Spannaus for Congress mobilizes 30-40% of Democratic 'outsiders'

by EIR Staff

The turnout of Democratic voters on behalf of LaRouche Democrat Nancy Spannaus in the Loudoun and Prince William county caucuses held in Virginia's 10th Congressional District, May 9 and May 14, has put a shot across the bow of those in the Republican and Democratic parties who have sought to destroy the United States through political witchhunts. In the area where Lyndon LaRouche has made his home, which is the most saturated with venomous propaganda and terror tactics against him, Spannaus polled between 30 and 48.5% officially against Washington lawyer Cornell Brooks, who has the endorsement of most of the local party leadership. The fact that Spannaus lost by only 10 votes in her home county of Loudoun, the scene of new scurrilous attacks on her by the official party and of some irregularities in the vote-counting procedures, is going to produce shockwaves far beyond the area.

It is now clear once again—as it was during Sen. Chuck Robb's campaign against Ollie North in 1994—that the LaRouche wing of the party is addressing the concerns of those who have turned their backs on politics in disgust, and that collaboration with the LaRouche wing is essential for Democrats who actually wish to defeat Republicans in this turbulent period. Brooks has formally won enough delegates now to win the 10th CD nomination, but a crowning by party insiders means nothing for winning the election. If the party leadership rejects the new blood represented by the LaRouche-Spannaus voters, it will continue down the path to becoming the "losers' party" permanently, with devastating consequences for the nation.

The Loudoun vote

The Loudoun County vote is a crucial example of both the paradigm shift, and the potential, of the current political situation. On the one hand, the lunatic fringe of the local party, which holds all the leading offices, and supports Brooks, was unable to run a successful fear campaign to bring out an "anti-LaRouche" vote. While the crew did circulate scurrilous attacks on LaRouche, mostly taken from the Anti-Defamation League's 1986 tract, at the caucus doors, this was so unsuccessful that they finally shut down their operation altogether. The officials only brought out 176 voters, as compared to 471 in the 1996 caucus showdown between LaRouche and Clinton.

On the other hand, Spannaus campaign volunteers had mounted a broad mobilization through radio ads, street organizing, mail, and phone banks in order to rouse inert and uninformed citizens to understand the stakes in the vote. This brought out dozens of voters who otherwise would never have heard of the caucus election. (The local party's determination to protect itself as a "private club" is shown by the caucus system itself: Rather than hold a primary to let voters decide who will run, the party held caucuses, unadvertised and unannounced, in each local jurisdiction.) Spannaus campaign workers discovered that an increasing number of Loudouners are revolted by the smear tactics against LaRouche. Equally important is the fact that voters see LaRouche Democrats as the only ones committed to defeating 18-year incumbent Frank Wolf (R), and to addressing the realities of the financial/economic crisis, and the treasonous assault on the Presidency.

One African-American voter, who brought several of her friends with her, expressed outrage at the way the Brooks supporters concentrated on attacking LaRouche, and on treating her and her friends as if they didn't know what they were doing in voting for Spannaus. The Spannaus campaign also drew significant support from Arab-American voters, who saw her stand up against the vicious anti-Islamic campaign of Frank Wolf's supporters in the "Christian fundamentalist" community.

Spannaus had sent out a mass mailing to 10,000 voters in the Loudoun County seat of Leesburg, as well as 10,000 voters in neighboring Fairfax County, where the caucus took place on May 16. While this did not bring many people to the polls, it helped create a positive environment for the core of the Spannaus vote to come out.

While the Loudoun party officials made a big show of fairness, the caucus result was marred by at least two irregularities. First, the officials never showed Spannaus representatives the empty ballot box before it was used—meaning that its emptiness was not verified. Second, the vote counters did not check the number of ballots against the declarations that all voters must fill out at the time of compilation. A subsequent check has turned up no evidence of fraud.

Prince William County pressures

The Spannaus campaign has also filed a formal complaint with the Virginia voting rights division of the U.S. Justice Department, on the caucus procedures in Prince William County, one of the three most populous jurisdictions in the district. Before the caucus occurred, Spannaus objected to the fact that it was being held outside the 10th CD, without having justified this before the Justice Department. The caucus turnout itself underscored the validity of her concern, since 17 people came from 11th CD, where the caucus was being held, and obviously were unable to vote. Prince William voters who *were* from the 10th CD had to travel up to 25 miles in order to find the obscure, unmarked party headquarters.

