The Pro-Soviet Agent of Influence
Who Gave Barack Obama
His First Job in Politics
By Trevor Loudon

March 26, 2012: Barack Obama assures outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev he will have "more flexibility" to deal with issues like missile defense after the U.S. presidential election and that more concessions will be forthcoming.
“This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility.” This is what President Barack Obama privately told Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, at the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, South Korea, on March 26, 2012. Medvedev replied, “I understand you. I transmit this information to Vladimir [Putin], and I stand with you.” Vladimir Putin was not the only person Obama’s “private message” was transmitted to. Their conversation was recorded and broadcast live via an open microphone and camera.

Consider Obama’s policies – the New START Treaty, the acceptance of Russian surveillance flights over the U.S., Russian troops training in Colorado, and “flexibility” over missile defense. Over the last four years President Obama seems to be doing everything he can to make Moscow happy. Could all this be mere naïveté, or a genuine, if misguided, willingness to build bridges to America’s long-time adversary? Or could President Obama’s political outlook actually coincidence more with Russian interests than America’s?

While Russia is no longer openly communist, little has changed in terms of Moscow’s foreign policy, since the time the hammer and sickle flew over the Kremlin. All the major former Soviet fronts still exist – World Peace Council, World Federation of Trade Unions, World Federation of Democratic Youth. Russia is allied with still Communist China and anti-Western Iran in a huge political, economic and military alliance – the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Russia works closely with neo-communist regimes such as Nicaragua and Venezuela, and South Africa and the old line communist governments of Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. Kremlin propaganda outlets such as Russia Today are as viciously anti-American as anything produced by Pravda or Tass at the height of the “Cold War.” Russian espionage against the West is still a major issue, as the rushed repatriation of ten Russian deep cover spies by President Obama in 2010 proved.

In that case, however, Russian agents accused of trying to acquire sensitive nuclear information from the U.S. Government were sent back to Moscow less than two weeks after they were arrested. The hastily-arranged “spy swap” ended any chance of finding out in detail in a public forum what kind of information the Russian intelligence service had been collecting and who in the U.S. Government had possibly been recruited or used as assets and contacts.
In 2005, then-Senator Obama made a controversial three-day visit with Senator Richard Lugar to Russia and Eastern Europe. During the visit, Russian authorities detained Obama and Lugar, threatened to search their plane, and examined their passports.

After Obama’s “hot mike” incident with Medvedev, Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney rightly re-affirmed that Russia is the United States’ “number one geo-political foe.” Despite all this, the mainstream media treat President Obama’s apparent Russophilia as of no consequence.

President Obama has associated all his life with supporters of the international communist movement. One was his boyhood mentor, Frank Marshall Davis, an advocate of “Red Russia” and long-time member of the Communist Party USA. Likewise Obama’s political mentor and personal physician in Chicago, Quentin Young, was also involved with the Communist Party, and even tried to enter North Vietnam during the Vietnam War to give moral support to communist forces then killing his own countrymen.

Obama’s Chicago friends and colleagues, former Weather underground terrorists, Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn, have long supported international communism though their connections to the Marxist regimes in Cuba and Venezuela. As Larry Grathwohl reports and the evidence shows, the Soviet KGB and the Cuban DGI were also involved with the Weather Underground in a significant way. But the individual in Obama’s life most closely tied to the Soviet/Russian component of international communism was undoubtedly former Illinois State Senator Alice Palmer.

Relationship with Obama

Though it eventually turned sour, the Palmer/Obama relationship was crucial to the aspiring politician’s career. It would be fair to say that Alice Palmer gave Barack Obama his first job in politics - she provided the first rung in the ladder to Obama’s eventual rise to the Oval Office.

Barack Obama and Alice Palmer were both involved, circa 1993, in Progressive Chicago, an affiliate of the New Party, which in turn was formed by members of ACORN, SEIU, Democratic Socialists of America, and the Soviet and Cuban-affiliated Institute for Policy Studies, as a vehicle to move the Democratic Party to the left.

In 1995, South Side Chicago politics was upset by scandal. Local Congressman Mel Reynolds was facing charges of sexual assault of a sixteen-year-old campaign volunteer, eventually resigning his seat. The vacancy interested several politicians, including State Senator Alice Palmer, who prepared to enter the Congressional race. Shortly after this she employed Barack Obama as her chief of Staff.

An organization, Friends of Alice Palmer, was formed to run her campaign and included in its leadership (since jailed) property developer Tony Rezko and Barack Obama. It also included three activists who were later proved to be members of the Democratic
Socialists of America - Timuel Black, future Congressman Danny Davis and Betty Willhoite. Black and Davis are close personal friends of Barack Obama to this day, while Willhoite endorsed Progressives for Obama in 2008.

In exchange for his help on her congressional campaign, Alice Palmer promised Obama support in winning her Illinois State Senate seat. In 1995, State Senator Palmer introduced Obama at a gathering in the Hyde Park home of former Weather Underground terrorists Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn.

