

Editorial

Defend the Voting Rights Act!

In the 1950s and '60s, the world watched in dismay as the battle for civil rights and voting rights in the United States spilled over into violence in the streets. Every liberty-loving person, inside and outside the country, was overjoyed when this struggle resulted in the passage of landmark legislation in 1964 and 1965, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. While that did not mean that the battle was over, it represented a major victory for justice.

Today, we see this achievement being gutted, and kicked aside. It didn't happen all at once, of course. Starting as early as the mid-1970s, after the economic shocks and majority austerity push of the Nixon administration, there was a palpable increase of racism. Over the course of the latter part of the 1990s, this increase became overtly ugly. Most notable have been the Supreme Court decisions which declared that a prisoner could be executed, even if he had proof of his innocence; and the decision early this year which gutted the enforcement provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

Some people have compared this shift against civil rights to the "counter-revolution" against racial equality which occurred at the end of the 19th century, and got progressively worse until Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected. How is such a descent to be prevented?

A fundamental change for the better, as in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt era, is going to require a shift in government philosophy, back to the principle of the General Welfare, and the active promotion of economic opportunity, education, health care, and other advancement for all Americans. But a critical role in achieving that shift, will be played by the fight to save the Voting Rights Act itself.

As Lyndon LaRouche has said repeatedly, the fight to defend the Voting Rights Act is a fight not only for the soul of the Democratic Party, whose bureaucracy is currently attempting to destroy it, but also for the nation. It is by saving this legislation, that the line in the sand against the resurgence of racism, and denial of civil rights, must be drawn.

In the weeks ahead, the contest over the Voting

Rights Act is going to get very intense. The LaRouche campaign has appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, in order to overturn lower court decisions in favor of the Democratic National Committee's argument that it needn't be guided by the law's provisions. Joining LaRouche's appeal were 66 prominent Democratic leaders, who signed an *amicus curiae* brief sponsored by former U.S. Rep. James Mann (D-S.C.) in defense of the Act. Some of those signing were actually in Congress during the fight for civil and voting rights in the 1960s, including former Sen. Eugene McCarthy and Rep. John Dow. In addition, hundreds of Democratic activists, state legislators, and others around the nation have signed an open letter to the Democratic National Committee, demanding a repudiation of the de facto racist decision to gut the Voting Rights Act and to rule LaRouche out of the Democratic Party Presidential contest.

On the other side of the matter, are the corrupt, racist cabal at the Democratic National Committee, their collaborators in many state parties around the country, and a whole group of Federal judges, going all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. And, let's not forget, Al Gore. Counting on the passivity of the majority of Americans, and the active support of the ugly New Confederacy crowd around the likes of Texas Gov. George W. Bush, Virginia Gov. James Gilmore, and so forth, this grouping is determined to work its will in the LaRouche case—as the opening shot in rolling back civil and voting rights more generally.

If the racist cabal wins, there is no question but that America loses. The United States would be left without a political party committed to the principles of Dr. Martin Luther King, and a takeover of the Presidency by the Stone Age grouping running the current Republican Party would be virtually assured.

Right now, the battle must be joined internationally, for those who wish to see the United States revived as a Temple of Hope and Beacon of Liberty for all mankind. The fight to defend the Voting Rights Act is every patriot's business.