

THE FEAR, LOATHING, AND RESPECT FOR SAUL ALINSKY

I would like to put us in the mood for today's paper by mentioning the Names of some famous American protestors and their works. There is Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*, there's Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay entitled *Self Reliance*, Henry Thoreau's thoughts on *Civil Disobedience*, Susan B. Anthony's speeches on behalf of Women's Suffrage, to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail* and then there's Bob Dylan's protest songs. These were all times when American radicals found an influential voice, and their writings had an impact on American politic. And these works were not unlike the writings and the times of Saul Alinsky. His most important work reflects the sixties, a time of peace marches, civil rights unrest, anti-war sentiments, political chaos, and profound social change. They were a time when Bob Dylan's music was on the lips of high school and college students. You may remember some of Dylan's songs and you may remember the words. If so, please indulge me and sing along on two of his best-known protest songs.

Sing two songs:

"Blowin' In The Wind"

"The Times They Are A-Changin'"

Opening Statement

If we could use H. G. Wells' time machine today and go back to a time and place that existed exactly 50 years ago, it would now be October 12, 1968. At that time IPFW was four years old, Glenbrook Mall was three years old, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, directed by Earl Wells, was 2 years old, and the new Library building, led by Quest member Fred Reynolds, had just been dedicated. James W. Jackson was serving as our 58th Quest Club President and we wouldn't be meeting here, but possibly, we would have met at the Fort Wayne Country Club.

At that time some of us would see Fort Wayne in a picturesque atmosphere – like a Norman Rockwell painting of the 'City of Churches.' But others would easily see the changes and chaos that gave dissonance to our world. We would have witnessed the recent assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy and watched television coverage of the Democratic Convention in Chicago just three weeks ago. Next week two African-American athletes would raise their fists at the summer Olympics in Mexico City, in three weeks Richard Nixon would be elected our next President, and in one month, Yale University would begin admitting women. We would land on the moon in 9 months, celebrate Woodstock in 10 months, and witness

ongoing Vietnam War protests that would lead to students being killed at Kent State. These were cogent and tempestuous times – not unlike today – and they were fertile ground for Saul David Alinsky and his social philosophy.

The Family Background

He was born on the west side of Chicago over one hundred and nine years ago – January 30, 1909. Although his first years were inauspicious, his family dynamics were invidious at best, and his character and dynamic personality were formed at a very young age.

His father, Benjamin, was a devout Russian Jew who had immigrated to New York City and eventually moved to Chicago and set up residence as a tailor at 263 Maxwell Street. He brought with him his wife, and their three children. He was a heavy, disheveled and unattractive man whose friends called him a shlub. When he separated from his wife a few years later, the children stayed with him and did not go with their mother. As his tailor business prospered, he relocated to a better neighborhood and remarried.

His new wife, Sarah Tannenbaum Alinsky, had worked for him as a seamstress, and was twenty years his junior – not much older than his own children. In January 1909, Benjamin and his young wife welcomed their first child, a son, Saul David Alinsky. A few years later a second son was born but soon died of diphtheria. Soon after, Sarah became a vigilant survivor and protector of Saul. By all accounts, she was obstinate, demanding, self-centered, and manipulative. But above all else, she was a troublemaker and extremist who took no prisoners.

Following Saul's bar mitzvah, Benjamin divorced, left his son and former wife in Chicago, and moved to California. From that point on, he would no longer be an influence on his son. Although Saul visited his father in California, and actually graduated from Hollywood High School in Los Angeles, Benjamin and Saul were eventually estranged, and for the rest of his life, Saul would harbor a deep disrespect for his father. When Benjamin died in 1952, he left an estate of \$30,000. To his son Saul, he left \$50.

Sarah, his mother, would become the rock that Alinsky needed for strength. Although she would go on to marry three other men, her life's focus would forever remain on her only child, her son. Her impact as a mother and rebellious troublemaker, would be like a die cast on the hardest steel, and remain an indelible influence on Alinsky's power of persuasion, his career, and the energy he brought to bear.

When friends wondered where Alinsky got his overpowering and provocative personality, they only had to meet his mother. For Sarah, being a troublemaker was her style – for her son, it would be his profession. Of the Nine events that would influence his life, having Sarah for a mother would be the First and most important.

