

Eisenhower appeared in a better light. . . . The more his successors got into trouble, the better Eisenhower looked. Presidents sometimes do more for the reputations of their predecessors than they do for their own.”

“The most astonishing part of Schlesinger’s poll,” asserts political scientist Felzenberg, who has taught at Princeton University and elsewhere, “was the low assessment” given to Ronald Reagan, who placed 25th (“Average”), just below George Bush and ahead of Chester Arthur. Reagan, Schlesinger writes, “has seven Near Great votes, including some from lib-

eral scholars impressed by his success in restoring the prestige of the presidency, in negotiating the last phases of the cold war, and in imposing his priorities on the country.” But Reagan also received nine Below Averages and four Failures from others on the Schlesinger panel.

Ten graders of a more conservative bent queried by *Policy Review* not surprisingly give Reagan much higher marks. “When passions cool after a generation or so,” predicts Alonzo L. Hamby, who teaches history at Ohio University, “Ronald Reagan will be widely accepted by historians as a near-great chief executive.”

A Republican Rainbow?

“New Bedfellows” by Peter Beinart, in *The New Republic* (Aug. 11 & 18, 1997),
1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Many liberal politicians and community activists take it for granted that Jews and “people of color” such as Latinos should stick together in politics. And in city after city, state after state, Jews and Latinos are voting the same way, writes Beinart, a *New Republic* senior editor. “What they do not do—to the great surprise of leaders in both communities—is vote like African Americans.”

Beinart says that the new ballot-box alliance has become evident recently in a number of closely watched elections around the country and been a crucial factor in some of them. In Los Angeles this spring, moderate Republican mayor Richard Riordan, challenged by liberal-left Democrat Tom Hayden, won 70 percent of the Jewish vote, 60 percent of the Latino vote—and only 25 percent of the black vote. In the mayoral contest in Houston in 1991, white businessman Bob Lanier, running against a liberal black state legislator, won 70 percent of the Jewish vote, 70 percent of the Latino vote—and only five percent of the black vote. In New Jersey’s 1993 gubernatorial race, Republican Christie Todd Whitman garnered 45 percent of the Latino vote and 40 percent of the Jewish vote in beating incumbent Democratic governor Jim Florio, who won 75 percent of the black vote. In Illinois in 1994, moderate Republican governor Jim Edgar captured a majority of the Jewish vote and one-third of the Latino vote, to win re-election; his Democratic foe got 85 percent of the black vote.

In many large cities and states, both Latinos and Jews “are proving themselves far more economically conservative than African Americans, and far more conservative on crime,” Beinart says. In Houston, for instance, most Latinos “don’t live the same sort of lives” as most blacks, whom they now slightly outnumber. The Latinos (mostly Mexican Americans) are less likely to be jobless, to work for the government, or to be in single-parent families, and more likely to own their own businesses.

Jewish political identity, too, Beinart contends, is no longer as “liberal” as it once was. A recent survey, for instance, shows that 62 percent of American Jews oppose government redistribution of wealth. In New York City, mayoral aspirant and Manhattan borough president Ruth Messinger “is articulate, wonkish and compassionate—an embodiment of Jewish left-liberalism,” Beinart says. “And, outside of her base on the Upper West Side, she is getting creamed by Republican incumbent Rudy Giuliani—among Jews.” Jules Polonetsky, an Orthodox Jew on Giuliani’s ticket, says that people see Messinger as “the kind of liberal Jewish leftist who’s willing to be mugged because the mugger had a bad childhood.”

Despite the new reality at the state and local levels, Beinart says, both Jews and Latinos are alienated by Republican attacks on immigration, cultural diversity, and minority rights, and “are refusing to follow white ethnics into the national GOP in sig-

nificant numbers.” Because of their party registration and presidential voting patterns, they still look like anchors of the Democratic Party’s liberal wing. In fact, though, he maintains, “they are stranded together in a fiscally conservative, culturally cosmopolitan politi-

cal no-man’s land. And they are a large part of the reason that growing numbers of candidates who are themselves ideologically stranded between the two parties—Whitman, Riordan, Edgar—have in recent years been elected.”

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

In Search of Interests

“The Erosion of American National Interests” by Samuel P. Huntington, in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.–Oct. 1997), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Defining America’s national interest has become almost impossible in the 1990s, argues Huntington, a political scientist at Harvard University and author of *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996). Foreign affairs pundits and other specialists have searched frantically “for new purposes that would justify a continuing U.S. role in world affairs comparable to that in the Cold War,” but their quest has come to naught. The real problem, he argues, is that, deprived of an enemy by the demise of the Soviet Union, and increasingly subjected to multiculturalism’s centrifugal forces, Americans are no longer sure of who they are.

“Given the domestic forces pushing toward heterogeneity, diversity, multiculturalism, and ethnic and racial division . . . the United States, perhaps more than most countries, may need an opposing other to maintain its unity,” Huntington writes. But no significant enemy is now in sight. “New threats will undoubtedly arise, but given the scarcity of current ones, campaigns to arouse interest in foreign affairs and support for major foreign policy initiatives now fall on deaf ears,” he points out. “The administration’s call for the ‘enlargement’ of democracy does not resonate with the public and is belied by the

administration’s own actions,” letting the commercial interests of particular firms and the sentimental ties of particular ethnic groups determine U.S. foreign policy.

Polls show that most Americans “are unwilling to support the commitment of significant resources to the defense of American allies, the protection of small nations against aggression, the promotion of human rights and democracy, or economic and social development in the Third World,” Huntington notes. Consequently, he says, the alternative to a foreign policy in pursuit of commercial and ethnic interests cannot be one based on some “grand design,” but rather must be “a policy of restraint and reconstitution aimed at limiting the diversion of American resources to the service of particularistic . . . interests.”

At some time in the future, a serious external threat may compel Americans to clearly define their national interests and commit major resources to their defense. Until then, Huntington concludes, the United States should conserve its resources by scaling back its involvement in the world. Today, he writes, America’s “national interest is national restraint.”

No Substitute for Victory

“The Myth of Rescue” by William Rubinstein, in *Prospect* (July 1997), 4 Bedford Sq., London WC1B 3RA; “The Bombing of Auschwitz Revisited: A Critical Analysis” by Richard H. Levy, in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (Winter 1996), Oxford Univ. Press, 2001 Evans Rd., Cary, N.C. 27513.

Historians such as David Wyman, author of *The Abandonment of the Jews* (1984), have argued that, out of indifference and anti-Semitism, the United States and Britain failed to do much to rescue Europe’s Jews from the Holocaust. This view has gained wide currency, but it com-

pletely misconstrues the situation that the Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe faced, contends Rubinstein, a professor of history at the University of Wales, at Aberystwyth.

Before World War II, Nazi policy was to expel as many Jews as possible, not to kill them. The claim by Wyman and other crit-