

**STUNG BY DEMOCRATIC DEBACLE,  
JEWS FEAR FOR DOMESTIC AGENDA**  
By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- Stung by the Democratic debacle in this week's elections, many Jews find themselves grappling with the rightward tidal wave that has swept the country.

For many of the defining issues of American Jewry, an unclear and uncharted path lies ahead in the wake of widespread Democratic losses across the nation.

While Jewish Republicans rejoiced and some voiced little worry, others sounded a dire warning.

"The entire domestic agenda is clearly in trouble," said Jerome Chanes, co-director for domestic concerns at the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, an umbrella organization.

With new Republican majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Jewish activists across the political spectrum predict a tumultuous time for Jewish domestic concerns on Capitol Hill beginning in January.

Faced with the loss of many longtime supporters of Israel and other Jewish causes -- including nine Jewish lawmakers -- many in the Jewish community have already begun to re-evaluate strategies and legislative priorities for the coming year.

The 104th Congress that was elected Tuesday will include a total of nine Jewish senators and 23 Jewish representatives, down from 10 senators and 31 representatives in the current legislature.

Much of how the Jewish community reacts to the altered balance of power in Washington depends on the level of cooperation that Republicans strike with the Clinton administration, analysts say.

American Jews, who vote overwhelmingly Democratic, and Jewish organizations, which tend to have a liberal bent, basked in the past two years of Democratic rule.

Organizations were generally more concerned with shaping good legislation than opposing what they saw as harmful initiatives.

Jewish organizations supported much of the recent congressional domestic agenda, including abortion rights legislation, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

They also supported Clinton's goal of universal health care coverage and welfare reform.

**New Role For Jewish Groups**

But now many activists fear a new role will emerge for Jewish groups as the Republican majority launches more conservative initiatives, such as school prayer and budget cuts that could harm social programs.

Democrats painted the loss that spanned all ideological, geographic and social barriers as a "catastrophe."

Republicans picked up eight seats in the Senate assuring the GOP its first majority since 1986. On the other side of the Hill, Republicans

captured a majority in the House for the first time in 40 years.

Democratic consultant Mark Mellman called the election "a volcanic eruption of anger" by voters, who were "anxious about the economic status and crisis of values."

Voters "are totally distrustful of government," he said.

"We're going to see a much smaller, but rather unified, Democratic Party, because if they don't hang together, they will hang separately," Mellman said.

A somber Steve Gutow, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, blamed not only the White House but all Democratic organizations, which, he said, "didn't do a good job selling changes."

Still, he added, "the president has to learn to express himself and not be all over the map."

In contrast, a jubilant Matthew Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican group, hailed the election as the "most important of the century for Republicans."

**Next Few Weeks Will Be Critical**

Brooks said the next few weeks will be critical for the Jewish community.

"The Jewish community will lose influence if it does not start to support the Republican Party," Brooks said. "There's a choice -- to get on board or be left outside."

Some on the Washington Jewish scene agreed.

"There is no reason to believe that the Jewish political agenda will not be advanced," said Abba Cohen, Washington director of the fervently Orthodox Agudath Israel.

Noting that the Jewish community "is not a monolithic community," Cohen said, "There are differing positions on a wide range of issues, and I believe the Jewish community can find allies in both political parties."

However, Jewish organizations that have traditionally sided with Democrats in many legislative battles are unlikely to heed Brooks' advice and alter their domestic agenda.

Many painted a bleak picture for the new Congress.

"There will be efforts to undo much of the social legislation the Jewish community has been key on in the past 40 years," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"Clearly we will have to fight defensive battles to stop bad legislation," the rabbi said.

But Saperstein remained optimistic that bipartisan coalitions could be forged. He recalled the Reagan years when landmark civil rights legislation passed.

Nonetheless, Saperstein predicted, "this is likely to be the toughest Congress on domestic and constitutional issues I've faced in my 20 years as a Jewish representative in Washington."

Democratic activists scored the election as a major victory for the religious right.

Perhaps the most important challenge to the

Jewish community, observers say, will center around prayer in public schools.

With the new conservative Congress likely to consider an amendment to the Constitution to allow prayer in school, many Jewish analysts predict that major battles over the issue lie ahead.

Some Jews, including many in the Orthodox community, support issues such as school prayer and school vouchers for private school education.

But the majority of Jews have traditionally felt that school prayer crosses the line separating church and state.

"There's a real danger that a constitutional amendment will be introduced and there's a real possibility of passage," NJCRAC's Chanes said, adding, "This Congress poses a troubled road."

Gutow of the National Jewish Democratic Council believes that "the Christian Coalition is going to claim -- and rightfully in many cases -- that it had a significant impact in the election."