The Justice Department says it is still investigating. Were the caucus shown to be unlawful, it would have to be rerun.

Despite these problems, Nancy Spannaus received 24 official votes, to 49 for Brooks. Another Spannaus voter arrived two minutes after the doors were closed. Counting the 17 voters from the wrong CD, Spannaus turned out 42 people—in Brooks's home district! This, too, must have put quite a scare into the local party officialdom.

The Prince William officials acted like an in-group determined to lose the general election. Those arriving to vote were forced to run a gauntlet of Brooks supporters outside the caucus, telling them that Spannaus was not a "mainstream" Democrat. When they got inside, they were confronted with a ballot that never listed the name "Spannaus," only the designation "S" to indicate the delegate-candidates pledged to her. The Spannaus campaign was not allowed to have an observer in the voting room, and the ballot counting was conducted in such a fashion as to make it impossible for the sole Spannaus observer to determine the accuracy of the tally.

African-American supporters of Spannaus were most outraged at the tactics of the campaign of African-American Brooks. One woman said that she was first confronted by Brooks, who tried to convince her that Spannaus "is not in the mainstream"; then came an official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; then, two more people. "Then," she said, "I went and voted for the Nancy Spannaus delegates! I've never been through anything like that before. Usually, when you go to vote, people just let you vote. This time, it was unbelievable. I had to run the gauntlet."

Another reflection of the insane attitude of the local Democratic "club" came in one man's comment to Spannaus. You're carrying out dirty tactics, he told her. What do you mean? asked Spannaus. "You're recruiting people at the motor vehicles bureau three days before the election!" As if recruiting Democrats were a threat to the party!

The issues at stake

During the last two weeks of the campaign, the campaign circulated 10,000 copies of a leaflet which posed the issues most sharply. "Are You a Citizen, or a Slave?" Spannaus's leaflet asks. "About one year ago, I went to the citizens of the 10th Congressional District of Virginia with an emergency message. Genocide on a scale not seen since Adolf Hitler was going on under the boot of Uganda's Museveni, in Central Africa. Hundreds of thousands of black Africans in Zaire were being 'ethnically cleansed,' and many shipped in boxcars back to Rwanda for extermination. I challenged your Congressman, Frank Wolf, who backs Museveni, to take action to *stop the holocaust!*

"The rallying cry was, 'Never Again!'

"Frank Wolf not only did nothing to stop the slaughter. . . .

"But what did *you,* the citizen of the 10th Congressional District, do about this genocide, which is still going on under Museveni puppets Kabila (Congo/Zaire) and Kagame (Rwanda)?

"Many of you also did nothing. . . .

"Your best way to act is to join the LaRouche political movement, and specifically, my campaign for Congress. Some of you have done so, to the great consternation of the Hunt Country oligarchy which owns Frank Wolf, and some of the nominal Democrats in the 10th CD.

"In the meantime, the threat which the IMF and British-backed forces represent to life itself in Central Africa, has dramatically expanded to the rest of the world. The systemic financial crisis which is gripping the world by the throat, and which Lyndon LaRouche uniquely warned about, has grown much worse. The bankers who have created this crisis through usury and looting, are demanding to be bailed out at the expense of millions, if not billions, of lives. You see the direction we're headed by looking at Southeast Asia, until last year a set of economies which were actually improving the living of their populations. Today, after looting by the global hedge funds, and by conditions imposed by the IMF, these nations are starving to death, and on the verge of social disintegration.

"That is the very same future that awaits us here in the United States, when the speculative bubble pops. . . .

"But here in the 10th CD, many of you are not true citizens, free and willing to think through the best policies and act on their behalf. Instead, you are *slaves,* . . . slaves of 'public opinion' and prejudice.

"You can't imagine fighting genocide, the way our forefathers did in World War II, or our ancestors did in the Revolutionary War. That would disrupt your life, get you in trouble with the authorities, interfere with the virtual reality that you have created to protect you from the realization that we've been going down the tubes over the past 30 years of post-industrial disintegration. . . .

The fact is, however, that your cowardice is literally killing people. . . .

"The question comes down to your courage: Will you be a slave, or a citizen? It is the answer to that question, which will determine the fate of the entire human race."