

Two cities demand demolition of KKK founder Pike's statue

by Patricia Salisbury

The national effort to remove the statue of Ku Klux Klan founder Gen. Albert Pike from Judiciary Square in Washington, D.C. won a victory in mid-November, with the passage of resolutions in the city councils of Buffalo, New York and Newark, New Jersey demanding that the statue come down. A mobilization around this issue was launched in September by the independent presidential campaign of Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. and Rev. James Bevel. The statue of the Confederate general and Scottish Rite Freemason, they said, is a blight upon the nation's capital; the failure of official Washington to remove it forthwith, is a telling indication of exactly what is wrong with our government today.

The resolution passed on Nov. 10 by the Buffalo Common Council cites the fact that Pike, known as a leader of Civil War-era Freemasonry, was a chief founder and strategist of the Ku Klux Klan, Chief Judiciary Officer of the Klan, and the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan in Arkansas. The resolution states that the Pike statue is an insult to all those who look to the capital of the United States as the center of liberty and justice. The resolution is addressed to the President of the United States, with copies forwarded to the Department of the Interior and the Department of Labor, the two government agencies that spend taxpayers money to maintain the statue.

On Nov. 11, retiring Newark city councilman George Branch introduced a resolution calling for the removal of the statue and held a hearing on the matter on Nov. 16. The resolution passed unanimously.

The Pike issue continues to draw coverage in the media nationally. On Nov. 10, the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* printed a four-page article titled "Down the Pike in Washington, Did Statuesque Arkansas Hero Have Klan Ties?" The article, written in response to the growing momentum to

remove the statue, attempts to deny Pike's Ku Klux Klan connections. Walter L. Brown, a retired University of Arkansas history professor who is described as the state's foremost authority on Pike, told the paper he had received a dozen phone calls from Washingtonians seeking to learn more about Pike, his Freemasonry, and his Klan ties.

The Buffalo and Newark resolutions are closely modeled on a resolution introduced into the City Council of the District of Columbia on Oct. 22, 1992 by council member William P. Lightfoot. So far there has been no action on the Lightfoot resolution, despite the fact that eight members of the City Council, Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly, and former mayor Marion Barry have all signed a petition calling for its removal.

The issue is particularly hot in Washington, where LaRouche-Bevel campaign workers distributed hundreds of thousands of leaflets exposing Pike's background. Reverend Bevel, LaRouche's running mate, campaigned throughout the District and led rallies at the Judiciary Square site which were also addressed by leading political figures including Florence Pendelton, one of the District's two "shadow" senators, and leaders of the Washington religious community. With the spotlight focused on the scandal in a city with a large minority population, the removal of the statue seemed a foregone conclusion.

KKK and ADL defend statue

Campaign organizers have been told by informed sources, however, that the D.C. resolution is locked in committee and is likely to die without coming to a vote. Whatever behind-the-scene pressures are being brought to bear on City Council Chairman John Wilson, who will determine whether the resolution goes to a vote, the key institutions which have declared themselves openly in defense of the statue are: 1)

the Ku Klux Klan, and 2) the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL).

In the days just prior to the Nov. 3 election, the offices of rally organizers received threatening phone calls from individual identifying themselves as members of the Klan and leaving the phone number of a Klan office in Manassas, Virginia. The callers vowed, amid a stream of profanities, that the statue would never come down. Singled out for abuse in the calls was Reverend Bevel.

On Nov. 13, D.C. Park Police broke with their previous practice of permitting peaceful assembly on the base of the statue and arrested Reverend Bevel and author and historian Anton Chaitkin, who has developed much of the documentation on the history of the statue and Pike's KKK and Freemasonic connections. Reverend Bevel stated at the time of this arrest that the D.C. government was acting on behalf of the Klan.

