
Interview: Nancy Spannaus

Spannaus challenges Confederate establishment in Virginia election

Nancy Spannaus, the editor of New Federalist newspaper and a longtime associate of Lyndon LaRouche, announced on Jan. 16 her campaign for the Democratic nomination for governor of Virginia. The election is on Nov. 2, 1993. This is her second run for office. In 1990, she ran as an independent against Sen. John Warner (R), and got nearly 200,000 votes (about 18%) in the two-way race. Spannaus was interviewed by Anita Gallagher on Jan. 20.

EIR: Your campaign for governor of Virginia is taking place in one of only two states that hold statewide elections in 1993. Virginia tries to project the same image about its economy as the United States does in the international community; that is, that its economy is “stable,” and slowly “recovering.” What do you say?

Spannaus: Virginia has been protected economically over the last few years primarily by federal government spending, both on the military and the general bureaucracy. The state has had the fifth largest per capita spending by the military in the country, and there is no doubt that such spending has kept unemployment under the national average, in the state as a whole.

But even this spending did not prevent the Commonwealth from having a massive “revenue shortfall” back in the summer of 1990, when all of a sudden a \$4 million hole appeared on the revenue side of the budget. It is my projection that this is very likely to happen again.

The reasons are these. First, with the free trade push by the state government and the administration, the remaining manufacturing jobs—only 14% of the total in the state—are going to move out. Thousands of communications jobs have left the state in the last years, moving to Mexico. Secondly, there are going to be more severe budget cuts from the federal government, particularly in the military, which will be devastating.

Virginia Sen. Chuck Robb (D) has already leaked the results of a federal defense conversion report, which says that the state will lose 47,000 private sector jobs alone over the next four years, as a result of defense cuts in contracting. Then there’s a multiplier effect beyond that, which will be catastrophic.

In fact, despite the rhetoric, the majority of Virginia’s population is in a depression, just as is the majority of most

of the U.S. population. You just have a larger percentage of high-paid lawyers and government bureaucrats, who are very conspicuous. In the mining area of the state, the rural areas, and the cities outside the D.C. metropolitan area, there’s hideous poverty. Homelessness, for example, is on the rise for the sixth year in a row, and half of the homeless are poor families, many of whom have family members working.

EIR: What is the solution to Virginia’s economic collapse?

Spannaus: The solution in Virginia, as in the rest of the country, lies in changing the policy in Washington. We need a national bank which will provide directed, low-interest credit, to rebuild our infrastructure on a massive scale.

The problem comes when people try to chisel our citizens out of their rightful services and monies, in hopes of solving the problem. It’ll never work.

I have proposed, however, that Virginia could eliminate some wasteful spending. Sources have estimated, for example, that Mary Sue Terry, the current Attorney General and my prospective opponent in the gubernatorial race, has spent \$30 million on her prosecutions of the LaRouche movement over the past six years. This money could go to much better use—keeping Virginia’s libraries open, for example.

EIR: You are running against Mary Sue Terry, whom American political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche has called “The Ilse Koch of America.” Terry has fought tooth-and-nail to execute 16 people in the electric chair in her capacity as Attorney General since 1985; including a number of people who had strong claims of innocence! Recently, a European nation refused to extradite a prisoner accused of murder to Virginia. What about the death penalty, and Terry’s use of it?

Spannaus: The death penalty is one of the major issues in my campaign against Terry, and it is a key issue among the black population in the state. There was a tremendous shock, particularly in the wake of the Roger Coleman case. Terry had prevented the presentation of Coleman’s evidence that he was innocent, on the basis of the procedural fact that his lawyers filed one day late. Terry went all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court to win that one, and despite an international mobilization, succeeded in getting the governor to go ahead with approving the execution. That gave people

in Virginia new insight into her brutality.

