

INTERVIEW

Talking about the job ahead

The chairman of the National Democratic Policy Committee on Washington and the party's future.

The following interview with National Democratic Policy Committee Chairman Warren Hamerman took place on Dec. 17 in New York City. The NDPC is a political action committee designed to support Democratic candidates and officeholders; its advisory committee of scientists, businessmen, labor, and farm officials is chaired by EIR contributing editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. According to the NDPC, the body was "formed as an alternative think tank to the Brookings Institution, RAND, and other advocates of austerity, to reconstitute an 'Alliance of Producers.'"

EIR: What shape is the Democratic Party in six weeks after the election?

Hamerman: Potentially, the Democratic Party is now in an excellent position to rebuild itself after the population so resoundingly rejected both Jimmy Carter and the entire rot of "McGovernism" in the recent elections. Traditional Democratic constituencies—labor, agriculture, minorities and other urban populations—participated with joy in kicking Carter and all he stands for out of office.

In fact, these were the same people who voted Carter into office in 1976 because then the population was so fed up with Washington and elected the man who promised to clean things up. Lyndon LaRouche aptly pointed out about the 1976 election that just because a man places a skunk in his neighbor's henyard, doesn't mean the man likes skunks.

Therefore in 1980, at the first chance they got, millions of Americans voted against Carter in such a decisive way. The entire future of not only the Democratic Party but of our nation depends upon how successfully we respond to the unique mandate from the population. In the main, Americans were motivated to send a clear political message to Washington in 1980 about their absolute rejection of the economic policies of austerity and depression symbolized by the high interest rates of Paul Volcker at the Federal Reserve as well as the ultra-liberal British-style foreign policy of destabilizations, psychological games, and weakness.

Also, people voted against the so-called tolerant approaches of the Carter and McGovern crew to the growing epidemic of drugs among our youth. Incidentally, in Washington right now a certain prominent nose and throat physician is lamenting the loss of business because he had been treating all the cocaine users at the Carter White House.

EIR: How does the NDPC see its role now?

Hamerman: The basic problem Ronald Reagan has if he is to fulfill the mandate of the elections is with the "big shots" in Washington from institutions like Brookings, RAND, the Council on Foreign Relations, the major national media and so forth.

The solution lies in mobilizing the "little shots" from around the country to have an effective policy input into government. The "little shots" in the so-called boondocks of America potentially exert far more policy judgment and clout than, for example, both Jimmy Carter and Bob Strauss gave them credit for. By "little shots" I mean the regional bankers and savings and loans officials who are virtually ready to hang Paul Volcker in effigy, the trade-union officials in local and regional organizations who disagree on policy with Lane Kirkland, who after all worked for Carter, the leaders of farm organizations, the heads of minority organizations and so forth.

The role of the NDPC is to mobilize these constituencies into an effective political force, to overflow Washington with the reality of what the nation is thinking on key questions. Given the terrible dishonesty and deliberate manipulations which our major national media practices, obviously the NDPC views as its primary responsibility the task of adequately informing the population on major policy issues, so that citizens may be consulted and respond to judgments from an informed standpoint.

The greatest danger our nation immediately faces would be for Ronald Reagan to become "Nixonized." Long before Richard Nixon was watergated, he was first isolated and placed in a controlled policy environment. When Nixon wanted to know what Europe was thinking on any given question he would not call up a European

head of state and ask him. Instead, Nixon would consult Henry Kissinger, who would phone up London or some resident Jesuit somewhere, and feed back a line to Nixon. Domestically, of course, Nixon was totally isolated from the constituents who voted him into office.

In addition to mobilizing and informing the population, the NDPC has the responsibility of developing the specific policies which can solve our nation's problems. In that sense we are a think tank as well.

