



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on March 6, 2017

Published in the March 6, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 05

Barack Obama's Legacy

With Obama promising Democrats that he is not leaving Washington, but will fight to retain his legislation and legacy, it pays to know what that consists of.



In late 1995, a little-known Chicago politician named Barack Obama, who was running for the Illinois State Senate, attended a private coffee social meet-and-greet at a townhouse in Chicago's Kenwood neighborhood. In attendance was departing state Senator Alice Palmer, who had handpicked Obama to be her successor. No one at that gathering could have imagined that the dynamic young leftist politician on the make, Barack Obama, would one day become president. But without question, Obama was with company who recognized him as an ideological fellow-traveler. And none was more so than the owners of the townhouse itself, a couple of local university professors named Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn.

Ayers and Dohrn, professors at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Northwestern School of Law, were husband and wife, an academic power couple influential in left-wing political circles. But decades earlier, they had been something a lot less innocuous than coffee-klatch radicals. In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, Ayers and Dohrn had been leaders of the Weather Underground, a Marxist terrorist group responsible for multiple bombing attacks on corporate and U.S. government and military targets. The couple had spent years as fugitives before turning themselves in to the government in 1980. Ayers' charges were dismissed on various technicalities, while Dohrn spent little more than a year in jail for her activities. And in the way that leftist celebrities tend to do, both of them landed on their feet with plush university jobs. Neither of them appears to have tempered their beliefs in the slightest, with Dohrn still proclaiming herself a radical in the 1990s and beyond.

Barack Obama's association with Ayers did not end with the coffee party in 1995. While the two never became close friends (although persistent rumors that Ayers ghost-wrote one of Obama's books have never been confirmed or refuted), their political lives continued to intersect over Obama's years of activity in Illinois politics. Most notably, Ayers served for a number of years on the five-member board of directors of the Woods Fund of Chicago, a charitable group of which Obama was a co-founder in 1993. Ayers' tenure on the board, which met several times a year, overlapped with Obama's for three years, suggesting that Obama would have approved Ayers' membership.

Superficially, Obama and Ayers are very different personages. The latter famously refused to disavow acts of violence during his involvement with the Weather Underground, whereas the former is generally known as a genial, mild-mannered family man (although Obama's love of "droning" enemies of the American state suggests a passive-aggressive penchant for sanitized violence). But ideologically, the two are of a piece. After eight years of President Barack Obama, which have seen the advent of socialized medicine and a host of longstanding cultural Marxist priorities such as same-sex "marriage,"



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there can be little doubt that our former commander-in-chief is in virtual ideological lock-step with the former left-wing terrorist and all of the broader aims that the radical Left of cultural Marxism and international socialism support.

As a general proposition, the radical Left is sympathetic with even the most violent cohorts of cultural Marxism, as the ongoing convulsions of anti-Trump violence — and the refusal of most on the “respectable” Left in the mainstream media and politics to condemn it — will attest. The attacks on President Trump and his supporters are almost unprecedented in virulence in American history, and there is no doubt that the entire leftist establishment is in near-unanimous sympathy with the mobs destroying property and assaulting innocents, with public figures who openly threaten the president with violence, and with Washington ideologues seeking to undermine the legitimacy of the Trump administration and the Right in general. And even as he rides off into the electoral sunset, it behooves Americans to remember that the superficially genial Barack Obama not only sympathizes with such enemies of freedom and decency, but also did as much as any president before him to create the climate of toxic ideology and intolerance that the alt-Left now exploits.

Probably a substantial number of Obama supporters in 2008 were attracted to candidate Obama’s undeniable charm, including his ability as a public speaker and his intelligence. His chief selling point, of course, was the cachet of being the first black president; many of those who cast their vote for him wanted to be a part of the historic election, and were less concerned with many of his personal convictions.

Radically Pro-abortion President

Those who know Obama well know his sympathies. Former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay has characterized Obama’s voting record during his little-remarked stint as an Illinois state senator as “Marxist leftist” — a seemingly extreme choice of words, until Obama’s actions are taken into account. In 1997, for example, Obama voted against SB 230, a bill designed to stop the abominable practice of partial-birth abortions. Late in his career in the Illinois State Senate, Obama voted against the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, which would have extended life-supporting healthcare to children who survived the abortion procedure. Once Obama had left the Illinois Senate for bigger things, however, the bill was passed.