"I can remember being one of a small group of people who came to Bill Ayers’ house to learn that Alice Palmer was stepping down from the senate and running for Congress," said Obama’s friend and physician Dr. Quentin Young, of the informal gathering at the home of Ayers and Dohrn. “Palmer identified [Obama] as her successor.”

However when Palmer was badly beaten in the Democratic primaries, she decided to stick with her State Senate seat. Obama refused to step down, to make way for Palmer’s return. Despite mediation attempts by Timuel Black and others, Obama dug his heels in, causing a relationship rift that has not healed to this day. Obama went on to win the seat unopposed, after he knocked Palmer and his other rivals off the ballot, by successfully challenging the legitimacy of their nominating signatures.

Obama's political ascendancy had begun.

In 2008, Alice Palmer supported Hillary Clinton in her bid to win the Democratic presidential nomination.

**Alice Palmer’s Background**

Who is the woman who gave the President his start in politics?

Alice J. Palmer was born in 1939, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Palmer graduated from high school at age sixteen and enrolled at Indiana University. After an extended leave of absence, Palmer returned to Indiana University to earn her Bachelor’s degree. There were some signs of Alice Palmer’s future activism during her high school days.

In 1955 Chicago teenager Emmett Till was brutally murdered, while visiting relatives in the South, for allegedly whistling at a white woman. The Communist Party made the incident a cause celebre and used it to exacerbate racial tensions. Alice Palmer joined a mass walkout at her school to protest Emmett Till’s murder.

At high school Alice Palmer was involved with fellow student Wallace Terry in the Model United Nations movement. Wallace Terry would go on to become an influential photo journalist, and part of Palmer’s far left Black Press institute as an adult.
After graduating in 1965, Alice Palmer began teaching in Indianapolis, but soon returned to Chicago to work at the newly renamed Malcolm X College. Palmer received her Master’s degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Campus and her Ph.D. from Northwestern University, where she co-authored two books and tutored in the Black House. Palmer remained at Northwestern University to serve as Associate Dean and Director of African American Student Affairs for the next five years.
Palmer served as the National Voter Education Director for a national citizen action organization before accepting a position with the Metro YMCA Youth and Government Program in 1986. She also served as Executive Director of Chicago Cities in Schools. In 1996, Palmer was hired by the University of Illinois at Chicago as an Associate Professor in the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs.

**Links to Grenadan Marxists**

In 1980 Alice Palmer and her husband, Edward “Buzz” Palmer were invited by the Maurice Bishop government of the Caribbean island of Grenada to attend celebrations marking the first anniversary of the country's Marxist-Leninist "revolution". The Palmers’ connection to Grenada is unclear, but was almost certainly through Don Rojas, a Caribbean born, American-educated activist, who went on to work for Grenada’s Marxist-Leninist “New Jewel Movement”.

In the late 1970s Rojas moved to Grenada where he served as editor-in-chief of the national newspaper The Free West Indian. At that time the People’s Revolutionary Government of Grenada -- led by charismatic Marxist-Leninist Prime Minister Maurice Bishop-- was in power. Rojas became Bishop's press secretary and played a leading role in Grenadian politics during the early 1980s political uprisings which led to the murder of Bishop and a U.S. invasion of the island. Prior to this political instability, Rojas successfully organized the first conference of Caribbean journalists and the first conference of Caribbean intellectuals, both held in Grenada. Rojas was expelled from Grenada by U.S. forces after the 1983 invasion of Grenada, ordered by then President Ronald Reagan.
Rojas met the Palmers through revolutionary journalism. After Grenada, Rojas moved to Prague, in communist Czechoslovakia, to serve as an executive for the Soviet front International Organization of Journalists. His job involved assisting member journalists and media workers in North America and the Caribbean. In 1985 Rojas organized the first tour of Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union exclusively for African-American journalists. The leader of the 16 journalists on the tour was Alice Palmer – accompanied by her husband “Buzz”.

Rojas became the only black journalist to cover the 1985 summit meeting between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Today he is active in the U.S. in the Independent Progressive Politics Network, which includes leading members of several U.S. Marxist groups, including Democratic Socialists of America, and the Communist Party spinoff Committees of Correspondence.
Rojas, in a taped interview, spoke to Cliff Kincaid fondly of the days when he worked for Grenada’s revolutionary government, even signing a copy of an address Bishop had made to the sixth summit of the non-aligned movement in Havana, Cuba, in 1979. Rojas said he helped to write the speech and was in Havana at the time. He signed it, “Forward Ever, Backward Never,” an inspirational quotation from Bishop which was supposed to capture the essence of the revolutionary process.