In all fairness, you have to say that Terry is continuing a tradition in Virginia; she didn't start it. But this tradition, of Confederate origin, has made Virginia a state where it is virtually impossible to get a hearing on new evidence after conviction in a capital case—you have only 21 days! It also dictates the fact that most of the prisoners on death row are black and indigent. Terry argues that in the name of "judicial efficiency," their sentences should be executed as soon as possible, and she has literally proceeded to fill execution slots during 1992, without regard to claims of innocence, in order to "clean out" death row.

In Virginia, as elsewhere in the United States, there is popular support for the death penalty. But Terry's bloodlust is so obvious, that her behavior can be used to create a backlash against its barbarity.

But you should also realize, that Terry is not just a state politician. She has been head of the National Association of State Attorneys General, and was even asked, if only *pro forma*, if she wanted to be considered to become Attorney General of the United States. She represents the same current of New Age fascism which has been promoted by the Democratic Leadership Council that Clinton comes out of. Therefore, it is critical to nip her career (she's 46) in the bud now, before we find her taking even more of a role in national politics.

EIR: Mary Sue Terry was co-director of a federal-state task force of 400 armed personnel who raided the LaRouche movement's U.S. headquarters in Leesburg, Virginia in October 1986, in which certain participating elements intended to kill LaRouche. Is the prosecution of LaRouche and his associates still a major issue in Virginia?

Spannaus: You aren't kidding. Terry has previously worn her role in the LaRouche prosecutions like a badge on her sleeve, in her propaganda. Her announcement for governor, sent out to her supporters last week, did not include this "credential," however. I wonder if she's beginning to realize that her bragging could backfire.

Within 1992, five years after her mass arrests of LaRouche organizers, the Commonwealth sent two leaders of the movement to jail—Rochelle Ascher and Michael Billington. Billington has a 77-year sentence, a scandal by anyone's standard, and that fact has not been well publicized in the pro-Terry press, for obvious reasons. If it gets the publicity it deserves, Terry is going to look pretty bad.

The official line in the state capital, I would say, is that Terry slew the dragon, and the LaRouche movement is "dead." But leading politicians know this is not true, and that, in fact, the LaRouche movement represents a clear, if small, voice of conscience which could burgeon under appropriate conditions of discontent. For that reason, Terry is using her influence in the state courts to ensure that other LaRouche associates who were convicted in her frameup



Nancy Spannaus campaigning for Senate at a shipyard near Norfolk, Virginia in 1990.

trials, are jailed, and to continue the prosecutions of the remaining defendants. I think she, and her well-heeled backers in the coal industry and financial circles, are looking over their shoulders with considerable nervousness.

EIR: The U.S. Attorney's office in Alexandria, Virginia, which recently prosecuted four people connected to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) for conspiracy to kidnap 36-year-old Lewis du Pont Smith, an associate of Lyndon LaRouche, saw one of Terry's top assistants take the witness stand and lie under oath. What effect would a perjury prosecution of Terry's Senior Assistant Attorney General John Russell have on the governor's race?

Spannaus: The kidnapers' trial and Russell's perjury are going to be two of the major foci of my campaign appearances, and I wouldn't be surprised if some Republicans, if not others, picked up on the issue. You should realize that there is a very heated contest among three would-be gubernatorial candidates on the Republican side, and Mary Sue Terry is their target. A vulnerability that is as well documented as Russell's perjury, could become a major weapon against her—just as the FBI's description of Terry as acting from political ambition in the period leading up to the 1986 raid, became a major editorial item a couple years ago in the Republican *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

Now, it's unclear who would prosecute Russell, of course, since Terry herself is unlikely to act, and the federal

government prosecutors are still stunned by losing their case against Kidnappers, Inc. But it could become an issue in the legislature, and certainly among the general public, and give Terry a lot of embarrassment.

EIR: The Democratic Party has controlled Virginia's legislature and courts for more than 100 years, heavily influenced by the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, and the Scottish Rite's 20th-century creation, the Anti-Defamation League. Is the ADL the real power in Virginia?