The Educational Inspiration

Following high school, Alinsky entered the University of Chicago at the age of 17. The year was 1926. During his freshman and sophomore years, he wandered through his course-work, not really knowing his career interests. He flunked American History during his freshman year and remained on academic probation throughout his sophomore year. During his first two years of college he received no grade higher than a C.

Throughout his undergraduate experience he was somewhat of a loner. He belonged to no clubs and joined no fraternities. He lived at home with his mother, stood six feet tall, was sharp tongued, sometimes profane, frequently opinionated, and unquestionably interesting.

He was unsure of a college major until his junior year when he took Ernest W. Burgess's course in social pathology. Burgess, and fellow professor Robert Park, had written one of America's first college textbooks on social science – *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*. That course became what I would call a branding moment. It was the fall of 1928, and Saul David Alinsky had found his career path.

That same year he also met a charming classmate, the woman who would become his first wife and the Second Major Influence in his life, Helene Simons. She was a blue-eyed, fair-skinned, blond from Philadelphia. She was an exceptional athlete, attended summer camps in Maine, and was raised in a German-Jewish upper-middle class family. She was an economics major, his intellectual equal, a perfect counter-point to his course behavior, with leadership skills and a natural ability to organize. It was a perfect match.

Two years later, in 1930, Alinsky graduated with a Bachelor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago. Although he majored in archaeology, a subject that had fascinated him, he was really a social science graduate.

Employment and Experiences

Following his undergraduate degree, Alinsky attended two years of graduate school at the University of Chicago in an effort to complete the requirements for a Ph.D. While taking a graduate course in sociology, his professors, Burgess and Park, had assigned him to study social distinctions in Chicago's

‘Jungle.’ The Jungle was a reference to Upton Sinclair’s seminal book on city slums, *The Jungle*.

He had read the book and like many, was incensed and determined to find solutions to poverty if and where possible. In studying the many factors that influence poverty, Alinsky visited the various dance halls where the youth of the 1930’s would hang out and socialize. He also visited the gambling houses, the brothels, and the prisons of Chicago’s west and south side. He spent time with the churches, parishes, pastors, priests, and community leaders. By the early 30’s he had compiled a list of over 200 civic and cultural leaders from Irish, Italian, Polish, German, Russian, Chinese, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, Moravian, Bohemian, athletic clubs, and every sector and immigrant community that framed the working class poor of Chicago. He knew their names, their phone numbers, and he knew them well.

In 1932, following his graduate work, he accepted a job as a criminologist for the State of Illinois. In this position he found a connection between the impoverished areas of Chicago and their subsequent high crime rate. This position also gave him an even higher profile as he interacted with all the personalities, issues and criminal interests of Chicago’s poor.

Alinsky, however, was most fascinated by Chicago’s prohibition gangs and was particularly interested in their influence on Chicago’s slums, children, and juvenile delinquency rates. To further this interest, he introduced himself to the gangs as a student doing social research on criminal personalities in an effort to keep kids out of jail.

Eventually he earned the confidence of many of Chicago’s most notorious criminals. He knew Al Capone’s gang members, especially Frank Nitti, known as “the Enforcer” who became the de facto head of the gang after Capone went to jail in 1931. He knew Bugs Moran and Roger Touhy. He knew where all the speakeasies were located and what mobsters controlled them. According to one gang member “Saul knew everybody.”

Beginning in 1933, as he worked with Clifford Shaw who ran the Institute for Juvenile Research, he was assigned to study criminals at the State Penitentiary at Joliet, which was a short drive southwest of Chicago. He worked there as a staff sociologist and member of the parole classification board. His primary job at Joliet was to interview inmates and assess their prospects for parole. Many of the gang members he had met on the streets of Chicago ended up being interviewed later by Alinsky at Joliet.

Although he had the connections and interest in delving into politics, Alinsky spent most of the 1930s focused on Crime. His work culminated in a paper

that he presented in 1937 at the annual congress of the American Prison Association in New York City entitled “The Philosophical Implications of the Individualistic Approach in Criminology.”

What Alinsky had found during his studies and employment as a criminologist was that crime was not so much caused by the devil; as was the common believe in past generations, as it was caused by individual circumstances and determinism. He was one of many social researchers of the early 20th century who identified the many variables that impacted poverty and crime. Alinsky felt these variables could be changed, and beginning in the late 1930's he focused on effecting that belief.

