

'Invisible Empire' of Kate Graham Targets D.C. for 'Negro Removal'

by Edward Spannaus

The planned shutdown of D.C. General Hospital is but one facet of an overall plan for the District of Columbia, aimed at eliminating as much as possible of the poorer, black population of the city, in order to promote hundreds of billions of dollars of speculative real estate development. This scheme, sometimes simply dubbed "The Plan" by black activists in the District, is run from behind the scenes by the *Washington Post's* Katharine Graham and a secret empire operating first and foremost through her "Critter Company," the elite Federal City Council, a private organization composed of 150 of the Washington metropolitan area's largest real estate developers, banks, law firms, and corporations.

This scheme is fairly described by 2004 Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., as an operation conducted by "Kkkatie Graham and Her Critter Company, whose included intention is Negro Removal." Poor Mayor Anthony Williams and Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton are mere terror-stricken lackeys of Graham's "Invisible Empire."

The **Federal City Council** (FCC) operates through a myriad of private institutions and government agencies; it is the dominant force behind the District of Columbia **Office of Planning**, and the recently created—and very powerful—**National Capital Revitalization Corporation** (NCRC), which is aiming to promote billions of dollars of "public-private" development in targetted areas of the city. The FCC is also a powerful influence behind the **National Capital Planning Commission** (NCPC), the federal planning agency which has promoted its long-range "Legacy Plan" for Washington. The NCPC's plan puts most of its emphasis on the East Capitol area around D.C. General Hospital and the South Capitol area, which is the primary, immediate target of "redevelopment" plans coming out of the NCRC.

The Federal City Council was founded in 1954 by the *Washington Post's* Philip Graham, to combat "blight" and to foster "renewal and development," as they delicately put it. It was modelled on Pittsburgh's "Allegheny Conference," financed by Richard Mellon, which had spearheaded "slum clearance" in Pittsburgh for the previous decade. Its first staff director had led the "slum clearance" program in Baltimore which had displaced thousands of black families in that city.

The Results

The Federal City Council's first project was the infamous "urban renewal" of Southwest D.C.—which drove the black population out that area in favor of the construction of offices and expensive apartment buildings.

Since 1970, the black component of the District's population has declined from 71% to about 60%. At the same time, the black population of Prince George's County—which borders D.C. on the east, rose from 25% to 55%. Those leaving included poor people who could no longer live in the District because of the shortage of affordable housing, as well as upwardly mobile blacks leaving the slums to find better living conditions.

Recently released census figures show that the District's black population was reduced by over 56,000 just during the past ten years. The *Washington Post*, barely able to restrain its glee, reported this in a front-page story on March 31, noting that the city's black population dropped at an even faster rate during the 1990s, than in previous decades.

Overall the city's population has actually increased over the past few years, with whites, Hispanics and Asians accounting for the increase. (The current population of the District is about 572,000.)

The population loss has taken place in the five majority-

black wards in the eastern half of the city, with the greatest loss of population in Anacostia's Ward 8 (92% black), located south and east of the Anacostia River, whose population dropped by nearly 15%. The *Post* noted dryly that some attribute this decline "to an exodus of low-income families driven out when public housing complexes were demolished."

Last August, in a story headlined "More Whites Are Making D.C. Home," the *Washington Post* had reported on preliminary census data, showing that the city's white population was on the rise for the first time in many years. Dwight Cropp, a former city official and member of the FCC's Board of Trustees, was quoted by the *Post* as saying that the city was going through "a transitional period." He described it as "a movement away from government programs addressing the needs of certain sectors of the community (it is clear, which sectors), to an emphasis on economic development and an overall strategy for reviving the city."

The *Post* slyly asserted: "It was pressure for fiscal stability from whites and other new D.C. residents that was behind the recent upheavals and layoffs at D.C. General Hospital, Cropp said."

Indeed, the deliberate reduction of city services — including fire and police services — which intensified under the rule of the Congressionally imposed Financial Control Board, plays a central role in driving the population out of certain neighborhoods, which can then be targeted for "redevelopment" and "gentrification." The closure of D.C. General Hospital would leave the eastern and southeast part of D.C. without its primary health care provider, handing over the poor, and, in large part, uninsured population to the tender mercies of a private hospital corporation, one already being investigated and sued for racketeering in a number of jurisdictions.

The Waterfront Initiative

The public face of the city government's efforts is the **Anacostia Waterfront Initiative**, a joint federal-city planning project which encompasses the seven-mile strip along the Anacostia River in Southeast Washington, up to the area surrounding RFK Stadium and D.C. General Hospital. The Initiative's concentration is the southern part, the area around the Navy Yard and the Southeast Federal Center. The Navy is transferring 5,000 jobs from Crystal City in neighboring Arlington County, to the Navy Yard, and with it, naturally, come defense contractors, which are building and renting new commercial office space.

Adjacent to the Navy Yard on the west is the Southeast Federal Center, a 55-acre federal site which will be built up with both federal office buildings and private commercial development. How can private developers build on federal land? Courtesy of a special bill sponsored by D.C.'s Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, and passed by Congress last year, which allows the federal General Services Administration to enter into joint ventures with private developers.

The real estate in this area has an estimated current value of several billions of dollars, limited by the fact that much of it is now inhabited by the city's poorest residents, mostly black. If those residents can be removed, then the potential value of this land skyrockets, opening up a massive speculative potential, which knowledgeable sources have estimated at up to a trillion dollars. While a huge amount of development is now under way or planned for the north and west side of the Anacostia, specific plans for the southeast side are proceeding much more slowly, because of the current run-down condition of the area.

For example, it has been publicly reported that America Online (AOL) founder Jim Kimsey has been in discussions with D.C. officials, including Mayor Williams, about moving part of AOL's operation into the Anacostia area which is targeted for redevelopment. Kimsey assigned the then-head of the Republican National Committee, Jim Nicholson, to work with the city government on details. The problem right now, is that Anacostia has the highest rates of unemployment, poverty and crime in the District. According to knowledgeable sources, the deal fell apart at the AOL/Time-Warner board level, when the board balked at the idea of sending their yuppies to work in the area; board members said that they couldn't expect their employees to work in such a place. "Get the poor people out of the area, and we and other big players are back in" — was the message that was delivered to the city government.

The Real Estate Scam

The case-study of AOL shows precisely what is the "dilemma" faced by those who are greedily eyeing the D.C. real estate market. These include not only the financial and real estate interests comprising Katharine Graham's FCC, and related institutions such as the Greater Washington Board of Trade, but also New York financial and banking interests. The District is now said to be swarming with national mortgage lenders, led by Citicorp, which are positioned to take advantage of the easing of restrictions on interstate banking, which they helped push through Congress.

Mortgage brokers are targeting properties in, or adjacent to the areas slated for "redevelopment," especially Southeast and Anacostia. In a pattern seen across the country, mortgages and properties are bought up cheap. In D.C., they are then purchased by the **Redevelopment Land Agency**, a federal-city agency which is authorized to purchase, assemble, and offer such properties, at discounted prices and tax breaks, to developers — backed by the same mortgage companies and banks that targeted the neighborhood in the first place. Once the projects get going, the developers and construction companies get their cuts — and additional tax breaks for employing District residents in low-wage laborer jobs, etc. Over the next few months, the Redevelopment Land Agency's functions are scheduled to be taken over by the National Capital Revitalization Corporation.