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The House Shakeup for the Democrats

by Barbara Dreyfuss

The landslide victory of Ronald Reagan brought with it significant losses for the Democrats in the House of Representatives. Although the Democrats will stay in control of the House, unlike the Senate, fully 39 Democratic seats were lost. This included 28 Democratic incumbents trying for another term and 10 seats vacated by Democratic incumbents not running for reelection. In 1978 only 11 seats were lost.

The 1980 rout of congressional Dems was in large measure another reflection of the population's rage against Jimmy Carter. Many Republicans rode to victory on Reagan's coattails when in another year the same races would have been close, or Democratic victories.

The Republicans also targeted a number of liberal administration-allied Democratic leaders for defeat, banking on the nation's dissatisfaction with Carter. By blaming Democratic committee chairmen and House leaders for passage of Carter's disastrous economic programs, the Republicans hoped to defeat these Democrats. "We are using the Carter syndrome," declared an aide on the Republican National Campaign Committee. "The leaders have been visible with Carter."

The defeat of many Democrats who have the same outlook as the Senate "McGovernite liberals," including two House leaders, could mean a major fight for control of key committees and leadership posts. Conservative Democrats, holding up the defeat of the many liberals as a warning, can now make claims for important posts such as Democratic caucus leader and Budget Commit-

tee chairman, though it is unclear whether they will take this opportunity.

The Republicans succeeded in ousting the third-ranking Democrat, Majority Whip John Brademas (D-Ind.). Brademas is a member of the Trilateral Commission, the Eastern Establishment group founded by David Rockefeller and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Also defeated was House Campaign Committee chairman James Corman (D-Calif.), and the chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee, Al Ullman (D-Ore.). In all, more than a dozen liberal Democrats, allied with the administration on anti-growth policies including energy conservation and the windfall profits tax, were defeated.

However, some important pro-industrial-growth conservative Democrats were also swept out in the Republican tide. The defeat of Cong. Mike McCormack (D-Wash.) was a very significant blow to America's industrial development.

McCormack, a scientist by profession, was the major congressional floor leader for nuclear energy development programs, viewing nuclear energy as vital for industrial expansion. As chairman of the subcommittee on Energy, Research and Development, he fought for increased nuclear funding. This year the congressman sponsored and saw passed into law the historic Magnetic Fusion Engineering Act of 1980. The law establishes programs to ensure a working commercial fusion reactor by the turn of the century. If reelected, McCormack

would have led the fight to ensure adequate yearly appropriations to meet that goal.

Another important defeat for this economic outlook was the unseating of Congressman Gunn McKay (D-Utah). McKay headed the United Democrats, a grouping of close to 100 conservative Democrats that sought policy alternatives to that of environmentalist-oriented liberal leaders.

Several spokesmen for labor were also defeated on Nov. 4. Edward Beard (D-R.I.) chairman of the House Labor Standards subcommittee, was retired. Beard had promised to focus all his effort next session on increasing the minimum wage to a more adequate level than the current \$3.10.

Cong. Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), an extremely important labor supporter, was also defeated. Thompson had been a target of the Carter administration's Abscam entrapment scheme. As second-ranking member of the House Education and Labor Committee, Thompson had backed decent minimum wage levels, the Davis-Bacon Act, labor law reform and other important labor-backed legislation.

Four Democrats and one Republican (who lost his primary) lost their seats because of involvement in the Abscam affair. Only one Democrat survived his connections to Abscam. Congressmen tied to local political networks and labor were primarily targeted in the Abscam case.

Republican strategy

The Republicans did not anticipate taking control of the House in 1980, but hoped to set the stage for its takeover in 1982-84. They have succeeded. The Democrats have only a 50 seat majority now, where before the election they held 117 seats more than the Republicans. Sources at the Republican campaign committee declared before Election Day that a lot of Political Action Committee money would flow to Republican challengers in 1982 if the Republicans showed in 1980 that they could defeat leading Democrats.

The Republicans also hoped, by targeting many liberal Democrats for defeat, to force the remaining Democrats into a more conservative stance. In announcing the decision to target the leadership, Congressman Guy Vander Jagt, chairman of the Republican National Campaign Committee declared, "We made a conscious decision to recruit outstanding candidates to confront Democratic leaders and committee chairmen. Even if they are not all defeated, the survivors will be frightened enough so that they will become more conservative once they return." Vander Jagt ran a "school" for the Republican challengers, grooming them to challenge the Democrats as big spenders and allies of Jimmy Carter.

Over the past year, as Carter's popularity dropped dramatically in the polls, congressmen increasingly pan-

icked that with Carter heading the ticket in November, they would lose their seats in a Republican sweep. "Most congressmen will keep their distance from him," declared a staff member on the House Democratic Campaign Committee. "They will hope their constituents remember their congressmen and take out their frustrations on the top of the ticket, against Carter."

