

Steal this Message, Part II: The Spirit of '73

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As I was facing the deadline for the next installment of *Steal This Message*, I sat at my computer desk, reading and re-reading the books and articles that littered my workspace and listened to the radio in the background bombarding me with commercials about the various "4th of July" celebrations that would be happening in my little piece of America. Americans gets very nostalgic about their nation's birthday and nearly all of us are filled with "the Spirit of '76" during that holiday weekend. However, during the other three hundred, sixty-four and one half days of the year, most working class Americans wax nostalgic about another spirit (whether they know it or not) - "the Spirit of '73." However, "The Spirit of '73" is something that no one in politics or the media talks about. Because I am like most Americans and also get a taste of the teary-eyed nostalgia that comes with the 4th of July, my July installment of *Steal This Message* will discuss "The Spirit of '73" and how it can be used to galvanize a working class constituency in American politics.

Statistics can be deceiving in American politics. Both sides, the Right and the Left, each have their own set of statistics that reinforce the opinions they already hold. Miriam Schulman was right when she said, "we throw out anecdotal evidence, mixed with a few facts and figures, and then we all retreat to our preconceived ideas without any empathetic consideration of the other side" (254). Like Schulman and, like most Americans, I am very suspicious of statistics. What once was an "absolute" in Algebra class (remember the term *real numbers*) has now become something called "the numbers

game." But, what happens when nearly all of the numbers of nearly all of the studies suggest the same thing? Does that mean it is true, or somehow closer to the truth than any other statistic? I am inclined to say "yes" and it is within the labyrinth of statistics that "The Spirit of '73" will begin to take shape.

After World War II, the United States economy performed at an incredible rate for more than three decades. Between 1947 and 1973, the United States economy put working class Americans on an escalator to the middle class. Ruy Teixeira writes in *America's Forgotten Majority* that "stretching back into the late 1940's and forward to the mid-1960's... the first mass middle class in the world [was created] - a middle class that even factory workers could enter, since they could earn a relatively comfortable living even without higher levels of education or professional skills" (6). Teixeira substantiates his claim with a whole myriad of statistics. Among the most important numbers in this statistical labyrinth are "a household in 1973 probably had an income of around 34,000, making it more than twice as well-off as the equivalent household in 1947" (11) and working class Americans achieved "wage gains of 79 percent for the typical worker between 1947 and 1973, as his or her hourly wage rose all the way from \$7.61 to \$12.77" (13). Teixeira also points out that these statistics suggest an average increase of \$10,750 per year for each family over this period. This "huge boost to family economic fortunes" (13) created an optimistic working class that could count on significant increases in wages and consequently, a more affluent way of life for the average American family. However, just like the escalators at the department stores, this economic escalator also had to reach a terminus and the terminus for the escalator of American affluence occurred in 1973.

John F. Kennedy's economic policy was one in which "a rising tide would lift all boats" and throughout the 1960's, even many of the smallest dinghy's were lifted - even Huck and Jim's river raft experienced some high tides during that decade, but since 1973, the rising tide has not lifted all boats - it only lifted yachts and working class Americans have suffered as the traditional economic waterways to prosperity have all but dried up. After 1973, working class Americans had to work harder simply to maintain their position in the economic class structure and the children of what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation," grew up in a stagnant flat economy that was rapidly changing. As America moved into the rapture of its post-industrial economy, many working class Americans were left behind. Tiexiera writes that "service-sector employment has continued to grow - to the point where it now accounts for 80 percent of employment... In other words, four-fifths of working Americans now provide services... instead of producing tangible goods for a living" (8).

Now that this economic revolution has taken place, there are only about twenty-five percent of Americans doing "blue collar" work. Jeffrey Madrick, in his book, *The End of Affluence*, chronicles the substantial drop in the United States domestic growth between 1973 and 1999. According to Madrick this drop in domestic growth accounts for the slowdown in wage growth in the post-1973 economy. Tiexiera points out that in the 1990's, "national income and wealth, of course, have continued to grow, but... only the top 20 percent have really made significant gains. And the bottom 60 percent... have barely budged" (11). Based on these statistics, it is plain to see that when John Kennedy's economic policy of "lifting all boats" was replaced by Ronald Reagan's "trickle down economics," the working class Left were just that - left - left out of the new economy in

the dried up creekbeds of economic uncertainty. The Working Class Left in America should invoke the "Spirit of '73" during this 4th of July holiday and tell those elected officials who still sound the trumpet of "trickle down economics" to "go float a boat."

