

sity in the last three weeks. Two of the three had committed suicide. How ironic, Speed said, that a *medical* student at this African-American university, in the city in which the fight for D.C. General was raging, felt that his life had no purpose. This student could have been at this meeting, or last week's meeting, and seen that this movement, this fight for the General Welfare, gives purpose to every life.

Challenge From 1960s Civil Rights Leader

Rev. James Bevel is a legendary figure in the American civil rights movement, and was also the 1992 candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the United States with Lyndon LaRouche, then in jail. Bevel, who had been called to Birmingham on Good Friday of 1963 by Dr. Martin Luther King, as King entered the Birmingham jail, and immediately devised the bold 1963 Birmingham "Children's March" that broke the

back of segregation in Alabama, inspired and challenged D.C. citizens to spread the General Welfare movement further than anything seen in their lifetime.

Bevel pointed out that while the U.S. government provides a *means* for true personal sovereignty, people who refuse to exercise it act like animals, instead of citizens. Bevel said that *no citizen* can ever truly be "oppressed" by another—neither the "powerless" by the "powerful," nor the "black" by the "white." He spoke of the "government," not as bureaucracy, but as the Constitution and Declaration of Independence of 1776, in the which, the Founding Fathers of America wrote of "inalienable rights," and "self-evident truths," such that "*all men are created equal.*" Bevel blasted the belief that the American founding documents were designed to exclude black Americans, or anyone else, and located the success of this battle for D.C. General in the real fight that is necessary:

'Time to Get Serious'

The following interchange took place between Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammed of the Nation of Islam and Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., at the conference of the International Caucus of Labor Committees and Schiller Institute in Reston, Virginia on Feb. 17-18, 2001.

Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammed: Greetings to you Mr. LaRouche. I'm very pleased to be here. As you know, I'm from Washington, D.C., which is the center of a lot of what you're talking about. And there are some of us in the District, who are attempting to be citizens, and to stand up on our hind legs, as you put it, but the barbarians are inside the gates. And they have occupied the high places in the powerful places, and among other . . . things that we're presently fighting to preserve, is the public health sector . . . especially D.C. General Hospital. As you probably know, there are probably 200,000 or more government-certified poor people who live in the District, 100,000 of whom have no health insurance, who rely almost completely on the public-health sector that's being dismantled.

The troubles at D.C. General Hospital have been imposed from the top down. Congress has specifically limited the amount of money that the District government can spend on public health. So, a hospital that last year had a budgeted amount of about \$120 million, only has \$60 million this year, and is slated to run out of money sometime in March, and the doors of the hospital are expected to close by April 1.

So, I'm just asking . . . how those of us who wish to be citizens, need to respond to this rather urgent emergency,

that has already cost lives. I mean, we can already count the number of people who have died as a result of the difficulties imposed on D.C. General Hospital. Thank you.

Lyndon LaRouche: I think what we have to do is, first of all—I think we have to use that. We have to probably put a death count against the management of this operation there, and keep building it up. Because we're in a, strategically, in a Valley Forge-type of situation, in which all the forces in government, in the majority, are against us. But it's not hopeless.

For example, the problem is, we came up against Ashcroft's nomination. Now, my associates and I did what was necessary, with a lot of help from a lot of people. We mobilized enough to get the votes, which if Daschle and company had stuck to it, would have tied up the Ashcroft nomination. We'd organized that number of votes. But then, because we didn't have the muscle to enforce what we had won, some of them finked out on us.

Now, there are two sides to that: One side is, we lost that particular fight; but we didn't lose it really. Because we're fighting a war, and we lost one battle, we had to retreat. But we made a show of force, and we got our forces united by fighting that battle. So, what we have to do, is look at these situations, as we take these battles on, and we make them cost as much, politically, to the enemy as possible, to give as much morale, and moralization to the victims and friends as possible, to build a movement of conscience around this issue.

We have to understand also, that this administration, while it seems momentarily all powerful—or, they'd like to convince people of such—is not. We're dealing with a doomed emperor. He's on a short fuse. And therefore, we have to get the troops mobilized and moving in. Lives are lost in wars, lives that should not be lost. We're losing

“You must bring out your neighbors, students, children—make them all act like citizens by *taking* their inalienable rights.” Organizing takes work, he stressed—meetings every night, planning each next step until victory.