As a result, he said, "we're going to see an attempt to promote their agenda."

#### Nothing To Fear About Christian Coalition

But Brooks countered, saying that he guaranteed that there is nothing to fear about the Christian Coalition.

"There are going to be those who continue to play on the fears of the Jewish community, but we're going to see that it's nothing more than politicians playing with emotions," Brooks said.

"We're not going to see the Christianization of America or prayer in schools," he said. "That's people trying to drive a wedge between the Jewish community" and the Republican Party.

Ironically, Jewish organizations that turned to Congress in the mid-1980s to counter conservative decisions from the Supreme Court on issues such as school prayer and religious freedom could find themselves now turning to those same courts for remedy.

"Now we're going in the opposite direction once again," Chanes said, citing the new moderate balance of the Supreme Court.

As for the Jewish community, the election's message "is loud and clear," said Diana Aviv, Washington director of the Council of Jewish Federations, which has been especially active on domestic issues such as welfare reform and health care.

"We must challenge ourselves to find creative ways to forge alliances, or we'll be closed out before we begin," she said.

The Republican takeover does not necessarily spell the defeat of Clinton's domestic agenda, many activists say. But they add almost in unison, "We will certainly see a move to the right."

Despite the dire predictions for domestic Jewish interests, the picture on the pro-Israel front looks brighter, according to Jewish activists.

The American-Israel relationship and Israel's \$3 billion in foreign aid are not threatened by the new Congress, the activists suggest.

The turnover "does not pose a threat to Israel," said Steven Grossman, president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby.

"I'm very upbeat about the prospects for the pro-Israel cause and the American-Israel relationship," he said.

"From past bipartisan support, it's clear that

the pro-Israel community has the support of the Republican leadership," he said.

Ever since the high turnover in the last Congress, AIPAC has continued a massive grassroots campaign to educate lawmakers and candidates alike on the pro-Israel agenda.

Despite dire predictions for foreign aid in the last Congress, both the House and Senate passed Israel's \$3 billion package by record margins this year.

As pro-Israel activists prepare to forge new alliances, some stalwart friends of Israel went down to defeat election night.

On the Senate side, all the Jews up for re-election managed to stave off sometimes tough competition. With the retirement of Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), the 104th Congress will have nine Jews in the Senate, one less than the minyan that made up the last Senate.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), one of the most vulnerable incumbents going into the election, will return to the Senate for a third term. The Jewish senator narrowly defeated N.J. Assembly Speaker Chuck Haytaian.

Another Jewish incumbent, Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), also edged out her challenger Michael Huffington in a very close race.

When the dust settled, voters also had returned Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Herb Kohl (D-Wisc.) to the Senate.

But the major news from the Senate will be the shift from the Democrats to the Republicans in leadership positions and chairs of committees. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) will become majority leader.

Most notably from the pro-Israel perspective, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) will chair the Foreign Relations Committee. Helms, an archconservative criticized by many in the Jewish community for his domestic agenda, has nonetheless been supportive of Israel in recent years.

Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) will take over the Senate Appropriations Committee, a position he held when the Republicans controlled the Senate in the 1980s. The Appropriations Committee and its Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, which will be chaired by Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), is responsible for foreign aid.

Another closely watched Senate race saw incumbent Chuck Robb (D-Va.) defeat Republican Oliver North, a religious right-backed candidate who suffered voter backlash because of his role in the Iran-Contra scandal.

#### Mixed Bag For Jewish Incumbents

Other key congressional races across the country held a mixed bag for Jewish incumbents.

Voters returned freshman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Martin Frost (D-Texas) to the House.

But several other Jews lost. Among the list is freshman Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky (D-Pa.), who lost to Jon Fox, a Jewish Republican.

Fox is believed to be the only new Jewish member to join the 104th Congress.

Other Jewish members who lost their seats include freshmen Eric Fingerhut (D-Ohio); Dan Hamburg (D-Calif.); Jane Harman, (D-Calif.); Herb Klein (D-N.J.); David Levy (R-N.Y.) and Lynn Schenk (D-Calif.).

Dan Glickman (D-Kan.), a veteran Jewish member, was ousted by his constituents.

As of press time, the race involving Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.) was still too close to call.

# **BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**

## **AIPAC STAFFERS MONITOR ELECTIONS ALL NIGHT TO 'BE PART OF HISTORY'**

By Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- As results of one of the most dramatic elections in modern times poured in Tuesday night, about 20 staffers manned the American Israel Public Affairs Committee headquarters here to monitor the races and "be a part of history," as one staffer put it.

The second floor of the pro-Israel lobby's Capitol Hill offices was transformed into a command post, with staffers and volunteers here in constant touch with AIPAC activists around the country.

