

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Jewish voters overwhelmingly supported President Clinton at the polls.** A Voter News Service nationwide exit poll showed that 80 percent of Jewish voters supported Clinton, compared with 16 percent for Bob Dole and 3 percent for Ross Perot. The American Jewish Congress, which polled in 10 states and the District of Columbia, said Clinton received 83 percent of the Jewish vote, compared to 13 percent for Dole, 2 percent for Perot and 2 percent for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader. [Page 1]

■ **Voters across the country re-elected two Jewish senators, maintaining the same roster of 10 Jewish senators as in the last Congress.** In the House, all Jewish incumbents won re-election, with the exception of one race in Pennsylvania that was still too close to call. [Page 3]

■ **Israel welcomed President Clinton's re-election, saying that it expected the traditionally strong relations with the United States to continue.** [Page 2]

■ **U.S. Special Middle East envoy Dennis Ross canceled a scheduled trip to the region, citing wide gaps in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on Hebron.** He had been due to return to the Middle East on Wednesday. [Page 4]

■ **A terrorist threat against U.S. government facilities in Paraguay forced U.S. officials to cancel an Election Day open house at an American cultural center, according to the State Department.** Officials hinted that the terrorists could be with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

■ **Vandals destroyed 43 marble and granite headstones in a pre-World War II Jewish cemetery in the southern Polish town of Oswiecim, a few miles away from the Auschwitz death camp, police said.** The case is under investigation.

■ **A group of 16 Knesset members met representatives of the Palestinian legislative council in Ramallah, marking the first meeting of an Israel-Palestinian friendship council aimed at organizing meetings between the two sides.** Only two members of the group belonged to Israel's government coalition.

ELECTION '96**With much at stake, U.S. Jews vow compromise and moderation**

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When President Clinton and the Republican Congress finish riding the wave of victory, how they govern will strike the very core of American Jewish life.

The White House and Congress have promised to save Medicare and Medicaid from going broke; Jewish social service agencies depend heavily on those entitlement funds, taking in more than \$2 billion last year alone.

Clinton and GOP leaders have pledged to enact campaign finance reform; Jews gave more than \$25 million to fund this year's election, sparking concerns of diminished influence under a changed system.

The president and Democratic leaders have vowed to revisit welfare reform; Jewish charities fear that the recently enacted welfare legislation will force them to step in to fill the void for the needy kicked off the rolls.

With so much at stake, Jewish activists are asking which Clinton will emerge: the centrist one who signed welfare reform that ended the federal guarantee of benefits for poor Americans or the more liberal Clinton who fought to his near-political death for sweeping health-care reform?

Overwhelmingly, they believe that Clinton the centrist is here to stay. "President Clinton is going to have to govern from the center," said Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council. "He, like all other presidents, is going to want to make history. That means governing to get things done."

The larger questions loom over the direction of Congress, where on some issues, such as welfare and immigration reform, the Jewish community appears ready to cooperate.

On other issues, however, such as school prayer, a balanced budget amendment and the foreign aid program, Jews are preparing to dig in their heels.

Clinton moved to the political center after the 1994 Democratic election debacle that gave the Republicans control of Congress, a position they cemented in Tuesday's election.

But in so doing, the president drew the wrath of many of his loudest supporters in the Jewish community and faced off against many Jewish activists who remain particularly bitter that he signed welfare reform legislation.

"The compromises that he's made on the economic and social justice issues are going to result in real hardships and an increased burden on the Jewish community to fill the tears in the safety net," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

However, any anger from the Jewish community toward Clinton for his move to the political right was not evident in early exit polls.

Television networks who share nationwide exit polling from the Voter News Service reported that Clinton received 80 percent of the Jewish vote. His Republican opponent, Bob Dole, received 16 percent, and Ross Perot received about 3 percent.

Clinton gets overwhelming Jewish support

The American Jewish Congress, which conducted its own exit polls, found that 83 percent of the Jewish vote went to Clinton, compared with 13 percent for Dole and 2 percent each to Perot and Green Party candidate Ralph Nader.