Nor has Obama’s position on abortion mellowed with the passage of time. On the hustings in western Pennsylvania, presidential candidate Obama, reacting to a pro-life Democrat supporter’s plea to protect the unborn, made this revealing comment: “Look, I got two daughters.... I am going to teach them first about values and morals, but if they make a mistake, I don’t want them punished with a baby.” As someone with a daughter, this writer has difficulty comprehending how a baby, under any circumstances, could be considered a “punishment.”

Practicing “Gay” Deception

Obama is also slavishly devoted to the normalization of homosexuality, a movement whose central aim has always been the legalization of same-sex “marriage.” The political groundwork for 2015’s Supreme Court ruling that compelled all states to recognize same-sex “marriage” has been many years in the making, and Barack Obama, along with his alt-Left confreres, was a big part of smoothing the way for our recent national capitulation to the homosexual lobby. However, candidate Obama repeatedly lied



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about his support for such “marriages” and other priorities of the radical homosexual agenda, because pragmatic advisors warned him that many in his support base, such as black Christians, were opposed to it. David Axelrod, the primary architect of Obama’s two presidential campaigns, admitted as much in his 2015 memoir: “Opposition to gay marriage was particularly strong in the black church, and as he ran for higher office, he grudgingly accepted the counsel of more pragmatic folks like me, and modified his position to support civil unions rather than marriage, which he would term a ‘sacred union.’”

Taking the advice of Axelrod and others, Obama told a black Christian church during his 2008 campaign, “I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union. God’s in the mix.”

But this was a cynical and calculated lie. In 1996, then-Illinois state Senator Obama took the time to reply to a primary election questionnaire produced by *Outlines*, a Chicago-area gay newspaper. Some of the answers Obama gave then — a dozen years before his first presidential candidacy, when he allegedly believed that marriage was between a man and a woman only — are revealing as to the lengths leftist radicals will go to conceal their radicalism, in order to accomplish their political ends:

- 1) I would support and co-sponsor a state civil rights bill for gays and lesbians....
- 6) I favor legalizing same-sex marriage, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages.
- 7) I believe in the rights of gays and lesbians to become foster parents, adopt children, and have the right to custody of their own children on the same basis as heterosexuals.

Once elected president, Obama’s views began to “evolve” on the issue — a carefully orchestrated spectacle intended to win over reluctant constituents. His cue to finally go public with what he had believed for decades was Vice President Biden’s disclosure, on *Meet the Press*, that he supported such unions. On May 9, 2012, Obama told ABC News that he now supported same-sex “marriage,” falsely stating that his views on the subject had been evolving. Yet again, as Axelrod admits, Obama had been in complete agreement with same-sex “marriage” for many years, since long before his first presidential campaign: “Yet if Obama’s views were ‘evolving’ publicly, they were fully evolved behind closed doors. The president was champing at the bit to announce his support for the right of gay and lesbian couples to wed — and having watched him struggle with this issue for years, I was ready, too.”

Gunning for Gun Owners

The right to keep and bear arms protected by the Second Amendment is another combustible social issue for which Obama has been reluctant to discuss his true leanings. Following the Supreme Court’s landmark 2008 decision *D.C. v. Heller* striking down Washington’s longstanding ban on handgun ownership, President Obama, eyeing reelection prospects, claimed to support Second Amendment rights. But as with same-sex “marriage,” Obama’s carefully concealed response to a 1990s electoral questionnaire suggests that, in common with doctrinaire leftists everywhere, Obama despises the Second Amendment. In the questionnaire, Obama indicated support for a total ban on private handgun ownership, then claimed an aide had filled out the form incorrectly — until additional documentation in Obama’s own handwriting was produced, showing that he had indeed intended to answer as the questionnaire recorded.