The main room resembled a trading floor on Wall Street. Staffers yelled results across the room, kept track of results on reams of paper and handled a myriad of phone calls all through the night and into the early morning hours Wednesday.

Still others were buried under computer paper, trying to analyze election results as they came in.

Staffers kept their eyes peeled on CNN and periodically scanned Associated Press reports -- all the time focused on how the 104th Congress would shape up as far as support for Israel was concerned, and how key pro-Israel legislators would fare.

Personal offices were turned into bases of operation, with local staff in touch with AIPAC representatives across the country, contacts in various organizations and candidates themselves.

Congratulation calls were made, as were condolence calls.

Gone were the ties and dresses seen earlier in the day. Staffers dressed comfortably, in jeans, shorts, sweats and T-shirts, prepared for a long night.

### **Culmination Of Two Years' Work**

One staffer called the mood relaxed because as the results came in, AIPAC could be satisfied that its own representatives and members of other pro-Israel groups had worked with most of the candidates before the election.

AIPAC representatives called Tuesday the "culmination" of all the organization worked for over the past two years.

"(Tonight) is about touching base with all the people that the committee has reached out to and worked with," said Toby Dershowitz, AIPAC's media relations coordinator.

A large red, white and blue chart in the main room helped track the races, the winners getting stars next to their names. As results came in, a staffer entered them into a special election computer program, keeping everyone up to date.

The television table was festooned with red crepe paper, and the walls around the main television were covered with various election posters, from both sides of the fence.

AIPAC is a non-partisan group and does not endorse or fund any candidates.

The air was filled with sounds of "He's ahead 1 percent," "It passed," "Is that called?" and shouts for staffers wanted on the phone.

Winners from around the country called in to express their appreciation for the involvement of the pro-Israel community in their campaigns.

Some were Republican newcomers to Capitol Hill, like Oklahoma Senator-elect James Inhofe and Michigan Senator-elect Spencer Abraham, who is Arab American.

A collective cry of "wow!" went up as longtime Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) was voted out of office. Rostenkowski, the former chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, is under indictment on charges of fraud and embezzlement.

Staffers scrutinized the television screen when Virginia Sen. Charles Robb, a Democrat, made his victory speech. They were searching for an AIPAC activist they knew was at his headquarters.

About seven die-hard staffers stayed throughout the night, preparing AIPAC's election report.

AIPAC's Washington office was not the only one manned all night by staffers and volunteers.

At a Los Angeles office building just before the polls closed there, the mood was "energetic," said AIPAC Southern Pacific Director Sam Witkin in a telephone interview.

"There's a lot of energy in this room," he said, shouting into the phone over the din in the background. "Everyone's having a good time."

The room was "a full house," with 200 people representing a cross-section of the Jewish community, and television monitors stationed about every 10 yards, Witkin said.

The mood in the Southwest region was anticipatory and "joyful," said Southwest Regional Director Jimmy Goldman. Goldman spent Tuesday visiting various campaign celebrations, keeping tabs on his region through his mobile phone.

AIPAC President Steve Grossman, a longtime Democratic activist, also spent Tuesday night and much of Wednesday morning on the phone, making an estimated 200 to 300 calls.

"It's quite an interesting evening," he said in a telephone interview from his Boston home. He was calling candidates and offering congratulations or condolences.

By midnight, the crowd in Washington had begun to dwindle, as the remaining workers continued to map out the landscape of pro-Israel country for the 104th Congress.

## **JEWES IN THE 104th CONGRESS**

### **Senate**

Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)\*  
Russell Feingold (D-Wis.)\*  
Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.)  
Herb Kohl (D-Wis.)  
Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.)

Carl Levin (D-Mich.)\*  
Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.)  
Arlen Specter (R-Pa.)\*  
Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.)\*

\*was not up for re-election

### **House of Representatives**

Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.)  
Anthony Beilenson (D-Calif.)  
Howard Berman (D-Calif.)  
Benjamin Cardin (D-Md.)  
Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.)  
Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.)  
Bob Filner (D-Calif.)  
Jon Fox (R-Pa.)\*  
Barney Frank (D-Mass.)  
Martin Frost (D-Texas)  
Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.)  
Tom Lantos (D-Calif.)

Sander Levin (D-Mich.)  
Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.)  
Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.)  
Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.)  
Steven Schiff (R-N.M.)  
Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.)  
Norman Sisisky (D-Va.)  
Henry Waxman (D-Calif.)  
Ron Wyden (D-Ore.)  
Sidney Yates (D-Ill.)  
Dick Zimmer (R-N.J.)

\*first time in office

**Note:** Returns showed Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.) with a slight lead over his opponent, but final results were pending a vote recount.