The level of support for Clinton roughly matches his showing in the 1992 election, reaffirming a long-standing pattern that American Jews vote overwhelmingly — and disproportionately — Democratic.

When voters swept Republican majorities into the House and Senate two years ago, the political upheaval turned Jewish Washington on its head.

Jewish groups, which tend to have a more liberal bent, largely went from proposing initiatives to playing defense against legislation they opposed, such as welfare and immigration reform.

This time around, little will change when the new Congress opens its doors in January and Clinton takes the oath of office for the second time.

But many of the activists who failed to stop legislation they opposed

JEWIS IN THE 105TH CONGRESS

Senate

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)* | Carl Levin (D-Mich.) |
| Russell Feingold (D-Wis.)* | Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.)* |
| Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.)* | Arlen Specter (R-Pa.)* |
| Herb Kohl (D-Wis.)* | Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) |
| Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.)* | Ron Wyden (D-Ore.)* |

*did not face re-election this year

House of Representatives

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) | Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) |
| Howard Berman (D-Calif.) | Sander Levin (D-Mich.) |
| Benjamin Cardin (D-Md.) | Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) |
| Peter Deutch (D-Fla.) | Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) |
| Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) | Steve Rothman (D-N.J.)* |
| Bob Filner (D-Calif.) | Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.) |
| Jon Fox (R-Pa.)* | Steven Schiff (R-N.M.) |
| Barney Frank (D-Mass.) | Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) |
| Martin Frost (D-Texas) | Brad Sherman (D-Calif.)* |
| Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.) | Norman Sisisky (D-Va.) |
| Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) | Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) |
| Jane Harman (D-Calif.) | Robert Wexler (D-Fla.)* |
| | Sidney Yates (D-Ill.) |

*first time in office
*pending recount

before say they have learned their lessons and are ready to work with former foes in shaping legislation they once sought to scuttle.

For the representatives of Jewish groups who work day in and day out in the nation's capital, this means a new approach: starting some legislative fires instead of focusing on putting so many out.

"After 1994 we fought to try to take items off the table," Diana Aviv, director of the Washington Action Office of the Council of Jewish Federations, said, citing immigration reform and aspects of the welfare overhaul. Now, she said, "we know there is an interest in bipartisan and not revolutionary change. We'll be a part of that."

Said Lynn Lyss, a longtime Jewish activist who served as co-chair of the Clinton-Gore Jewish Leadership Council: "We need to get out there early and make our positions clear."

At the same time, however, Jewish groups are preparing for the expected assault of legislation that could dramatically impact their missions.

"If the president sticks to his commitment to balance the budget by 2003, he has got to touch entitlement programs. Medicare and Medicaid are on the table," Aviv said. "This is a battle we'll have to face when we come to it."

Most Jewish groups oppose a balanced budget amendment, believing that it would lead to immediate cuts in federal programs that serve the poor and disadvantaged.

"A balanced budget amendment would complicate the president's promise to revisit the portions of the welfare bill that deal with legal immigrants," said Aviv, referring to the provisions that cut legal immigrants from the welfare rolls.

"It's going to be hard enough to get the new Congress to give the savings back," she said, citing the billions of dollars saved under the proposal.

Republicans, meanwhile, predict that the Jewish community will have a tough time advocating its positions in the new Congress.

"Republicans emerged with strong vindication and validation for the core foundations of the Republican agenda," said Matt Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, the Republican group.

"What I have concluded about our ability as a community to advance our causes is hampered by the perception that the Jewish community is against the

Republican Congress," he said.

When it comes to the White House, it's a different story, Lyss said.

"We need to talk to President Clinton in a way to remind him that we have been supportive of him for the last four years. We hope he will listen to our concerns."

Some activists argue that campaign finance reform is the biggest threat they need to take to the president.

"The campaign process has given the Jewish community the access to make a case that we otherwise would not have the chance to present," said Chuck Brooks, executive director of the National PAC, the largest of dozens of pro-Israel PACs.