Unfortunately, there is a darker side to America's prosperity in the early part of the 20th Century. Because of racism, people of color were often excluded from labor unions and could not share in the prosperity that took white America on an escalator to the middle class life. In the late 1960's, African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, and women all began to demand their Civil Rights and somewhere during the Civil Rights Movement, the Democrats commitment to the working class shifted to being a commitment to various different identity groups. This form of identity politics provides the capitalist class with a smokescreen to help combat a political movement committed to the cause of the working class. Although many minorities in the United States were not able to participate in the rising escalator of prosperity between 1946 and 1973, because the Civil Rights Movement occurred at approximately the same time that America's bubble of prosperity for all began to burst, minorities and women still have a lot to gain by getting behind a movement that tried to protect the interests of the working class. Statistically speaking (and you all know how I hate statistics), poverty is concentrated more heavily in minorities and women than in any other identity group. They would have a lot to gain if the Working Class Left starting compelling the United States to fight the war on poverty the way that President Bush compels its citizens to fight the war on terror.

FDR created a working class constituency that elected him to America's highest office four consecutive terms. Many of those same working class Americans elected Harry

Truman President during his very narrow victory in 1948. Dwight Eisenhower gained most of the working class vote during the 1950's and his being a war hero probably contributed to this more than his economic policies. John Kennedy won by a very narrow margin in 1960 and the working class contributed to his victory as well. If one were to look at politics from the 1960's through today, the working class has played a very prominent role in Presidential politics. However, since the late 60's, the Democratic Party has abandoned the platform of "working class people" and has substituted it for a narrower platform geared toward women and minorities. I applaud the Democrat's commitment to provide women and minorities with a voice in government, however, by adopting a platform that would galvanize the working class into a political constituency in the same way that Franklin Roosevelt did, the Democratic party could still help women and minorities, but would also be helping more than sixty percent of the American people as well. FDR put a "chicken in every pot," and Democrats should keep that in mind and learn a lesson from their past while they "Don't Stop Thinkin' About Tomorrow."

On October 15, 1980, *The New York Times* printed a story on a man named Dewey Burton. At the time, Dewey was a 34-year-old autoworker from Detroit and, according to *The Times*, "is a strong union man, a Democrat by upbringing and conviction." The significance of *The Times* article was that Dewey planned on voting for Ronald Reagan in the forthcoming Presidential election. Men like Dewey became collectively known as "Joe Sixpack" during the 1980's. The rhetoric of the 2004 Presidential campaigns, thus far, has been one dominated by "middle class tax cuts" and other initiatives designed to garner the support of suburban soccer moms. This is the new constituency that everyone seems to be fighting over. In the 2000 election, Al Gore briefly touched on issues that

confront working class Americans and was quickly accused of "class warfare."

Conservative columnist Bruce Bartlett wrote that Gore's acceptance speech "was all about the rich versus the poor and the powerful against the powerless." Since the 2000 election, Americans have witnessed the scandalous behavior of Enron, Worldcom, and Halliburton, lending credence to Mother Jones' statement that the American government was a government "of Wall Street, for Wall Street, and by Wall Street." Maybe it's time that the working class Left resurrected "Joe Sixpack" and used him as the mascot for the Democratic Party. He might be showing a little butt crack through his faded Levis, but at least he wouldn't be a complete ass like the mascot (and most of the candidates) that they have right now.

Although "Joe Sixpack says in the global economy of the 21st Century, workers all have the right to a decent wage and to speak their minds and seek union representation" won't fit on a bumpersticker, "Joe Sixpack for President" will. Imagine what the United States would look like if a steelworker were to become President. Imagine what could happen if a homeless person was appointed Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. What if America was really a country "of the people, for the people, and by the people?" What if there was a political ad where Joe Sixpack punched out Wal Mart's price slashing Zorro guy and said, "The age of corporate interests and cash and carry government is over?" In the immortal words of Louis Armstrong, "What a wonderful world it would be." I live in one of the most conservative states in America (Texas) and the Republican Party has a chokehold on politics here. Because it won't do me any good to vote for a Democrat in any of the elections, I pledge that I will write in "Joe Sixpack" so that my vote might send a message to the Democratic Party and let them

know that there is a whole host of people in the working class Left that are dying to get behind a movement that will make their country better. And, I feel confident that, if elected President, that Joe Sixpack can hold a good old down home tent revival and "The Spirit of '73" will once again stir in the heart of America.