As Kincaid reports, “Rojas was captured, arrested, and then deported from Grenada by U.S. forces. Today, however, his Free Speech TV channel is called the ‘anti-Fox’ network and claims carriage on 200 cable affiliates, Dish Network and DirecTV, reaching 35 million homes. Free Speech TV has been promoting the ‘Occupation of Wall Street’ protests and also distributes Al-Jazeera. Rojas says he has applied for cash from the Soros-funded Open Society Institute (OSI).”
In the speech, as Kincaid notes, Bishop had talked about the “revolutionary process” which “has seen the emergence of successful and progressive revolutions in countries like Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea and, most recently Nicaragua and Iran, has had a vital impact on the balance of forces in today’s world.”

Kampuchea, the communist word for the country of Cambodia, saw a takeover by the communist Khmer Rouge, after America’s defeat in Vietnam, which took the lives of about two million people in a bloody genocide. Iran was taken over by radical Islamists, who remain in charge and are working to obtain nuclear weapons in order to destroy the state of Israel and threaten the U.S.

“Long live the Cuban revolution!” was one of the concluding phrases in the Bishop speech.

“Peace” Work

In the early 1980’s Alice Palmer was heavily involved in the international “peace” networks, then coordinated by the Soviet Union, through their largest and best funded international, and still existing front, the World Peace Council.

The World Peace Council directed most of its propaganda against Western military alliances, armaments programs and the like. In 1949 the World Peace Council was founded in Prague during a "Peace Congress" sponsored by the Soviets and their Czech and other Eastern European satellites. The organization was planned and controlled by the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The WPC claimed to represent 600 million "organizers for peace" around the world.

Based in Helsinki, the Council was the major Soviet-controlled international Communist front organization. Operating under the joint control of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the KGB. The WPC in those days had two main functions: to influence public opinion and government policies in non-Communist countries along lines favorable to Soviet policy goals.

In 1978 the U.S. House Intelligence Committee released a large CIA report on Soviet propaganda and front groups around the world (outside the U.S.) in which the WPC was identified as such a front. It has continued to be so identified in other government reports including State Department documents.

After being expelled from several countries, the WPC finally set up headquarters in Helsinki. Circa 1990, the WPC was estimated to have an annual budget of more than $40 million, almost all provided by the Soviet Union.

In 1983 Alice Palmer travelled to Czechoslovakia to the World Peace Council’s Prague Assembly. She was also an Executive Board member of the Communist Party USA.


Of the 48 U.S. Peace Council officers in 1983-1985, at least ten (Sara Staggs, Rob Prince, Michael Myerson, Frank Chapman, Otis Cunningham, James Jackson, Atiba Mbiwan, Pauline Rosen, Jose Soler and Denise Young) were known Communist Party USA members or supporters.

A further eight were involved, in the 1990s, in the Communist Party splinter group Committees of Correspondence. They were Gus Newport, Mark Solomon, Linda Coronado, Barbara Lee, Kevin Lynch, Anne Mitchell, Arlene Prigoff and Alice Palmer herself.

Of those listed above, Barbara Lee would go on to become a still serving Democratic Congresswoman from California, and a very early and vocal endorser of Barack Obama in 2008.

One of the Communist Party supporters listed above, Frank Chapman, would write a very interesting letter to the Communist Party newspaper People’s World of January 12, 2008, commenting on Barack Obama’s recent victory in the Iowa Democratic primary.

> Now, beyond all the optimism I was capable of mustering, Mr. Obama won Iowa! He won in a political arena 95 percent white. It was a resounding defeat for the manipulations of the ultra-right and their right-liberal fellow travellers. Also it was a hard lesson for liberals who underestimated the political fury of the masses in these troubled times."

> Obama’s victory was more than a progressive move; it was a dialectical leap ushering in a qualitatively new era of struggle. *Marx once compared revolutionary struggle with the work of the mole, who sometimes burrows so far beneath the ground that he leaves no trace of his movement on the surface. This is the old revolutionary “mole,” not only showing his traces on the surface but also breaking through... [emphasis added]*

**The Black Press Institute**

Alice Palmer and “Buzz Palmer” established the Black Press Institute in Chicago circa 1982. In a 1986 interview with the Communist Party USA paper People's Daily World,
Alice Palmer explained BPI's role in influencing decision makers such as the powerful Congressional Black Caucus:

After the 1960s some of us looked around and observed there was no national Black newspaper...So we started the Black Press Review. We received the Black newspapers from around the country, reprinted articles and editorials that gave a sense of the dynamics and the lives of Black people, and sent them out to the Congressional Black Caucus and other opinion leaders, saying ‘Look, here is what black America is thinking and doing...’ Since then we have moved into organizing forums and dialogues...

The publication carried articles such as "Socialism is the Only Way Forward" and "Is Black Bourgeois Ideology Enough?"

A review of the organization’s network shows BPI’s reach was extensive, covering Africa, the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Communist Party, the United Nations, most major black media outlets, organized labor, academia and even the Nation of Islam.