"Reform being considered that would eliminate PACs and out-of-state contributions to candidates would have a terrible effect on our community," Brooks said.

Despite concern over what such reforms could mean for the future, access to the 105th Congress appears secure.

That access is attributed to a combination of political activism, individual campaign contributions and pro-Israel PAC money.

"We have the relationships, now we need to put teeth into the ones that are new relationships and strengthen the relations with those who will likely become the next generation of activist congressional leaders," said Howard Kohr, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby, does not give political contributions.

As part of that outreach, AIPAC officials have met with more than 600 candidates for federal office this year, including the entire freshman class of the 105th Congress.

As a result, Israel remains on solid footing — both because of a solidly pro-Israel president and Congress, Kohr said.

Meanwhile, Jewish activists are increasingly concerned about the emergence of a push for school prayer on the national agenda. "We're likely to see the Congress take up where they left off on church-state issues and school prayer," said Jason Isaacson, the Washington-based director of government and international affairs of the American Jewish Committee.

Said Saperstein: "The religious right clearly had an impact on the makeup of Congress. This is where the battle will be fought."

But while Jews prepare for battles, their buzzwords this election week are compromise and bipartisanship.

"I hope everybody will be more for moderation, both the Congress and the Jewish community," Lyss said. "I hope we can get back to an even keel." □

Israelis, Palestinians react

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel and the Palestinians welcomed President Clinton's re-election and expressed their desire for a continued American role in the peace process.

Palestinian officials said they hoped Clinton's renewed mandate would give him the leverage to put more pressure on Israel to advance the peace process.

But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday he did not think the second-term Clinton administration would take any such steps.

And in an election night interview, Netanyahu told Israel Television, "Whoever is waiting for extreme pressure from Washington is going to be disappointed."

Relations with the United States are "good, friendly and based on a clear understanding that the state of Israel must make the fateful decisions for Israel, not some friend and partner from across the sea," he said. □

ELECTION '96**The Jewish face of Congress will see very few changes***By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In the little-changed 105th Congress, the Jewish face will have a familiar look, too.

Tuesday's election results could boost Jewish representation in the House of Representatives by one seat. In the Senate, Jewish lawmakers maintained the same minyan of 10.

With the exception of one contest that remained too close to call, the other 21 Jewish incumbents seeking re-election in the House won their races, most by wide margins.

Of 19 Jewish challengers vying for House seats, three emerged with victories.

With the departure of two Jewish House members, Jewish lawmakers will possibly number 25, pending the outcome of the undecided race in Pennsylvania, which is being recounted.

In the Senate, four Jewish challengers for the Senate all lost their election bids.

The two Jewish incumbent senators, Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) and Carl Levin (D-Mich.), both sailed to easy victories.

The other eight Jewish senators were not up for re-election this year.

Meanwhile, voters returned to office dozens of non-Jewish incumbents considered longtime friends of Israel and other Jewish interests.

At the same time, a handful of candidates aligned with far-right elements and eyed warily by the Jewish community won return trips to Capitol Hill.

In one of the most closely watched races for the Senate, Wellstone defeated former Sen. Rudy Boschwitz in a rerun of the 1990 matchup between the two Jewish candidates.

Local Jewish officials appeared pleased with the results.

'A friend of Israel'

"We're returning to the Senate a friend of Israel and someone who champions many of the same social justice issues which our Jewish communal agencies are fighting for, particularly in welfare reform areas," said Jay Tcath, who is the executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Wellstone was the only senator facing re-election this year who voted against the controversial welfare reform law recently enacted.

In another bitterly fought Senate race that appeared to be a dead heat leading up to Election Day, Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) defeated his Jewish opponent, Rep. Dick Zimmer (R-N.J.) by an 11-point margin.

New Jersey's Jewish voters favored Torricelli over Zimmer 74 percent to 26 percent, according to an exit poll conducted by the New Jersey region of the American Jewish Congress.

"The New Jersey Jewish vote has been consistently Democratic," said Phil Baum, executive director of AJCongress.