Steal This Message, Part III: Joe Sixpack Says: “Marx Rules”

I was talking to one of my working class friends – actually, I was listening to him express his concerns about his economic uncertainty. I heard a very defeatist tone in his voice, like he had given up on life – given up on hope. I tried to explain to him that better days would have to come eventually – the capitalist system had run amuck and soon, some kind of social intervention would be necessary in order for the system to correct itself. I had his undivided attention until I made the critical error of mentioning Marx. At that point, my friend fell back in to his despair and said, “Communism doesn’t work. We already know that. What we’ve got is what we’ve got and that’s it.”

I wanted to argue with him, citing Germany, France and several other Western European nations that embrace social democracies. However, I kept my mouth shut. I didn’t feel that it was the appropriate time – my friend needed me to listen, not to lecture him on Marxist philosophy. I thought about our little chat in the days that followed our conversation and wondered “Why are so many working class Americans so turned off by Marxism?”

To Americans, Marx is a boogeyman – the philosopher whose work resulted in the brutality of the Soviet Union and Korea – the very thing that those same working class Americans were taught that they were fighting against in Vietnam. Like Howard Zinn, I, too, am “annoyed by the way Stalinism was mistaken for socialism (Zinn on History, [html](#)). Looking back, I can recall several occasions during my lifetime when the capitalist media reported “Marxist rebels” in Third World countries staging armed

insurrections against their governments. Unfortunately, the phrase “Marxist rebels” has given way to “Islamic fundamentalists” in recent history, and the end result of both phrases is the same – fear and paranoia in the hearts and minds of the American people. Because of the media, many Americans are almost as scared of “Marxists” as they are of “black males.”

Another reason Marxism seems so deplorable to many Americans is that it is equated with the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, the media, once again, sang an ever-present hymn about how capitalism defeated communism and brought an end to the Cold War. However, “to see the disintegration of the Soviet Union as a sign of the failure of socialism, is to mistake the monstrous tyranny created by Stalin for the vision of an egalitarian and democratic society which has inspired enormous numbers of people all over the world” (Zinn, html). The purpose of this section of *Steal This Message* is to try and explicate Marxism in terms that the average working class American can understand so that they, too, will be like our Presidential hero, Joe Sixpack, and boldly proclaim that “Marx Rules.”

Before we go on to explicate “Marx for the Masses” let us first look at the active smear campaign that Conservatives have waged against Marxism in the media and on the web. Earlier in this section, the TV news’ depiction of Marxism was illustrated. However, these brief soundbytes on the television are mild compared to some of the scathing indictments in print and on the web. For example, after searching a few blogs on the web, I found these quotes: “Communists despise traditional notions of family and

morality and seek to undermine these institutions”; “Our universities have been taken over by social elites (Communists). They are indoctrinating the future leaders of this country with their propaganda”; “Our judicial system has been compromised by Liberal activist (Communist) judges who usurped the authority of legislature by arbitrarily making laws from the bench”; and “the mainstream news media is operated and controlled by Socialists and has evolved into nothing more than a propaganda machine.”

Although these claims appear – and are – outlandish, they are endemic. Not only are the blogs filled with anti-communist, anti-Marxist and anti-Socialist rhetoric, but there are also several articles in the print media that say approximately the same thing: “Liberalism has paved the way for the communization of the United States from within. Anyone who points this out will of course be branded a ‘McCarthyist,’ or proclaimed as being ‘politically incorrect’ or ‘intolerant,’ or other such disparaging terms in order to stifle debate” (*Communism in America*); “like the abolition of private property rights, progressive taxation, and government control of industry and media, the destruction of the American concept of family and marriage is part and parcel of the Marxist principles espoused by communism” (*The Marxist Underpinnings of Homosexual Marriage*); and “16 out of 17 Americans that were involved in creating the U.N. were later identified, in sworn testimony, as secret communist agents” (*Who Created The United Nations?*). Now, all of these things sound even more cloak and dagger than a Spy v. Spy film during the Cold War and are chocked full of conspiracy theory. However, these illustrations are very useful in demonstrating the depth and breadth of rhetoric against Marxism, socialism, and communism in the United States. The burning question is “Why should

anybody care about Marxism in 2004? Didn't we bury any threat that it might have been against the capitalist way of life in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union?" Part of the answer to that question lies in the things about Marxism that these authors don't tell working class Americans.

