

# Opinion

## The loud, rather obnoxious minority

By **MARTIN SANTALUCIA** A WEEK AND A HALF AGO the conservative Tea Party Movement descended onto Washington D.C. with 70,000 protesters, according to ABC News, rallying for decreased government spending. The mob of angry conservatives wielded standard issue D.C. protest ephemera as they marched through the city proudly exhibiting that they had at least picked up the main characters of their high school history classes' WWII chapter, though watching footage of the protests forced me to wonder how many of those protesters actually know what Hitler and Stalin did to be globally reviled.

Watching the clips of the protest that weekend, I realized that the same treatment George W. Bush had to endure from long-haired, un-bathed hippies will now be applied to Barack Obama by angry, old conservatives. Extra weight was added to the protest as it punctuated a summer of town halls that were hijacked so that every local lunatic in America could have some airtime on CNN. Cable news and the Republican Party may be interested in spinning these outbursts, even from their own party members, into something more dramatic even if the incidents are only a result of legislators actually trying to engage their electorate. Defining moments of my experience as staff on the Obama campaign taught me that crazy people are everywhere and they are always planning to attend your public event. One may recall that even Bush's screened town hall audiences occasionally had a protester among them, a protester who was immediately removed by security and, presumably, shot by the winner of a coin toss between Karl Rove and Dick Cheney.

What strikes me most about these events is the degree to which amnesia factors into Republican complaints of the Obama Administration. After Obama's health-care speech, social networks exploded with cries of injustice and desecration of the House floor, many wanting to know why the president appeared to get a pass for pushing a political agenda during his speech. This is absurd. The building, the very room they were standing in, was built as a shrine to the American political process and the ideological battles between our elected officials. If one was to chastise Obama for politicizing anything, it would have to be the office of the presidency, an office George Washington hoped would remain an apolitical institution. To make a valid argument, however, you would also be required to reprimand every president since Washington for the same offense. To argue that Obama's speech was anything more political than any other president had delivered from that podium is, apolitically speaking, stupid. As a recent example, George W. Bush routinely used his State of the Union addresses to promote his foreign policy agenda, even as it became increasingly unpopular, divisive and clearly wrong.

Republicans are currently attempting to rewrite the history of their twelve-year majority, portraying themselves as the giving and benevolent leaders of the past. They are trying to erase the style in which they wielded their power, maliciously beating the perpetually stumbling Democratic Party on "national security" in the same manner the Democrats are currently beating them with health care and other domestic issues. The GOP had simply forgotten how unpleasant the business end of a baseball bat could be; what they are experiencing is called "loosing" and, to quote Jon Stewart, "It's supposed to taste like a s\*\*t taco."

The illusion of the Republican base's current activity over that of the Democrats during the Bush Administration is a product of media manipulation. Bush was followed everywhere by protests varying in size from state to state and anti-war/Bush protests became weekly occurrences in places such as my own hometown of West Chester, regardless of Bush's travel to the area. To report on an anti-Bush rally past 2004 did nothing for ratings. Opposition to Obama's charisma, rhetoric and decisive electoral victory on the other hand, is currently proving to be yet another way to capitalize on the Obama brand. These stories will probably remain interesting until he has a full year in office under his belt and then coverage of anti-Obama rallies will too die off. I hope whoever the 45<sup>th</sup> President will be is watching this and preparing.

Considering the airtime is only temporary, and screaming of non-existent death panels does next to nothing for the democratic process, I would recommend to anyone thinking of attending one of these media circuses that it might be a better use of their time to put down the swastika-covered donkey poster and participate in a rational debate.

Unfortunately, as I type this, I realize it will most likely in vain because, as we have all seen over the last several years, the only thing that ever really changes in D.C. is the face behind the Hitler mustache.

## Cheated by the American scheme

By **ANTONIOS AVRAMIDIS** MILLION DOLLAR HOMES, SALARIES AND BONUSES with so many figures it would hurt their parents feelings, and the ability to do whatever it is you love doing. That's the American dream, the pie in the sky that every student is trying to get a piece of, it almost sounds too good to be true, but we've all been given the promise. Work hard, study hard, and show up to that 6-9 basket weaving class for no other reason than your degree audit says you should; in just four (or five, or six) short years, you'll be getting that dream job, no questions asked. How were 18 year old high school students going to pay for the college that would give them the keys to the kingdom? Easy, take on a crippling amount of student loans. Don't worry, though. That dream job you landed before the ink on your diploma had dried would pay those loans off before Sallie Mae knew what hit her. Then the picture only got better, the Baby Boomers and Generation X would be retiring. The opportunity for real professional growth and promotion would be so abundant, you were on the fast track to becoming the youngest CEO in history. If only Alexander the Great knew, he would be jealous.

That was before the global economic crisis began and students began to graduate with less opportunity for being hired than those the year before them. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, students who graduated in 2008 were about half as likely to apply for a job and have one as students graduating in 2007, down from 51% to 26% respectively. With good reason, students began to worry about their future, how would they buy their low emission vehicles if only one in four of them were being hired right out of college? Then the answer came in the form of a Harvard graduate, who himself embodied the dream. Students mobilized and worked themselves into a frenzy with new found fervor. The prophet had come, he had brought the message, and the message was change. This sparked voters age 18 to 29 to go out and vote. Their voices were heard, and Barack Obama was elected President. The change came, but not in the form that many students had expected. NACE reports that in the year 2009, only nineteen percent of graduating students who applied for a job, got the job.

This information combined with the report from CBS News claiming that eighty percent of Baby Boomers plan on working well past the previously established retirement age of 63 spells out a few universal truths for the college student. One such truth being that an education will be no longer be a commodity, but a prerequisite for successfully entering the workforce in their desired fields. Unfortunately, the New York Times reported that overall, college students are now covering more of the cost of educating themselves, while the cost of instruction has decreased. The reason for increasing rates while cost and corners are cut in the classroom? Higher spending on administrative costs. With the costs for attending a university now being higher than before, with less being given, and less opportunities for being hired, the American Dream seems to be slipping further and further away. According to the Associated Press, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has proclaimed the worst recession since the 1930's is probably over, while unemployment will remain high for a few years to come.

The tune of the average student is changing, as their diploma's in less than concrete majors with little to no hiring opportunity in today's economy become worth as much as the place mats where they are waiting tables. I suggest we worry less about the degree and more about getting an actual education. Those with the hunger and knowledge to succeed in today's harsh employment environment will do so because of the education they received, not taking classes simply to get their degree. Someone I rarely see eye to eye with on social or political issues recently told me "I go to work to get an education and I come to school to get a degree." I can't agree more. I'm not sure what the solution is for graduates who are genuinely concerned with their employment opportunities, but I hear if you continue to work on your degree by piling on student loan debt for graduate school, that seven figure bonus is only a call away.

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