

# **Father Michael Pflieger**

## **Father Michael Pflieger**

### **Radical Catholic Priest**

Michael Louis Pflieger (born May 22, 1949) is a Roman Catholic priest and social activist in Chicago, Illinois.

Pflieger's social activism has brought him attention throughout Chicago and beyond. He has often collaborated and associated with African American religious, political and social activists such as Jeremiah Wright, Joseph Lowery, Jesse Jackson, Cornel West, and Louis Farrakhan.

On March 28, 2008, Pflieger invited Jeremiah Wright, former pastor of presidential candidate Barack Obama, to deliver a blessing at Saint Sabina during a visit by poet Maya Angelou. Wright had been criticized by political pundits for making what they considered anti-American statements in a sermon, but Pflieger came to Wright's defense. "I wanted him to come here so he could see that people really stand with him and support him while he's under all this attack. America, unfortunately, has been really cheated of knowing the real Dr. Wright," said Pflieger. In a statement on Saint Sabina's website, Pflieger wrote, "Dr. Wright is one of the great biblical scholars of our country and the best of preachers in the prophetic tradition. Dr. Wright has been shamefully demonized by 30 second sound bites that have tried to re-define him into someone other than who he is."

### **Controversy during 2008 presidential election**

On May 25, 2008, Pflieger gave a sermon at Trinity United

Church of Christ, then the church of Presidential candidate Barack Obama, where he mocked Hillary Clinton, Obama's opponent for the Democratic Party nomination. Pflieger imitated Clinton by saying, "I really believe that she just always thought, 'This is mine. I'm Bill's wife. I'm white, and this is mine. I just gotta get up and step into the plate.' Then out of nowhere came, 'Hey, I'm Barack Obama,' and she said, 'Oh, damn! Where did you come from? I'm white. I'm entitled. There's a black man stealing my show!'"

After hearing about Pflieger's remarks, Obama said he was "deeply disappointed in Father Pflieger's divisive, backward-looking rhetoric". Pflieger later released a statement through St. Sabina that read, "I regret the words I chose Sunday. These words are inconsistent with Sen. Obama's life and message, and I am deeply sorry if they offended Sen. Clinton or anyone else who saw them." On May 31, 2008, Obama resigned his membership in Trinity Church, saying that his campaign had caused the church to receive excessive media attention. On June 1, 2008, Pflieger released a longer apology to the St. Sabina parish regarding the incident and its aftermath.

On June 3, 2008, Cardinal George asked Pflieger to take a temporary leave of absence from St. Sabina. George said in a statement, "I have asked Father Michael Pflieger, Pastor of St. Sabina's Parish, to step back from his obligations there and take leave for a couple of weeks from his pastoral duties, effective today. Fr. Pflieger does not believe this to be the right step at this time. While respecting his disagreement, I have nevertheless asked him to use this opportunity to reflect on his recent statements and actions in the light of the Church's regulations for all Catholic priests. I hope that this period will also be a time away from the public spotlight and for rest and attention to family concerns." Pflieger resumed his parish duties on June 16, 2008.

*(Originally published October 20th, 2008)*

---

# Frank Marshall Davis

## Frank Marshall Davis

### Left-wing radical American journalist

Frank Marshall Davis (December 31, 1905, Arkansas City, Kansas; July 26, 1987, Honolulu, Hawaii) was an American journalist, poet and political and labor movement activist. He was investigated for his links with the Communist party in the United States. In 1950, the congressional House Un-American Activities Committee accused Davis of involvement in several communist-front organizations. The committee concluded that the Honolulu Record "is a front for the Communist Party, despite the fact that the paper does not make this admission." The committee's report on the *Honolulu Record* states the following about Davis:

*Mr. Davis' column defends Communists and attacks capitalism with the same vigor as columns appearing regularly in the Daily Worker and other frankly Communist publications. Typical of Mr. Davis' remarks are the following: "Democracy today lies weak and slowly dying from the poison administered by the divident doctors in Washington and Wall Street who have fooled a trusting public into believing that they are the specialists who would save us from the dread diseases of socialism and communism. . . . They hope to hand us fascism disguised as the healed democracy." (Honolulu Record, July 28, 1949, p. 8). Mr. Davis constantly defended the 11 top United States Communist officials recently convicted in New York on charges of conspiracy to advocate the overthrow of the Government by force and violence. One of Mr. Davis'*

*comments on the case was as follows : "I feel strong sympathy for the Communist minority who are being oppressed for their political beliefs." (Honolulu Record, October 20, 1949, p. 6). When Mr. Davis' column first appeared in the Record in May 1949, the Record boasted that the author was a member of the national executive board of the Civil Rights Congress. The organization is cited as Communist by Attorney General Tom Clark as well as by the Committee on Un-American Activities. Mr. Davis has signed a number of statements in behalf of Communists under the sponsorship of the Civil Rights Congress; one of these defended was Gerhart Eisler, notorious Communist international agent who escaped jailing for passport fraud by fleeing to the Soviet sector of Germany. Other front organizations of the Communist Party with which Mr. Davis has associated include : American Youth for Democracy, Abraham Lincoln School, National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, League of American Writers, the National Negro Congress, and the Hawaii Civil Liberties Committee.*

## **Frank Marshall Davis and Barack Obama**

In his autobiographical *Dreams from My Father*, U.S. Senator and Democratic Party presidential candidate Barack Obama wrote about "Frank", a friend of his grandfather's. "Frank" told Obama that they both grew up only 50 miles apart, near Wichita, although they did not meet until Hawaii, and told him about the days of Jim Crow in Kansas. As Obama remembered, "It made me smile, thinking back on Frank and his old Black Power, dashiki self. In some ways he was as incurable as my mother, as certain in his faith, living in the same sixties time warp that Hawaii had created."