Einstein said "make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler." By trying to be "constructively reductive," I may be taking a complex philosophy and creating something else far removed from what it was intended to mean. However, in keeping my promise of breaking down complex issues into "bumper sticker" slogans, I must simplify Marx so that working class Americans can gain some understanding of what Marxism is meant to be – not what the media and Conservatives have made it out to be. Today, when capitalism, the free market and private enterprise are being hailed as the victors in the ideological standoff between capitalism vs. communism – a capitalist system that must be exported to the four corners of the world, I think it is time to "rekindle the idea of socialism" to "remind us of the powerful appeal of the socialist idea to people alienated from the political system and aware of the growing stark disparities in income and wealth – as so many Americans are today" (Zinn, html).

For Marx, the most important features of a society are its economic classes and their relations to each other. His history was an economic history of class struggles (between ruler and subject, lord and serf, and finally bourgeois and proletarian). What Marx called "bourgeois and proletarian," we call "haves and have nots." In the past, the middle class has always served as a buffer between the "haves" and "have nots" (see Zinn's *People's*

History of the United States) preventing capitalism from reaching what Marx believed to be a critical mass for a proletarian revolution. However, in very recent American history, capitalism has been creating more proletarians who have nothing to sell but their labor by bankrupting the middle class. This phenomenon can easily be seen in the erosion of the middle class over the past thirty years (since '73) and mega retailers like Wal-Mart wiping out the small business owners.

Labor unions and other organizations that sought to increase the standard of living and quality of life for workers also helped to prevent capitalism from reaching a critical mass. According to Marx, under capitalism, workers tend to be paid the minimum amount required for them to accept the job. This “minimum” is kept at a “minimum” because of competition for jobs from what Marx called “the reserve army of labor.” Today, we just call them the unemployed. Marx believed that the capitalist sold the product of the worker’s labor at a price proportional to its value and the difference between what the product sells for and what its cost is the “surplus value” (profit) that is kept by the capitalist.

Although, for the most part, Marx’s theory was correct, he had no way of knowing about credit cards, marketing tools, and other capitalist inventions that create a market where products often sell at prices that far exceed their value. For example, if one were to buy a new car from a dealership and then try to trade it in for another one later, it is possible, if not likely, that the person would owe more on the car than it was worth. In cases like these, it doesn’t take the proletarian long to be swimming in debt further

exacerbating his ability to earn a “living wage.” Marx also saw the capitalist market as being somewhat “fixed.” Because he didn’t live in the age of advertising, Marx didn’t predict that the market could be manipulated (presumably by influential capitalists). Oddly enough, it is the capitalists who argue very strongly about “market factors” and claim that “it is the choices of the masses that create the inequalities of fortune and fame – and the only way to correct those ‘injustices’ is to control the choices” (Loberfeld, Social Justice, html). Conservatives, like Loberfeld, embrace Marx’s “fixed” view of the market. However, they fail to acknowledge that the capitalists have found ways to manipulate the markets through advertising and other means. It only takes a short interview with someone who lost their entire savings in the Enron scandal to realize that the market is not “fixed.”

Marx goes on to add that because workers cannot buy the full product of their labor and the capitalists don’t consume all of the surplus value, there tends to be recessions. Perhaps the best example of how this part of Marx’s theory rang true in the United States is The Great Depression. After the Stock Market collapsed, there was mass unemployment. People couldn’t buy the goods that the capitalists were selling which resulted in more layoffs and even more unemployment. Because of the competition for jobs, wages went down even more and that resulted in what Marx called “the increasing immiseration of the proletariat” (Marx, html). However, according to Marx, it doesn’t take a depression to cause this “immiseration.” Increased productivity through labor saving machinery also creates unemployment and drives down wages. Howard Zinn points out that mass immigration has also been a way for the capitalist to keep labor costs

down (see *A People's History of the United States*). In *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* Frederick Engels (Marx's colleague) wrote: "the middle classes must increasingly disappear until the world is divided into millionaires and paupers..." (Engels, html). It is then that, according to Marx, a "socialist revolution" occurs. According to Lenin one additional way that the capitalists maintain their power is through "imperialism." Lenin believed this to be the highest stage of capitalism. By exercising imperial power the "mother country" is able to export its poverty to the colonies and, at the same time, keep the working class masses placated at home (Lenin, html).