Contributors to BPI's journal “New Deliberations” included:

- Jan Carew – A Guyanese born Marxist and Emeritus Professor Northwestern University in Illinois. Carew was a leader in the field of Pan-African Studies and Black Studies, served as lecturer, professor or program director at Princeton, Rutgers, George Mason, Hampshire, Lincoln and London Universities. Carew was an assistant editor of University of Minnesota based Marxist journal, Nature, Society and Thought, and was a close associate of dozens of well Marxists including Communist Party USA members Paul Robeson, W.E.B. DuBois, Claudia Jones, and Langston Hughes, Malcolm X, Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, Grenadan leader Maurice Bishop, and Guyana’s pro – Soviet president Cheddi Jagan.

- Robert Starks - Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Development, Northeastern University, A close associate of the Communist Party USA and Democratic Socialists of America. Active in the leadership of the Chicago Committee in Solidarity with Southern Africa, with three future Obama associates or mentors - Timuel Black, Alice Palmer and Earl Durham. Also on the board of B.P.I.

- Dwight Kirk – a Washington DC journalist, outspoken Obama supporter, and a leader of the Communist Party USA and Democratic Socialists of America dominated Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. Also on the board of B.P.I.

- Prof. Earl Durham – died 2007, was a leading Chicago activist and academic. Durham was a long time Communist Party USA leader who served on the faculty
of the Chicago Communist Party’s Abraham Lincoln School in the 1940s, with future Obama mentor Frank Marshall Davis and Bernice Targ. Her son Chicago banker, Robert Weissbourd, would in 2008 become Chair of the Obama for America Campaign Urban and Metropolitan Policy Committee and also serve on the Obama Transition HUD Agency Review Team. Bernice Targ was also active in the Young Communist League in Chicago in the 1930s with her good friend and future Obama mentor Quentin Young.

Durham taught the methods of Chicago radical Saul Alinsky in his Chicago university classes. In the 1960s he worked closely with members of Chicago Students for a Democratic Society, on a paper “The Movement”. One of his fellow editorial board members, Mike James, would later become an endorser of Progressives for Obama.

In the 1990’s Durham worked with Obama in the leadership of leftist Chicago non-profit Community Organizing and Family Issues.

Earl Durham was a BPI board member as was his late brother Richard Durham.

A 1960s editor of Muhammad Speaks, the weekly publication of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, Durham “sought to provide an international perspective to the newspaper and included several articles on the independence struggles of African nations...”

In the 1950's Chicago's Du Bois Theater Guild was one of the first groups to stress "Black Awareness" in its theater philosophy. Founding members included Richard Durham, Communist Party member Oscar Brown, Jr., and communist youth leader Vernon Jarrett, the future father-in-law of Obama friend and now senior White House advisor Valerie Jarrett.

Richard Durham would also be recruited in the early 1970s to write for Buzz Palmer’s Afro-American Patrolman’s League, a group of radical black Chicago police officers. He also wrote numerous speeches for Chicago's first African-American mayor, Harold Washington, in the 1980’s. Washington was an official endorser of the 1981 conference of the U.S. Peace Council, the U.S. affiliate of the WPC.

Black Press Institute board members in 1987 included:

- Dr Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Chair, Political Science Department. – Northwestern University. In 1977, Abu-Lughod was elected a member of the Palestine National Council, the legislative body and the most important institution of the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization.

Robert Chrisman – founder and co-editor of radical magazine, The Black Scholar. A poet and essayist who’s been a visiting professor at the University of California at Berkeley, Chair of the Black Studies Department of the University of Nebraska at Omaha until mid-2005 and the principal organizer of that department's Malcolm X Festival for three years. Veteran of a communist organized 1976 delegation to Cuba.

Dr Djibril Diallo - United Nations Development Program Information Officer.

Dr Carlton Goodlett – a black San Francisco newspaper publisher, life-long Communist Party USA associate, and member of the Soviet controlled World Peace Council.

According to one-time communist, former San Francisco district attorney Terence Hallinan, an endorsement from Carlton Goodlett was important to the election of many political leaders. Goodlett helped to inspire and promote the political careers of San Francisco’s leftist Mayor Willie Brown, and former far left Congressional Representatives Philip Burton and Ron Dellums.

Current California Rep. and one-time U.S. Peace Council leader Barbara Lee was also helped by Carlton Goodlett.

Terry Johnson - journalist for the Philadelphia Inquirer, Newsweek magazine, and former city editor of The Village Voice. A long time Communist Party USA affiliate.

Beverly Manley – journalist wife of pro-Cuban Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley.

Leila McDowell – now a Washington D.C. publicist. A former Black Panther and member of the ultra-radical National Alliance of Third World Journalists. From January 1989 to January 1990, McDowell was Senior Account Executive for Democratic party enablers Fenton Communications, where she managed the accounts of the firm’s two largest clients: The Marxist –Leninist government of Angola, and the Republic of Jamaica. Latterly she has worked as a media consultant for Venezuela’s Marxist regime.

