



The Osawatomie Connection

It wasn't until I read fellow writer Selwyn Duke's article on Obama's Osawatomie speech ("Did Obama Give Anti-Free Market Speech at Osawatomie for Communist Connection?") in which he revealed that the Weather Underground had used the name of the town as the title of their 1975 communist newsletter, that I realized there was much more to the Osawatomie speech than the national media has let on. A photo of that newsletter featuring Ho Chi Minh's picture left no doubt that this Kansas town had real significance for the radical left. Otherwise, why would a secret terrorist group like the Weather Underground use that name as their newsletter's title?



In his speech, Obama mentioned that Osawatomie, Kansas, was where Theodore Roosevelt gave an important oration about the New Nationalism back in 1910, and that he largely agreed with what Roosevelt had said. He didn't say much more about it as he went on to pronounce his own socialist view that capitalism doesn't work, claiming that It doesn't produce jobs or prosperity. Only more government, more debt, and more taxes will produce the economic recovery we all wish for, asserted the president.

So I decided to look into the Osawatomie connection. A fascinating article in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* by Robert S. La Forte (Summer 1966), now [available online](#), provides a detailed account of Roosevelt's famous address, who was behind it, and why it was denounced by some of its critics as socialistic or communistic.

The historical event that has made Osawatomie significant to the left is the fact that John Brown, the abolitionist, took part in the Battle of Osawatomie that occurred on August 30, 1856. About 250-300 pro-slavery men were intent on destroying the free-state settlements in Osawatomie. According to [Wikipedia](#):

John Brown first got word that the group was coming when they shot his son Frederick. Brown with forty or so men tried to defend the town against the pro-slavery partisans, causing heavy casualties before being forced to withdraw; the town of Osawatomie was then looted and burned. This was one event in [a] series of skirmishes between abolitionists and pro-slavery Missourians in what has been known as Bleeding Kansas.

The occasion for the Roosevelt speech was the two-day dedicatory ceremonies at the John Brown Memorial Park on August 30 and 31, 1910. The park was located in the vicinity where the Battle of Osawatomie had taken place. La Forte writes:

The essence of Roosevelt's speech has been discussed by numerous historians. It was, according to Prof. George E. Mowry, "the most radical speech ever given by an ex-President.... His concepts of the extent to which a powerful federal government could regulate and use private property in the



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interest of the whole and his declarations about labor, when viewed [with]...the eyes of 1910, were nothing short of revolutionary.”

Here is an excerpt of what Roosevelt actually said in his speech:

The American people are right in demanding that new Nationalism without which we cannot hope to deal with new problems. The new Nationalism puts the National need before sectional or personal advantage. It is impatient of the utter confusion that results from local legislatures attempting to treat National issues as local issues. It is still more impatient of the impotence which springs from over-division of governmental powers, the impotence which makes it possible for local selfishness or for legal cunning, hired by wealthy special interests, to bring National activities to a deadlock. This new Nationalism regards the executive power as the steward of public welfare. It demands of the judiciary that it shall be interested primarily in human welfare rather than in property, just as it demands that the representative body shall represent all the people rather than any one class or section of the people... .

I believe in shaping the ends of government to protect property as well as human welfare.

Normally...the ends are the same, but whenever the alternative must be faced I am for men and not for property... .

The emphasis on people rather than property reminds me of some of the signs being held by the Occupy Wall Streeters, “People not Profit.” Also, Roosevelt complained that it was the federal system of divided powers that made the president impotent to carry out far-reaching national plans for the public welfare. But that’s what the Founding Fathers intended in order to prevent a strongman in the White House from becoming a dictator. Thus, one can see why critics of Roosevelt’s speech regarded it as socialistic. It is also significant that John McCain considers Teddy Roosevelt as his favorite President. La Forte states:

On August 31, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt delivered what was perhaps the most important speech ever given in Kansas. Surrounded by 30,000 enthusiastic listeners at Osawatomie, he developed a political creed which became a milestone along the road to the modern all-powerful state. This speech, later called the “New Nationalism Address,” evoked a wide variety of responses. It was labeled “Communistic,” “Socialistic,” and “Anarchistic” in various quarters; while others hailed it “the greatest oration ever given on American soil.” What then were the circumstances surrounding the address? What was the Kansas role in the drama at Osawatomie? Why was that town chosen for such an auspicious moment in history? And why did an ex-President devise a comprehensive political program such as the “New Nationalism?”

La Forte provides some fascinating answers. First, who suggested that Roosevelt be invited to give that speech? It was Dr. Uhls, superintendent of the state mental hospital, who urged Governor Stubbs to invite the ex-President to address the dedication. Roosevelt at the time was on a safari in Africa, so Stubbs sent a telegram to Gifford Pinchot who had access to Roosevelt who, when reached, wired back “Accept.”

Who was Gifford Pinchot? He was a conservationist and a member of Skull and Bones, the secret senior society at Yale. The Republican Party at the time was torn between conservatives and progressives, and Roosevelt decided to use the occasion of the speech to put forth his progressive views. But he actually did not write the Osawatomie speech. It was Gifford Pinchot who wrote the first draft. La Forte writes: Pinchot, even more of an extremist than Roosevelt in upholding strong governmental control over



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individual activities, tinted the address with radicalism far in excess of what Roosevelt would probably have done alone. Writing in the September 3 issue of the Outlook, Roosevelt was much more lenient towards capitalism than he had been at Osawatomie. Explaining his position further, he said, "If we approach the work of reform in a spirit of vindictiveness — in a spirit of reckless disregard for the right of others or of hatred for men because they are better off than ourselves — we are sure in the end to do not good but damage to all mankind... ." Apparently Pinchot, the Bonesman, was more anti-capitalist than Roosevelt. But the left remembers what Roosevelt said in Osawatomie, not what he wrote in Outlook magazine. But the idea of a glorified socialist strongman leading America was in the air. At Osawatomie, Roosevelt had said that the executive was the "steward of public welfare," inferring strong centralized power in the presidency. In 1912, there appeared a novel about such a strong leader taking over America, Philip Dru, Administrator, written by Col. Edward M. House, in New Haven, Connecticut. (The book is available through The John Birch Society.) While House was not a member of the Yale secret society, Anthony Sutton writes that House "was the Order's messenger boy." House became the "mystery man" or "eminence grise" of the Wilson administration. Ironically, William Howard Taft, the conservative Republican opposed by Roosevelt, was also a Bonesman.

La Forte writes:

In 1912 the Osawatomie speech became the basis of the National Progressive party platform. After the stunning defeat of the Republicans in 1910, Roosevelt issued the following statement: "So far as I am concerned, I have nothing whatever to add to or take away from the declaration of principles which I have made in the Osawatomie speech... . The fight for progressive popular government has merely begun, and will certainly go on to a triumphant conclusion in spite of initial checks and irrespective of the personal success or failure of individual leaders."

Of course, as we know, because Roosevelt divided the Republicans in the 1912 election with his Progressive (nicknamed the "Bull Moose") Party. the liberal Democrat Woodrow Wilson was able to win the election with only 41.8 percent of the vote, opening the way for a federal income tax, the creation of an American central bank called the Federal Reserve System, and entry into World War I, setting us on the road to international socialism. One hundred years later, the Obama regime represents the end result of that untiring effort to enslave the American people under an obsolete 19th century political ideology that has already destroyed much of our Constitutional Republic.

At Osawatomie, Roosevelt railed against local interests blocking a strong national leader from changing America. Today, it is those same local interests that are blocking the Shadow Party from imposing its socialist dictatorship over America. As the French say, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*: The more things change, the more they remain the same.



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