Anyone can see that Marx and Engel's "Communist Manifesto" talked a whole lot more about economic history than it did about Communist ideology. The Soviet Union, a consequence of Marxism, may have used some of Marx's ideology but was, in no way, representative of what Marx might have envisioned when he wrote "workers of the world unite." As an American, I think that Marx went too far in his critique of capitalism and history shows that "liquidating the capitalist class" only makes a country poorer. However, Marx's economic theories seem to hold true. There is a substantial amount of anecdotal evidence that suggests Marx was right about the evolution of capitalism. So much evidence that Conservatives have to demonize and discredit Marxism so that people are not more receptive to Marxist ideas.

In contrast to all of the negative comments that Conservatives make about Marxism, let's look at all of the things that America does that conceivably could have been lifted

from the “Communist Manifesto” itself: we have public schools, a progressive tax structure, and separation of church and state. In addition, America has (or should I say “had”) adopted other Marxist positions in its society. For example, Marx advocated the abolition of inheritance. Instead of abolishing it completely, America has instead put an inheritance tax in place to help keep familial dynasties from becoming the aristocracy. President Bush is trying to do away with that one but oddly enough Conservatives also have an agenda that could be mistaken for Marxism:

Marx believed in the confiscation of the property of emigrants and rebels. One only needs to look at Conservative policies in terms of the Drug Enforcement Administration and parts of the Patriot Act to see the similarities. In addition, Marx believed in the state controlling a centralized communication system. The FCC owns the airwaves in the United States and aren't the Conservatives the ones who are so bent out of shape about Janet Jackson's breast, Howard Stern's mouth, and internet pornography? Perhaps the best example of all this is the Conservative doctrine that all people have an obligation to work – better known as Welfare Reform. Couldn't one see Welfare Reform as the creation of industrial armies? These things don't seem to be stretching Marx any more than the Conservative arguments cited earlier. My question is “Why aren't the Conservatives being called Communists?”

Perhaps the simplest answer to that question is that the working class Left leans toward Marxism in terms of helping the “have nots.” They want the government to step in and be responsive to the needs of all of its citizens. In contrast, Conservatives only

lean toward Marxism when it comes to restricting the rights of its people which are protected by the Constitution. Having said that, I'll let the readers decide where the real totalitarian threat lies.

In order to maintain our capitalist system, we must keep it in check. In the last 30 years, there has been an increase in the gap between rich and poor – a great divide between “the haves” and “the have nots.” Because we have allowed our capitalist system to operate in that same “laissez faire” environment that it did during the time of the robber barons, we have hastened the coming of Marx’s “immiseration of the proletariat.” Working class Americans don’t have to embrace Marxism as a way of life and march lock step with their comrades to the factory every morning, but we all should be familiar with Marx’s critique of capitalism and see it as a blessing that we have a pseudo-repair manual for the system that we are living under. See the “Marx rules” as a prescription for a better way of life. Plato says “the price good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men,” so be like Joe Sixpack, jump up on a hickory stump and shout out: “Marx Rules.”

Steal This Message, Part IV: Joe Sixpack says: “You Say Liberal Like It’s A Bad Thing!”

One of the most interesting phenomenon in American politics surrounds the word “liberal.” Conservatives throw the word around like it is an expletive. President Bush has accused his opponents John Kerry and John Edwards of being two of the “most liberal politicians in the Senate.” Christian Conservatives have also joined in on the liberal bashing. For example, on June 16th, the Southern Baptist Convention decided to no longer fund the Baptist World Alliance and severed all ties with the organization because of their continual drift to the Left. In short, they left the organization hanging because it was “too liberal.” In an effort to combat this negative branding of the word “liberal” and at the same time, playing into the hands of the Conservatives, Democrats are no longer referring to themselves as liberals. Now, the 21st Century Democrats in America are “progressives.” However, Joe Sixpack, our Presidential hero, wants to bring the phrase “liberal” back into the vocabulary of the Working Class Left, saying to all the naysayers, Democrats and Republicans alike, “You say Liberal like it’s a bad thing.”