Gwen McKinney – also a Washington DC publicist. McKinney was co-founder and national co-coordinator of the National Alliance of Third World Journalists, a membership organization of U.S. journalists and media professionals. In the 1980’s she founded and directed a special project, the Namibia Information Service, that was supported by the United Nations. It focused on disseminating news to the U.S. media and non-governmental organizations on developments in Namibia during the period before the United Nations-supervised elections brought the pro-Soviet South West Africa People’s organization to power.
McKinney was a panelist when a Democratic Socialists of America Feminist Commission hosted a conference entitled "Socialist Feminists: Who Are We Now?" January 8-10 1993 in Washington, D.C. The conference was designed to help set a socialist feminist agenda for the Clinton era.

McKinney was press secretary for Washington D.C. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, during her successful election campaign to the U.S. Congress between June and September of 1990.

- Salim Muwakkil – a Chicago journalist for socialist publication In These Times. Muwakkil is a long-time associate of Democratic Socialists of America and was a founder of the Marxist-inspired Black Radical Congress.

Salim Muwakkil, Bill Ayers and Barack Obama spoke together at a public gathering sponsored by The Center for Public Intellectuals & the University of Illinois-Chicago, April 19th-20th, 2002, at the Chicago Illinois Union on the topic "Intellectuals: Who Needs Them?"

- Abdias do Nascimento – a Brazilian far leftist politician, activist and academic.

- Prexy Nesbitt – a Chicago journalist, Africa activist, former Communist Party youth wing associate, Institute for Policy Studies affiliate, Cuba visitor, and Black Radical Congress founder.

In January 1976 Prexy Nesbitt, attended the Weather Underground-organized Hard Times Conference at the University of Chicago.

- Cheryl Johnson - provost of Dominican University and is former dean of the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Columbia College Chicago. Associate editor of Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century African History, and a past member of the board of directors of the African Studies Association. Prior to her tenure at Columbia College Chicago, Dr. Johnson served as chairperson of the history department at Loyola University Chicago and taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Northwestern University where she also served as assistant director of the Program of African Studies.

In the early 1980's she was co-chair, with Prexy Nesbitt, of the Coalition for Illinois Divestment from South Africa, and was a founder of the Black Radical Congress. In late 1985 Cheryl Johnson travelled to Cuba, and wrote about the trip for BPI 's New Deliberations magazine.

- Alfred Opubar - UNESCO Chair Community Sector – Nigeria.

- Robert Sengstacke – photo journalist and former contributor to the Nation of Islam’s Muhammad speaks newspaper.
• Wallace Terry – former high school friend of Alice Palmer, and award-winning journalist, news commentator and bestselling author distinguished for his coverage of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement.

Wallace Terry was recognized as the leading authority on the black experience in Vietnam. His internationally acclaimed book, BLOODS: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans, was named one of the five best nonfiction books of the year by Time magazine, and nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

In Vietnam Terry worked closely with local journalist Pham Xuan An, who was later revealed as communist North Vietnam’s top spy against the American forces.

• Joe Walker – a journalist, labor advocate and life-long Communist Party USA affiliate. Walker was New York City Bureau Chief of the nation of Islam’s Muhammad Speaks, and its successor, Bilalian News. He also became the United Nations Bureau Chief for Muhammad Speaks and covered events around the world. He travelled to over sixty countries and attended many conferences and other international gatherings. From his travels he wrote a series of featured articles on the Middle East, North Korea, Cuba, the Vietnamese War, the Islamic areas of the Soviet Union and other ““critical hot spots of the 1960s and ‘70s”.

John Woodford, a Communist Party associate and the former editor-in-chief of Muhammad Speaks, said, "Joe was a journalistic super-star of the progressive world".Walker covered events worldwide such as Nguyen Thi Madame Binh, a Vietnamese delegate to the Paris Peace Talks; Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers Union; the Afro-Russian journalists Slava Tynes and Lily Golden; the Cuban Diplomat Ricardo Alarcon; and leading figures in many of the anti-imperialist African liberation movements, such as the African National Congress, Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, Movement For The Popular Liberation Of Angola, Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, and Southwest African Peoples Organization.

Joe Walker was affiliated with the World Peace Council, and was the head of the US section of another Soviet front, International Organization of Journalists. In 1976 he received the Julius Fucik Honorary Medal from the IOJ “in recognition of his outstanding achievement in journalism in the fight against colonialism, racism and fascism, and for world peace and understanding.”

• Timothy Wright – a Chicago lawyer and National Lawyers Guild official –the U.S. affiliate of the Soviet-front International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

Also serving on the BPI board were academics from several leading U.S. universities and several major news outlets including Dallas Herald Times; The Challenger of Buffalo, New York; The Chicago Metro News; A.M.E. Christian Reporter; Detroit Free Press; and the Greensboro Carolina Peacemaker.
Clearly, Alice Palmer’s Black Press Institute was an influential and very well connected organization. Where the money came from is unclear, but it certainly had all the hallmarks of a Soviet influence operation.

This writer interviewed a former CIA officer some years ago, who told me of an incident when de-briefing a Soviet defector. The defector told the CIA officer that the KGB was operating a “black press” ring in the United States. As this was a domestic issue, and outside of the CIA’s allowed jurisdiction, the case officer shut down the defector immediately, and told him to tell his story to the FBI. Could the Soviet defector have been referring to the Black Press Institute?

