

Theological Geography

VDH: Where Did These Guys Come From?



Victor Davis Hanson
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Where Did These Guys Come From?

Victor Davis Hanson finally gets it, or reveals that he has. This is a watershed of the first importance and is reproduced here from [this link at Pajamas Media](#).

The Origins of Obamism

I do not think it will be easy to delay Obamism. It is not just that both houses of Congress are under liberal leadership with ample majorities, with a White House and captive media egging them on. The problem is that now the entire engine of the federal government is harnessed in the most unapologetic way to pushing through a far left agenda. There is no shame, no hesitancy in using the full powers of the state.

How does that work out? Without qualification (remember we are in a new age of transparency and ethical reform) votes are bought with hundred-million-dollar earmarks; the attorney general predicates judicial action on the political ramifications of indicting or not indicting; federal bureaucracies (watch the EPA if cap and trade stalls) are devoted to the new Caesar rather than the letter of the law.

Such a strange scenario we have found ourselves in—a clear majority of Americans is opposed to almost everything Obama has to offer; congressional representatives know they are acting against the will of the people, but know too that they are offered all sorts of borrowed money for their districts to compensate for their unpopular actions. And a charismatic commander in chief believes that he can charm even the angriest of critics, and that anything he promises (Iran's deadlines, closing of Guantanamo, new transparency, no more

lobbyists, etc) means zilch and can be contextualized by another “let me be perfectly clear” speech spiced with a couple of the usual “it would have been impossible for someone as unlikely as me to have become President just (fill in the blanks) years ago”

No, I would not count Obama out. So what drives his agenda? What are its origins?

Here are the three most prominent catalysts.

Equality of Result

What Barack Obama advocates is as old as Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*, the agenda of the classical *dêmos* and Roman *turba*.

It is why the French Revolution emphasized *égalité* and *fraternité*, while the Founding Fathers instead championed the freedom of the individual from the despotism of the state. In short, equality of result doctrine ignores the role of markets, of skills, of tragedy itself that renders some of us ill, others in perfect health, some born gifted, others less so, some evil by nature, others good, and instead promises that the state can even us all out through its power of material redistribution. Give us all the same amount of money and perks at the end of the day, and then utopia reigns under the benevolent watch of Ivy-League professors and organizers.

It is a given that what we make is not our own, but predicated on the liberality of society. Thus, for those who were too greedy, too conniving, or even too lucky, the state must step in to ensure that we end up the same.

In its most benign form, we know this as progressivism or communitarianism, a big government, high tax philosophy that co-exists within democracy. Its more pernicious strains are socialist, in which the state ensures, through bureaucratic fiat and a labyrinth of laws that curb free expression, that redistribution is institutionalized. And the virulent form (thankfully with the fall of the Soviet Union and the transformation of China not so global-threatening any more) is, of course, a murderous communism, in which any means necessary are justified to ensure the desired ends and the rule of anointed apparatus. Remember, history's greatest killers (Stalin and Mao) do it all "for the people."

Multiculturalism

But there is another element to Barack Obama besides progressive statism. A number of contemporary -isms and -ologies (multiculturalism, moral equivalence, utopian pacifism, post-modernism) also help to explain Obamism, especially in cultural terms. Our universities subscribe to race/class/gender theory of exploitation, in which much of the unhappiness of today's women, of today's nonwhite, and of today's poor originates with the privileges of the white Christian Western male that are predicated on oppression.

It works like this: The ghetto resident, the denizen of the barrio, the abandoned and divorced waitress with three young children, can all chart their poverty and unhappiness not to accident, fate, bad luck, bad decisions, poor judgment, illegality or drug use, or simple tragedy, but rather exclusively to a system that is rigged to ensure oppression on the basis of race, class, and gender—often insidious and

unfathomable except to the sensitive and gifted academic or community organizer.

So Obama combines the age-old belief that the state is there to level the playing field (rather than protect the rights of the individual and secure the safety of the people from foreign threats), with the postmodern notion that government must recompensate those by fiat on the basis on their race or class or gender. Remember all that, and everything from the Professor Gates incident, to the dutiful attendance at the foot of Rev. Wright to Van Jones become logical rather than aberrant. Michelle Obama could make \$300,000 and she will always be more a victim than the Appalachian coal miner who earns \$30,000, by virtue of her race and gender.

The Chicago Way

A third and final ingredient to Obamism is the Chicago way. Here we see an interesting updated version of the old big-city, Daley thuggery. Rahm Emanuel threatens recalcitrant congressmen with reminders of the long Obama memory. The Axelrod/Jarrett clique ensures that the government channels stimuli to blue-states, that key Congress people are bought off with tens of millions of government largess, that every campaign promise—from no lobbyists and airing on C-span health care debates to posting impending legislation on the Internet for set durations and “reaching across the aisle”—is simply cynical fluff that no sane person would take seriously.

So?

In short, we have a traditional statist bent on redistribution (Obama’s words, not mine), updated with the postmodern belief that race/class/

gender oppressions require government affirmative reactions (which also abroad explains why we reach out to enemies and shun allies), all energized by an ends justify the means Chicago bare-knuckles apparat.

And?

These true believers, then, don't really care that the Blue Dogs (if such really exist) bite the dust in 2010, if Harry Reid goes up in smoke, or indeed, if Barack Obama is reelected. Instead, they will institutionalize an agenda that will affect America for generations, move it sharply to the left, and earn a spot in the academic pantheon of American heroes.

Asking why would Obama & Co. be so self-destructive to push through an array of proposals that have no more than 45% of the public's support is like asking whether the English Prof who teaches incomprehensible Foucauldian theory worries whether he has only 2 students, or whether the well-off union boss is all that upset that membership has sunk to 30% of the workforce, or multimillion-dollar-earning Sarah Palin-interviewing Katie Couric is worried about her sinking ratings, or whether the New York Times columnists are upset that their mother paper is broke with subscription and readership down, and laying off thousands of blue-collar employees.

Instead, for the true believer, it is all about the self, and the sense of the self—and damn all other considerations. (We saw that with Jimmy Carter as well; that he destroyed liberal Democrat politics for a generation meant nothing; that he won prizes and jet-setted the world for thirty years meant everything. For these people, it is always about

them—all the time. Let us eat cake as they end up liberal icons for the duration).

What Are We Left With?

The most blatant cynicism in recent American political history—a man who ran as a bipartisan who is the most partisan we’ve seen, a healer whose even flippant comments are designed to offend, a statist who assumes that the sheared sheep cannot stampede somewhere else, a reformer who trusts his honey-laced rhetoric can disguise Daley-style corruption.

On that happy note.

Everything, as my dear late mother lectured me, happens for a reason, or at least presents a sort of logic—irony, paradox, karma, and nemesis being the best ways of interpreting our unfathomable existences. It took messianic narcissistic Barack Obama to expose the full extent of the mess that a once noble tradition of 19th-century liberalism had devolved into. Only he could have rammed it down the throats of the American people, and when he is done, we will suffer, but also sicken of it for quite a while.

Otherwise, Merry Christmas! And thanks again to the most informed, articulate, and outspoken commentators in the blogosphere!

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