Not convinced this would work, over 30 congressmen joined the effort to open up the Democratic convention last August, in an effort to elect someone other than Carter as the Democratic nominee.

The new Congress

The remaining liberal Democratic congressmen will find it very difficult to determine policy now. With Reagan elected on a promise of strong executive leadership, and the Senate in the hands of conservative Republicans, legislation will not get far if it continues the anti-growth programs of Jimmy Carter and some of his key collaborators, such as Cong. Henry Reuss (D-Wis.), chairman of the House Banking Committee.

Reuss has been responsible for bills such as the Depository Institutions Deregulation Act, aimed at wiping out much of the regional banking system and putting the remainder under the tight control of the Federal Reserve Board. "Reuss won't be able to get anything done now," declared an aide to Republican Senator Jake Garn of Utah, who will now head the Senate Banking Committee.

An opportunity now exists for a bipartisan coalition of conservative Democrats and Republicans in the House, working with a Republican-run Senate to implement such necessary measures as expansion of industrial credit, 100 percent parity for farmers and rapid increase in the number of nuclear power plants.

Who lost

The Republicans had targeted four Democratic leaders for defeat—House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.), Majority Whip John Brademas (D-Ind.), Democratic Caucus head Tom Foley (D-Wash.), and House Democratic Campaign Committee chairman James Corman (D-Calif.). Brademas and Corman lost.

Majority Leader Jim Wright was accused by his opponent, Jim Bradshaw, of becoming a pawn of the Washington establishment and the Carter administration. As majority leader, Wright steered many administration bills through the House. Despite this, Wright, a moderate Democrat, has close ties with his district, which has more military-related firms than any other, and a very large number of independent oilmen.

An influential number of Texas businessmen formed a group called Responsible Conservatives, sending out 25,000 letters to Republicans urging them to vote for both Reagan and Jim Wright. They warned that if Wright were defeated, Phil Burton of California would

become majority leader. Wright only beat Burton by one vote for the post in 1976.

Burton, a supporter of the "alternative lifestyles" of his native San Francisco, has been a floor leader for the "McGovernite" House liberals for many years. Wright won reelection with almost 62 percent of the vote.

Another leader who managed to save his seat was Tom Foley (D-Wash.), head of the Democratic caucus as well as the House Agriculture Committee. Foley is a staunch liberal who has run the committee from an anti-producer standpoint. He was crucial in the passage of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide bill, which has hampered farm production.

Although Foley kept his seat, the Democratic caucus will change hands in December under House rules. Two men very different in outlook are vying for the spot—Cong. Gillis Long of Louisiana and Cong. Charles Rose of North Carolina. Rose, who managed Phil Burton's try for House Majority Leader in 1976, has already said he wants the caucus meetings to be used to force congressmen behind the policies of the House leadership. Rose is also the founder of the Congressional Clearinghouse, a group run by the Club of Rome, the people who coined the phrase "limits to growth." The Clearinghouse, through seminars and policy papers, hopes to determine congressional activities.

Long is vehemently opposed to using the caucus as a means of disciplining members. And he wants to decrease the number of committees in the House to facilitate the legislative process.

Two defeats

The Republicans succeeded in defeating majority whip John Brademas. Brademas is a leading member of the Eastern Establishment, having been trained at Harvard, sent as a Rhodes scholar to Oxford and then made a member of the Trilateral Commission.

As the third-ranking Democratic leader, with 22 years in Congress, Brademas was attacked as "part of the problem" in Washington. His opponent, John Hiler, a marketing director of his family's foundry, received a lot of funding from independent oilmen, many builders associations, contractors and tool companies.

Brademas' defeat opens up the whip position, which is expected to go to Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.), a member of the old conservative, labor-allied machine of Chicago's late mayor Richard Daley. Rostenkowski is also eligible for the chairmanship of the prestigious Ways and Means Committee, and may take that post instead.

The fourth targeted member of the leadership was James Corman, a 20-year House veteran. Corman, a leading liberal, was termed a "puppet of Carter" by his opponent, Bobbi Fiedler, a vocal opponent of school

busing. Corman was the chief House sponsor of Ted Kennedy's national health insurance program. He was also chief sponsor of Carter's welfare programs.

Committee chairmen ousted

Five major committee chairmen were ousted this election, two as a result of Abscam:

Al Ullman (D-Ore.), Lester Wolff (D-N.Y.), Harold T. Johnson (D-Calif.), Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), and John Murphy (D-N.Y.).

- *Al Ullman (D-Ore.), chairman of the Ways and Means Committee:* Ullman is the committee chairman most closely allied with the Carter administration who was targeted and ousted this election. Ullman, chairman of the tax-writing committee, refused to allow any consideration of a tax-cut legislation before the election. With the Republicans pledging major tax cuts, many Democrats felt their reelection depended on showing their support for such policies. But Ullman felt that consideration of a tax cut would embarrass the Carter administration, which had publicly rejected a tax-cut bill in 1980.