**East Bloc Delegation**

In 1985 Alice Palmer led a high level delegation of 16 Afro-American journalists to the Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, and Czechoslovakia.

Besides Palmer, the delegation consisted of:

- Robert Chrisman, Editor and publisher of The Black Scholar, Black Press Institute
- Utrice Leid, Managing editor New York City Sun
- John Williams, Photographer, New York City Sun
- Marcia Keizs, Editor of the Carib Sun
- Ben Dupuy, Director of Haiti Progress
- Terry Johnson, Reporter for the Philadelphia Enquirer, Black Press Institute, Communist Party affiliate
- John Woodford, National Alliance of Third World Journalists, Communist Party affiliate
- Charles Belle, Syndicated business columnist representing the National Black Publishers Association
- Valerie Van Isler, International news staff, Pacifica Radio, New York
- Lena Sherrod, Director of The Peoples Institute of Economics
- Joe Walker, International Organization of Journalists, US, Communist Party affiliate
- “Buzz” Palmer, President, Black Press Institute
- Jan Carew, Executive Board President Black Press Institute
- Richard Hudlin, Phd, writer and researcher, Black Press Institute
- Kevin Blackistone, Reporter for the Chicago Reporter, Black Press Institute

The trip was organized by International Organization of Journalists executive Don Rojas, the American-educated former press secretary to Grenada’s late Marxist-Leninist leader Maurice Bishop, in conjunction with the Black Press Institute, the National Alliance of Black Journalists, and the National Newspaper Publishers Association—the US's largest organization of owners of black newspapers.

Alice Palmer told the Communist Party USA newspaper:
The trip was extraordinary because we were able to sit down with our counterparts and with the seats of power in three major capitals—Prague, Berlin and Moscow. We visited with foreign ministers, we talked with the editors of the major newspapers in these three cities...

It was a very unusual trip because we were given access...Every effort was made to give us as much as we asked for...We came back feeling that we could speak very well about the interest of the socialist countries in promoting peace.

This was before the (Soviet nuclear test ban) moratorium, this was before the Reykjavik offers...It was very clear to us in our conversations and interviews with people at that time, that this was already something of concern and, something that would be promoted when the opportunity arose, as we can see that it has been.

In Czechoslovakia, Alice Palmer and other delegates officials at the Czech Foreign Ministry, including Dr. Vladimir Polachek, head of the Department of Basic Political Questions and Dr. Rudolf Jabubik, Deputy head of the 6th Territorial Department (including the US).

**Communist Party of the Soviet Union Congress**


Alice Palmer told the Communist Party’s People’s Daily World of December 24 1986:

I spent a great deal of time with a woman from the Novosti (Press Agency) and she and I had a lot in common...I had a chance to go shopping, just as I would if were back in Chicago...It is useful to those people who would
like to demonize the Soviet people. When I stood in line, it was the same kind of line I stand in in the Jewel grocery store in Chicago. It was merely because the place was crowded, not because at the end of the line there was nothing for me to purchase.

In June 1986 the People's Daily World published a Black Press Institute article by Alice Palmer on the CPSU conference entitled "An Afro-American journalist in the USSR". The article praised Soviet "central planning" and included such statements as:

We Americans can be misled by the major media. We're being told the Soviets are striving to achieve a comparatively low standard of living compared with ours, but actually they have reached a basic stability in meeting their needs and are now planning to double their production.

No slave labor system can enlist the confidence and enthusiasm of its workers. In fact, I know of no slave labor system that declared [as did the Soviet system] that improving the living standard of the common people was its objective, let alone one that publicly announced a plan to make such advances.

The key to their [Soviet] system is the focus on groups, not individuals. They say it is the people together - not leading, privileged individuals -- who make the nation happen.

Palmer claimed that America's white-owned press

has tended to ignore or distort the gains that have been made [by the Soviets] since [the Russian Revolution of 1917]. But in fact the Soviets are carrying out a policy to resolve the inequalities between nationalities, inequalities that they say were inherited from capitalist and czarist rule. They have a comprehensive affirmative action program, which they have stuck to religiously -- if I can use that word -- since 1917.

Palmer also said that because Soviet school curricula were established at the national level

there is no second-class "track" system in the minority-nationality schools as there is in the inferior inner city schools in my hometown, Chicago, and elsewhere in the United States.

Palmer also visited the famous Patrice Lumumba University, established by the Soviets (and the KGB) to train future leaders of Third World countries:

The Soviet government and people have always sided with the Africans in South Africa and Namibia against apartheid…. I saw this, too, at the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University in Moscow, where students from
underdeveloped countries are trained to become engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, agricultural specialists and skilled workers. There is no brain drain going on; the students receive a free education and then return to use their talents to build up their own countries.

