

INTERVIEW

Thurman demands Dem. Party revival

Last week, EIR featured Part One of an interview with Georgia Democratic Party Chairman Marjorie Thurman, the new chairman of the Association of Democratic State Chairs. The interview, conducted by Anita Gallagher of the National Democratic Policy Committee, included Mrs. Thurman's comments on the potential for greater responsiveness to state and local party organizations on the part of the Democratic National Committee. The second and final part of the interview follows.

Q: Have you looked at any of the new plans for delegate selection? DNC chair candidate Joe Crangle [based in upstate New York] has a plan, for example, that would select one-third of the delegates each by primary, caucus, and party officials.

Thurman: I have glanced over everything that has come in, but there is no way I would want to make a statement in favor of or against any that I have seen. It's going to have to be dealt with through a lot of debate and deliberation on what is practical and what is not. I think the first thing we are going to have to deal with in the new party administration is the fact that it didn't work, and where we go from here; everyone agrees that this delegate selection process did not work, and it's got to be redone.

Q: Will you put out frequent bulletins? How often do you think the state chairs will meet?

Thurman: I expect that we're going to meet very, very often. I don't think, with just 110 state chairs and vice-chairs, that we will get involved with a newsletter, but certainly we will put out memoranda to the state chairs and vice-chairs to keep them apprised of everything that's happening.

Q: I have heard that the Republican National Committee sends out something once a week to its members.

Thurman: I would love to see the DNC do that. We have had absolutely no communication from them for such a long time. We used to, many years ago, but not for the last four years. A national newsletter to everybody on the

mailing list would be fantastic. But I would not do a newsletter for a 110-member team—I will keep them apprised by way of memoranda, and hopefully the DNC will have a newsletter.

Q: Will you spend a lot of time in Washington and a lot of time traveling?

Thurman: I have done a lot of traveling, and I don't think the new position will change my pace at all. I've given it all I've had all my life, and if anything, I'll give it even more now. I still have to practice law for a living, and I don't have anybody subsidizing me. My special interest is the party, and that's why I care to be bothered with this, and I have certainly done it under very adverse circumstances, probably for the better part of my career. But at this point in time, I think it is going to be nice, because there is no way that all the chairmen don't feel the same way I do about party-building—so it might be that politics is going to be fun, for a change.

Q: Bob Strauss is proposing a Democratic Advisory Council of 29 people that would include the Democratic congressional leaders and six DNC members. The *Baltimore Sun* says "This group will serve to pre-empt the expected proliferation of many other groups that will emerge to rebuild the party and define its policy."

Thurman: Do you know what that says? It says "forget the Marge Thurmans, the Chuck Manatts, the Patty Cunninghams, and all those other people down here, and let's just us take it over." I'm sorry, but you don't deal with politics from the top down, you deal with it from the bottom up. And if anybody forgets it, then they don't know where they're coming from, and I will fight like everything to oppose that.

Q: The National Democratic Policy Committee is very concerned that the party not continue to be associated with the economic policies of Jimmy Carter. We think this played a big part in the election defeat.

Thurman: I could not agree more. Now, I have no problem with the Democratic Policy Council; we've had one for years, and it hasn't been that active or that effective because the DNC represented nobody for the last four years except Carter himself. So I think it is good to have policy debate, and there is no way that those of us who are dealing with implementation could not participate. But our primary concern is to elect Democrats, and I am going to be fundamentally concerned with organization-building rather than policy at this point. I am perfectly happy with other folks out there talking about redefining issues. That is correct, that is splendid, and I would love to participate in it. But the number-one priority is getting our organization back together, because it is in bad shape at this point.