

CHANGE YOU CAN BELIEVE IN

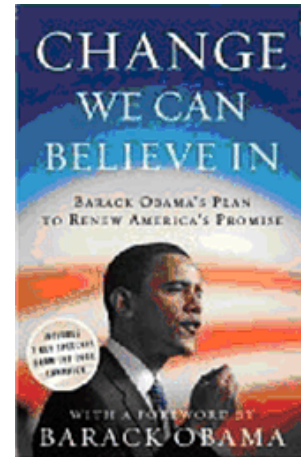
Barack Obama's plan to renew America's promise

[aka: Change That Defies the Imagination]

by Barack Obama's campaign people

2008, Three Rivers Press, 271 pages

Someone inclined to favor Democrats over Republicans in general recommended this book to me before the election, saying it provides a "really detailed, incredibly well-thought-out plan of what Barack Obama will do if he wins the presidency—of course with the consent of Congress, consistent with the Constitution, and only if the money exists. That last proviso—if the money exists—is the thin red-ink line I'm hanging a lot my personal hopes on for this administration. Because, ohmigosh, if the Obamanon[1] executes even half of the objectives outlined in Change We Can Believe In, everyone in the country will need to volunteer their life savings.



For true O believers such volunteering will be no problem. But for the rest of us—if he doesn't fulfill the pledge to not spend any money he doesn't have—I'm afraid Mr. Obama and Friends are going to be rifling through the OPM[2] piggy bank without respite for, like, ever.

Take the World-Class Education for Every American section, which perhaps ironically is in the chapter "Investing in Our Prosperity:" I checked this short section out carefully and kept looking for any proposed innovative free-market alternatives to the government schools, be they vouchers, charter schools, Marva Collins street academies, home schooling communities, repeal of the compulsory attendance laws, apprenticeship concepts, reference to any and all of the vibrant new, exciting ideas from John Taylor Gatto and other educational-freedom notions. But Noooo! The only nod we get is in a bullet: "... by welcoming charter schools within the public schools system..."[3].

That's it. I'll give Obama's team credit for identifying the abysmal quality of education in America. But his solution is to take a problem obviously caused by government—nobody is proposing that private schools do not function well—and piling on so much government you can't see past the bloated local school board. Money? We have to have more government school teachers, we have to pay them better, we have to start government schooling earlier, quadruple funding for Head Start, provide affordable and high-quality child care, fully fund the "No Child Left Behind" program, "provide \$100 million to stimulate teacher education reforms," etc., etc.

Holy Moses, and we're only looking at the government schools—which by the way were never supposed to be federally funded; they have always been the legal responsibility of the states—and already I feel the piggy bank burgeoning to the breaking point. But not to worry, hard choices have to be made, and by golly, Mr. Obama will make them. Remember the pledge: we don't spend money we don't have. [I also remember a pledge: "We're ending the war in Iraq."]

Okay, I realize I'm sounding a little flippant. But all one need do is read the Change That Defies the Imagination Table of Contents—which provides a listing of every idealization

ever conceived by any advocate of activist government who ever lived—and your head will spin. Here's the list:

1: Reviving Our Economy—Strengthening the Middle Class

- ☐ Provide immediate relief with an Emergency Economic Plan
- ☐ Economic security and opportunity for all Americans
- ☐ Affordable health care for all Americans
- ☐ Empower families to succeed
- ☐ Restore trust, return to fiscal responsibility

2: Investing in Our Prosperity—Creating our Economic Future

- ☐ Promote our energy independence and create 5 million green jobs
- ☐ A world-class education for every American
- ☐ Make America the undisputed leader in science and technology
- ☐ Build the infrastructure of the 21st century
- ☐ Help our small businesses and manufacturers thrive and create jobs
- ☐ Compete and thrive in the global economy

3: Rebuilding America's Leadership—Restoring our Place in the World

- ☐ End the war in Iraq responsibly
- ☐ Finish the fight against Al Qaeda and turn the tide on terrorism
- ☐ Rebuild a strong 21st century military (!)
- ☐ Stop the spread of nuclear weapons
- ☐ Renew our alliances to meet new global challenges

