

'D-Day March' in Washington: Let the Stones Cry Out

by Nancy Spannaus

The nationwide movement to defend the principle of the General Welfare, set into motion by the leadership of 2004 Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., is on the march, and expanding rapidly. This movement is rapidly taking on the character of a revived civil rights movement, emerging at the 11th hour to save the United States from disaster.

Currently, the primary focus for this movement is the fight to prevent the shutdown of D.C. General Hospital, the only public hospital in the nation's capital, an action whose early phases have already killed at least *nine* D.C. residents. But it is increasingly clear that this movement, like Martin Luther King's civil rights movement of yore, is not linked to any single issue, but is passionately determined to restore the American republic to its Constitutional commitment, in the face of the threat of fascist economics and dictatorship.

Hundreds of D.C. citizens, joined by leading activists from around the country, participated in D-Day celebrations on June 6, which featured a New Orleans-style funeral procession for the victims of the hospital closing, and that night held the largest mass meeting of the four-month mobilization thus far, at the Union Temple Baptist Church.

Among the primary targets of this movement, represented in Washington, D.C. by the Coalition to Save D.C. General Hospital, and across the nation by the LaRouche movement, is the U.S. Congress, which has the authority to overturn the illegal actions of the D.C. Financial Control Board shutting D.C. General. Intensive targetting of Congressmen, in order to get them to introduce a joint resolution to reject the privatization of D.C.'s public health system and to restore full funding for D.C. General, has resulted in

getting four Congressmen to sign onto the objective, and other leading Congressmen, such as House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.), to put out public statements in favor of saving the hospital.

But political leaders will not wait for Congress. They are also acting in the courts, and in the streets. The D-Day funeral procession through Washington was followed for two days by rallies aimed at Congress and the D.C. Federal Court, where a nationally backed court fight to stop the hospital closing was taking place on June 8.

Congress Can Act

The clock is ticking on the period during which the U.S. Congress can review, and overturn, the April 30 diktat by the Control Board, to privatize and close D.C. General. The Control Board admits that it is subject to the 30-day review period for any D.C. legislation. With this in mind, citizens have been pummeling Congressional offices nationwide, demanding that Congressmen, who love to declare how much they are for public health and the people's interests, step forward to defend D.C. General.

The mood among Congressmen is increasingly polarized. The powerful KKK-Katie Graham, owner of the *Washington Post*, and de facto plantation mistress of Washington, is utilizing her considerable assets in order to prevent Congressional action. One of her primary aces is D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, who has turned against her constituency by refusing to support the hospital, and has aggressively sought to prevent other Congressmen from "invading her turf." Graham's *Post*, with a reputation for making or breaking politicians, is blacking out the consequences of the D.C.



LaRouche activists march "for the common good," in the June 6 funeral procession in Washington, for the now nine people who have died unnecessarily, since the capital's hospital emergency rooms were overwhelmed by the shutdown of D.C. General.

General shutdown, and undoubtedly threatening to destroy those leaders, including the D.C. Council, who might step out of line.

In addition to lobbying, the LaRouche movement also spurred the circulation of an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief. More than 130 national constituency leaders and elected officials signed the brief, in support of a lawsuit brought by D.C. Councilmen David Catania (R) and Kevin Chavous (D), which seeks to block the Control Board's action in imposing the privatization. While it is likely that the U.S. District Court will deny the challenge, the brief defines the issues of principle, and law, which are at stake.

The brief makes two principal arguments. The first is that the issue of the General Welfare, as defined in the U.S. Constitution and implemented by health care policy measures stemming from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Administration, takes precedence over all other considerations of policy. The second argument is that the Control Board action not only violated its own lawful powers, but did so in a dictatorial manner, superseding the authority of the duly elected institutions of government, in this case the D.C. Council. Such a diktat method of governing is precisely what Lyndon LaRouche has warned about from the Bush regime, under conditions of increasing financial and economic breakdown.

The full text of the brief, and signers, appears below. Many of these signers are also actively lobbying, and carrying out other political action, to address the health care issue.

People Are Dying

The fact is, as any alert person around the Washington, D.C. area knows, people are *dying* as a result of the closed-down of D.C. General. This reality was dramatized by the Coalition to Save D.C. General on June 6, with the staging of the funeral march and mass meeting.

Two hearses accompanied the march of 200-300 people, which went from D.C. General to the Union Temple Baptist Church, homebase to Rev. Willie Wilson and the Coalition. Escorted by police, the marchers walked three miles through Washington's Southeast quadrant. New Orleans funeral music was played over a loudspeaker, and the procession was greeted by a uniformly positive response, ranging from people honking their horns in support, to joining the march for a few blocks.