Once president, Obama did everything in his power to attack the Second Amendment, even as public



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support for gun control waned. Finding the climate in Congress unfavorable to outright gun bans or other legislative measures, even after repeated mass shootings such as the Sandy Hook massacre, Obama resorted to various executive sleight-of-hand measures such as executive orders and directives to restrict the availability of ammunition and repeated efforts to prohibit the private sale of firearms without notifying the government. While it is true that Obama did not preside over any major pieces of gun-control legislation, such as Clinton's "assault weapons ban" and Reagan's 1986 Firearms Owner Protection Act, it is only because the Obama presidency happened to occur during a period of rising public awareness of unconstitutional gun-control measures. So unfavorable has been public opinion toward gun control that, even in the wake of the horrific Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting, when the gun-control crowd tried to take maximal political advantage to pass "sweeping" new gun-control legislation — with the enthusiastic backing of President Obama — no laws were ultimately passed.

Environment of Hot Air

Another agenda item near and dear to the radical Left is the environmentalist program, which nowadays derives much of its vitality from climate-change hysteria. And for perfervid environmentalists, President Obama did not disappoint. Soon after taking office for his second term, Obama, no longer worried about reelection prospects, embarked on all-out war on behalf of Big Government environmentalism.

His first priority was the climate-change bogeyman. Obama's "Climate Action Plan" laid out an ambitious agenda for new government regulation of industry, in the name of reducing greenhouse gas and carbon emissions. The plan provides for a panoply of new controls to achieve goals such as reducing carbon emissions from power plants, increasing fuel-economy standards, reducing methane and hydrofluorocarbon emissions, and empowering government agencies to support "climate-resilient investment" (whatever that might be), among many other things. Obama's plan also calls for the United States to become the international leader in climate change-sensitive governance, seeking and promoting international controls and accords to spread the gospel of climate change across the world. And because the perfect climate is expected to remain elusive, the plan calls for more research and planning to prepare for additional measures to combat climate change as new human activities are discovered to pose a threat. In other words, the plan (and the entire climate-change/global-warming movement) provides an ever-evolving rationale for more and more government control, both at the national and international level.

Nor did Obama stop with his own plan. Obama signed the first-ever international climate agreement, the Paris Agreement, making the United States beholden to a new international regime of government climate controls limiting carbon emissions by private industry, among many other things. President Obama also entangled the United States in mammoth bilateral climate agreements with China in 2014, which commit the United States to more significant cuts in carbon and greenhouse-gas emissions.

Obama had been planning for months for a smooth transition to a successor president who would continue to push his environmental agenda. But when Hillary Clinton lost last November's election, Obama embarked on a frenzy of lame-duck executive actions designed to cripple the Trump administration's ability to reverse any of his environmental priorities. In noting with approval Obama's post-election "mad dash" to secure his environmental legacy, *Outside* magazine's Juliet Eilperin



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observed that “Obama is determined to shift [the federal government’s] trajectory as far to the left as possible before Donald Trump takes office in January. In many cases, that means exerting every federal lever still available to promote renewable energy, restrict drilling and coal extraction, and safeguard a handful of prized landscapes in the western United States.” Among the “federal levers” that Obama pulled during his last weeks in office were:

- A new five-year plan that attempts to ban further offshore drilling in the United States, including further exploratory drilling in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas in the Arctic Ocean and proposed drilling off the Atlantic coast;
- A new rule aimed at eliminating methane gas releases from drilling on federal land;
- Consideration of an alternate, more expensive route for the contentious Dakota Access Pipeline; and
- A rule aiming to expand wind and solar development on BLM land.

All of this was accomplished in a mere two weeks immediately after the election — a schedule nearly as ambitious as President Trump’s initial blitz of executive orders, but one met with warm approval instead of condemnation by the kept media.