Spannaus: It has become evident through the course of the LaRouche cases, that the ADL has inordinate influence in legal circles in Virginia, and considerable influence in the courts. In fact, the Bronfmans themselves and leading ADL funders, from John Kluge to major bluebloods, have established estates in Virginia, and play a major political power role. Terry herself received a human rights award from the ADL—just about the time that she began her recent drive for sped-up executions. She's venal enough, and racist enough, to be their darling.

The case of Virginia, which has a relatively small Jewish population, just underlines the fact that the ADL has nothing to do with Judaism. It's a lobby for organized crime and drugs, and a hit squad for financial interests who want to eliminate their opponents—which is the way it has acted in Virginia.

EIR: Although Terry is nominally a Democrat, she is opposed to a union dues checkoff privilege which Gov. Douglas Wilder granted state employees last year. Terry has declared that she is ready to participate in bankrupting the United Mine Workers Union, through the collection of \$50 million in court fines. Should labor support you, and will they do it?

Spannaus: I believe I will have a broad base of labor support in the election, regardless of what their leadership does. Unfortunately, the state leadership is viciously corrupt, and in the last election, when I ran against the generally disliked Republican Warner, the state AFL-CIO leadership would not even permit me to fill out a questionnaire. Danny LeBlanc threatened to have me arrested for simply asking for a form, and preferred to support Warner, de facto. I don't know whether he'll be successful in doing the same thing this time, although I'm sure he wants to. For the reality is that the labor bureaucracy in Virginia, feeling it has a tenuous hold on existence, really propitiates the powers that be. I've had labor leaders tell me I can't afford to come out pro-labor, because that will be the death of any politician politically. With these kinds of fighting attitudes, it's no surprise labor gets nowhere.

But I am encouraged to see that some labor leaders who were afraid to declare publicly for me in 1990, are now willing to come out in support of LaRouche's freedom. This indicates that they will be more willing to fight this time. They will also be encouraged by the fact that Governor

Mayors are fearful that Clinton won't deliver

At the 1993 winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 17-19, there was widespread recognition that President Clinton does not have any proposals on the table that even come close to addressing the magnitude of the problems facing urban areas in the United States.

The mayor of an Ohio steel city told *EIR*, "I am a steel worker, first and foremost, and I was a steel worker before I was a union representative or a mayor." He said that he had received "no response" from Clinton, after writing two letters to the President-elect detailing the devastation that will be wrought by the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The mayor of Virginia Beach, Virginia warned of what will happen in his area if threatened budget cuts in the military go through, wiping out an estimated 47,000 jobs in the state of Virginia alone. "I sense the embryo of retreat" in the new administration, was the view of the mayor of Gary, Indiana.

The Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness

heard testimony on the extent of these problems around the country, estimating the number of homeless at 750,000 and the number of malnourished as at least 30 million. "In your most far-reaching proposal, how many of these homeless do you propose to be able to assist?" *EIR* asked. The answer: "4,000 at best."

The Committee on Arts, Culture, and Recreation, which was supposed to discuss funding of the arts in the cities, instead dwelt on the issue of casino gambling (a new art form?). Many mayors, especially older ones, expressed disgust with the idea of making this practice even more widespread than it already is.

The recognition that Clinton's honeymoon may already be over, created a considerable receptivity to the alternative presented by *EIR* and Lyndon LaRouche. Discussing LaRouche's proposal to nationalize the Federal Reserve, along the lines of Alexander Hamilton's National Bank, one Texas mayor said, "If we could deal with that problem, we could do so much more on the real problems." Other mayors remembered LaRouche's warnings about the economic crisis and other issues. "I hate to admit it, but LaRouche was right on AIDS," said the mayor of a large downstate Illinois city.

—Matt Guice, Gerald Pechenuk, and Dr. Ernie Shapiro

Wilder and Secretary of Education James Dyke have publicly attacked Terry, making unprincipled party unity a virtual relic of the past.

EIR: African-Americans, such as Secretary of Education Dyke, have said that they fear that Terry's election could "set the clock back" to the days of political control by Virginia's "old boy" networks. Will the civil rights constituency support you?