At the church, two biers, which had been donated by Mason's Funeral Home, were placed at the front, and opened, with mirrors in each. Most of those attending filed by the coffins, and then read the encapsulized stories of the nine individuals known to have died because D.C. General was closed.

The emotional impact deepened considerably, early in the meeting, when Shirley Seigler, the mother of 19-year-old victim, William Etheridge, spoke to the crowd. "No family should have to go through what I went through," she said. Etheridge was shot on May 5, three minutes from D.C. General; but, because the Control Board had closed the emergency room, he had to be taken to Prince George's

Ambassador Flynn: Stop Waging War on the Poor!

Raymond L. Flynn, who served as U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican from 1993-97 and as Mayor of Boston from 1984-93, issued this statement on June 2. Flynn has been, since 1999, the president of the political advocacy group the Catholic Alliance, and is author of two books published in the last year, The Accidental Pope and John Paul II, A Personal Portrait and the Man.

I've become aware of the action to dismantle D.C. General Hospital, as a fully funded, full-service public hospital. It saddens me to see the health-care mission of this hospital, which has served the poor, the weak, and the needy in our nation's capital for over 200 years, being abused in this way.

The news of the precipitous dismantling of this beloved medical institution reminds me, in a most eerie way, of the bizarre dismantling of Boston City Hospital, the

hospital where I was born and my mother and father died. At the time of our hospital's demise, I was 3,000 miles away, having just assumed my post as Ambassador to the Holy See, and I could do little to intervene in the case of our distinguished hospital. Today, I am only a few hundred miles away, and I hope I can be of help in saving this venerable public institution.

Franklin Roosevelt, while still Governor of New York State, said, "The success or failure of any government in the final analysis must be measured by the wellbeing of its citizens. Nothing can be more important to a state than its public health; the state's most paramount concern should be the health of its people." Pope John Paul II, in his final speech of his 1995 U.S. tour, said we must make "the common good the end and criterion regulating all public and social life." Like all others who have served in public office, I swore a Constitutional oath to "promote the general welfare." These worthy sentiments are my trusted guides in the issue of saving D.C. General Hospital. We have a health-care crisis in the United States and the closing of D.C. General Hospital will further add to it. We've got to stop waging war on the poor!

County, miles away. The young man, who was preparing to attend college in the fall, died en route.

Increase the Pressure

Seigler's remarks were followed by a series of speeches by Coalition leaders and guests, ranging from Nevada State Senator Joseph Neal, to civil rights heroine Amelia Boynton Robinson, and Martin Luther King's field commander in the 1963 Children's March, Rev. James L. Bevel. Coalition spokesman Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, D.C. General's "warrior nurse" Charlene Gordon, and Coalition leader Lynne Speed, from LaRouche's Schiller Institute, issued scathing indictments of traitors like Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, and KKK-Katie Graham, whose Washington financial establishment is behind the plan to privatize and shut down the public hospital. Dr. Michal Young, President of the Medical/Dental Staff at D.C. General, exposed the travesty of the shutdown procedure under way, and the lack of provision for necessary care at other facilities. She was particularly scathing in her attack on the new management, which had closed D.C. General's emergency room on May 1, but then re-opened it on May 25-26, in order to service white suburban youth attending a rock concert at nearby RFK Stadium.

An unscheduled appearance was made by Willie Lynch, the chief of staff to Councilman Kevin Chavous. While Lynch shouted his commitment to keeping people from dying in the streets, the crowd was skeptical, as Chavous, and other

Councilmen, have not joined the Coalition in pressuring Congress.

Former Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn, who is also former Ambassador to the Vatican, sent a taped message of support to the meeting, and was interviewed on Washington radio WOL pledging the support of his national Catholic association. Another highlight was a speech by LaRouche's national spokeswoman Debra Freeman, who situated the fight to save D.C. General in the international political context, as a means of defeating Bush. She also announced LaRouche's intention to personally escalate against the "witch of Washington," KKK-Katie Graham, with a Presidential campaign pamphlet aimed at exposing her control of a small army of counterinsurgents, implementing the program of "Negro removal" in D.C. The a foretaste of the content of this new salvo was presented by Schiller Institute leader Dennis Speed, read by his wife, Lynne Speed.

The final speaker was Rev. James Bevel. In a rousing speech, he elaborated on the *authority* which has been given to the American citizen by God, the "absolute authority to do what is right, just, and needed." Tyrants will move in, if citizens don't act, he said. Today, it's as if the Devil is testing us: "Let's see how dead these people are. If they let us take the hospital, they must be dead." Citizens have to take responsibility for public institutions—or they fail to be citizens.

A demonstration against the *Washington Post*, proposed by former Boston Mayor Flynn, was announced for June 12.