

## Some Books on Community Organizing

Compiled by classmate Lew Finfer, organizer with Massachusetts Communities Action Network and Faith in Action

1. **Activism that Makes Sense: Congregations and Community Organization by Gregory Pierce.** About an important segment of community organizing where the organization's membership is from religious congregations. The four significant organizing networks using this form of congregation-based organizing are: Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), Faith in Action (formerly called PICO), Gamaliel Foundation, Direct Action Research and Training (DART).
2. **Reveille for Radicals, Rules for Radicals by Saul Alinsky.** Alinsky is seen as the modern founder of community organizing, starting with a group called the Back of the Yards Council in Chicago in 1939. He hired Fred Ross to build the Community Service Organization, a statewide group with chapters for Mexican-Americans; Ross hired Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta, launching their organizing careers. Alinsky founded the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to coordinate founding and supporting community organizing groups. The IAF remains a major organizing network.
3. **I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle by Charles Payne.** Has chapters on organizers and leaders and focuses on the work of the SNCC in Mississippi as led by Bob Moses. Other civil rights movement books: *The Children* by David Halberstam (about young civil rights leaders in Nashville like Diane Nash and John Lewis), John Lewis's *Walking with the Wind* and *Good Trouble*, David Garrow's *Bearing the Cross*, and Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters* (along with two others in his series).
4. **Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing by Lee Staples** (new edition published in 2021). A very good manual on organizing practices written by a veteran organizer.
5. **Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organization by Rev. Dennis Jacobsen.** Examines key organizing principles of power, self-interest, etc., through a religious perspective.
6. **Organizing for Social Change: A Manual for Activists in the 1990s by Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max** of the Midwest Academy Seven Locks Press. A classic manual on community organizing with their Strategy Chart.
7. **Building Powerful Community Organizations by Michael Brown.** A manual on community organizing.
8. **Social Policy magazine** focuses on community organizing and is edited by Wade Rathke, the founder of ACORN.
9. **Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America by Richard Wood.** About congregation-based community organizing, with a focus on the Faith in Action Network.
10. **Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics by Mary Beth Rogers.** Focus on Texas organizing of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliated organizations and lead organizer Ernesto Cortés.
11. **Building a People of Power; Equipping Churches to Transform Their Communities by Robert Lithicum.** How religious congregations can work on social justice issues, and the theological case for this within the Evangelical tradition
12. **Ed Chambers Roots for Radicals.** Chambers was head of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) organizing network for many years.

13. ***A Shared Future* by Richard Wood and Brad Fulton.**
14. **Mike Miller's books: *Community Organizing, A Community Organizer's Tale.***
15. ***Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman.** Saru directs the One Fair Wage campaign and is cofounder of the Restaurant Opportunities Center.
16. ***The Fight for \$15* by David Rolf.** About organizing to raise the minimum wage, which was begun by New York City fast food workers organized by the SEIU labor union.
17. ***Blessed be the Fighters* by Shel Trapp.** Trapp was the longtime director of National People's Action, which led the campaign to pass the Community Reinvestment Act. It continues today as the network called People's Action.
18. ***How People Get Power: Organizing Oppressed Communities for Action* by Si Kahn.** Si Kahn organized in North Carolina.
19. ***Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement* by Marshall Ganz.** Ganz was a major organizer for the United Farm Workers, led by Cesar Chavez. Ganz has been a major trainer of organizers here and around the world since the 1990s.
20. ***People Power: The Community Organizing Tradition of Saul Alinsky*, edited by Aaron Schutz and Mike Miller.**
21. ***Nuts & Bolts: The ACORN Fundamentals of Organizing* by Wade Rathke.** Rathke is the founder of ACORN and currently directs ACORN International, working in communities across the world.
22. ***Stand Up!: How to Get Involved, Speak Out and Win in a World on Fire* by Gordan Whitman.** Whitman is a major organizer with the Faith and Action Network.
23. ***Going Public: An Organizer's Guild to Citizen Action* by Mike Gecan.** Gecan is a major organizer for the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)
24. ***America's Social Arsonist: Fred Ross and Grassroots Organizing in the Twentieth Century* by Gabriel Thompson.** Fred Ross hired Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta for their first organizing jobs at the Community Services Organization in CA in the 1990s and was a major adviser to Cesar Chavez as he developed the United Farmworkers over the following three decades.