Other Important Influences

Working as a criminologist and sociologist was the Third Major Influence on Alinsky. The Fourth was the rise of the CIO under the leadership of John L. Lewis. Under the New Deal, labor organizations had been more active in recruiting members and challenging large corporations that were not unionized. By 1935 John Lewis had become the first great general of the American labor force. The next four years would see the automobile and steel industry become unionized. Alinsky was fascinated by Lewis' appeal and admired his organizational skills.

The Fifth Major Influence for Alinsky was right in his own backyard, literally. By 1939, he had become less active in the labor movement and more active in general community organizing. He began this in the 'Back of the Yards' and other poor areas on the South Side of Chicago.

The 'Back of the Yards' is an area just east and south of the historic Union Stockyards, which were first relocated to that one central area in 1865. By the 1930's the site had 2,300 separate livestock pens, with room to accommodate 75,000 hogs, 21,000 cattle and 22,000 sheep at any one time. To clean the yards it was estimated that 500,000 gallons a day of Chicago River water were pumped into the stockyards and subsequently pumped back out into the river.

When the City permanently reversed the flow of the Chicago River in 1900, the main intent was to prevent the Stock Yards' waste products, along with other sewage, from flowing into Lake Michigan and contaminating the City's drinking water. Eventually, so much stockyard waste drained into the South Fork of the river that it was called 'Bubbly Creek' due to the gaseous products of decomposition. The creek still bubbles to this day.

Understandably, property values on the east and south side of the stockyards were the lowest in Chicago and therefore home to the poorest citizens. These

homes and businesses constituted the slums written about by Sinclair Lewis. 'Back of the Yards' notoriously had never been a single organized voting bloc and without a vote they lacked political power. Residents spoke more than a dozen languages, were frequently identified with certain city streets and blocks, and in most cases never spoke outside their ethnic heritage. Saul Alinsky aimed to change this.

Using his experience in studying crime, his large network of community leaders, and his knowledge of the rising labor movement, Alinsky attempted to organize this area into one large and respected political power. By doing this, he believed poverty and crime would be diminished and possibly eliminated.

Several politicians backed his early efforts to turn a scattered, voiceless discontent into a self-sufficient neighborhood that deserved respect. The Mayor of Chicago, Edward J. Kelly, was the first to admire what Alinsky was doing. Later, he earned the admiration of Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, who said Alinsky's aims "most faithfully reflect our ideals of brotherhood, tolerance, charity and dignity of the individual."

Alinsky's ability to bring divergent interests together, to find common ground on critical issues, to find leaders who cared about their community, and to create a lasting governing structure and communication network for a community was highly successful. He called the new organization 'Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council' (BYNC). In effect, this effort, which began in 1939, was the world's first successful attempt at community organizing. BYNC still exists today.

Shortly after the 'Back of the Yards' success, Alinsky formed the Industrial Area Foundation (IAF) as a way of finding, representing, and funding common interests and issues in other areas of Chicago. He envisioned IAF as a training ground for community organizers and those who could assist in the founding of community organizations throughout the United States.

During the 40's and 50's Alinsky's local and national profile increased and his network included Chicago luminaries such as Marshall Field, Bishop Sheil, John D. Rockefeller, Carl Sandburg, John L. Lewis, and the heirs to the Macy fortune – Val and Happy. Many of these individuals had been influential in the 'Back of the Yards' movement, but most importantly, they now sat on the IAF board where they contributed much needed money to the cause of preventing poverty and childhood delinquency through a concerted community organization.

These were heady days for Alinsky. He had the respect of the leading citizens of Chicago and he had financial resources to pursue his agenda. As a result of these associations, he was asked to sit on the governing boards of several civic and non-profit organizations. And his national profile gave rise to speaking engagements throughout the United States.

He spent time in New York, Kansas, Michigan, and California. By 1945 Alinsky had compiled most of his work, and with his wife's editorial skills, had completed his first full effort at putting his organizational concepts into a written form. He called the book *Reveille for Radicals* and it was published in 1946. It was the nation's first handbook on community organizing techniques and offered community leadership practices that had never been used before.