## IN N.Y. ADDRESS, ZHIRINOVSKY RESORTS TO ANTI-SEMITIC RHETORIC

By Larry Yudelson

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- If Russian ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky was hoping his current trip to America would clean up his image as a potential dictator and anti-Semite, he failed.

At a news conference here, he called Jews a negative influence on Russia, blaming them for the Bolshevik revolution, the breakup of the strong Soviet state and criminal enterprises in his country. He then renounced anti-Semitism.

"We have a very good attitude to all minorities in Russia," he said through a translator, saying that neither he nor his Liberal Democratic Party has formally taken a position about Jews.

Zhirinovsky addressed the United Nations Correspondents Association on Wednesday, following a speech Monday night to the World Affairs Council in San Francisco.

He was scheduled to speak at the National Press Club in Washington on Friday.

At the United Nations on Wednesday, when asked whether he thought the Jewish minority was playing a positive role in Russia, he replied, "I can't say they are playing a positive role. They are playing a negative role."

"We are patriots of the state, but the majority of those who welcomed the destruction of the state are those who represent the Jewish minority," he said.

Zhirinovsky then proceeded to distance himself from this statement, as he did from his similar remarks.

"This is not my position. This is the position of the people," he said.

Continuing in his original vein, he said that Russia's "new business structures are held mostly by Jewish people. Lots of people understand that a lot of money in these structures are criminal. This explains our opposition to these criminal structures."

"This is not our position. This is the position of the people," he repeated.

### 'Not Our Word' But The 'Word Of Propaganda'

Similarly, Zhirinovsky put the blame on "present propaganda" for saying that "the October Revolution in 1917 was made by those who had been mostly Jewish."

"But this is not our word. This is the word of propaganda. The propaganda is saying the previous regime is a cruel regime -- that is why they are against those who made this revolution."

"That is why I would like only to explain what happened. When we are asked why there is anti-Semitism in Russia, we say this is why. We are giving the reason," he said.

Zhirinovsky again denied repeated reports that his father is Jewish.

"If you find me Jewish parents, I would be happy to embrace him, kiss him, but unfortunately all my relatives are Russian. I would be happy to have any relatives of any nationality," he said.

But the Russian parliamentarian, whose party captured 23 percent of the vote in last December's elections, was forthright about his desire to serve as his country's dictator.

Asked whether he saw any common ground with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, he praised

the new Russian constitution for providing for a "strong authoritarian regime," which he lamented has not yet come to pass.

"This is the only way to resolve the present crisis," he said.

"In principle, I am in favor of a democratic regime, a parliamentary republic. But in our current crisis, such a regime cannot produce results."

Addressing United Nations issues, Zhirinovsky said the world body's policies were better "15 or 20 years ago."

"I'm against the U.N. interfering in the internal affairs of any state," he explained.

He said he would have Russia veto economic embargoes and boycotts, such as those presently imposed against Libya, Iraq and the former Yugoslavia.

Regarding the Balkans, he said, "The only solution is the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the region, including the U.N."

## TEAR-GAS GRENADES THROWN IN THEATERS SCREENING NEW FILM ABOUT ISRAELI ARMY

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- The Paris premiere of "Zahal," a five-hour documentary film about the Israeli army by Claude Lanzmann, was disrupted by tear-gas grenades Wednesday in both movie theaters where it was being screened.

Near the Champs-Elysees, two people entered the theater after the screening began and after a few minutes threw one tear-gas grenade, provoking panic among the spectators.

Three people were lightly wounded.

Near Montparnasse, three persons entered the theater and threw a tear-gas grenade. No injuries were reported.

An anonymous caller, saying he was speaking on behalf of an extreme-right-wing student organization called Groupe Union Defense, claimed responsibility for both attacks, which he said were made "in solidarity with the Palestinian people, victim of the daily atrocities of the Zionist occupation army."

Lanzmann, a French Jew, creator of the film "Shoah" and an intellectual whose first film, "Pourquoi Israel?" was strongly critical of the Jewish state, said he had unsuccessfully requested police protection in front of the theaters.

## JORDAN ISSUES FINAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Nov. 9 (JTA) -- On the eve of King Hussein's first official visit to Israel, Jordan's upper house of Parliament endorsed the historic Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty.

Of the chamber's 40 members, all of whom were appointed by Hussein, 33 voted in favor of the treaty on Wednesday.

Former Prime Minister Ahmed Obeidat rejected the treaty and left before the vote. Six other members of the chamber were absent.

Jordan's lower house of Parliament approved the treaty on Sunday, the same day that the Israeli Cabinet also gave its approval.

Hussein was expected to issue a royal decree putting the treaty into effect before meeting Rabin in Israel on Thursday to exchange copies of the ratified treaties.