4: Perfecting our Union—Embracing America's Values

- ☐ Restore trust in government and clean up Washington
- ☐ Make voluntary citizen service universal (!)
- ☐ Partner with communities of faith (!)
- ☐ Strengthen families
- ☐ Advance equal opportunity for all Americans
- ☐ Secure our borders and reform broken immigration system
- ☐ Safeguard the environment for future generations
- ☐ Honor the sportsmen and protect the great outdoors
- ☐ Fight crime and promote public safety

We're all adults here, so we can recognize many of the above section headings are platitudes, not programs. However, *Change That Defies the Imagination* is unusual as a campaign book for fleshing out in text the many specific programs the Obamanons have in mind for "all Americans." I've already given you some idea of the education programs. There are many more specifics. Virtually every program is a federally funded one.

For example, he wants to "deploy the next-generation broadband system" (fast Internet), and not surprisingly he/the authors see the federal government actually making this happen. [Across the country, certainly in metropolitan areas, we already have universal fast free access to the Internet. This "universal fast-Internet access via government program" is such a classic political boondoggle from left and right.]

Going thru the list, however, there are a couple of sections that scare the bejesus out of any red-blooded libertarian: strengthening the government indoctrination (schooling) monopoly is one of them as I've discussed; also building up the military, strengthening the police-state apparatus in so many ways, partnering with "communities of faith," and "making voluntary citizen service universal." I know from experience when the government talks about voluntary universal anything it means compulsory universal anything—consider that the income tax is based on "voluntary compliance." In the government's definition of volunteering, if you don't volunteer you get your obvious "clear personal choice" of going to jail.

You'll also notice that a majority of the specific proposals in the book carry a price tag, as the book takes the approach, "Let's set the sea on fire, y'all work out the details." I'm not even sure an omnipotent deity could accomplish a quarter of what the Obamanon advocates. What's that other saying, "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." And the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, too. The point is unless Obama is stopped by his oh-so-sincere pledge to not spend money he doesn't have, he's either going to tax us into beggardom or, more likely, adopt the time-tested Republican practice and borrow us into oblivion.

You have to wonder whether the young idealistic Obama, paying such close attention in his civics classes—and in his lessons on Constitutional law (which he supposedly taught by the way)—was ever exposed to the thoughtful individualism of Emerson and Thoreau. The pertinent quote I have in mind from the great Henry David is:

The only way government ever aided any enterprise is in the alacrity with which it got out of the way.

Just a thought.

Does Obama really think he can wish away the laws of economics... or abandon the nonaggression principle with impunity? And that people won't see it?

Hey, Mr. O, how about counting me out of your change thing. Tell you what, I'll go along with any change you're pushing that protects my rights to life, liberty, and property. How's that? In regard to property, if you strengthen the common law against corporate pollution of any citizen's property—even the public property we all own as "the commons"—sign me up. That's the healthy idea of environmentalism.

Speaking of environmental pollution, I'd like to propose you end the war and bring the troops home from wherever ASAP, because frankly you've made a big mistake in believing the official story about 9/11 and this whole Al Qaeda terrorist business.

I was one of the libertarians who advocated Obama as a hopeful improvement to the Bush-Cheney regime. There's still no doubt in my mind that for pure, unadulterated criminality—complete with torture, rendition, depleted uranium, massacres of civilians, and yes, 9/11, etc., etc.—the Bushoviks will forever be "top dog in history" (transcending in an Orwellian sense even the mass crimes of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Ariel Sharon, etc.). As I write this review, Obama has still not been inaugurated, but if this

book and his staff and cabinet appointments are any indication the Obamanon may become "top dog in history" for pure political fraud.

But you know what, the freedom movement is much stronger now, and I have a growing confidence the people will rise up to exert full control over—or routinely jettison in accordance with the Constitution the Big O is purportedly so knowledgeable about—any "people's president" who continues to defy that constitution and our undaunted will toward our birthright of liberty.

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[1] Obamanon = the Obama "Phenomenon"

[2] other people's money

[3] This is a nit, but the text—the section is supposedly about excellence in education—"the public schools system" is normally "the public school system." And if you're going to pluralize school, I can see some argument for adding an apostrophe to schools.

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