Bankrupting America

One of the severest indictments of the Obama administration has been the soaring national debt. While it is true that Obama inherited an economic and financial mess, including already vertiginous levels of debt, his eight years in the White House have added massively to the problem, thanks to runaway government spending on a scale never before witnessed in American history. Back in 2008, as the economy was sinking to depths not seen since the Great Depression, President Obama had an opportunity to slash government spending and begin paying down the debt. Instead, reluctant to inflict “austerity measures” on America’s bloated public sector, Obama imposed them on the private sector instead. The centerpiece of his economic recovery program was a series of massive bailouts doled out to large, well-connected or otherwise politically correct enterprises — all at taxpayer expense, naturally. Obama created vast new government bureaucracies, courtesy of new laws such as Dodd-Frank, whose purpose was to regulate more tightly not only the financial sector, but also many other sectors, such as insurance and retail, whose business activities have anything to do with the issuance of credit (like the creation of credit cards for in-store use). As a consequence, the federal government grew massively, and Washington, D.C., and surrounding counties in Virginia and Maryland became islands of prosperity during the darkest years of the Great Recession. In a word: Under President Obama, the lobbyists, politicians, federal employees, and government contractors all made money, thanks to an unending gravy train of bailouts, “stimulus” grants, and contracts to rebuild infrastructure, whether necessary or not, and lots of new government jobs. Even as corporate America tightened its belt and shed millions of jobs, household incomes disappeared, and vast swaths of rural America watched factories close, Obama’s Washington flourished, with government employees enjoying better wages and benefits and more opportunities for advancement than ever before. And the entire lavish Beltway party was funded by taxpayer dollars. What’s more, the official national debt reached almost \$20 trillion on President Obama’s watch, meaning that the United States took on more debt during the Obama presidency than during all other presidencies in U.S. history combined.



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Trickle-down Healthcare

Just 16 days after election to his first term in office, Obama hiked the federal tobacco excise tax by a whopping 156 percent. Somewhat surprisingly, Obama did not follow with the usual suite of tax increases favored by liberals, no doubt in part because of strong GOP congressional resistance. But he more than made up for his comparative neglect of conventional tax hikes when ObamaCare was rolled out. That failed Mother of All Boondoggles came laden with tax increases, a few of which have yet to kick in, but many of which have already exacted a very heavy economic toll. Among them are the ObamaCare individual mandate tax imposed on Americans refusing to purchase health insurance, the ObamaCare employer mandate tax imposed on employers with more than 50 employees that do not offer health insurance, a hike in Medicare payroll taxes, and an excise tax on “Cadillac” health-insurance plans. Taken together, the welter of new economic burdens inflicted on the American economy by ObamaCare — America’s furthest foray yet into socialized medicine — have created far more hardship than any tax hikes in recent history.

As for its intended objectives, ObamaCare has been an abject failure. In addition to massive tax hikes, the deeply unpopular program has resulted in millions of Americans losing their health coverage outright (Obama’s facile promises to the contrary), and tens of millions more seeing their pre-ObamaCare benefits disappear under the weight of spiraling deductibles and premiums. Huge numbers of Americans have been forced into an unhappy choice between complying with the law — and paying for coverage with deductibles in the thousands of dollars to the tune of hundreds of dollars more in monthly premiums — or living without health coverage, paying annual tax penalties which are more economical.

But neither Obama nor any Democrats in Washington care an iota for any of this. The coercive mandates associated with ObamaCare are perceived as necessary measures to ensure that the program is adequately financed, while many of the more cynical among Washington liberals have publicly expressed hope that ObamaCare will fail — and give them a pretext to enact single-payer government healthcare, which has been the real goal all along. Socialized medicine, it should be noted, has been one of Barack Obama’s political goals for decades, which is why he has done everything in his power to resist any changes to his signature accomplishment as president.

Longing to Not Be Free

Like all doctrinaire leftists, Barack Obama has always had distrust and contempt for free market capitalism. Elected in the depths of the Great Recession, Obama was quick to assign blame for the crisis to the free market and its alleged excesses. To the surprise of no one, he sought to use government power and money to solve the crisis, spending billions in a massive bailout and fastening a new and wide-ranging set of government controls on business, particularly the financial sector. The most significant of these was the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, which, among other things, greatly limited the range of financial activities allowed to commercial banks and brought formerly unregulated types of financial activity such as derivatives under federal control. Dodd-Frank was the most comprehensive piece of regulation of the financial sector since the Great Depression, and is the closest that America has come yet to outright nationalization of the financial sector.



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The true causes of the Great Recession, as with all other such episodes in American history, were systematic distortions in pricing and valuation caused by government interference in, and protection of, the banking system, but as always, the solution offered by politicians such as Obama, who bear much of the responsibility for such market failures, is to expand their own power at the expense of the private sector. Not surprisingly, the private sector has yet to recover from the damage inflicted by Dodd-Frank and other measures, such as the Obama bailouts, by which government attempted to cure the sickness by applying more of the poison responsible for the pathology. The much-ballyhooed “Obama recovery” signaled by rising stock prices over the last several years bears little resemblance to the era of genuine economic growth during the ‘80s and ‘90s; this particular rising tide has lifted only a few boats, those captained by the already wealthy and well-connected.

