

Barry case sparks resistance to frameup of black leaders

by Mel Klenetsky

On June 13, Washington, D.C.'s Mayor Marion Barry announced that he would not seek re-election, as the selection of jurors continued in the Department of Justice case against him. The announcement came in the midst of a growing citizens movement, angered at the selective prosecution and entrapment tactics of U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens and the Department of Justice.

Supporters of Barry have filed a petition with the United Nations resolution, and a Citizens Grand Jury began to mobilize political forces to stop the injustices perpetrated against the black mayor of the nation's capital. Days after Barry made his announcement that he would not seek re-election, Stephens announced the convening of a new grand jury, targeting alleged corruption in the Barry administration as a whole.

Both Jesse Jackson and D.C. delegate and mayoral candidate Walter Fauntroy had urged Barry to resign. Jackson, a friend of Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, also urged Barry to cop a plea, and indicated that his announcement not to run would pave the way for a plea bargain.

Jackson has long been a player in the effort to oust Barry from office. For months, prior to the government "sting" against Barry, rumors were constantly surfacing in the media that Jackson would seek the office that Barry held. Jackson, with his national reputation, playing coy throughout, angered many D.C. citizens when he so openly asked Barry not to seek re-election.

When Barry's announcement finally came, he stressed, "This is not related to my legal situation, but to my recovery and my wife and son, who have suffered painfully." Barry sought rehabilitation from substance abuse, after he was caught in a federal sting through which a former friend of his, Rasheeda Moore, lured him into a hotel room and offered him cocaine.

Barry has been involved in D.C. politics since 1972, when he began serving a term on the D.C. Board of Education. In 1974 he was elected to the City Council, and he became mayor in 1979. Barry has had strong support from his constituents, especially senior citizens, which makes the Department of Justice efforts to oust him appear all the more political. If Mayor Barry is seeking rehabilitation, why force him to resign? Why put him in jail? These are the questions to which Barry's constituents are demanding answers.

Anger in the black community

The malice and vindictiveness of the federal targeting of Barry were the subject of a Citizens Grand Jury convened by Rev. James Bevel's Citizens Committee for Constitutional Government. Washington's five black daily newspapers have also picked up on the issue of the targeting of Mayor Barry and other black elected officials by the Department of Justice.

The *Washington Times* on June 13 reported on the sharp increase of circulation of the black dailies, as D.C. citizens became fed up with the coverage of the mayor in the *Washington Post* and *Washington Times*. Black newspaper headlines expressed the growing view that the Justice Department is running a rotten political frameup to destroy Barry. One example is the *Capitol Spotlight*, which headlined its coverage, "Bait-gate: U.S. government, Jay on trial."

Several weeks before Barry decided not to seek re-election, Mary Cox, a Washington, D.C.-based attorney, submitted a complaint to the United Nations. Cox explained how justice for Barry was sought through Congress and the White House but was not obtained, so the case of the political witchhunt against the mayor was taken to the Secretary General of the U.N. Addressing a 500-person rally in Washington on June 13, Cox announced that she would take her petition

to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), now meeting in Copenhagen, where the issue of human rights is being addressed.

Cox described how the Department of Justice had targeted Barry since 1984, spending more than \$40 million to bring him down. She described how the mayor, his wife, and son were harassed, how his life was endangered with the sting operation, and how his phone lines were tapped and all his moves monitored in this six-year effort.

'Investigate the investigators'

Reverend Bevel, in calling for the Citizens Grand Jury, maintained that those who manufacture crime, ensnaring political targets as Barry was ensnared, are not morally, spiritually, or legally capable themselves of investigating crime. Bevel's call set into motion a Citizens Grand Jury that will continue to monitor the Barry trial and raise the issues of the unjust targeting of black politicians and other groups by U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, and the Department of Justice generally.