Alinsky was passionate about sharing his views and expecting change. Basically, he considered his book as something similar to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* in which he offered his view of how to organize without and within so the resulting action can change a community or entity for the better.

Writing this book was the Sixth Major Influence on Alinsky's life. It was a success, not so much financially but that it garnered a following, especially among those who needed to find a voice when they had no power to speak. It placed Alinsky on the map. It would eventually become a must read by labor organizers and leaders, by politicians from both sides of the aisle who looked for new votes, by people like William Buckley and Martin Luther King, Jr., by the disillusioned college drop out, by the hippy movement, and eventually by Vietnam War protestors and warriors alike. It was viewed on its basic standard, as a way to organize people, gain power and change the status quo to your liking.

A critical Seventh Major Influence occurred just one year later in the summer of 1947. While vacationing in the Indiana Dunes, his beloved wife, Helene, was tragically swept under water while trying to save a child, and drowned. Her heroism was lauded and admired but for Alinsky, there was only sorrow. Life could never again be the same. It took five years of depression and many tears to find a way past the sadness. He would go on to marry again but never fully enjoy such a perfect partnership and close friend. This event also cultivated a fatalistic anger in his work.

By 1950 Alinsky had turned his attention to the black ghettos of Chicago. This would become the Eighth Major Influence on his life. This did not sit well with politicians and leaders who relied on a quiet, submissive African American voice. His actions eventually aroused the ire of Mayor Richard J. Daley.

Alinsky once explained that his reasons for organizing in African American communities included, and I quote:

“Negroes were being lynched regularly in the South as the first stirrings of black opposition began to be felt, and many of the white civil rights organizers and labor agitators who had started to work with them were tarred and feathered, castrated—or killed. Most Southern politicians were members of the Ku Klux Klan and had no compunction about boasting of it.”

Alinsky was also energized by the funeral of Emmett Till, the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision by the Supreme Court, and the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his civil rights work throughout the southern states. Although King and Alinsky were dynamically opposed in their techniques – ‘non-violence’ versus ‘disruptive proaction’ – they were unified in their effort to find justice for the African American citizen.

Eventually it was a surprising change in Alinsky’s circle of friends that brightened his outlook on life. While visiting New York he met Jean Graham, an attractive slim brunette in her thirties with a debutante background. She was a Scotch Presbyterian, divorced from an executive of Bethlehem Steel, a Vassar graduate from a wealthy background, and was raised on Park Avenue. His friends thought her to be the most unlikely match but she was swept off her feet and the two were married in the spring of 1952. Jean became the Ninth and final Major Influence on Alinsky and his work.

By the late 50s and early 60s he, and the ‘Industrial Area Foundation,’ were increasingly being asked by churches and concerned citizens to assist in reaching the impoverished and racially divided inner cities, to confront urban housing discrimination, and to support the integration of public schools and large businesses.

One prominent example was in November of 1964 when Alinsky was invited to Rochester, New York by a delegation of 5 whites and 3 blacks representing the Rochester Area Council of Churches. They were interested in seeing Kodak, Rochester’s largest employer, become integrated. In 1964 Kodak commanded over 90 percent of the photographic market and employed over 30,000 people mostly in Rochester. Of all these employees, less than a dozen were African American.

After incorporating Alinsky’s tactics, and following a year of civil unrest, Kodak was finally integrated. It was during this period following the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 and the Watts riots of 1965 that many politicians and communities began to see Alinsky as more of a troublemaker than a problem solver. Some conservatives claimed he was actually a member of the

Communist Party, a claim that Alinsky vehemently denied and considered an obvious prevarication.

Another example occurred in 1966 when Alinsky was invited to address a gathering in California. He traveled there at the request of the San Francisco Bay Area Presbyterian Churches to organize the African American ghetto in Oakland. Hearing of these plans, the panic-stricken Oakland City Council promptly introduced a resolution banning him from the city. Politicians in Oakland and similar communities across the nation began to fear that Alinsky's efforts could change the power structure, especially giving voice to African American voters.

Between 1962 and 1972 Alinsky found himself being both admired and demonized by individuals and organizations from across the United States. His reputation preceded him and he seemed to thrive from the attention whether positive or negative. Those who admired his techniques were quick to find virtues in his ability to organize and give power to the powerless while those who hated him criticized his techniques of targeting the powerbrokers and his unorthodox way of upsetting the status quo.