More recently, the regional office of the ADL, the organized crime front masquerading as a civil rights agency, defended the statue in response to a Washington-based reporter who called asking about the campaign to bring the statue down. The ADL spokesman told the reporter that "it is an idiotic charge that Pike was affiliated with the KKK. There is no documentation of that. We don't know of any connections. This is the LaRouche people. They always come up with conspiratorial charges. However, even if there is documentation, it is still a small issue relative to the larger issues in the world today, like racism."

Informed Washington sources have told organizers for the ongoing LaRouche-Bevel campaign that the word is out that because of the "LaRouche connection," the campaign is perceived as "anti-Semitic." The ADL has a lot to lose with this issue, since any scrutiny of Pike's history leads directly to the common roots of the KKK and the ADL itself in the Freemasonic networks that have conducted both overt and covert warfare against the United States. Indeed, by defending Pike and the KKK, the ADL is defending itself.

The ADL's "big lie" technique will encounter more obstacles than usual, given the passionate nature of the issues around the Pike statue. It remains to be seen whether ADL methods of intimidation can keep D.C. political figures from voting to remove the statue, which Mayor Kelly termed "offensive" when she signed the petition calling for its removal.

Debate on the Pike statue has become so pervasive in D.C. political life, that it broke out at the much-publicized walking tour of President-elect Clinton. Volunteers circulating petitions to bring down the statue spotted D.C. delegate Eleanor Holmes-Norton among the dignitaries, and asked her to endorse the campaign. Holmes-Norton, who had received a dossier on General Pike, but had apparently become a victim of the ADL propaganda machine, said only that her staff was "researching the issue." Reminded that she had been supplied with documentation weeks ago, she snapped that "this did not count because it was supplied by the LaRouche

people." However, realizing that she was still on the spot when members of the crowd loudly asked, "When are you going to bring it down?" Holmes-Norton said that she was calling for a federal investigation, and that this call was "on the record."

Mayor Kelly has had a very different reaction; reiterating her commitment to seeing the statue come down, she expressed surprise and disapproval concerning the arrest of Reverend Bevel, and pledged that she would contact police authorities to look into the matter. "Reverend Bevel is a wonderful man," she said. "I think the world of him, and I think the work these people are doing is very important."

LaRouche-Bevel campaign organizers are redoubling efforts to bring the statue down. Despite police harassment, rallies at the statue have continued every Friday, and a major demonstration which will draw people from throughout the East Coast and the South has been set for Dec. 4.

New evidence

New proofs of the Pike-Klan connection continue to fuel the campaign. Historian Anton Chaitkin has added to the dossier, materials in the public record in the Virginia court system. Documents obtained by Chaitkin establish that in 1926, the "Albert Pike Klan No. 32," the official name by which the KKK was known in Norfolk, Virginia, filed a court action in its own name.

Virginia KKK leader J.R. Kemp petitioned for an injunction against officers of the Klan's Norfolk subsidiary, which had taken the camouflage name of the Puritan Club, to force them to return control of their clubhouse to the official Albert Pike Klan No. 32. The Albert Pike KKK lodge lost the suit, when the court decided not to interfere in an internal KKK squabble.

An article in the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot* covered the judicial action on June 4, 5, 8 and 12, 1926, reporting on June 8 under the headline, "Court Dismisses Contempt Action Against Klansmen," ". . . The controversy between Albert Pike Klan No. 32, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., and the Puritan Club for possession of the records of the club, is scheduled to begin this morning in the court of Law and Chancery, Judge McIlwaine on the bench."

Chaitkin points out that Albert Pike's KKK had a strong presence in Virginia life in 1926. In late March, 112 robed Knights of the Klan marched in the burial procession of a Norfolk police sergeant. In May, a month before the cited court action, the Norfolk Academy of Music put on a show called "The Awakening," a musical rendition of the D.W. Griffith KKK propaganda film "Birth of a Nation." The production was staged for the benefit of a fund to build a temple for the Albert Pike KKK. The show broke all attendance records in Norfolk's theatrical history. The hit number was a song and dance routine entitled "Daddy Swiped Our Last Clean Sheet and Joined the Ku Klux Klan."