

'Cranes of LaRouche' And D.C. Mayor Williams

by Lynne Speed and Carl Osgood

In Friedrich Schiller's famous ballad, "The Cranes of Ibykus," an honored national poet is brutally murdered, the terrible deed witnessed only by a flock of cranes—who later that day, at a great poetry festival, so haunt the murderers' tortured conscience, that the criminals give themselves away. So today, the mayor of Washington, D.C., Anthony Williams, is being tormented by his past misdeeds. The mayor took the lead in murdering the city's venerable and highly valued public hospital in 2001. It was an act which has cost scores of residents their lives; it was fiercely fought against by forces rallied by Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche's movement, in the Coalition to Save D.C. General Hospital.

The events leading up to the stunning July 26 decision by the Washington Board of Elections to throw Mayor Williams off the ballot for the September Democratic primary—totally unexpected by his re-election campaign—reflect the ongoing willful disregard for the law and the welfare of the residents of the District, on the part of Williams and his backers both inside and outside the national capital. Williams was verbally indicted for his disregard in mass meetings and Congressional briefings in the Spring of 2001, by LaRouche and by Coalition leaders Lynne Speed, Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, and D.C. General medical personnel, among others.

Despite the wishes of Williams' backers—such as the Federal City Council, the Democratic Leadership Council, and the late "KKK-Katie" Katharine Graham's *Washington Post*—the "Ibykus principle" is lawfully asserting itself with Tony Williams, all the while that LaRouche's forecast of financial disintegration proves itself to be true.

'A True New Democratic Plan'

Williams is a creature of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), spawned by organized-crime-linked figure Michael Steinhardt, with Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), Al From, and other Wall Street toadies, to drive out of the Democratic Party any vestiges of the Franklin Roosevelt tradition of promoting the general welfare. Williams' policies of "Negro Removal" from prime urban real estate, fit in perfectly with the FDR-hating DLC president Al From, who has recently been in the news defending Wall Street from the anger of the Democratic rank-and-file.

On April 23, 2001, Williams promoted his plan to shut down D.C. General Hospital as being a "true New Democratic plan," to a meeting of the DLC, "The New Economy in the



Washington's Mayor Tony Williams back in February 2001, facing one of the mass meetings called to stop him and the Financial Control Board from shutting down the city's only public hospital. Williams killed the hospital that May; now a nemesis seems to be pursuing him.

Maryland-D.C.-Virginia Region." Appropriately enough, the motto of the conference was a quote from the British Empire's Charles Darwin, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." At the meeting, Williams claimed that shutting down D.C. General would *end* racial discrimination against poor people by allowing them to "go anywhere" in the District for health care—rather than going to their highly rated and internationally reputed public hospital! Williams also teamed there with Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley to trumpet their scheme to bring the 2012 Olympics to the Washington-Baltimore region. Though he lied at the time, Williams and the city have since acknowledged that D.C. General's site was wanted for the Olympics plan and related real-estate speculation.

Fifteen months after Williams succeeded in shutting down D.C. General, the District's health-care system is in far worse crisis, because emergency room capacity, including Level 1 trauma care, has been slashed by the shutdown.

Williams has run his re-election campaign in much the same way he has run roughshod over the welfare of the residents of the District. Voter disgust with Williams was so widespread, that he could not find enough volunteers to collect the required 2,000 signatures on his nominating petitions; his campaign, instead, paid people to gather signatures. The utter lack of integrity and fraud of his campaign workers, in their petition gathering, parallel his government's fraudulent statistics concerning the deaths and health catastrophe, following the closing of D.C. General. Williams submitted petitions that were riddled with fraud and forgeries, involving nearly 8,000 of the 10,000 "signatures."

The successful challenge to the mayor's petitions was

brought by Dorothy Brizill, of D.C. Watch and a vocal supporter of the Coalition to Save D.C. General Hospital, who regularly featured Coalition press releases on her website.