By the mid-sixties times were definitely changing. What was common in organizational structures of the 1940s was being challenged by radical behaviors of the 1960s. It was no longer possible to go door-to-door seeking approval and soliciting support on issues. It was more likely that an issue would be galvanizing through a much more important media – television. More importantly, the presence and integrity of someone like Martin Luther King, Jr., as viewed through the medium of television, could set a larger framework and support a change different than traditional community organizing.

In Alinsky's mind, what was needed was a new way of envisioning his 1940's concept of community organizing. In following this precept, he reworked his *Reveille* into a new written approach and called it, *Rules for Radicals*. Published in 1971, this found an immediate success with those disillusioned by the sixties who were looking for ways to achieve power amidst confusion.

Alinsky had noted that the leadership book *The Prince*, written by Machiavelli and published in the early sixteenth century, was for the 'Haves' on how to hold power. His new book *Rules for Radicals*, published 450 years later, was, on the other hand, written for the 'Have-Nots' on how to gain power.

In the papers I have placed on your tables is a copy of Alinsky's 13 organizational rules and a primer on choosing leadership. I encourage you to

look at this. Using these 13 rules, Alinsky tried to convince a new generation of youth to adopt his 'pragmatic' approach to organizing, which rested on accepting 'the world as it is' and rejecting the more militant political approaches being advocated by several radical organizations of the late sixties.

Alinsky was notable in that he was not an iconoclast and he did not join political parties. When asked during a Playboy interview in 1972 whether he ever considered becoming a Communist Party member, he replied, and I quote: "Not at any time. I've never joined any organization—not even the ones I've organized myself. I prize my own independence too much."

Alinsky was succinct when he said: "to accomplish anything you've got to have power and you'll only get it through organization. Now, power comes in two forms — money and people. You haven't got any money, but you do have people, and here's what you can do with them."

This was Alinsky's core belief: in contests between money and people, a large enough group can and will secure immediate concessions from landlords, politicians, and business owners. He was never nihilistic; he wanted to work within existing norms. This organizing method helped his campaigns win local improvements in public housing, community health services, and public schools all across the United States.

By the mid-sixties, Alinsky's ideas were being adapted by some U.S. college students and other young counter-culture elements who used them as part of their strategies for organizing on campus and beyond. Conservative author William F. Buckley, Jr. said in 1966 that Alinsky was "very close to being an organizational genius" and Time Magazine wrote in 1970 "It is not too much to argue that American democracy is being altered by Alinsky's ideas".

Alinsky described his plans for the 1972 election as an effort to organize the white middle-class across the United States. He believed that many Americans were living in frustration and despair, worried about their future, and ripe to become politically active citizens.

In a direct quote from his book *Rules For Radicals* Alinsky predicted, correctly, that the middle class could be driven to a right-wing viewpoint, and I quote: "making them ripe for the plucking by some guy on horseback promising a return to the vanished verities of yesterday" with a stated motive of, and I quote: "I love this goddamn country, and we're going to take it back." This is not unlike some of today's politicians and their campaign slogans.

Unfortunately Alinsky would not live to see his full impact on American politics. He died suddenly from a heart attack on June 12, 1972, at the age of 63, less than a year after the publication of *Rules for Radicals*. He was cremated and his ashes were interred in what is now part of Zion Gardens Cemetery in Chicago.

Alinsky's Legacy

Based on his organizing in Chicago, Alinsky had formed the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in 1940. It is still active today as the nation's largest network of local faith and community-based organizations. Thousands of community and labor leaders have been and continue to be trained at its workshops.

Many other organizations have been established following the IAF model including the National Urban League, which was founded in 1946. Our own Fort Wayne Urban League was formed a year later in 1947. Additionally, Alinsky's work and writings have become a core curriculum resource when studying social work in our nation's colleges and universities.

In 1969, while a political science major at Wellesley College, Hillary Rodham wrote her senior thesis on Alinsky's work. The decision to write a thesis involving Alinsky was not her idea. Instead, her political science professor, Alan Schechter, who is now an emeritus professor at Wellesley, had suggested it.

