

D.C. Movement Strikes Blows Against 'Negro Removal' Plan

by Michele Steinberg

The international campaign to save D.C. General Hospital, has struck another political blow against what Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. has characterized as “KKKatie Graham’s Invisible Empire, Its FCC Critter Company and her Negro Removal Program.” On April 12, after a months’ long political battle, the democratically elected Washington, D.C. City Council *unanimously* voted up \$21.5 million to keep D.C. General Hospital open, defying the D.C. Financial Control Board run by Gingrichite Congressional Republicans. Earlier in the day, the council’s Human Services Committee unanimously voted to delete \$75 million that would have paid an Arizona-based hospital takeover company to *close* D.C. General, the only public hospital in the nation’s capital. That outfit, known as Doctors Community Health Care (DCHC), has a record laced with charges of fraud.

This was no ordinary vote, as could be witnessed in the “duel” of packed press conferences by the Council and the Control Board that day, and Mayor Anthony Williams’ denunciation of the Council afterwards. It was a life and death fight for the American Constitutional principle of the General Welfare, that came to a head the week April 9, after the Mayor and the Control Board—which imposes iron-fisted austerity on the people of Washington—moved to ram through the contract with DCHC.

It was clear that with the input of the LaRouche movement, the next phase of the battle would hit Washington’s “secret government” in a way never before politically felt. On April 10, the FDR-PAC, a political action committee founded by associates of Democratic Party leader Lyndon H. LaRouche, issued 750,000 new broadsides, announcing:

“We therefore, in the name of the principle of the General Welfare, defy KKKatie Graham, and her Kritter Kompany, the Federal City Council, National Capital Revitalization Corporation, National Capital Planning Commission, and all

the civic groups, ‘community activists’ and clergymen who are either owned by them, or merely rented. The lives of the people, ‘of the least of these,’ are, according to the U.S. Constitution sacred. D.C. General will save their lives because ‘We, the People’ shall save D.C. General.”

The release of the broadside followed a week of town meetings, candlelight vigils, Congressional lobbying, rallies, and press conferences led by the Coalition to Save D.C. General Hospital, which has used the broadsides to build a formidable grass roots civil rights movement. By April 12, just over week after the Schiller Institute/Coalition held a town meeting on April 4 to honor Dr. Martin Luther King and win this fight, the situation reached a showdown: The City Council announced an alternative plan of saving the hospital by appropriating \$21.5 million in city funds for D.C. General to operate as a fully funded, full-service public hospital.

Duel of Press Conferences

When 12 of the 13 City council members appeared at the press conference, they were reversing a “star chamber” vote to approve the shutdown plan, which had been taken by the Control Board the previous night, and made public in a press conference that same day. The Control Board and Williams had voted, in effect, to deny D.C. General its threadbare \$45 million annual operating funds, and pay \$75 million to DCHC to “close the damn place down.” DCHC itself had just been terminated in its contract with Aliquippa, Pennsylvania (see accompanying article), for the same reasons of financial turpitude which the D.C. Control Board had ignored and denied.

At the press conference, Councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis told Coalition co-founder Lynne Speed, one of LaRouche’s longtime associates, that the City Council will hold hearings to look into the “contractor”—DCHC. Such hearings are expected to uncover massive corruption in the

Control Board, Congress, and in the Mayor's Administration, all of which had been duly informed that DCHC and its partner firm, New Century Financial Enterprises (NCFE) are being sued and charged with fraud.

A week before the April 12 showdown, KKKatie Graham's "Invisible Empire" began using openly fascist tactics against the Coalition to Save D.C. General. Key employees who supported D.C. General, most prominently its CEO, Dr. Michael Barch, were targeted for dismissal; staff at other hospitals were being threatened with getting fired if they supported D.C. General by attending town meetings or circulating literature. A Howard University Student Government teach-in on April 10 was nearly cancelled at the last moment.

