

America's Historic Mission: 1776 & 1936

There are real deadlines in history, as Lyndon LaRouche forcefully demonstrates in the feature article in this issue of EIR. In American history, none of those “deadline” periods captures the imagination quite so strongly as the battle to win over the colonies to support independence from the British Empire—the run-up to the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

In the brief historical review that follows, we present that fight in a way that might surprise many. For, in fact, the decision to declare independence was itself the result of an intense organizing process with a “deadline,” one on which the very potential of the United States’ existence hung in the balance. Fortunately, both our nation’s leadership, and leaders within the various states, demonstrated the courage and will to meet that deadline, and bring our nation to life.

One hundred and sixty years later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt evoked that struggle, and its core ideas, when he addressed the Democratic Party Convention of 1936 in Philadelphia. That victory of 1776, he said, had to be renewed, because the independence won from the British Empire then, was threatened by “economic royalists” who sought to enslave the people. We are in a war for the survival of our republic, FDR said, and you must rally with me to defend economic, as well as political independence, which, without economic justice, is only a facade.

That speech by FDR, which we reprint here, came to be known as the “Rendezvous with Destiny” speech. It presented to the delegates of that convention, a powerful call to the mission for which the United States itself

was founded, the mission of building “a temple out of faith and hope and charity,” with the explicit intent of inspiring people around the world, then threatened by fascism, to join the “great and successful war” which America was waging to preserve its republican form of government.

Today, the American people need nothing less than the kind of total mobilization that brought about the Declaration of Independence, and the total commitment to economic freedom, reflected in these two historical moments. That is the only way the Glass-Steagall Act will be reinstated, on the deadline required, and civilization itself given a chance for survival.