Alice Palmer and the International Organization of Journalists

The International Organization of Journalists was one of the standard Soviet-line international communist fronts.

According to the Yearbooks of International Communist Organizations (Munich: Saur), this Prague-based entity had affiliates in 90 countries during 1995-2000.

The IOJ was based in Prague until its expulsion by the Czech government in 1995.


This paper examines the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), which it identifies as a Soviet-dominated organization. The paper suggests that the IOJ has capitalized on "Third World" countries' discontent with Western news media by offering itself as the ideological leader and trainer of anti-Western journalists. It then examines the function and methods of the IOJ in the context of post-World War II communist international front organizations; reviews the IOJ's structure, publications, and training centers; and explores its role in shaping "Third World" arguments in the debate about the New Information Order. The paper argues that the IOJ's efforts generally have served Soviet foreign policy on international communications.

In a book titled The Soviet Propaganda Network (1988), Clive Rose, former British Ambassador to NATO, and Chairman, Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, wrote:

The IOJ claims to be financed by affiliation fees established by the Executive Committee. In practice accounts are almost never published, although affiliation fees are believed to raise US $75,000 annually. Some ten percent of these fees are devoted to an International Solidarity Fund (which also claims the proceeds of the IOJ's Solidarity Lottery ...)

Alice Palmer, editor of the Black Press Review, was elected International Organization of Journalists vice president for North America at the organization's 10th Congress, October 20-23 1986, in Prague Czechoslovakia. She also travelled to the Soviet Union and Bulgaria during the same trip. Alice Palmer's IOJ duties were to include coordinating the activities of IOJ chapters in the US, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.
Other U.S. delegates on this trip included Jan Carew of Black Press Institute, Gwen McKinney and Leila McDowell of the National Alliance of Third World Journalists, and Simon Gerson and Jose Soler of the U.S. branch of International Organization of Journalists, and the Communist Party USA.

“A peaceful world, a just world, requires outreach.”

Alice Palmer,
executive director,
Black Press Institute;
vice president for North America,
International Organization of Journalists

The inclusion of the elderly Si Gerson is significant. In 1976, Si became campaign manager for the Communist presidential ticket of Gus Hall and Jarvis Tyner and continued to serve as chair of the party’s Political Action Commission for many years. Gerson was the Communist Party’s election expert. His role as head of the Political Action Committee was to coordinate CPUSA activity behind desired candidates for political office – almost always Democrats.

The Communist Party has since helped to elect hundreds of key Democrats to public office, including, by its own admission, Barack Obama.

In a December 1986 People’s Weekly World interview with Chicago Communist Party USA member Mike Giocondo, Alice Palmer explained the International Organization of Journalists’ concept of media "fairness":

**Giocondo**: What is the IOJ's approach to the question of fairness in the media? How does it relate to the concept of "objective journalism" which is stressed here in the US?

**Palmer**: The IOJ believes that there must be fairness in media, which is called for in a proposal for a New Information Order, which the IOJ
supports. Fairness is not an abstraction, because journalists are not abstractions; we live in a world, we live in our particular societies, and therefore are caught up in whatever the dynamics of the situation are. This concept of "Objective journalism" that is taught in journalism schools...is not possible...What we are striving for is fairness and balance of information.

To give you a concrete example, the Black Press Institute recently held a media dialogue in Southern Africa in Washington DC on how to make the information more balanced as it comes out of South Africa. The IOJ and the BPI believe there should be balance, that there should be fairness in recognizing the complexities, and that a voice must be given to those who are struggling against oppression.

In other words, the news must be tilted in support of certain causes, to move public opinion in that direction. And the government must play a role in bringing this about.

**Soviet Propagandist?**

During her time as International Organization of Journalists vice president, Alice Palmer worked with the highest levels of the Soviet propaganda machine -- with the Soviet journal Izvestia, with Romesh Chandra, the Indian communist in charge of the World Peace Council, and IOJ leaders such as Kaarle Nordenstreng and Jiri Kubka.

Alice Palmer told the People's Weekly World of December 24 1986:

> The IOJ has adopted positions on nuclear weapons, trying to do away with the nuclear threat in the world.

> The IOJ stands not only for peace, but for justice as well. An example of its concern for justice is that the same time I was elected a vice president, a number of African nations were also brought in. This was a real move to bring in people from frontline countries and other nations.

> I will be heading a taskforce on peace and disarmament. And at the conference I was co-moderator, with the editor of Izvestia' (a Soviet government publication), of a panel on peace and the news media. We came up with some very good suggestions. A number of the people complemented the Soviet Union for its efforts towards peace in these past few years -- the moratorium and other things.

> The IOJ has worked with the World Peace Council, and Kaarle Nordenstreng, Jiri Kubka and other IOJ leaders have worked closely with Romesh Chandra, the president of the World Peace Council.
IOJ delegations visit other countries to report on the peace proposals of the Soviet Union, so that people can hear about it. This by the way is an example of promoting fairness in the media.

