



My Best Wishes to Mr. President Barack Hussein Obama

Jerry Krase (January 24, 2009)



Now that Barack Hussein Obama has become the 44th President of the United States of America and, incidentally, the newest tenant at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, it seems that everybody wants to give him a piece of their mind. The assumption is that not only does he have one, but it is also an open one. Here is a little piece of mine.

Now that BHO has become the new tenant at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW it seems that everybody wants to get into the act with offering advice and guidance (*guida e consiglio*) The assumption is that not only does he have a mind, it is also a more open one. One of the first of these offerings was made by Thomas Friedman in his regular The New York Times opinion column, ["Radical](#)



[in the White House."](#) [2]

Firstly, Tom makes it known, as though in reassuring relief, that Barack isn't really a radical (radicale) at least in the sense of the leftist kind as was feared during the nasty Presidential Election Campaign or the rightist kind he equivocates. For him, to be a radical is to be merely different. For me, and most dictionaries, it is to be a "revolutionary" (rivoluzionario). In any case I assume that Tom went to DC to attend the Inauguration and cut a rug at one or another of the post-inauguration glittering galas (galà patinati).

I, on the other hand, spent the first of my January 20, 2009 waking hours (7-9 AM) as usual at [Dizzy](#) [3]'s "A Finer Diner" where I had one slice of 8 to 12 grain dry toast and a bottomless cup of coffee (una tazza di caffè smisurata) scanning all the newspapers that were delivered that day. A venerable tradition at Dizzy's is the offering of a "Quote for the Day" on the other side from the "Daily Specials" on the sandwich board which sits on the sidewalk at 8th Avenue and 9th Street creating a pedestrian hazard. My favorite, newish, waitperson, Cecile, has managed to provide patrons and passersby with some respite from the depressing quotes (le citazioni deprimenti) by the famous or the anonymous borrowed from Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations."

On Inauguration Day she was searching for an especially meaningful missive for which I offered, and she approved, "No more Misunderestimation (Non piu' sottovalutazioni)" - two little, and one big, words that need no further explanation. After making sure that everyone who came into the establishment had perused the sandwich board and offered me left-wing praise or right-wing puzzlement for my phrasing, I took the subway (la Metro) this morning to Manhattan to do some business and hoped to get back in time to watch the inauguration on television with my wife. Across from me on the usually yuppy-packed "F" train was what appeared to me to be a middle-aged African American homeless (senza tetto) woman bundled up in an odd collection of winter and summer outerwear.

She was fast asleep and next to her sat the usual collection of black plastic garbage bags containing all that she felt worthy of trudging along with her as she travelled on her way to nowhere (in nessun posto) on a cold and Historic Inauguration Day. She gave off such a foul odor (odore ripugnante) that she had half the car to herself. A long line of persons of no-color, previously residing in the White House, have found other things too important to consider than her obvious plight. My wish is that Barack Hussein not only remembers the people his predecessors left behind in America, but also comes back to visit them (ritorni per visitarli). Now that would be really radical! (Ora questo sarebbe veramente radicale!)

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