Despite the candidacy of Zimmer, a Jewish Republican who has shown strong support for Israel, Baum said, Jewish voters ultimately backed the seven-term congressman because of his equally steadfast support for Israel and because he better reflected the views of the Jewish community on important social issues, including welfare and immigration policy.

In the contest for Bob Dole's old Senate seat in Kansas, Rep. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) defeated Jewish Democratic challenger Jill Docking.

Another Jewish candidate, Republican Nancy Mayer of Rhode Island, also lost her bid for the Senate to John Reed.

In the House, the new Jewish faces will be Democrats Robert Wexler of Florida, Steve Rothman of New Jersey and Brad Sherman of California.

In other House highlights:

- In Pennsylvania, the nation's tightest House race left incumbent Jon Fox (R-Pa.) and his Democratic challenger, Joseph Hoeffel, still waiting for final results.

With 100 percent of the Philadelphia suburban region precincts reporting, Fox, the only Jewish member of the 104th Congress' freshmen class, clung to a 10-vote lead.

A recount was scheduled for Friday.

In that race, Hoeffel attacked Fox for scoring a 100 percent rating from the Christian Coalition and tried to paint him as a disciple of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.).

Fox, who serves on the House International Relations Committee, touted his record of support for Israel, as well as his support for welfare reform, health-care reform and spending reform.

- In Georgia, despite running in a radically redrawn district with a large white and Republican population, incumbent Democrat Cynthia McKinney won handily over Republican John Mitnick.

The contest between the first black woman elected to Congress from Georgia and her Jewish challenger evoked considerable racial acrimony, with McKinney's father calling Mitnick a "racist Jew" and Mitnick accusing McKinney of cozying up to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

'An intense mistrust'

Jews in McKinney's district "developed an intense mistrust of her and she will need to begin the healing process so that she is able to effectively represent the 7 percent of her population which is Jewish," said Sherry Frank, southeast area director of the American Jewish Committee.

Meanwhile, several races involving non-Jewish candidates with close ties to the religious right and other controversial views produced mixed results:

- In Texas, voters returned former Republican Congressman Ron Paul to the House after a 12-year absence.

Paul has published numerous anti-Israel and racist articles over the last decade.

In 1987, for example, he wrote, "It's time that Israel stopped running American foreign policy and draining American taxpayers' wallets."

- Also in Texas, Rep. Steve Stockman and his Democrat challenger, Nick Lampson, both failed to muster more than 50 percent of the vote, throwing the contest into a December runoff.

A Republican freshman, Stockman has come under fire from Jewish groups for his ties to the militia movement and for holding views they say run roughshod over the separation of church and state.

- In Arizona, incumbent Republican J.D. Hayworth, a self-described champion of the Republican agenda and supporter of school prayer, won a decisive victory.

- Republican incumbents Andrea Seastrand of California, who called for an end to the separation of church and state, and Frank Cremeans of Ohio, who opposed government bans on endorsing religion, were both rebuffed by voters. □

Ross delays return to region, cites disagreements in talks

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — U.S. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross canceled at the last minute his trip to Israel, citing the gaps still separating Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.

Ross had been expected to return to the region Wednesday to mediate the talks on a redeployment of Israeli forces in Hebron. U.S. officials said he had put off his return indefinitely.

"The fact of the matter is that we cannot want peace more than the parties themselves," U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk told reporters in Jerusalem on Wednesday.

The Israeli-Palestinian talks on a Hebron redeployment have proceeded inconclusively since early October.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated Wednesday Israel's charge that the Palestinians were responsible for the delay in signing an agreement to implement a Hebron redeployment.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman, meeting with Jordanian King Hussein in Amman on Wednesday, urged Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to conclude the agreement.

Weizman said he was certain the Hebron issue could be solved if the Palestinian leadership showed "a little more willingness to do so."

The visit, Weizman's first official trip to Jordan, was in part aimed at mending relations between Israel and Jordan. Israel's opening of an entrance to a tunnel near the Temple Mount in September, after which Palestinians rioted for three days in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, had drawn the ire of Hussein, who publicly warned Netanyahu to fulfill peace accords signed by the previous Labor government.