Gerald Horne, a professor, writer, Communist Party historian and contributing editor of *Political Affairs*, stated that "Frank" was Davis, and further claimed he was a "decisive influence" on Obama.

(Originally published October 20th, 2008)

# Bernardine Dohrn

## Left-wing radical terrorist – wife of William Ayers



Bernardine Rae Dohrn (Bernardine Dohrn) born January 12, 1942) is a former leader of the 1969-1980 radical leftist organization Weather Underground. Dohrn became one of the leaders of the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), a radical wing of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), in the late 1960s. The ninth annual national SDS conference was held in Chicago in June 18-22, 1969, and the SDS collapsed in an RYM-led upheaval. In July 1969, Dohrn, Eleanor Raskin, Dianne Donghi, Peter Clapp, David Millstone and Diana Oughton, all

representing "Weatherman", as Dohrn's faction was now called, traveled to Cuba and met with representatives of the North Vietnamese and Cuban governments.

Dohrn has been criticized for a comment she made about the recent Charles Manson led Tate-LaBianca murders in a speech during the December 1969 "War Council" meeting organized by the Weathermen and attended by about 400 people in Flint, Michigan: "Dig it! First they killed those pigs and then they put a fork in their bellies. Wild!" Dohrn also charged that her fellow left-wingers showed themselves to be scared "honkies" for not burning down Chicago when Black Panther leader Fred Hampton was killed, and urged her audience to arm themselves and be "a fighting force alongside the blacks." At this point, two months after the Days of Rage, the new Weatherman organization had not used guns or bombs. Dohrn's husband, Bill Ayers has written that Dohrn was being ironic when she made the statement:

*I didn't hear that exactly, but words that were close enough I guess. Her speech was focused on the murder just days earlier of our friend Fred Hampton, the Black Panther leader. She linked Fred's murder to the murders of other Panthers around the country, to the assassinations of Malcolm X and Patrice Lumumba, the CIA attempts on Fidel's life, and then to the ongoing terror in Viet Nam. "This is the state of the world," she cried. "This is what screams out for our attention and our response. And what do we find in our newspapers? A sick fascination with a story that has it all: a racist psycho, a killer cult, and a chorus line of Hollywood bodies. Dig it!*

## **Later radical history**

The Weathermen, as they were known colloquially, conducted a series of bombings against the US government throughout the early 1970s, bombing several federal buildings. Dohrn is a

principal signatory on the group's "Declaration of a State of War" (1970) that formally declared war on the U.S. Government, and completed the group's transformation from political advocacy to violent action. Dohrn also co-wrote and published the subversive manifesto *Prairie Fire* (1974), and participated in the covertly-filmed *Underground* (1976).

After the Greenwich Village townhouse explosion, the accidental detonation of a bomb being made that killed three of the members, all members of Weatherman went underground and the group took on its last and most famous title, the Weather Underground. The Weathermen and Weather Underground were suspected in various bombings – police cars, the National Guard Association building, the U.S. Capitol and the Pentagon. Dohrn allegedly participated in many of the group's revolutionary activities.

In late 1975, the Weather Underground put out an issue of a magazine, *Osawatamie*, which carried an article by Dohrn, "Our Class Struggle", described as a speech given to the organization's cadres on September 2 of that year. In the article, Dohrn clearly stated support for Communist ideology:

We are building a communist organization to be part of the forces which build a revolutionary communist party to lead the working class to seize power and build socialism. We must further the study of Marxism-Leninism within the WUO [Weather Underground Organization]. The struggle for Marxism-Leninism is the most significant development in our recent history. We discovered thru [sic] our own experiences what revolutionaries all over the world have found – that Marxism-Leninism is the science of revolution, the revolutionary ideology of the working class, our guide to the struggle.

According to a 1974 FBI study of the group, Dohrn's article signaled a developing commitment to Marxism-Leninism that had not been clear in the groups previous statements, despite trips to Cuba by some members of the group before and after

Weather Underground was formed, and contact with Vietnamese communists there.

While on the run from police, Dohrn married another Weatherman leader Bill Ayers, with whom she has two children. During the last years of their underground life, Dohrn and Ayers resided in the Logan Square neighborhood of Chicago, where they used the aliases Christine Louise Douglas and Anthony J. Lee.

