revolution—as designed for use in America—was outlined in Cloward and Piven’s article entitled, “The Weight of the Poor: A Strategy to End Poverty.” It was their response to the Los Angeles (Watts) riots that erupted in August of 1965 after police used batons to subdue a black man suspected of drunk driving. The publisher sold an unprecedented 30,000 reprints of the article; and left-wing activists, excited over the radical strategy it outlined, were more than eager to put it into practice.

A Blueprint for “Change”

Cloward told the New York Times in September 1970 that poor people can advance only when “the rest of society is afraid of them.” Cloward and Piven urged activists to work to sabotage the welfare system; such a collapse, they reasoned, would “ignite a political and financial crisis that would rock the nation.” Poor people would then rise in revolt and the rest of society would accept their demands.

Promoters of Cloward-Piven cited Saul Alinsky, the radical community organizer from Chicago, as their inspiration. In his 1972 book, *Rules for Radicals*, Alinsky stated, “Since the Haves publicly pose as the custodians of responsibility, morality, law, and justice, they can be constantly pushed to live up to their own book of morality and regulations. No organization, including organized religion, can live up to the letter of its own book. You can club them to death with their ‘book’ of rules and regulations.”³

The failure of any system to live up to its own rule book, Alinsky reasoned, can then be used to discredit it altogether.

Calculated Economic Sabotage

At the time they wrote their article, Cloward and Piven estimated that persuading even a fraction of potential welfare recipients to demand their “entitlements” would bankrupt the system. They predicted “a profound financial and political crisis” would ensue, unleashing “powerful forces . . . for major economic reform at the national level.”

The plan called for groups of aggressive organizers who would use demonstrations to create a climate of militancy. Politicians would be intimidated by threats of black violence, and they would call on the federal government for help. Media campaigns, orchestrated and carried out by left-wing journalists (i.e., allies) would promote the idea of a federal program of income redistribution. The objective would be a guaranteed living income for all—working and non-working alike. With major cities across the country degenerating into chaos, Washington would be forced to act. [Note that we are seeing whole states imploding now under the weight of impossible welfare loads.—MER Editors]

Cloward-Piven is the classic Trojan Horse movement, the ostensible purpose of which is to provide material help to the downtrodden. In reality, the objective is to draft the poor en masse into service as foot soldiers in an action calculated to overwhelm government agencies, flooding them with demands beyond their capacity to respond.

George Wiley, a militant black organizer, was recruited to lead Cloward & Piven’s new movement. In the summer of 1967, Wiley formed the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO), closely following the strategies articulated in the article by Cloward and Piven. Wiley’s followers flooded into welfare offices across the country, intimidating social workers and demanding every penny to which they believed the law entitled them. In a period of two years, NWRO built a dues-paying membership of 22,500 families, with more than 500 chapters across the nation.

A New York Times article (September 27, 1970) described Wiley’s tactics: “sit-ins in legislative chambers, including a United States Senate committee hearing, mass demonstrations of several thousand welfare recipients, school boycotts, picket lines, mounted police, tear gas, arrests—and, on occasion, rock-throwing, smashed glass doors, overturned desks, scattered papers and ripped-out phones.”

Sol Stern wrote in the *City Journal*, “The flooding succeeded beyond Wiley’s wildest dreams. From 1965 to 1974, the number of single-parent households on welfare soared from 4.3 million to 10.8 million, despite mostly flush economic times. By the early 1970s, one person was on the welfare rolls in New York City for every two working in the city’s private economy.”⁴

Readers may recall that massive welfare spending forced New York City to declare bankruptcy in 1975. The entire state very nearly went down with it.

After the initial shock produced when Cloward-Piven was activated, a backlash set in. A reform movement culminated in the 1996 “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act,” which imposed time limitations on federal welfare and set up strict eligibility and work requirements.

³ Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, Vintage Books edition [Random House], New York, 1989, p. 152. Copyright 1971 by Saul D. Alinsky.

⁴ Cloward-Piven Strategy,” www.discoverthenetworks.org

Most Americans have never even heard of Cloward and Piven, but former Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, could give you an earful. He attempted to expose them in the late 1990s. As his welfare reform campaign gathered momentum, Giuliani accused the two by name, citing their 1966 article as evidence they had engaged in calculated economic sabotage. “This wasn’t an accident,” Giuliani stated in a 1997 speech. “It wasn’t an atmospheric thing, it wasn’t supernatural. This is the result of policies and programs designed to have the maximum number of people get on welfare.”

A Vast Network for Forcing “Change”

When the public began to “catch on” to Cloward and Piven’s scheme to create economic and political chaos, the two culprits moved on to other sectors of the bureaucracy where they detected weaknesses that could be exploited.

In 1982, Cloward-Piven activists founded a new voting rights movement, ostensibly to take up the unfinished work of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Like ACORN, this new “voting rights” movement was led by activists from Wiley’s welfare rights campaign. Its flagship organizations, Project Vote and Human SERVE were founded in 1982. Project Vote is a front group for ACORN; it was founded by former NWRO organizer and ACORN co-founder, Zach Polett. Human SERVE was founded by Cloward and Piven with help from a former NWRO organizer by the name of Hulbert James.

ACORN and Project Vote lobbied heavily for the Motor Voter Act of 1993, a law allowing people to register in public places such as motor vehicle departments, schools, and libraries. The outrage is, that bill (signed into law in 1993 by Bill Clinton) has enabled the voting rights coalition of the Left to load voter rolls with invalid registrations—i.e., names of people who are deceased, ineligible, and even non-existent. Other coalition tactics include street protests (at times, violent), intimidation of election officials, frivolous lawsuits, and baseless charges of “racism” and “disenfranchisement.”

Barack Obama spent years working with ACORN, providing legal counsel and training operatives for that organization. In a speech to ACORN in November 2007, Obama stated, “I’ve been fighting alongside ACORN on issues you care about my entire career. Even before I was an elected official, when I ran the ‘Project vote’ voter registration drive in Illinois, ACORN was smack dab in the middle of it, and we appreciate your work.”⁵

Without a doubt, the Cloward-Piven Strategy, through widespread activism by ACORN, Project Vote, and dozens of sister organizations committed to the same radical agenda, contributed heavily to the election of the most radical president in U.S. history. When Barack Obama promised he would change America, he meant it—and he is keeping his promise. If he and his radical enablers are not stopped, they will surely destroy our economic system, our currency, and our freedoms. The America we knew—once the freest and most prosperous nation on earth—the nation that sacrificed its blood and treasure again and again to lift other nations out of oppression—will no longer exist.

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⁵ *Investor’s Business Daily* (Editors), “Obama-corn,” October 13, 2008.