In the paper Ms. Rodham endorsed Alinsky's central critique of government antipoverty programs — that they tended to be too top-down and removed from the wishes of individuals. But she split with Alinsky over a central point. He vowed to “rub raw the sores of discontent” and compel action through agitation. This, she believed, ran counter to the notion of change within the system.

Additionally Ms. Rodham stated, and I quote: “I agreed with some of Alinsky's ideas, particularly the value of empowering people to help themselves. But we had a fundamental disagreement. He believed you could change the system only from the outside. I didn't.”

Alinsky's ideas have long held a canonical place in community organizing literature and training curricula, but interest in his life and work was sparked again in 2008 after President Barack Obama's election. Obama had cited Alinsky as an influence in his first book, *Dreams from My Father*.

According to Alinsky biographer Sanford Horwitt, Obama's presidential campaign was influenced by Alinsky's teachings. And some conservative talk

show hosts, such as Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, gave this link unending vituperations.

But historian Thomas Sugrue disagreed with this assessment and wrote, “As with all conspiracy theories, the Alinsky-Obama link rests on a kernel of truth”.

The facts are that following his Bachelor’s degree from Columbia University in 1983 and prior to entering Harvard in 1988, Obama spent three years serving as the Director of the Developing Communities Project, a faith based organization in Chicago. It was an organization that was influenced by Alinsky’s work. Additionally, Obama also had written an essay that was collected in a book memorializing Alinsky. That was the extent of the influence.

Over the past ten years, the rising Tea Party movement developed a paranoid obsession with Alinsky, which still persists among today’s “alt-right” community. Invidious articles often appeared across conservative media with titles such as “How Saul Alinsky Taught Barack Obama Everything He Knows About Civic Upheaval.”

But it is interesting to note that Adam Brandon, a spokesperson for the conservative non-profit organization FreedomWorks, one of several groups involved in organizing Tea Party protests, said that his group distributes *Rules for Radicals* to its top leadership members and a shortened guide called *Rules for Patriots* to its entire network.

In a January 2012 story that appeared in The Wall Street Journal, citing the Tea Party’s tactic of sending activists to town-hall meetings, Brandon explained, “[Alinsky’s] tactics when it comes to grass-roots organizing are incredibly effective.”

And two years ago, during the 2016 Presidential campaign, Alinsky was again in the news. Although I could not find a single positive reference associated with his name, I found it ironic that his campaign techniques, as outlined in *Rules for Radicals*, were the single most impactful set of guidelines being used by all candidates from all parties in an effort to win elections.

On a personal note, I must share with you that I am an educational product of the sixties having received my undergraduate degree in 1968. During that turbulent decade I often found comfort in the words of the great American transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau, whom I mentioned earlier. He

spent two years in solitude observing life on Walden Pond and wrote the eloquent treatise entitled *Civil Disobedience*.

Less than two weeks ago my wife and I spent a day in Thoreau's hometown, Concord, Massachusetts. We visited Walden Pond, where I walked along the shore-side path and felt the sand beneath my feet. We stayed overnight in his childhood home located beside Concord Green and built in 1716, and we slept in the first floor corner bedroom #27, which is said to be haunted by the ghosts of Minute Men killed on April 19, 1775, and we also visited Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, where I sat beside Thoreau's gravesite and those of his friends, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Louisa May Alcott.

As I sat there I could almost hear his voice reaching across the ages and whispering truth to today's political discussions. In a quote from *Civil Disobedience* Thoreau said: "If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations." Saul Alinsky was certainly one of those people.

Today, October 12, 2018, almost fifty years after he died, things have not changed that much. We still react to, and are divided by the same old controversies. The strident political ideologies, the ethnic bigotry, the racial, social, and gender inequities, the lack of ethics in leadership, the flaring extremes of bias and prejudice, and the pervasive anxiety that comes with change are still with us. And, it follows that Saul Alinsky continues to be controversial.

In my humble opinion, we will never escape progress and its accompanying anxiety. And in our very fortunate society that strives for inclusivity, that thrives on the newest technological innovations and twitter-speed solutions, and relies increasingly on algorithmically supported opinions and enormous financial resources devoted to political change, conflict will be inevitable and sometimes dispiriting.