It was largely in reaction to this highly selective “economic recovery” that Donald Trump was elected to succeed Obama as president. His many flaws notwithstanding, Trump the businessman does have a fairly clear perception of the wide-ranging damage inflicted on the American economy by eight years of Obama’s leftist policies. Trump and the GOP have vowed to repeal Dodd-Frank, ObamaCare, and many other regulations and policies from the Obama era that continue to hamstring the economy and prevent new capital formation. Unfortunately, as the Trump-led GOP promise to “repeal and replace” ObamaCare attests, the solution to many of these usurpations by the Left is likely to be little more than warmed-over Republican-friendly Big Government.

Trump has already made credible efforts to slow down the volume of regulations issued by executive branch agencies and to reverse many of Obama’s environmental regulations. He has also nominated a constitutionalist for the Supreme Court vacancy, as he promised to do, and taken steps to extricate the United States from internationalist trade compacts such as the TPP.

But in the longer run, the full legacy of the Obama presidency will be hard to undo. Like his ideological predecessors FDR and Lyndon Johnson, Obama has presided over truly revolutionary changes in the American body politic, from the legalization of same-sex “marriage” to ObamaCare, which have not only become quickly entrenched in American government but will also serve as precedents for further leftist innovation the moment the next Barack Obama is elected president. The rule since the 1930s has been that, roughly once a generation, a leftist true believer is elected president and promptly declares war, after the fashion of Marxists everywhere, on traditional morality and limited government. By the time the Right regains political power, they are too late to muster the political will to undo the damage. And the Left consolidates its gains and waits patiently for the next opportunity to move its agenda forward. Thus have the opponents of socialism and cultural Marxism chosen to play a defensive game, slowing down the encroachments of the enemies of freedom and decency, but never forcing them to retreat.

So it has been during the Obama years. A truly radical leftist with a long track record of supporting the most extreme elements of the Marxist program charmed his way into the White House and left the country a socioeconomic shambles eight years later. Whether President Trump or anyone else will be able to undo even a small part of the damage remains to be seen.

Indeed, Barack Obama has no intention of disappearing from the political scene. He has already announced the creation of a Chicago-based Obama Foundation, which presumably will (as the Clinton Foundation before it) continue to attract funds to try to further the cause of the radical Left, both at home and abroad. Moreover, the Obamas have decided to take up residence in Washington, D.C., instead of retiring to their home state as most previous ex-presidents have done. The reason, according



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to an explosive article in the *New York Post* by Paul Sperry, is that Obama is now planning to openly sabotage the Trump administration and, in fact, is already doing just that. Obama, writes Sperry, is “working behind the scenes to set up what will effectively be a shadow government to not only protect his threatened legacy, but to sabotage the incoming administration and its popular America First agenda.” Obama is allegedly doing this through “a network of leftist nonprofits led by Organizing for Action.” OFA is not just any non-profit leftist advocacy group; it was set up by Obama (its initials originally stood for “Obama for America”) in 2013, with the purpose of mobilizing political support for Obama’s initiatives.

Designed to outlast the Obama administration, OFA continues to function as an Alinsky-esque army of trained agitators prepared to turn out on command and demonstrate — often violently — to create “pressure from below” in support of Obama’s revolutionary leftist agenda. Obama remains intimately involved with OFA’s activities, urging them in not-so-subtle cadences to resist the Trump administration. Immediately after Trump’s unexpected win, for example, Obama told his OFA minions in a conference call from the White House, “Move forward to protect what we’ve accomplished. Now is the time for some organizing. So don’t mope.” The OFA took him at his word, marshaling its over 32,000 registered volunteers nationwide in the wave of protests and riots that have convulsed America for weeks. And there’s much more to come. Said Obama coyly after the election, “You’re going to see me early next year, and we’re going to be in a position where we can start cooking up all kinds of great stuff.... I’m still fired up and ready to go.”

Expect the Obamas, like the Clintons, to become permanent fixtures on the national and international radical Left stage, using their clout, cachet, and connections to marshal resources in support of the never-ending struggle of the Left against liberty and decency.



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