Former D.C. Superior Court District Judge Harry Tousseint Alexander began the discussion at the Citizens Grand Jury by outlining the intended role of the grand jury in American jurisprudence, in protecting citizens against indictment by corrupt and politically motivated prosecutors. In Alexander's words, there is no room for taps, tapes, and bugs, which infringe on individual freedoms in this process. Alexander asked the audience to look into the source of the illegal leaks to the press from the grand jury that eventually indicted Barry, and also to look into the certification of the grand jury in the first place, to pinpoint responsibility for prosecutorial misconduct.

Dr. Robert Hamilton, a baptist minister and chairman of the ministers committee of the mayor's office, testifying at the Citizens Grand Jury on June 12, and expressed his concern about the prosecutorial violations in the prosecution of Marion Barry. Hamilton indicated how blatant the Department of Justice, President Bush, and certain press were in openly announcing their efforts to force Barry out of office.

Hamilton denounced the costly, elaborate, and illegal sting operation and the attempt to convict Barry in the press through rumors and slander, prior to trial. "There's a clique that wants to decide for whom we can and can't vote," Hamilton said. "If Attorney General Thornburgh wants to run D.C., let him run for office, not be a dictator." Hamilton called for an "investigation of the investigators."

Selective and racist prosecution

Others testifying before the Citizens Grand Jury raised the broader issue of the targeting of black officials. Beverly Neil of the D.C. Voter Education and Research Action Group cited a 1977 study by Prof. Mary R. Sawyer of Iowa State University, entitled, "Dilemma of black politics." That study, since updated, documents the harassment of black

elected officials, giving case studies of the more prominent examples like New York's Adam Clayton Powell, former Illinois congressman Ralph Metcalf, and former Massachusetts senator Edward Brooke. More than 61% of black elected officials were under indictment or are being harassed, according to the Sawyer study.

Fay Williams, from Rep. Mervyn Dymally's (D-Calif.) office, presented the audience with documentation from the *Congressional Record* of an affidavit that showed the existence within the FBI of a policy, called "Frühmenschen" (German for "aboriginals"), that justified the routine investigation, without probable cause, of black elected officials on the racist premise that these officials were intellectually and socially incapable of governing.

Schiller Institute President Webster Tarpley also spoke, demonstrating the selective and vindictive nature of the prosecution. Tarpley described how Thornburgh is not investigating his own long-term aides, David Runkel, accused of slanderous and illegal leaks against Rep. William Gray (D-Pa.), and Henry Barr, a 21-year aide to Thornburgh who has been accused of cocaine dealing, while he perpetrated the political persecution of people like R. Budd Dwyer, the former treasurer of Pennsylvania, who blew his brains out during a 1987 press conference after being convicted by a Thornburgh-initiated witchhunt. Dwyer had accused Thornburgh of going after him for not signing travel vouchers for Thornburgh's wife, for a trip she took to Europe, when Thornburgh was governor and Dwyer treasurer of the state.

Tarpley likened the "Get Barry" task force to the "Get LaRouche," "Get Martin Luther King," and "Get Hoffa" task forces, and described the Jay Stephens prosecution as a coup d'état in the nation's capital.

Carlos Wesley, an *EIR* journalist specializing in Panama, described the use of the Thornburgh Doctrine in justifying the U.S. invasion of Panama. Wesley described how thousands of innocent citizens, mostly black, were killed in order to capture one man, whose alleged drug involvement was based on such things as testimony by convicted drug dealers who testified against him in order to have their sentences reduced. Wesley warned that this unconstitutional use of force against Panama can be used in the cities of the United States, against urban populations.

The growing sentiment in the black communities is that they are the target of political repression and economic genocide. Race riot tensions are exploding in New York City and other urban centers, fanned by FBI informants such as Al Sharpton.

Reverend Bevel's call for the Citizens Grand Jury and his emphasis on non-violence (Bevel was an associate of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, and a prominent leader of the civil rights movement) were designed to productively channel the growing political dissent in the black community into concrete forms of political protest, which demand an end to the injustices being perpetrated.