Spannaus: Activists in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference were among the most vigorous supporters of my 1990 campaign, and I'm sure they also will be this time around. In fact, the situation is even more positive, because Rev. James Bevel, who led the most dramatic actions of Martin Luther King's civil rights movement and is well remembered for it, has now joined with the LaRouche movement.

But this can't become a racial issue. The problem with Terry is that she represents an anti-human perspective, one that denies individuals of all races their rights to life and justice. It would be a disaster if the black population decided to vote on a racial basis.

You see the problem with Governor Wilder, for example. He's black, but has had little compunction about implementing vicious austerity against his own people. Education Secretary Dyke is black, but his educational policies are New Age atrocities that will destroy the minds of all children. What is needed are real development policies, which presently only my candidacy, and that of a number of candidates for state delegate from the LaRouche movement, represent.

EIR: The U.S. Supreme Court may rule before July that Virginia must refund \$450 million in illegally collected taxes from retired military and federal employees. Should Virginia make the refund, and how will this affect your campaign?

Spannaus: This situation, for which Mary Sue Terry is directly responsible, is exemplary of the chiseling which austerity Democrats like Terry advocate. Even poorer states, like West Virginia, have moved to meet their obligations, once the courts ruled that they should not have taxed federal retirees. But Terry has refused, and continues to challenge the implementation of the ruling. I'm hoping that this issue will awaken those who blindly nod approval to "fiscal conservatism." This time, it's going to hit them.

EIR: Can you and your slate of candidates for Virginia's House of Delegates win?

Spannaus: It's a question of whether a political minority, officially scorned but representing the ideas of economic and social justice, can defeat a corrupt ruling machine. That depends upon how quickly that machine is discredited, and how bold are the individuals who are acquainted with the alternative. We could win, but it depends upon citizens acting on what they know to be right.

Lincoln's 'house divided' seen in rare manuscripts

In commemoration of Lincoln's Birthday (Feb. 12), the J.P. Morgan Library in New York presents "Lincoln: 'A House Divided,'" an exhibition of rare autograph manuscripts related to his famous speech of 1858 on the slavery issue: "A house divided against itself can not stand." The exhibition opened Jan. 12 and remains on view through Feb. 28.

Lincoln's "house divided" speech was delivered on June 16, 1858, upon his nomination as the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate. Although the manuscript of the text he used that day does not seem to have survived, the electrifying speech was recorded by journalists and reprinted in newspapers across the country. Even though Lincoln lost the senatorial race, the "house divided" speech marked his transformation from a local to a national figure.

The centerpiece of the Morgan Library exhibition is the earliest known manuscript in Lincoln's own hand in which he uses the biblical metaphor of a "house divided" (Mark 3:25) to express his opposition to the spread of slavery. Following a reference to the act permitting voters in the Kansas territory to decide for themselves whether to allow to forbid slavery, Lincoln writes: "A house divided against itself can not stand. I believe this government can not endure permanently, half slave, and half free." Later he adds, "I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall; but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided."

Although the leaf is undated, most scholars agree that it was probably written several weeks or months before his historic speech of June 1858. Other references in the 35-line manuscript suggest that may have been part of an unrecorded (or undelivered) speech Lincoln drafted in response to a speech made by his political rival, Stephen Douglas, on Dec. 9, 1857. (Douglas took the position that the U.S. territories should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they wished to have slavery.) Whatever its original purpose, the text of the leaf was incorporated almost verbatim into Lincoln's "house divided" speech the following June.

The manuscript, which is part of the Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Morgan Library, will be exhibited alongside several other Lincoln autographs also related to the text of the "house divided" speech. In one of these, Lincoln vigorously condemns the popular sovereignty doctrine of Douglas and urged voters to reject what he considers to be a morally bankrupt position: "Welcome, or unwelcome, agreeable, or disagreeable, whether this nation shall be an entire slave nation, is the issue before us." Hoping that civil war can be avoided, he adds, "To give the victory to the right, not *bloody bullets*, but *peaceful ballots* only are necessary."