Ullman was also unpopular for his proposal last year of a value-added tax, an indiscriminate, highly regressive tax. He was forced to withdraw this proposal due to massive opposition.

If Congressman Rostenkowski refuses the chairmanship of Ways and Means, Cong. Sam Gibbons (D-Fla.), a 20-year veteran of the Hill, has wanted the post for a long time. Gibbons's tax record has swung from being a staunch supporter of increasing the tax bite for wealthier families, to backing lower capital-gains taxes.

- *Lester Wolff, chairman of the Select Committee on Narcotics:* Wolff's defeat may effect the continued existence of the Select Committee on Narcotics, a committee that with the right chairman could be used as a base for a strong attack on the international drug mafia. The Select Committee was established by Wolff, and its mandate runs out this year. Wolff's seniority and his role in creating the committee gave him a strong position from which to fight for its continuation. It is unclear whether congressmen such as Billy Evans (D-Ga.), who are campaigning for keeping the committee, will have the clout to do so.

- *Harold T. Johnson, chairman of the Public Works Committee:* Johnson was defeated by Eugene Chappie, a longtime state assemblyman. Johnson has been considered a strong supporter of federal public works projects in opposition to the environmentalists, and he worked hard for water projects for the Central Valley in California. The man who will probably replace him as head of the committee, James Howard (D-N.J.), is also a strong proponent of federal water programs.

Another committee chairman heavily targeted by

the Republicans, Morris Udall (D-Ariz.), head of the Interior Committee, managed to keep his seat. Udall is a leading environmentalist and has been the sponsor and floor manager of such bills as the Alaska Lands measure, which would keep millions of acres from development.

Abscam effects

Four congressmen, including two important committee chairmen, lost their seats in large measure because they were targets of the Justice Department's Abscam entrapment scheme. Six congressmen had been implicated in Abscam. One Republican, Richard Kelley of Florida, lost his primary, and Cong. Raymond Lederer (D-Pa.) won reelection.

Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), who had been indicted in the Abscam probe, was a power in the House for 26 years before he lost his seat on Nov. 4. Thompson was chairman of the House Administration Committee, which deals with the internal workings of the House. Even more important was the role he played as the number two man on the Education and Labor Committee, staunchly backing minimum wage bills and other measures important to labor.

The other committee chairman ousted by Abscam was John Murphy (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Murphy was indicted in the Abscam affair and his trial begins only six days after the election. Murphy had tried to have the Abscam video tapes of his actions made public to show his innocence, but a court refused. Representing the port of New York, Murphy was a strong supporter of expanding and upgrading the nation's maritime industries, and an important defender of labor unions involved with maritime trade. The three leading possibilities to take over the chairmanship of the committee are Walter Jones (D-N.C.), Mario Biaggi (D-N.Y.), and John Breaux (D-La.). Biaggi is a likely successor and would follow in Murphy's direction.

Also defeated was Michael Myers (D-Pa.), who had been expelled from the House several weeks ago because of his conviction in the Abscam case. Myers, who served on both the Education and Labor Committee and the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, was part of the old-line Democratic machine of Philadelphia. He was defeated by an independent, Thomas Foglietta, put up by the Democrats associated with the liberal Philadelphia mayor, William Green.

Cong. John Jenrette (D-S.C.) was also a victim of Abscam. Convicted of accepting a bribe, Jenrette was appealing the verdict when he ran for reelection and lost. He had been a strong supporter of federal aid to farming from his position on the appropriations subcommittee on agriculture.

National policy

LaRouche on Reagan's landslide victory

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.,
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The economic and foreign policies of the Carter administration have been repudiated by the landslide victory of President-elect Ronald Reagan. The Democratic Party, licking its wounds, has the occasion to reflect on the monstrous error it tolerated in permitting itself to be blackmailed and armtwisted into nominating Jimmy Carter at the August convention.

Although the patterns of results in elections of congressman and key state officials are not entirely consistent, it is the general trend that what has been called sometimes the "McGovernite liberal" faction of the Democratic Party has lost the almost dictatorial power it acquired in the Democratic Party during the aftermath of "Watergate."

These developments must now be echoed by appropriate reforms in Democratic Party organizations at the state and national levels. These changes in the state and national organizations' composition of leadership must be congruent with the indicated changes in leadership and policies of the Democratic Party congressional caucus.

The Democratic Party's central tasks at this moment are twofold. First, and above all other considerations, those who represent what I have described as the Whig currents of the party must define a clear perspective for the decisive, positive role our forces will contribute during the coming four years of President Reagan's administration. Second, that perspective must govern the internal reorganization of the party in preparation for the elections of 1982 and 1984.

The resurgence of Whig political power

To understand President-elect Reagan's victory most effectively, we must stand for a moment above the formal lines of division between the two major parties. We of the Whig currents within the Democratic Party, together with the Whig currents of the Republican