Specifically, in the United States the NDPC has the task of mobilizing traditional Democratic constituencies to take the policy initiative in proposing bipartisan programs to the new administration. Finally, we are the only force traditional Democratic constituencies can rely on to rebuild the Democratic party. As the elections proved, we were marching in step with the policy intent of the American population

EIR: What is your estimate of the potential for bipartisan legislative action?

Hamerman: The key to the entire situation is removing Paul Volcker from the Federal Reserve and changing the policy underlying his high interest-rate regime. We have proposed two pieces of legislation for the new Congress.

The first is a draft Federal Reserve Reform Act, which amends the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 to provide credit expansion without inflation, and restores to Congress the constitutional power to regulate the currency. The second is a proposed Taxation System for Capital Formation Act, which proposes selective tax cuts for both households and industries in all areas of productive investment and closes the loopholes in speculative and black-market areas. For instance, are you aware that the total value of New York City real estate is larger than the value of all plant and equipment in American manufacturing industry?

To set the American economy back on the track of the sort of sound banking and fiscal policies of Alexander Hamilton, our first secretary of the treasury, the new Congress must also repeal the hideous Reuss omnibus banking act passed in the last session. Congress absolutely has an important mandate to restore strength to law enforcement and the intelligence agencies around the declaration of a war against drugs which are so crippling our youth. Around these measures there is strong bipartisan agreement. Any congressman or senator who persists in ignoring these programs will of course be "Characterized" in the 1982 elections.

EIR: What does the new Congress look like from this point of view?

Hamerman: Potentially, the Ninety-Seventh Congress can be an effective vehicle for restoring our nation's progress. In the House of Representatives, Speaker Tip O'Neill only kept his position because he promised to

announce his retirement in 1981, and because he made a host of concessions to the Conservative Democratic Forum, a grouping of forty or more Southern conservative Democrats.

What's the problem with Tip O'Neill? In a few words: when Lane Kirkland talks, Tip O'Neill walks. Kirkland is a kooky spy in the labor movement who is connected into the most unsavory European socialists and extreme left liberals in this country. Kirkland didn't come up through the ranks. He's an impostor with top Foreign Service training who was inserted into the labor movement by Jay Lovestone and Arthur Goldberg. Kirkland comes from a plantation family in South Carolina, and he still refers to the Civil War as the "War of Northern Aggression." Certain people in a position to know told me that Kirkland drew up a list of his recommended committee chairmen and gave it to O'Neill before the last Congress; Tip O'Neill implemented ten out of Kirkland's twelve recommendations.

The second problem in the House was that a number of good Democrats were defeated in the last election. The best example was Mike McCormack, who headed the Science and Technology Committee and was the resident congressional expert on energy policy.

Despite these two problems I am basically optimistic about the new Congress, provided that the pressure from the little shots around the country can be effectively transmitted. Of course, we have to get back to the old seniority system for committee selection and most important of all, give congressmen time to think.

Overall, we are working to put together with others a true bipartisan coalition of the conservative Democrats from the South, the blue-collar Democrats from the North, and the scientifically and industrially oriented congressmen from the Republican side. Several congressmen working with us estimate that a core grouping of well over a hundred cooperating across the aisles is already forming.

You can see the result of our work and the mood in the country by the quality of debate on the high-interest strangulation of the economy during the closing days of the last Congress. The Senate also passed an excellent resolution against the "Deliberate Recession" policy of Volcker. The Senate side of things will be much better now that the outrageous kooks like George McGovern are out of there.

Our problem will be in getting some senators to rise to the intellectual challenges of defining policy in the national interest. I was pleased with Caspar Weinberger's statement when his nomination for secretary of defense was announced. He stated that the policy questions on substantive defense matters ought to be made in the Senate for the coming period. That was one of our proposals, which we floated with some senators a few weeks back.

EIR: You recently returned from Washington. . . .

Hamerman: During the first week in December I accompanied Lyndon LaRouche to Washington. We met with half a dozen people responsible for different policy departments in the Reagan transition team, ten or so congressmen and senators, and a great many individuals influential on various key overall international and national policy questions.

