

What follows is an eight-year old review of Rules for Radicals, by Saul Alinsky. Clearly, it is aimed at the Clintons (Alinsky devotees), who, at the time, had an iron grip on the DNC. Has Rules for Radicals become the playbook for the DNC? It would seem so.

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Saul Alinsky wrote two books outlining his organizational principles and strategies: Reveille for Radicals (1946) and Rules for Radicals (1971).

Rules for Radicals opens with a quote about Lucifer, written by Saul Alinsky: "Lest we forget at least an over-the-shoulder acknowledgment to the very first radical: from all our legends, mythology, and history (and who is to know where mythology leaves off and history begins -- or which is which), the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom -- Lucifer."

In Rules for Radicals, Alinsky says: "Here I propose to present an arrangement of certain facts and general concepts of change, a step toward a science of revolution." He builds on the tactical principles of Machiavelli: "The Prince was written by Machiavelli for the Haves on how to hold power. Rules for Radicals is written for the Have-nots on how to take it away."

Rules for Radicals is concerned with the acquisition of power: "my aim here is to suggest how to organize for power: how to get it and how to use it." This is not to be done with assistance to the poor, nor even by organizing the poor to demand assistance: "...[E]ven if all the low-income parts of our population were organized ... it would not be powerful enough to get significant, basic, needed changes."

Alinsky advises the organizer to target the middle class, rather than the poor: "Organization for action will now and in the decade ahead center upon America's white middle class. That is where the power is."

Alinsky is interested in the middle class solely for its usefulness: "Our rebels have contemptuously rejected the values and the way of life of the middle class. They have stigmatized it as materialistic, decadent, bourgeois, degenerate, imperialistic, warmongering, brutalized and corrupt. They are right; but we must begin from where we are if we are to build power for change, and the power and the people are in the middle class majority."

To accomplish this, Alinsky writes that the organizer must "begin to dissect and examine that way of life [the middle class lifestyle] ... He will know that 'square' [traditional/establishment] is no longer to be dismissed as such -- instead his own approach must be 'square' [traditional/establishment] enough to get the action started."

Rules for Radicals defends belief that the end justifies the means: "to say that the ends corrupt," writes Alinsky, "is to believe in the immaculate conception of ends and principles ... the practical revolutionary will understand ... [that] in action, one does not

always enjoy the luxury of a decision that is consistent both with one's individual conscience and the good of mankind."

Altogether, Alinsky provides eleven rules of the ethics of means and ends. They are morally relativistic:

"The practical revolutionary will understand Goethe's 'conscience is the virtue of observers and not of agents of action'; in action, one does not always enjoy the luxury of a decision that is consistent both with one's individual conscience and the good of mankind."

"The second rule of the ethics of the means and ends is that the judgment of the ethics of means is dependent on the political position of those sitting in judgment." Alinsky elaborates his meaning on this point, saying that if you were a member of the underground Resistance, "... then you adopted the means of assassination, terror, property destruction, the bombing of tunnels and trains, kidnapping, and the willingness to sacrifice innocent hostages to the end of defeating the Nazi's. Those who opposed the Nazi's conquerors regarded the Resistance as a secret army of selfless, patriotic idealists" Rules for Radicals is therefore concerned with how to win. "...[I]n such a conflict, neither protagonist is concerned with any value except victory."

"The third rule of the ethics of means and ends is that in war the ends justifies almost any means."

"There can be no such thing as a successful traitor, for if one succeeds, he becomes a founding father."

Rules for Radicals teaches the organizer that he must give a moral appearance (as opposed to behaving morally): "All effective action requires the passport of morality."

The tenth rule of the ethics of means and ends states "that you do what you can with what you have and clothe it with moral arguments ... Moral rationalization is indispensable at all times of action whether to justify the selection or the use of ends or means."

Rules for Radicals provides the organizer with a tactical style for community organization that assumes an adversarial relationship between groups of people in which one either dominates or is dominated.

"The first rule of power tactics is: power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have."

"Wherever possible go outside the experience of the enemy. Here you want to cause confusion, fear, and retreat."

"Make the enemy live up to their own book of rules. You can kill them with this. They can no more obey their own rules than the Christian church can live up to Christianity."

Ridicule is man's most potent weapon. It is almost impossible to counterattack ridicule. Also, it infuriates the opposition, who then react to your advantage."

"The threat is generally more terrifying than the thing itself."

"In a fight almost anything goes. It almost reaches the point where you stop to apologize if a chance blow lands above the belt."

"Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it."

One of the criteria for picking the target is the target's vulnerability ... the other important point in the choosing of a target is that it must be a personification, not something general and abstract."

"The enemy properly goaded and guided in his reaction will be your major strength."

Saul Alinsky urged the active and deliberate "conscious-raising" of people through the technique of "popular education." Popular education is a method by which an organizer leads people to a class-based interpretation of their grievances, and to accept the organizer's systemic solutions to address those grievances. "Through the People's Organization these groups [of citizens] discover that what they considered primarily their individual problem is also the problem of others, and furthermore the only hope for solving an issue of titanic proportions is by pooling all their efforts and strengths. That appreciation and conclusion is an educational process."

Rules for Radicals stresses organizational power collecting: "The ego of the organizer is stronger and more monumental than the ego of the leader. The organizer is in a true sense reaching for the highest level for which a man can reach – to create, to be a 'great creator', to play God." Alinsky considered Hillary a terrific "organizer" and wanted her to become his protégée. She declined. She had bigger fish to fry. She learned her lessons well. She and Bill have employed Alinsky's tactics probably better than anyone else.