



A Harvard Professor Looks at Obama

Although Harvard was founded as an orthodox Calvinist institution in the very early days of the Massachusetts Bay colony, it became Unitarian in 1805, and is considered the Unitarian Vatican. Indeed, political liberalism, which holds government as the chief solver of our social problems, is the direct offspring of Unitarian religious philosophy. Unitarians do not seek personal salvation under a triune God, but believe in do-gooder social activity as the road to personal moral perfection.



And so, when Harvard Professor James T. Kloppenberg, a specialist in the intellectual history of the United States and chair of the history department, writes a new book about Obama and his dreams, *Harvard Magazine* decided that a portion of that book would make a great article. And because it was published in *Harvard Magazine* (Nov.-Dec. 2010), you can be sure it represents the best liberal thinking on the subject.

So it should come as no surprise that the article makes no mention of the word “socialism” or of the existence of Obama’s political mentor Saul Alinsky. Maybe they are mentioned elsewhere in the professor’s book, but not in the article, which will be read by more people than the book. The professor sees Obama simply as an advocate of “deliberative democracy and pragmatism.”

But the opening line of the article suggests that Professor Kloppenberg is not quite sure what to make of the president. He writes: “Barack Obama is a mystery.” He comments that the Left doesn’t think he is radical enough, and the Right is convinced he threatens “the foundations of the American social order.”

But then he reassures us that Obama is really operating within a well-established American tradition. “He believes,” writes the professor, “that anti-foundationalism, historicism, and philosophical pragmatism are consistent with the principles of civic republicanism and deliberative democracy on which America was built and for which it should stand.”

Is that the new Harvard definition of revolutionary socialism? We know that Harvard professors are very clever people and can use words in very clever ways. But this takes the cake in defanging unadulterated socialist revolution. Verbal gymnastics is a pleasant way for the liberal elite to get people to accept the unacceptable, as long as it is put in words that enchant the minds of reason-challenged do-gooders.

Kloppenberg writes: “He can, and he does, turn to philosophical pragmatism and to American history. What we need, he suggests, is a ‘shift in metaphors,’ a willingness to see ‘our democracy not as a house to be built, but as a conversation to be had.’”

Wow! So now socialist revolution requires “a shift in metaphors ... a conversation to be had.” A conversation with a price-tag of a couple of trillion dollars. No wonder Harvard professors have pointy heads. You can’t get better than that. The professor then comments: “It would be hard to find in William James or John Dewey a clearer statement of the conceptual and historical connections between



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philosophical pragmatism and deliberative democracy in the American political tradition.”

Of course, the professor doesn’t mention the fact that John Dewey was an avowed socialist who spent his entire professional life trying to change America into a socialist society. As for the professor’s banging away at the word “pragmatic,” it should be noted that the title of Saul Alinsky’s book, [Rules for Radicals](#), is described on the cover as “A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals.”

Pragmatism is the key concept in the professor’s article. He explains: “As the pragmatic James and Dewey insisted repeatedly, and as more recent philosophical pragmatists have confirmed, democratic principles should not be confused with unchanging dogmas.” Alinsky was very much against the use of dogma, which he believed was counterproductive in attempts by stealth socialists to achieve political power. He insisted that radical revolutionaries must work within the system and use the language of the system if they were ever to get into positions of power. And obviously, Obama is a skilled practitioner of that strategy, so skilled that he actually landed in the White House. No other socialist ever achieved a victory of such magnitude. Think of it: A socialist revolutionary commands Air Force One!

Like a good pragmatist, Obama believes that concepts of freedom and equality have had different meanings at different times in our history and that they have new meanings for today’s generation. But to conservatives, freedom means freedom from government. That meaning hasn’t changed in the hearts and minds of conservatives. It is bedrock.

But the professor writes: “It is time for critical inquiry and substantive change. Ritual invocations of earlier nostrums, as if such formulas could help solve the problems earlier generations could not have imagined, deflect attention from the hard work of democracy. The need for such hard work derives, at least in part, from the deeply flawed institutional structures put in place by the Constitution.”

The Constitution has always been an obstacle to socialist ambitions to change America from a constitutional republic to a socialist or fascist state. That is why Obama and his cohorts are trying to simply bulldoze the Constitution out of the way so that they can advance their socialist agenda. That was how ObamaCare was rammed through.

Kloppenber states the problem very plainly: “Although subject to amendment, the Constitution nevertheless erected formidable barriers in the way of those who would alter the framework of American governance.” Apparently, he’d like to get rid of them.

But the Tea Partiers, who are not mentioned in the article, have risen to defend the Constitution and the freedoms it guarantees. The fact that it is now under attack by the socialists and the Harvard elite confirms that they have never been able to understand the passion behind the conservatives’ love of the Constitution and individual freedom.

In short, what the professor is telling us is that the proper terms to use in describing Obama are “philosophical pragmatism and deliberative democracy.” Of course, he wrote his article before *Radical-in-Chief* was published, which exposes Obama’s socialist and revolutionary background. Semantic trickery makes it easier for the Harvard elite to swallow revolutionary socialism and collaborate with its White House practitioners.

As for conservatives, we tell it like it is. Stealth socialists are by definition liars and frauds. Liberals tend to be experts at self-deception. That is why they can be so clever in the use of language. They don’t want *Harvard Magazine* to sound like some radical rag published by unwashed socialists. So they dress up their radicalism in the vocabulary of the refined, highly educated liberal snob. To them Sarah Palin is the enemy, not the socialists.



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But of course they don't call it socialism. As the professor put it, "the philosophy of pragmatism is uniquely suited to democratic decision making." But behind all of this supposedly benign pragmatism is the killer instinct. Alinsky writes: "Lenin was a pragmatist; when he returned to what was then Petrograd from exile, he said that the Bolsheviks stood for getting power through the ballot but would reconsider after they got the guns!" In other words, no one really knows what socialists will do when they get total power. But who really wants to find out?



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