

Obama to Blue-Collar America: Adios!

☒ When I was a kid growing up in the Bronx in the 1950s I knew a lot more about the Yankees than I did about politics. In fact, I didn't know anything about politics, except for one thing: I knew we were Democrats.

My father was a blue-collar worker and like all "working class" men he voted a straight Democratic ticket. We lived in a lower middle class neighborhood and pretty much all the men were FDR blue-collar guys. I never took a survey, but I'm pretty sure there wasn't a Republican within miles of our tenement.

That's how it was back then. Not anymore.

Now, an opinion piece on the New York Times Web site by veteran political reporter Thomas Edsall tells us that for the first time the Democratic Party will "explicitly abandon the white working class."

The blog goes on to explain that, "All pretense of trying to win a majority of the white working class has been effectively jettisoned in favor of cementing a center-left coalition made up, on the one hand, of voters who have gotten ahead on the basis of educational attainment – professors, artists, designers, editors, human resources managers, lawyers, librarians, social workers, teachers and therapists – and a second, substantial constituency of lower-income voters who are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic."

But before President Obama and his team decided to abandon white working class Americans, they pretty much decided to abandon him, along with a lot of other Democrats. For decades, white blue-collar workers have been jumping ship. And for good reason.

For years now, white men without college degrees have felt that the Democratic Party didn't care about them and their families. Take affirmative action. A black kid gets to check off the race box on his college or job application and gets an automatic boost – even if his parents are professional people. The white kid whose father works in a coal mine isn't entitled to affirmative action. How is that kid privileged?

Sure Democrats are always telling blue-collar workers how much they care about them, but then the president – paying due respect to his progressive base – refuses to okay an oil pipeline from Canada to the United States that would have put tens of thousands of blue-collar Americans to work. Why? The pipeline might hurt the environment.

Then there's the gnawing feeling that the Democratic elites – college professors, journalists, the Hollywood ditzocracy – seem to enjoy blaming America for all sorts of sins and apologizing for the country's supposedly oppressive role in the world. If that's the case, the "unsophisticated" blue-collar guy wonders, why are so many people trying so hard to get to America?

The divorce between the Democratic Party and blue-collar workers isn't exactly amicable, but since it's been coming for a long time both sides understand that they just can't live with each other anymore. Call it irreconcilable differences.

My blue-collar Democratic Party father isn't with us anymore. I'm guessing if he were, he'd be a Republican.

(Update: The Obama campaign team has issued a statement saying it is not abandoning white blue-collar voters.)