Dr. Simmon Wilcox from Aliquippa Community Hospital received a standing ovation for his, and his fellow doctors’, defeat of the very Doctors Community Health Care Corp. which was tapped by the Control Board to ruin D.C. General. Dr. Wilcox, who has traveled throughout the world, practicing medicine in Jamaica, South Africa, and other nations, told the audience that the excellence of American public health was once a “crowning jewel” that set this nation apart. He said he had never thought he would see those hospitals closed and looted, as was now being done in the name of profit-making.

Dr. Wilcox recalled how DCHC had come in with a “better bid” than a proposal to incorporate Aliquippa into a univer-

lives already. We’ve got to keep the death toll—not for George Bush; he’s not going to be impressed; he’s going to delight in the number of people that die. He’s never shown, himself, much compassion for anybody. Remember, “Well, if innocent people have to die on death row, that’s good for my politics, therefore, they’ll die.” And he’ll do the same thing with Washington, D.C. . . .

We just have to keep fighting. And not be discouraged by the defeats we take. Because we’ve got to win. The question is when? How soon? I think we ought to keep the score. But keep the score for the purpose of getting *the people* to understand. The people who agree with us, but who aren’t fighting. *Get them to understand!* “Look, the reason we’re not winning is because we don’t have enough support from you guys. So get serious and start organizing more of your friends and neighbors, and we might have enough muscle, so you don’t face a defeat, as we did with Ashcroft. If we had had more strength to support what we did in organizing Democrats to come around on the Ashcroft issue, we’d have won it. The reason we didn’t win it, all the way, is because we didn’t have enough support.”

So, the key thing now, is on this issue, like the D.C. General Hospital, is to do two things: Continue the fight and expand it. But also, let’s take this thing to the other parts of the country, and build up a national movement on this thing, and take the D.C. General case, and use it not only as a D.C. issue, but make this a *national* issue: “Look, look at what they’re doing to us in Washington. What do you think they’re going to do to you in New York? What do you think they’re going to do to you in Boston? Or Detroit? Or elsewhere? You guys have got to get on board here. We’ve got to win a national battle in Washington, for the sake of the whole country.”

And so, I think we’ve got to go in that direction.

sity network that would have brought in the finest doctors and research facilities in the area. The hospital “accountants” praised DCHC for the “very high rating it had gotten from Wall Street,” and for its “great website.” The doctors at Aliquippa, however, “being more interested in knowing the medical performance after these people take over a hospital,” did their own “due diligence” check. They found that DCHC’s takeovers of other financially limited hospitals had destroyed those facilities completely, resulting in lawsuits that showed extensive fraud. Dr. Wilcox especially thanked the LaRouche movement for coming out to Aliquippa “within 24 hours” of speaking to him on the phone about DCHC, and providing the crucial information that led the hospital board to *cancel* the deal with DCHC completely.

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, possibly the most controversial U.S. Surgeon General in recent times, because of her well-known outspokenness, raised the issue beyond the fate of the one hospital: “You are not fighting about a hospital and that alone.” She told the assembled citizens that the budget-cutters and “control boards” of the world will never lack money to build a new jail, but they never have funds to build the schools that America’s young black men should be going to *instead* of prison. Children are graduating high school with diplomas that *they cannot read*, she went on. “We believe in having health care for the haves, and *sick* care for the have-nots. We always go out and vote up taxes to build a jail. But when we start talking about schools, hospitals, about health care for the poor, where are we? ‘We don’t have the money.’ ”

‘Why Did You Come Here?’

Attacking the continual media reports in the Washington area for months, that the takeover and closure of the city’s public hospital was “a done deal,” Dr. Elders reported that the first question the media asked her when she arrived today for the mass meeting was, “ ‘Why did you come here?’ I was asked two or three times, since I arrived, why have you come in now? It’s all over. It’s all done. Well, you see, I’m a doctor. And I am saying that nobody is ever dead until there is not another heartbeat, that I can’t make come about. You just have to keep fighting. You have to keep on working. You set a goal to save D.C. General. Don’t let that be an end in itself—keep fighting. Don’t let the fear of failure stop you. . . . If you disappear, the hospital will disappear.”

Elders, a veteran of political and civil rights battles, told the crowd she has been falsely called an atheist—and then humorously quoted her church’s bishop on the big, important battles like that going on in Washington: “When you are dancing with a bear, don’t sit down to rest; keep dancing until the *bear gets tired.*”

The Coalition to Save D.C. General stands now within sight of a victory for the principle of the general welfare—if it can now mobilize citizens all over the United States to make every member of Congress answer to the issue of that principle.