During his talks with Hussein, Weizman also asked the monarch's assistance in renewing Israel's stalled peace talks with Syria. Asked if he would meet with Syrian President Hafez Assad if invited to do so, Weizman said, "in five minutes, I could have a helicopter here." □

Jews pray for Yeltsin's health

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — As Russian President Boris Yeltsin underwent heart surgery, Moscow Jews were praying for his health.

A special prayer for Yeltsin's health was introduced in Moscow's Choral Synagogue two months ago, after the 65-year-old president confirmed that he would undergo a heart operation.

Jews prayed for the success of Tuesday's bypass operation in the city's three synagogues.

"Those who could not attend the service called the synagogue asking us to pray in their name," said Berel Lazar, rabbi of the Marina Roscha Synagogue. "Praying for [Yeltsin's] health, we prayed for our future, for democracy and freedom of religion."

Most Russian Jews backed Yeltsin in the summer election. An international group of doctors declared Tuesday's operation a success. □

Quebec official resigns; admitted to wearing swastika

By Bram D. Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — The lieutenant governor of Quebec has resigned after disclosing that he wore a swastika as a medical student 54 years ago.

Jean-Louis Roux, 74, a former actor recently

appointed to the largely ceremonial position of lieutenant governor by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, faced a barrage of criticism after making the disclosure in an interview with the French-language news magazine L'Actualite.

He also admitted in the interview that he participated in an anti-draft demonstration in 1942 that degenerated into vandalism of Jewish-owned shops.

Faced with criticism from groups including the Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada, which had called for a full apology to the Quebec Jewish community, Roux issued a statement Monday in which he expressed regret for "an error in my youth."

On Tuesday, he submitted a one-sentence letter of resignation to Chretien.

Roux was the official representative in Quebec of Canada's head of state, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain. He is a staunch federalist who opposes the secession of Quebec from the rest of Canada.

Prior to his resignation, many leading separatists had demanded Roux's dismissal.

Gilles Rheaume, a leader of the Sovereign Movement of Quebec, sent a telegram Monday to Queen Elizabeth asking her to have Roux removed from power.

The separatist Bloc Quebecois had demanded that Roux be recalled by Chretien "for racist behavior." □

London judge frees Palestinian accused in Israeli Embassy blast

By Deborah Leipziger

LONDON (JTA) — A Palestinian woman accused of involvement in the 1994 bombing of the Israeli Embassy here was freed this week after a judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence against her.

The judge in the case said Monday that he would direct the jury to acquit Nadia Zekra, 48, a Palestinian homemaker charged with planting the bomb.

The case is "fraught with pitfalls," the judge said, adding that "it would be dangerous in the extreme to allow this case to go before a jury. I have no hesitation in discharging this case."

Cases against another woman and two men charged in connection with the bombing are scheduled to continue.

Officials at the Israeli Embassy and the Jewish Board of Deputies, the community's umbrella group, declined to comment on Monday's ruling, saying that they would not speak publicly until the other cases are concluded.

The July 26, 1994, embassy bombing caused \$8.4 million in damage and left 14 people injured.

A second explosion occurred the next day at Balfour House, the London headquarters of the Joint Israel Appeal. Five people were injured in that attack.

On the day of the first bombing, Zekra had parked her Audi near the embassy and walked off. Six months later, she was arrested. She has spent almost five months in jail.

Jawad Botmeh, 28; Samar Alami, 30; and Mahmoud Abu-Wardeh, 25, are still being tried on charges of conspiracy to cause explosions, possession of a dangerous substance and possession of three handguns.

All three have denied the charges against them.

A legal source following their trial believes that they will also be acquitted for lack of evidence.

In a separate development, Israel and Great Britain are reportedly expected to increase their cooperation in fighting terrorism by clamping down on the activities of Islamic fundamentalist groups. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai is expected to focus on the subject during his visit here later this month. □