

# Frank Marshall Davis

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### 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.

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