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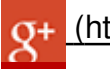
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# The Hillary Letters

Hillary Clinton, Saul Alinsky correspondence revealed

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**NOTE: READ THE HILLARY CLINTON-SAUL ALINSKY LETTERS [HERE](http://www.scribd.com/doc/240077031/The-Hillary-Letters)**

**[/The-Hillary-Letters](http://www.scribd.com/doc/240077031/The-Hillary-Letters)**.

Previously unpublished correspondence between Hillary Clinton and the late left-wing organizer Saul Alinsky reveals new details about her relationship with the controversial Chicago activist and shed light on her early ideological development.

Clinton met with Alinsky several times in 1968 while writing a Wellesley college thesis about his theory of community organizing.

Clinton's relationship with Alinsky, and her support for his philosophy, continued for several years after she entered Yale law school in 1969, two letters obtained by the *Washington Free Beacon* show.

The letters obtained by the Free Beacon are part of the archives for the Industrial Areas Foundation, a training center for community organizers founded by Alinsky, which are housed at the University of Texas at Austin.

The letters also suggest that Alinsky, who died in 1972, had a deeper influence on Clinton's early political views than previously known.

A 23-year-old Hillary Clinton was living in Berkeley, California, in the summer of 1971. She was interning at the left-wing law firm Treuhaft, Walker and Burnstein, known for its radical politics and a client roster that included Black Panthers and other militants.

On July 8, 1971, Clinton reached out to Alinsky, then 62, in a letter sent via airmail, paid for with stamps featuring Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and marked "Personal."

"Dear Saul," she began. "When is that new book [*Rules for Radicals*] coming out—or has it come and I somehow missed the fulfillment of Revelation?"

"I have just had my one-thousandth conversation about *Reveille [for Radicals]* and need some new material to throw at people," she added, a reference to Alinsky's 1946 book on his theories of community organizing.

Clinton devoted just one paragraph in her memoir *Living History* to Alinsky, writing that she rejected a job offer from him in 1969 in favor of going to law school. She wrote that she wanted to follow a more conventional path.

However, in the 1971 letter, Clinton assured Alinsky that she had "survived law school, slightly bruised, with my belief in and zest for organizing intact."

"The more I've seen of places like Yale Law School and the people who haunt them, the more convinced I am that we have the serious business and joy of much work ahead—if the commitment to a free and open society is ever going to mean more than eloquence and frustration," wrote Clinton.

According to the letter, Clinton and Alinsky had kept in touch since she entered Yale. The 62-year-old radical had

reached out to give her advice on campus activism.

“If I never thanked you for the encouraging words of last spring in the midst of the Yale-Cambodia madness, I do so now,” wrote Clinton, who had moderated a campus election to join an anti-war student strike.

She added that she missed their regular conversations, and asked if Alinsky would be able to meet her the next time he was in California.

“I am living in Berkeley and working in Oakland for the summer and would love to see you,” Clinton wrote. “Let me know if there is any chance of our getting together.”

Clinton’s letter reached Alinsky’s office while he was on an extended trip to Southeast Asia, where he was helping train community organizers in the Philippines.

But a response letter from Alinsky’s secretary suggests that the radical organizer had a deep fondness for Clinton as well.

“Since I know [Alinsky’s] feelings about you I took the liberty of opening your letter because I didn’t want something urgent to wait for two weeks,” Alinsky’s long-time secretary, Georgia Harper, wrote to Clinton in a July 13, 1971 letter. “And I’m glad I did.”

Harper told Clinton that Alinsky’s book *Rules for Radicals* had been released. She enclosed several reviews of the book.

“Mr. Alinsky will be in San Francisco, staying at the Hilton Inn at the airport on Monday and Tuesday, July 26 and 27,” Harper added. “I know he would like to have you call him so that if there is a chance in his schedule maybe you can get together.”

It is unclear whether the meeting occurred.

A self-proclaimed radical, Alinsky advocated guerilla tactics and civil disobedience to correct what he saw as an institutionalized power gap in poor communities. His philosophy divided the world into “haves”—middle class and wealthy people—and “have nots”—the poor. He took an ends-justify-the-means approach to power and wealth redistribution, and developed the theoretical basis of “community organizing.”

“*The Prince* was written by Machiavelli for the Haves on how to hold power,” wrote Alinsky in his 1971 book. “*Rules for Radicals* is written for the Have-Nots on how to take it away.”