Seeks a Court To Save Him

The challengers' complaints cited "systematic and flagrant abuse of the District of Columbia election law, which casts substantial doubt over the entire signature-gathering process." Signatures of obvious non-residents and/or voters not registered in D.C. included Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, former Republican Vice Presidential candidate Jack Kemp, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and fashion trend-setter Martha Stewart.

However the three-person Election Board was ultimately persuaded to its unanimous decision to kick Williams off the Democratic ballot, when Williams' petitioning chief Scott Bishop, Sr., and his son Scott Bishop, Jr., who were subpoenaed by the board, invoked the Fifth Amendment during the proceedings. Williams and his campaign staff could also face possible Federal criminal charges for election fraud.

On July 31, Williams, against the advice of his own remaining supporters, decided to fight the Election Board and election laws he signed himself, by challenging the decision at the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. His filing called the board's ruling "capricious and lawless," and asked for an expedited ruling from the court.

Perhaps Williams thinks he knows a judge who will overturn the board. If so, this will give him more trouble—making

it clear that he was "appointed to the ballot," as George W. Bush was appointed to the Presidency by the Supreme Court. At the same time, Williams announced that he would remain a Democrat and run a write-in campaign in the primary. This also went against advisers, who argued that if he runs as an independent, he has a better chance in November's election. The major factor in that decision was probably the ruling by D.C. Office of Campaign Finance, a week before the Board of Elections' decision, that should Williams run as an independent, he would have to return \$1.3 million in campaign funds he raised as a Democrat to his contributors. This includes many thousands from executives and employees of Doctors Community Healthcare Corp., the "hospital privatization" firm to which Williams mortgaged the lives of D.C. General Hospital patients. DCHC is based in Sen. John McCain's Arizona.

Democratic Presidential pre-candidate LaRouche not only led the fight, internationally, to save D.C. General Hospital, in defense of the general welfare, but his campaigns have, more than once, successfully petitioned to put him on the Washington, D.C. ballot as a Presidential candidate, proving that the requirements of D.C. election law can easily be met by a campaign organization that respects the law, and the voters. In support of the challenge to Williams' petitions, representatives of previous LaRouche campaigns sent a letter to the Board of Elections and Ethics (see box).

The message is as forceful for the rest of the DLC, and Senators Joe Lieberman and John McCain.

LaRouche Representative Intervenes with Board

LaRouche activist Diane Sare wrote the following letter to Benjamin F. Wilson, Chairman of D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics, before it made the decision on July 26, to deny ballot status to Mayor Anthony Williams.

Dear Chairman Wilson:

I have served as the District of Columbia coordinator for the recent election campaigns of Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. for the Democratic nomination, particularly those in 1996 and 2000, in which supporters of Mr. LaRouche successfully submitted nominating petitions to place his name on the Democratic Party ballot.

Having been through the petitioning process a number of times, in which we scrupulously complied with the statutory requirements for submitting nominating petitions, I and my colleagues are appalled that Mayor Anthony Williams appears to be asking the Board to extend some sort

of preferential treatment to his campaign.

The fact that Mr. Williams is the Mayor, if anything, should mean that he has an extra degree of responsibility for complying with the law, not that he should be excused, or held to a lesser standard than that to which other candidates have been held in the past.

Having been through this process, I and my colleagues do not regard the D.C. requirements as particularly onerous—particularly in comparison with some other jurisdictions. It is a heavy challenge, but with hard work and diligence—and a degree of popular support—we always were able to comply fully with the legal requirements. And we did not have the powers of the Mayor, or the command of the political machine that the Mayor has. . . .

We are well aware that Mr. Williams has a problem, in that many voters in the District do not wish to sign for him, because of his callous attitude toward the poorer sections of the population—as manifested most notably in his role in the closing of D.C. General Hospital—but such a lack of popular support is precisely the type of situation to which the petitioning requirement is addressed.

I hope this is relevant and useful to your deliberations.