



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 18, 2016

Democracy Spring Promises Massive Protests

For many Americans old enough to remember, the riots in the streets of Chicago during the 1968 Democratic National Convention remains a summative image of the tumultuous times of the late 1960s. The protests in the streets mirrored the deep divisions within the Democratic Party over the Vietnam War. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, a strong supporter of Vice President Hubert Humphrey — the eventual nominee — sent police into the streets to confront the rioters, while inside the hall, supporters of South Dakota Senator George McGovern backed the rioters.



Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut used his nominating speech for McGovern to characterize the actions of the Chicago police as “Gestapo tactics.”

The split in the Democratic Party contributed greatly to the election of Republican Richard Nixon that fall.

Among the rioters was Tom Hayden, a leader in the New Left radical organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Now, several similar radical groups have announced that they will launch massive “civil disobedience” campaigns across America. Their stated goal is to “save our democracy.”

A group calling itself Democracy Spring is vowing “civil disobedience on a historic scale.” It predicts that its protests will lead to the arrest of thousands.

On its website, Democracy Spring (perhaps taken from the so-called Arab Spring upheaval in the Middle East in which moderate authoritarian rulers were ousted by extremist elements) said, “This spring, in the heart of the primary season, as the national election begins to take center stage, Americans of all ages, faiths, political perspectives, and walks of life will bring the popular cry for change to Washington in a way that’s impossible to ignore: with nonviolent civil disobedience on a historic scale.”

What will this so-called civil disobedience consist of? The stated intention is to use marches, sit-ins, and other forms of nonviolent protests so as to make the election “a referendum on whether our democracy should belong to the People as a whole or to the billionaire class alone.”

This immediately raises some questions. If the purpose of the protests is to take back “democracy” from the “billionaire class,” then why is MoveOn.org a key element in their alliance? After all, George Soros, a well-known billionaire known for his left-wing politics, is a major funder of MoveOn.org. MoveOn.org has been among the biggest supporters of Senator Bernie Sanders, an avowed socialist who is running for the Democratic Party nomination.

The Democratic Socialists of America are among the groups that have endorsed Democracy Spring. Also declaring itself “all in behind Democracy Spring” is the AFL-CIO.



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The leftist MoveOn.org circulated a petition in the days before the recently cancelled Donald Trump-for-president event in Chicago, demanding that officials terminate the rally. In a statement rich with irony, the petition demanded a shut down of the rally because Trump is guilty of “hate,” and “dangerous intolerance.”

Among those demonstrating outside the arena was domestic terrorist Bill Ayers, a Chicago resident. Ayers was once a leader in the Weather Underground (a more radical off-shoot of the left-wing SDS, which was involved in the riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago), and participated in bombing police headquarters in New York City in 1970. President Barack Obama literally launched his political career in the home of Ayers, with a fundraising event. When he ran for president in 2008, Obama was asked about beginning his first political campaign with the support of a terrorist, who had bombed buildings. Obama dismissed the concern, claiming that Ayers was “just a guy in the neighborhood.”

While the Democracy Spring group is claiming that their protests will be nonviolent, that is just propaganda. No one would have any problem with peaceful assembly and petitioning the government for a “redress of grievances,” in Washington, D.C. After all, those are rights specifically protected in the First Amendment of the Constitution.

But let us examine more closely the assertion that the activities will be nonviolent, by quoting what is intended. “We will demand that Congress listen to the People and take immediate action to save our democracy. And we won’t leave until they do — or until they send thousands of us to jail, along with the unmistakable message that our country needs a new Congress, one that will end the legalized corruption of our democracy and ensure that every American has an equal voice in government.”

First of all, the attempt to “save our democracy” is based on a flawed premise. The United States was organized in 1789, with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, as a federal republic, not a democracy. James Madison, writing in *Federalist*, No. 10, made it abundantly clear that the government being set up by the Constitution was not a democracy. “Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.”

Instead, Madison asserted that the Constitution had created a republic: “A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect.” He then went on to explain how a republic “varies from pure democracy.”

Of course, there are democratic elements in our republic. But, those are found in how we choose our representatives. If the United States were simply a “democracy,” in which the will of the majority prevailed on every subject, no man’s property, liberty, or even life would be secure. A bill of rights is a direct contradiction to “democracy.” For example, the majority has no more right to infringe upon religious liberty than does a minority. In fact, the Constitution would be superfluous in an actual democracy, because the only restriction upon government would be the will of the majority.

And why would thousands of these supposed nonviolent protestors be sent to jail, if they are simply sitting on the Mall in D.C., singing “Kumbaya” and “We Will Overcome”?

It is because that is not their intention. As they say themselves, they are going to “sit in” at the Capitol. In other words, their intention is to block the flow of traffic inside the nation’s Capitol. Their desire is to provoke arrest by violating the rights of others at the Capitol to move around freely. It can be expected that the recent demonizing of the police across the country will ramp up, as well.



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Democracy Spring has announced that their demonstrations will begin on April 2. On that day, they will hold a kickoff rally in Philadelphia at 10 a.m., and then march 140 miles over the next 10 days to Washington, D.C., where they predict thousands will sit-in on the Capitol “in what will be the largest civil obedience action of the century.”

The group has already obtained legal counsel for the thousands expected to be arrested. “With hundreds of patriotic Americans being sent to jail, day after day for at least a week — simply for sitting in to save our democracy — the drama in Washington will rock the business-as-usual cycle of this election and catapult this critical issue on to center stage.”

Violence is almost a certainty. The campaign director for Democracy Spring, Kai Newkirk, interrupted Trump at a CNN-hosted Republican debate in December, saying, “The American people deserve free and fair elections, not billionaire auctions.”

With the recent violent actions in Chicago, where demonstrators shut down a rally of the Republican front-runner, it is clear that the only way these protests remain “peaceful” is if other Americans simply accede to their radical demands.

And recalling the 1968 riots in Chicago, one has to wonder if we will see a repeat at this year’s Democratic or Republican national conventions.

Steve Byas is a professor of history at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Moore, Oklahoma. His book, History’s Greatest Libels, is a challenge to the lies of history told against such individuals as Joseph McCarthy, Clarence Thomas, and Warren Harding.



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