

REFLECTIONS ON THE ELECTION

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Not surprisingly, the mainstream media are in disbelief over the results of the presidential election. That's because they live in an intellectual ghetto. Instead of just talking to each other, it would be so nice if they actually spent time talking to those who work in housekeeping, the cafeteria, maintenance and security.

Will they change now that they have been proven wrong? Not at all. They are hopelessly incapable of changing, though they love to say that the public has a hard time accepting change. Not so. They do.

Does money count in elections? Not as much as many think. Harris raised over \$1 billion and wound up \$20 million in debt in the final week. Trump spent half as much, over \$400 million. In the few weeks before the election, Bill Gates gave Harris \$50 million, and Michael Bloomberg followed with another \$50 million. George Soros topped them both.

Do celebrities matter? They may if they occasionally show up for a rally or fundraiser. But Harris went overboard, bringing in Oprah, Bruce Springsteen, Beyonce, Taylor Swift, Katy Perry, Jennifer Lopez et al. She also went on Saturday Night Live before the election. This actually hurt her. Why? She was already seen as a lightweight, the word-salad queen, so being surrounded by celebrities only fed the perception that she was not a serious person.

Why were so many of the polls wrong? Because most of them never corrected for the Trump supporters who simply won't speak to them. They don't trust them, and, importantly, they know it is not popular in many circles to admit being for Trump.

The pollster that was the most accurate was J.L. Partners. Based in the U.S., it was founded by pollsters for the British Prime Minister; it published its results with the *Daily Mail*, a conservative U.K. publication. It was one of the few that got it right: it said in the run-up to the election that Trump had a 54 percent chance of winning. McLaughlin & Associates also did a good job.

Pollsters often ask the wrong questions, or they don't dig deep enough. For example, the media kept reporting that Trump's unfavorability rating was significantly higher than Harris'. On election day, Nate Silver, who runs an influential survey site, reported that Trump's unfavorability score was 8.6 points higher than his favorability score. For Harris, her unfavorable rating was 2.0 points higher than her favorable rating.

A more important question is how the public views the candidates on their leadership abilities and their ability to get things done. A month before the election, Gallup found that when it comes to who is a strong and decisive leader, Trump outscored Harris 59 percent to 48 percent. On their ability to get things done, Trump won 61-49. Exit polls on election day found that his numbers increased significantly on related measures.

In other words, an election is not a popularity contest. It is about issues and who is the most likely to govern effectively.

Billy Martin, who coached the New York Yankees, was hard to deal with. Bobby Knight, who coached the University of Indiana basketball team, could be obnoxious. Bill Belichick, who coached the New England Patriots, was surly. Unlikeable though they were, they were also great leaders who knew how to win.

Ergo, while Trump's persona may strike many as offensive, few question his ability to get things done, and that is what counts in the end.

Democratic strategist James Carville warned Democrats in October that Harris was not getting her message out. This misses the point. She had no message. That was her problem. Being against Trump is not a message—it's a feeling: it doesn't tell voters what policies you want to implement.

Admittedly, she was put in a delicate position. Joe Biden dropped out after the debate in June because the media could no longer pretend that he wasn't mentally challenged. They covered up for him for years, but could do so no longer. Harris never faced a challenger—she was anointed—and proved incapable of separating herself from his policies.

More than anything else, it was the politics of extremism that did her in.

- Flooding the economy with funny money drove prices sky high
- Allowing millions of migrants to crash our borders and then be rewarded with better services from the government than are afforded homeless veterans angered millions
- Playing catch and release with violent criminals was indefensible
- Forgiving student loans for the middle and upper classes while making the working class pay for them was infuriating
- Promoting policies that allow children to change their sex behind their parents' back was mindboggling
- Allowing boys to compete against girls in sports and shower with them was morally bankrupt
- Allowing the FBI to spy on Catholics was malicious
- Inviting foreign aggression was irresponsible

These policies did Harris in. For the most part, the American people do not want extremists on the right or the left in office. Thank God for that.