Oddly enough, Conservative Columnists Barry Loberfeld invokes the word “liberal” as he tries to present an argument against Marxism in “Social Justice: Code For Communism:”

Justice as a political/ legal term can begin only when limitations are placed upon a sovereign... The historical realization traces from the Roman Senate to Magna Carta to the US Constitution to the 19th Century. It was now a matter of “justice”

that government not arrest citizens arbitrarily, sanction their bondage by others, persecute them for their religion or speech, seize their property, or prevent their travel. This culmination of centuries of ideas and struggles became known as liberalism (Loberfeld, Frontpage Magazine.com 2/27/04).

Loberfeld goes on to write that “the expositors of liberalism (Spencer, Maine) saw their ethic, by establishing the political equality of all (e.g. the abolition of slavery, serfdom, and inequality of rights) as moving mankind from a ‘society of status’ to a ‘society of contract’ (Loberfeld, html). Loberfeld gives a very flattering history of liberalism and he is a Conservative. If this is the definition of “liberalism” from the point of view of a Conservative, it makes one wonder what a “liberal” really is.

Liberal is defined (by Webster’s online) as being one who is “not limited to or by the established, traditional, orthodox, or authoritarian attitudes, views, or dogmas; free from bigotry.” Basically, a liberal is one who “thinks outside the box” – a trait that many in corporate America appreciate and look for because many of their executives suffer from what is often called “groupthink” (incidentally, “group think” is one of the traits that many believe are problematic in the Bush-Cheney cabinet). Another part of the definition reads “liberals are those ‘favoring proposals for reform, open to new ideas of progress, and tolerant of the ideas and behaviors of others; broad minded.” Golly, that sounds like someone that Joe Sixpack would like to have for a neighbor. Webster’s also has a definition for the word “liberal” that it calls obsolete, implying that it no longer applies to the word that it used to define. This definition defines liberals as being

“morally unrestrained or licentious.” Isn’t it just a little disconcerting that Conservatives throw the word “liberal” around when they obviously are referring to a definition that Webster’s says is “obsolete”? Kinda makes you wonder if they are not just a little behind the times, doesn’t it?

In contrast to Conservatives, Francis Bacon thought that liberals were “bestowing in a large and noble way, as a freeman; generous; bounteous; open-handed; as, a liberal giver.” Likewise John Milton said that liberals were “Infinitely good, and of his good as liberal and free and infinite.” Tell me, who are the Conservatives of the 21st Century to argue with Francis Bacon or John Milton? How could anyone even put Francis Bacon, John Milton and Karl Rove in the same sentence? (Ooops, I just did!)

The primary reason that Conservatives take issue with Liberals is that Liberals operate under the premise that the rich are too rich and the poor are too poor. Liberals see a world in which the wealthy retain their wealth on the backs of the poor – they are not rich because they deserve to be rich, they are rich because most of the costs of operating a society are shifted on to the poor. My question is: “isn’t that exactly what is happening?” If you have a high credit score you can leave your money in the bank and get a zero percent car loan for that new SUV, but if you are broke, then you have to pay 18 percent interest on a Kia Sephia. How is that fair and equitable? Jim Hightower writes in “Corporate Redistribution of Wealth” that “what we have is a redistribution of wealth from America’s working families to super-rich investors... it’s really nothing but stealing from the many to profit the few” (html). Brian Jones, from the Socialist Worker writes:

“the key is fighting for a totally different society where the priority is providing for the needs of the majority, not the profit of the few” (html). Is that a liberal idea? I think that it might fit Francis Bacon’s definition of “generous; bounteous; open-handed; as, a liberal giver.”

Mother Jones once said the United States is a country “Of Wall Street, For Wall Street, and By Wall Street.” If working class Americans would like to reclaim their country and once again make it a country “Of the People, For the People, and By the People,” then it must embrace liberalism, not run from it. We, as a nation, and as a people, need to get rid of an economic and political system that increases the hardships of the working poor while the richest one percent of Americans live in the lap of luxury. We, as a nation and a people, need to embrace liberalism and remember what its history was and not what modern political pundits have made it out to be. We, as a nation and a people, need to look at our Conservative counterparts with sincerity when they call us “liberals” and politely say “thank you;” and when they stare at us with the eyes of bewilderment say with surprise in our voice, “You say liberal like it was a band thing.”