I have been in Washington at least one day week since the August Democratic convention, and one thing in particular struck me. All sorts of people, especially government officials who used to cynically “dump on” the American population, have developed a new respect for the American citizenry as a result of the election mandate.

EIR: How does the situation look around the Democratic National Committee and the House Democratic leadership?

Hamerman: Politically, the battle for the direction of the Democratic Party is more advanced than the battle for policy control in the Congress. In February, a new Democratic Party chairman will be selected—goodbye John White. On December ninth in Washington, there was a meeting of most of the Democratic state chairmen, followed by a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee.

Basically, a number of the Democratic chairmen who have been feeling the heat from their constituents back home came into the meeting pretty angry. There were two issues. First, there was a general demand for a full-scale independent audit of how Democratic Party finances had been spent over the last year. What came out at the meeting was that the Carter crew, John White and Bob Strauss, came into state after state and robbed the coffers dry and then put all the money into Carter's doomed election campaign. That's how a lot of good Democrats were defeated.

The second angry demand was to return the party to the old “patronage system,” where elected officials and local party leaders could effectively represent the interests of their citizens. Along these lines it looks fairly certain that elected Democratic congressmen and party officials will automatically be on the Democratic National Committee. If this system of representation had been in effect, Jimmy Carter would never have gotten the nomination at the August at the New York convention.

We should not underestimate the slick games the McGovernite crew will use to hold onto their power. Morley Winograd from Michigan, the man who wrote the kooky McGovernite reforms of the Democratic Party, tried to run the December ninth meetings in Washington like he was conducting a T-group session. The chairman from his state, Sam Fishman, and Mark Hogan from Colorado have to go. Hogan and Pat Schroeder are so far out they make George McGovern look like a

conservative. The Colorado and Michigan problems need cleaning up. On balance, the Democratic Party is most sensitive right now to the power of its constituents' mandate in the elections. We have two years until the 1982 midterm convention. We know exactly how to rebuild. In fact, because during the election campaign I was the national campaign director for Lyndon LaRouche, a number of sentiments were communicated directly to me that “if we had listened to LaRouche's hardball economic policies during the election we would have done far better.”

EIR: Where do you think Ted Kennedy will go from here?

Hamerman: Ted Kennedy can win his re-election in 1982 and be a viable national leader on only one condition: he must stop acting like the younger brother of George McGovern, and start acting like the younger brother of Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy was the initiator of the NASA space program, strong on research and defense, strong on promoting industrial expansion. The tremendous anti-Carter sentiment in the population shown during the election also existed during the primary season. But because Ted Kennedy marched in the opposite direction from the American population, he got the leftovers from Gene McCarthy and McGovern.

Everyone talks about how powerful Kennedy's convention speech was. One day I may reveal the full story. But the important thing for people to know, in addition to what was said, was what things were also in the speech that Teddy did not want to go with. These things would have taken Teddy back to the policy course of brothers Jack and Bobby to the same extent. Basically, Ted Kennedy's future is up to Ted Kennedy. He can probably have it all . . . or nothing.

EIR: What's the state of labor-Democratic relations?

Hamerman: Labor will not leave the Democratic Party—she will force the Democratic Party to change. Look at the discrepancies. Lane Kirkland, Sol Chaikin, and a host of other big names were out there giving the “do or die” for Jimmy Carter. The local and regional membership and more than a significant number of local and regional officials publicly were saying they were for Carter while stabbing the S.O.B. in the back. I know this from the inside. The media pollsters were thoroughly fooled by this; that's why they fell flat on their overpaid faces.

Labor stuck Carter in the back. His economic policies were wretched and he was running a witchhunt against legitimate labor leaders through Brilab and Abscam. Labor must throw its Confederate leader Kirkland back to the Georgetown Foreign Service school where he was groomed and get back to basic policy input. Labor will be the key to rebuilding the Democratic Party.