Clinton’s connection to Alinsky has been the subject of speculation for decades. It became controversial when Wellsley College, by request of the Clinton White House, sealed her 1968 thesis from the public for years. Conservative lawyer Barbara Olson said ([http://www.nbcnews.com/id/17388372/ns/politics-decision\\_08/t/reading-hillary-rodhams-hidden-thesis/#.VCAi-Uu5duY](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/17388372/ns/politics-decision_08/t/reading-hillary-rodhams-hidden-thesis/#.VCAi-Uu5duY)) Clinton had asked for the thesis to be sealed because it showed “the extent to which she internalized and assimilated the beliefs and methods of Saul Alinsky.” Clinton opponent turned Clinton defender David Brock referred to her as “Alinsky’s daughter” in 1996’s *The Seduction of Hillary Rodham*.

The paper was opened to the public in 2001. While the thesis is largely sympathetic to Alinsky, it is also critical of some of his tactics.

Clinton described the organizer as “a man of exceptional charm,” but also objected to some of the conflicts he

provoked as “unrealistic,” noting that his model could be difficult for others to replicate.

“Many of the Alinsky-inspired poverty warriors could not (discounting political reasons) move beyond the cathartic first step of organizing groups ‘to oppose, complain, demonstrate, and boycott’ to developing and running a program,” she wrote.

The letters obtained by the *Free Beacon* suggest that Clinton experimented more with radical politics during her law school years than she has publicly acknowledged.

In *Living History*, she describes her views during that time as far more pragmatic than leftwing.

She “agreed with some of Alinsky’s ideas,” Clinton wrote in her first memoir, but the two had a “fundamental disagreement” over his anti-establishment tactics.

She described how this disagreement led to her parting ways with Alinsky in the summer before law school in 1969.

“He offered me the chance to work with him when I graduated from college, and he was disappointed that I decided instead to go to law school,” she wrote.

“Alinsky said I would be wasting my time, but my decision was an expression of my belief that the system could be changed from within.”

A request for comment from the Clinton team was not returned.

## **The letters between Clinton and Alinsky can be read here:**

[The Hillary Letters \(http://www.scribd.com/doc/240077031/The-Hillary-Letters?secret\\_password=4qcPvvsyVHwYqeGzQuYi\)](http://www.scribd.com/doc/240077031/The-Hillary-Letters?secret_password=4qcPvvsyVHwYqeGzQuYi) by [Washington Free Beacon \(http://www.scribd.com/WashingtonFreeBeacon\)](http://www.scribd.com/WashingtonFreeBeacon)

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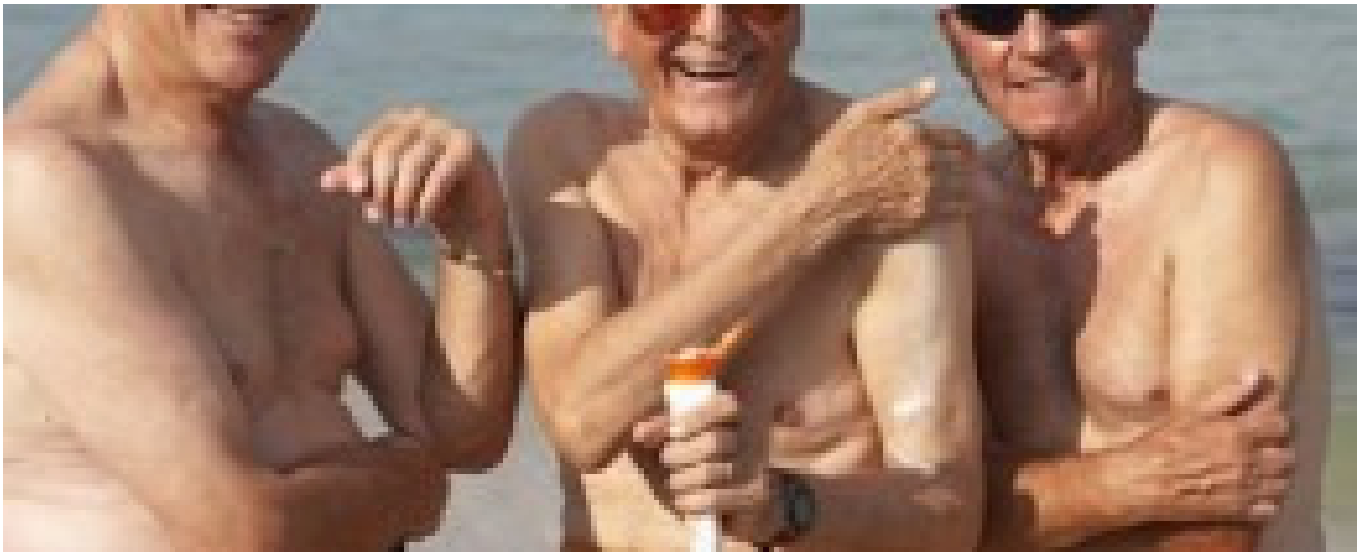
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