In the late 1970s, the Weatherman group split into two factions – the “May 19 Coalition” and the “Prairie Fire Collective” – with Dohrn and Ayers in the latter. The Prairie Fire Collective favored coming out of hiding, with members facing the criminal charges against them, while the May 19 Coalition continued in hiding. A decisive factor in Dohrn’s coming out of hiding were her concerns about her children.

The couple turned themselves in to authorities in 1980. While some charges relating to their activities with the Weathermen were dropped due to governmental misconduct, Dohrn pled guilty to charges of aggravated battery and bail jumping, receiving probation. She later served less than a year of jail time, after refusing to testify against ex-Weatherman Susan Rosenberg in an armed robbery case. Shortly after turning themselves in, Dohrn and Ayers became legal guardians of the son of former members of the Weather Underground, Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert, after they were convicted of murder for their roles in a 1981 armored car robbery.

Note: During the armored car robbery the First black police officer on the force was killed.

Waverly L. Brown(1935-1981) was an Nyack, New York police officer who was killed in the line of duty during an infamous 1981 armed robbery of a Brinks Armored Car, along with fellow Nyack officer Edward O’Grady and Brinks security guard Peter Paige. The event garnered national headlines and led the arrest and imprisonment of several people involved, many of



whom were members of the Weather Underground and Black Liberation Army.

Prior to his law enforcement career, Brown served in the United States Air Force and participated in the Korean War. In 1966, he became the first African American member of Nyack's police department. By 1981, he had served with the department for 15 years. Nicknamed "Chipper", he was well liked by his fellow officers, and often cooked meals for them during his shift.

*(Originally published October 20th, 2008)*

---

## **William Ayers**

## **William Ayers**

### **A left-wing radical and terrorist**

William Ayers was tapped by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley to shape that city's now nationally-renowned school reform program. Since 1999 he has served on the board of directors of the Woods Fund of Chicago, an anti-poverty, philanthropic foundation established in 1941. This became controversial in the 2008 United States presidential election, as Barack Obama had served on the board until 2002, with overlapping times of service with Ayers.

### **Radical history**

Ayers became involved in the New Left and the Students for a

Democratic Society (SDS). He rose to national prominence as an SDS leader in 1968 and 1969. As head of an SDS regional group, the "Jesse James Gang", Ayers made decisive contributions to the Weatherman orientation toward militancy.

The groups Ayers headed in Detroit and Michigan became one of the earliest gatherings of what became the Weatherman. Between the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and the June 1969 SDS convention, Ayers became a prominent leader of the group, which arose as a result of a schism in SDS.

"During that time his infatuation with street fighting grew and he developed a language of confrontational militancy that became more and more extreme over the year [1969]", former Weatherman member Cathy Wilkerson wrote in 2001. Before this time, Ayers had become a roommate of and strong influence on Terry Robbins, who was two years younger and "came to idolize him", Wilkerson wrote. From the summer of 1968 to summer 1969, the pair worked closely together, "appearing inseparable at most SDS conventions and meetings", she wrote. The two competed over things small and large, "including the ability to come up with quick one-liners, quirky names, sexual conquests, street fighting ability, and eventually the ability to talk tough", she wrote. As Ayers started glorifying violence more and more, Robbins was affected by it. "But while Ayers, according to what he writes, knew that his language, which increasingly glorified violence, was just show, Robbins was one of those who really believed all of it." Robbins would later be killed in a famous Weatherman explosion

In June 1969, the Weatherman took control of the SDS at its national convention, where Ayers was elected "Education Secretary".

Later in 1969, Ayers participated in planting a bomb at a statue dedicated to police casualties in the 1886 Haymarket Riot. The blast broke almost 100 windows and blew pieces of the statue onto the nearby Kennedy Expressway. The statue was

rebuilt and unveiled on May 4, 1970, and blown up again by Weatherman on October 6, 1970. Built yet again, the city posted a 24-hour police guard to prevent another blast. He participated in the Days of Rage riot in Chicago that October, and in December was at the "War Council" meeting in Flint, Michigan.

The following year he "went underground" with several associates after the Greenwich Village townhouse explosion, in which caused the death of Weatherman member Ted Gold as well as Ayers' close friend, Terry Robbins, and Ayers girlfriend, Oughton, were killed while a nail bomb was under construction. Kathy Boudin and Cathy Wilkerson survived the blast. Ayers was not facing criminal charges at the time, but the federal government later filed charges against him.

While underground, he and fellow member Bernardine Dohrn married, and the two remained fugitives together, changing identities, jobs and locations. By 1976 or 1977, with federal charges against both fugitives dropped due to prosecutorial misconduct, Ayers was ready to turn himself in to authorities, but Dohrn remained reluctant until after she gave birth to two sons, one born in 1977, the other in 1980. "He was sweet and patient, as he always is, to let me come to my senses on my own", she later said.

Ayers and Dohrn later became legal guardians to the son of former Weathermen David Gilbert and Kathy Boudin after the boy's parents were arrested for their part in the Brinks Robbery of 1981.

*(Originally published October 20th, 2008)*