The IOJ is the largest journalist organization in the world. Its publications are published in 10 or 15 languages, and it reaches many people all over the world. So you can see that being fair in the media is very important, particularly in the Third World.

Alice Palmer saw journalists and the U.S. "peace movement" as playing a very important role in the struggle for peace:

At the center of this is that the peace movement must stop the Soviet bashing. That is just not productive, it is not a good thing at all. I see over and over again that it is a barrier to our ability to work together in the United States and with the people of the Soviet Union for peace.

“Buzz” Palmer and the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies

In late 1988, or early 1989, Alice Palmer’s husband “Buzz” and the Black Press Institute began planning a project involving joint work between African-American scholars, and Soviet scholars, on the African-American experience.

This is highly significant, because the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies, was the main Soviet and later Russian center on research of American and Canadian foreign and internal policy. The Institute played an important role in the Soviet foreign policy decision making process. Its specialists were responsible for providing unbiased information to Soviet top leaders on the economic, political, military development of the United States.

A letter signed by several 12 U.S. Senators and more than 70 U.S. Congressmen in 1983 warned against allowing the Institute to run a conference in the United States because it was a KGB front. It said: “One of the institute’s deputy directors is a career KGB officer, and the U.S.A. Institute’s activities are carried out at the direction of the KGB, the International Department of the Soviet Communist Central Committee, and the Foreign Ministry.”

In an interview with Mike Giocondo of the Peoples World of February 2 1989, “Buzz” Palmer explained the background of the project, and the involvement of the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies:

World Magazine: Recently the Black Press Institute became involved with a project with the Soviet Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies. What's the background of the project.
Palmer: Approximately four years ago the International Organization of Journalists requested that we form a delegation of African-American journalists to visit socialist countries....

When we arrived in the Soviet Union, we had the opportunity to meet with the editor of Pravda, who is also the chair of the Union of Soviet Journalists. Then we met with the Institute of U.S. and Canadian Studies.

I indicated that it would be excellent if African-Americans learned more about the Soviet Union, and Soviet Union learned more about African-Americans.

I said it would make excellent sense to develop joint studies and faculty exchanges...but nothing was agreed on...in 1988. I again went to the Soviet Union on an exchange program of journalists. I again met with the chairman of the Institute, and I was presently surprised when the deputy director said "let's do it".

World Magazine: Why were the Soviets interested in participating in this project?

Palmer: The Soviet Union is attempting to reach out to the total American community...The Soviet Union has to be commended for their willingness to open up their doors to all segments of the American community. A genuine desire for friendship motivates the Soviets to a greater extent than any other country I have ever seen.

Committees of Correspondence

In 1994, long after she began her relationship with Barack Obama, Alice and “Buzz Palmer” were listed on a "Membership, Subscription and Mailing List" for the Chicago Committees of Correspondence, an offshoot of the Communist Party USA. Other Chicago activists who also played some role in Obama’s career were also on that list, including Obama New Party colleagues Carl Davidson, Lou Pardo and Congressman Danny Davis, former Weather Underground terrorists Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn, pro-Obama blogger and Ayers’ education colleague Mike Klonsky, Obama fundraiser Marilyn Katz, and Obama Community Organizing and Family Issues colleague and Black Press Institute board member Earl Durham.

Obama was also mentored for many years by Chicago Committees of Correspondence and Democratic Socialists of America member Timuel Black, the close friend of Alice Palmer, who later unsuccessfully tried to mediate her rift with Obama.

In 2008, Committees of Correspondence actively campaigned for Obama and several supporters were endorsers of the Progressives for Obama website.
Committees of Correspondence leader Manning Marable, writing in the December 2008 issue of the British Trotskyite journal Socialist Review, explained Obama's relationship to the Chicago left:

What makes Obama different is that he has also been a community organizer. He has read left literature, including my works, and he understands what socialism is. A lot of the people working with him are, indeed, socialists with backgrounds in the Communist Party or as independent Marxists. There are a lot of people like that in Chicago who have worked with him for years...

Manning Marable was almost certainly referring to the numerous former Chicago Communist Party USA supporters, like Alice Palmer, who had switched their allegiance to the Committees of Correspondence.

Conclusion

Alice Palmer was a pro-communist activist working inside the Illinois Democratic Party. She worked closely with the future U.S. president for several years, in the same socialist and communist networks that dominated the left side of Chicago politics.

Alice Palmer was also a high level, pro-Soviet operative, actively involved with known Soviet and communist front organizations at the height of the Cold War.

She was a major proponent of Soviet “peace” initiatives” primarily aimed at destroying NATO and disarming the United States.

Now Alice Palmer’s former protege is the most powerful politician in the world.

Interestingly, where Alice Palmer once worked tirelessly in the interests of the Soviet Union, Barack Obama seems to working almost as enthusiastically to give the Russians what they want.

Alice Palmer pushed Soviet “peace” proposals at the height of the Cold War. Now, in a different climate, Barack Obama has the power to carry out those policies and seems to be doing so.