

Tomorrow's Work

Fred Gardaphe * (November 05, 2012)



A good way to alienate people around you is to tell them whom you are voting for. With the polls tighter than ever, the odds are you are close to people who are not voting the same way you are ...

A good way to alienate people around you is to tell them whom you are voting for. With the polls tighter than ever, the odds are you are close to people who are not voting the same way you are. That means if you open your mouth, you could get into some pretty intense arguments with people you care about. Many people chose to not disclose their choices, and, that that is certainly their prerogative, it says a lot about how difficult it has become to stand up and for one's beliefs.



Like most of what has happened in 21st century U.S.A., we tend to leave this kind of public talk to the professionals—those who get paid to form opinions and express them in the media. This follows much of what we have let happen to our democracy. We have professional politicians, professional soldiers, professional everything, or so it seems. And when you professionalize democracy, you end up with what I have termed *democracy*—a governing system that tells you to stay out and leave it to the professionals. And many do that, so many in fact that the turn out is not much over 50 percent of eligible voters.

Why do so many not participate in making such an important decision? Could it be because they don't see that much of a difference in those who will spend their money, send their children off to fight wars, determine how much of their hard earned money they will be required to send to the government? I think it has much to do with how we have been lulled into apathy by the idea that the professionals will take care of everything.

So if I tell the world that I'm voting for Barak Obama because I want to give him four more years to fix the fine mess he found himself in when he took command, then I've got to be ready for a lot of flack, and risk offending people with whom, on many other issues I share similar feelings.

If I tell the world that I'm voting for Barak Obama because he represents more closely the ideal of democracy than his opponent, you might call me a dreamer, but for me, ideals light the way for our everyday attempts to improve life; they leave us with better vision for setting goals even as they cast shadows of our inability to reach perfection.

If I tell the world that I'm voting for Obama because the lessons I learned about work from my grandparents make sense under his administration, you might call me nostalgic, but there's something that my Italian immigrant ancestors struggled for that I am enjoying and I won't forget that. While neither candidate said much, if anything, about working people, Obama's vision of work is much closer to that of my grandparents' than is his opponent's. I'm voting for Obama, because I believe the private sector, represented by his opponent, has no capacity for caring about the common worker, the common citizen, those his opponent referred to as the 47 percent. The working class majority, many of whom were led to believe that they are actually part of this shrinking mythical middle class that everyone's so worried about, haven't had their needs directly addressed by a U.S. president since F.D.R. Even Obama doesn't do well in this area, but at least he's listening and health care for every American would go a long way to change that.

I'm voting for Obama, because, for the first time in a long time, his leadership made it possible for me to travel through Europe with my head held high as an American. I don't think Obama is the perfect person to be leading us, but to me he's the right person right now. I believe he is the one who will lead us to in a working democracy and not into a *democracy* in which we turn over all our responsibilities to the private sector.

* Distinguished Professor of English and Italian American Studies at Queens College/CUNY and the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

Source URL: <http://test.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/op-eds/article/tomorrows-work>

Links

[1] <http://test.iitaly.org/files/barack-obama-barack-obama-738862160012001352151296jpg>