And it then follows that anxiety will be ever more present and a necessary accommodation within our society. There are some who welcome change and some who are afraid of change. Thoreau, I suppose, might have thought this over at his cabin on Walden Pond. Saul David Alinsky, however, created an instrument of change and would feel right at home amidst today's political chaos – a stressful and ever-changing arena that harbors few answers. Which takes us back to the songs of Bob Dylan – The Times They Are A-Changin'

and The Answer My Friend Is Blowin' In The Wind, The Answer Is Blowin' In the Wind.

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Alinsky's 13 Rules For Radicals

1. **"Power is not only what you have, but what the enemy thinks you have."**
2. **"Never go outside the expertise of your people."** When an action or tactic is outside the experience of the people, the result is confusion, fear and retreat.... [and] the collapse of communication.
3. **"Whenever possible, go outside the expertise of the enemy."** Look for ways to increase insecurity, anxiety and uncertainty. (This happens all the time. Watch how many organizations under attack are blind-sided by seemingly irrelevant arguments that they are then forced to address.)
4. **"Make the enemy live up to it's own book of rules."** You can kill them with this, for they can no more obey their own rules than the Christian church can live up to Christianity.
5. **"Ridicule is man's most potent weapon."** It is almost impossible to counteract ridicule. Also it infuriates the opposition, which then reacts to your advantage.
6. **"A good tactic is one your people enjoy."**
7. **"A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag."** Man can sustain militant interest in any issue for only a limited time . . .
8. **"Keep the pressure on. Never let up."** Use different tactics and actions, and utilize all events of the period for your purpose.
9. **"The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself."**
10. **"The major premise for tactics is the development of operations that will maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition."** It is this unceasing pressure that results in the reactions from the opposition that are essential for the success of the campaign.
11. **"If you push a negative hard and deep enough, it will push through and become a positive."** It break through into its counterside... every positive has its negative.
12. **"The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative."**
13. **"Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it."** In conflict tactics there are certain rules that [should be regarded] as universalities. One is that the opposition must be singled out as the target and 'frozen.' . . .

The Qualities Alinsky Looked For In A Good Organizer Were:

1. **Ego** (“reaching for the highest level for which man can reach — to create, to be a ‘great creator,’ to play God”)
2. **Curiosity** (raising “questions that agitate, that break through the accepted pattern”)
3. **Irreverence** (“nothing is sacred”; the organizer “detests dogma, defies any finite definition of morality”)
4. **Imagination** (“the fuel for the force that keeps an organizer organizing”)
5. **A Sense of Humor** (“the most potent weapons known to mankind are satire and ridicule”)
6. **An Organized Personality** (with confidence in presenting the right reason for his actions only “as a moral rationalization after the right end has been achieved.’...)

Quote from Rules for Radicals:

“The organizer’s first job is to create the issues or problems, and organizations must be based on many issues. The organizer must first rub raw the resentments of the people of the community; fan the latent hostilities of many of the people to the point of overt expression. He must search out controversy and issues, rather than avoid them, for unless there is controversy people are not concerned enough to act . . . An organizer must stir up dissatisfaction and discontent.”

The Nine Major Influences on Alinsky's Life and Career

1. Alinsky's mother, Sarah Tannenbaum Alinsky – beginning in 1909.
2. His first wife, Helene Simmons Alinsky – beginning in 1928.
3. Working as a Criminologist and Sociologist – beginning in 1930.
4. Meeting and working with John L. Lewis and the CIO in 1935.
5. Organizing 'The Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council' (BYNC) in 1939 and founding the 'Industrial Areas Foundation' (IAF) in 1940.
6. Writing his first major book: 'Reveille For Radicals' in 1946 with help from his first wife Helene.
7. The death of his first wife, Helene in 1947.
8. Organizing Black Ghettos in several major American cities beginning in 1946 that led to the founding of the Urban League.
9. His second wife, Jean Graham Alinsky in 1952 and her assistance in writing his second major book, 'Rules For Radicals' in 1971.

Two Protest Songs by Bob Dylan

Blowin' In The Wind

How many roads must a man walk down, before you call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove sail, before she sleeps in the sand?
How many times must the cannonballs fly, before they're forever banned?
The answer my friend, is blowin' in the wind. The answer is blowin' in the wind.

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Come gather 'round people wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around you have grown
And accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'

Come senators, congressmen please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside and it is ragin'
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'