But the Coalition knew that the Control Board was on thin ice, especially because of the rejection of DCHC in Pennsylvania, and escalated the political fight. Its broadsheet, the third of recent weeks, is being circulated nationally. It charges, "Recent victories by national forces assembled to stop the shutdown of D.C. General Hospital have upset the plan of the city's Anglo-American elite for a 'facelift' and 'whitening of the nation's capital.' This plan has been unfolding since the 1950s with the creation of the Federal City Council (FCC), a secretive 'above government' group founded by Katharine Graham's husband, Phil Graham. . . . Closing D.C. General is intended to empty the Southeast of African-American 'undesirables,' to set the stage for a hoped-for 'real estate boom,' potentially valued as much as a *trillion* dollars—once '*Lebensraum*' is provided for new affluent residents."

The broadside details the decades-long history of the Katharine Graham-headed Federal City Council, that "Invisible Empire" which has terrorized and controlled Washington politicians through her *Washington Post* newspaper and other means. It continues, "a global and national movement, has said that D.C. General is not a local issue, but a question of the General Welfare. . . . There must be a *fully funded, full-service public hospital* in Washington, D.C."

A Special King Commemoration

What preceded the Coalition's successive breakthroughs on the Pennsylvania flank, and then in Washington, was its April 4 mass meeting, on the 33rd anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, held at the Union Temple Baptist Church of Rev. Willie Wilson, who has been a leading member of the Coalition. Prominent leaders joined the April 4 meeting, showing its nationwide support.

Michigan State Rep. LaMar Lemmons told the meeting he had come all the way from Michigan to support D.C. General. He spoke about his meeting with members of the City Council that day, and how he was shocked that the Control Board can deny the D.C. citizenry their sovereignty. "People here do not have power, though they are citizens." He said, "When you have situations like this, as you have here in D.C. with the hospital—and it *has* to remain open—it's true, you have to draw the line. Business as usual has to stop. We have

to do as people did, before, in Montgomery, Alabama, under King's leadership. You need the same kind of movement in D.C."

And in the face of threats to have him removed for supporting his own hospital, Dr. Michael Barch, CEO of the Public Benefits Corp. (PBC) that currently runs D.C. General, spoke at the town meeting. Barch told the crowd that D.C. General is "not just a hospital—it is an urban health care system." There are over 30 different specialized clinics at the hospital "and every one of them is free." Barch pointed out that D.C. General is required by law to take care of anyone who walks through its doors, and that years ago, it had been established that the cost of this is \$75 million a year, while the allocation given in the post-Gingrich Congress, was \$45 million. "The [hospital's] budgetary problems were the result of . . . a systematic underpayment of the hospital."

Barch also blasted the media: "When I came to D.C. General, I came with a lot of 'Northwest' prejudices," referring to the more affluent Northwest quadrant of the capital. "What I thought, was based on the *Washington Post*. . . . [In fact] D.C. General has an outstanding medical staff. When you think about what the people that work there have lived through in the last several months, you see . . . commitment that is unlike any that I have ever seen in a medical facility."

The participation of Representative Lemmons was just an illustration of the massive support for keeping D.C. General Hospital open. The Schiller Institute/Coalition press conference on April 4 had released the names of 350 signers of a support statement that declared saving the hospital "a matter of international importance." Signers include 5 former U.S. Congressmen and Administration officials, 75 state legislators from 25 states, 150 trade union officials from 30 states, 60 other municipal, county, and state elected officials, and hundreds of religious, civil rights, and ethnic and political leaders. The list of signers was also presented to dozens of Congressional offices who were met by citizens' lobby groups on April 4.

By Monday, April 9, a report circulated that there would be an attempt by the Public Benefits Corp. that night, to vote out Dr. Barch as CEO. Citizens were mobilized to defend Dr. Barch at the meeting, but no vote was taken, because the quorum of PBC board members did not show up. The same day, the President of Howard University—who is a member of Graham's Federal City Council—moved to cancel a teach-in called to support D.C. General, that would feature Schiller Institute/Coalition speakers. Despite the pressure, the Howard meeting took place with student support. After the City Council vote on April 12, Mayor Williams announced he will *try* to line up support for a veto; several City Council members say they will file a lawsuit to block the Control Board.

But like Dr. King's civil rights efforts, and the 1989 candlelight revolution in Berlin that brought down the Berlin Wall, the fight will be determined by a movement of the people, by the people and for the people.