

Defeat Project 2025, demand government meets basic needs

By the League Basic Needs
Electoral Committee

This year's Democratic National Convention is taking place on the sixtieth anniversary of one of the most effective protests ever held at a U.S. political convention. In August 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) attempted to get seated in place of the fascist, all-white Mississippi delegation at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City. The speech was delivered to the Credentials Committee by the MFDP spokesperson Fannie Lou Hamer, and ended up being recorded and replayed over and over again on national TV. It became instrumental in turning Americans against the Jim Crow fascist regime in Mississippi and across the South. Ever since, it has been a model for fighting fascism, and should be used today to inspire everyone committed to defeating Project 2025 and building a society where government meets the basic needs of its people.

PROJECT 2025

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party has several critical lessons to teach the revolutionaries of 2024. Foremost is exposing the brutality and depravity of the fascist enemy we face. Decades of ruling class propaganda have caused far too many Americans to become complacent and forget the great truth pronounced by Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr., that *the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is our own government.*

Revolutionaries have to address the problem of the immediate fascist threat of Project 2025, even as it appears that the Democratic Party candidate will be totally unacceptable – whether “Genocide Joe” or a last-minute replacement. As the famous anti-fascist Georgi Dimitrov taught us, whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism in its preparatory stages will not be in a position to prevent its victory later. Project 2025 is unquestionably the most immediately dangerous tendency in the overall fascist offensive, and must be defeated. This cannot be done by simply working in an electoral campaign, although that should be part of it.

The millions who are justifiably horrified by the crimes of Biden dare not let themselves be deceived by the illusion that – just because Democrats oppose it – Project 2025 is not so bad, or not so different from the status quo. Project 2025 actually corresponds well to the classic definition of fascism – “substitution of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie – bourgeois democracy – by another form – open terrorist dictatorship.”

Project 2025 (and its companion policies put forward in Trump campaign speeches and in Supreme Court decisions) is the open replacement of all the norms of U.S. bourgeois democracy with unrestricted, violent

corporate dictatorship. Presidential immunity. The Insurrection Act invoked against peaceful protests. Internments and/or deportations of tens of millions. Block-by-block military sweeps in neighborhoods of color to round up anyone without a government ID. A national abortion ban. Suppression of independent newspapers and other independent media. Increase of mass incarceration. Denial of housing and health care subsidies. Deportation of Palestinian protesters. Suppression of LGBTQ communities. Elimination of environmental regulations. Destruction of federal regulatory agencies. Fixing and/or overturning of elections. Stripping citizenship from children of immigrants. Imprisonment of revolutionaries.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

The fascism we face in 2024 is equally vicious, violent, and racist as the fascism of 1964. What is different is that it is driven by far more powerful objective economic factors, ones that make it even more deadly and dangerous. Jim Crow-era fascism was based on the use of segregation to enforce colonial exploitation of Southern labor, especially sharecroppers and especially African Americans. It was undone, not only by the heroism of Fannie Lou Hamer and her colleagues, but by the fact that Wall Street found it could make more money by industrializing the South than it did from its agriculture.

When the cotton-picking machine was introduced, African Americans migrated to the cities where many of them were able to find jobs and carry on their freedom fight under more favorable conditions.

Today we face a situation where artificial intelligence and digital production are increasingly removing the need for any labor force at all. During the industrial era, the system depended on the labor of workers and as a result provided millions of them with wages and benefits for themselves and their families, along with limited rights to vote, speak, and protest. Now that the economy no longer requires their labor, it will no longer tolerate people organizing, demanding, and voting for policies to meet their basic needs for food, housing, health care, and education.

Real victory therefore requires more than simply defeating dictatorship, although that is a necessary step. The changing economy means we cannot return to the democracy of the 1960s or even the 2010s. Today's battle for democracy has to be inseparable from the political struggle for necessities of life that can no longer be obtained by work for wages. Democracy will be meaningless unless it leads to ending poverty and homelessness and building a better life. And real democracy will only be finally secured when we transform the private property economy into one

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I Question America

Mr. Chairman, and to the Credentials Committee, my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and I live at 626 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi, Sunflower County, the home of Senator James O. Eastland, and Senator Stennis.

It was the 31st of August in 1962 that eighteen of us traveled twenty-six miles to the county courthouse in Indianola to try to register to become first-class citizens. We was met in Indianola by policemen, Highway Patrolmen, and they only allowed two of us in to take the literacy test at the time....

I had worked as a timekeeper and sharecropper for eighteen years.... The plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tried to register.... The plantation owner came and said, “Fannie Lou, If you don't go down and withdraw your registration, you will have to leave.... Then if you go down and withdraw, you still might have to go because we're not ready for that in Mississippi.”

And I addressed him and told him and said, “I didn't try to register for you. I tried to register for myself.”



VIDEO STILL / UNSTRIPPED VOICES
Voting rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party makes her televised speech to the 1964 Democratic Convention credentials committee.

I had to leave that same night.

On the 10th of September 1962, sixteen bullets was fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also, Mr. Joe McDonald's house was shot in.

And June the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop; was returning back to Mississippi. Ten of us was traveling by the Continental Trailway bus. When we got to Winona, Mississippi, which is Montgomery County, four of the people got off to use the washroom, and two of the people to use the restaurant....

I saw when they began to get the five people in a highway patrolman's car. I stepped off of the bus to see what was happening and somebody screamed from the car that the five workers was in and said, “Get that one there.” And when I went to get in the car, when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail and put in the booking room. They left some of the people in the booking room and began to place us in cells. I was placed in a cell with a young woman called Miss Ivesta Simpson. After I was placed in the cell I began to hear sounds of licks and screams. I could hear the sounds of licks and horrible screams. And I could hear somebody say, “Can you say, ‘yes, sir,’

[N-word]? Can you say ‘yes, sir?’”

And they would say other horrible names.

She would say, “Yes, I can say ‘yes, sir.’”

“So, well, say it.”

She said, “I don't know you well enough.”

They beat her, I don't know how long. And after a while she began to pray, and asked God to have mercy on those people.

And it wasn't too long before three white men came to my cell. One of these men was a State Highway Patrolman and he asked me where I was from. And I told him Ruleville. He said, “We are going to check this.” And they left my cell and it wasn't too long before they came back. He said, “You are from Ruleville all right,” and he used a curse word. And he said, “We're going to make you wish you was dead.”

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack. The first

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that distributes society's wealth based on human needs, not private profit.

The 1960s Civil Rights Movement was already beginning to understand this, as King transitioned to the Poor People's Campaign in 1967-68, and Hamer dedicated the rest of her life to building the Freedom Farm Cooperative in Sunflower County, Mississippi. "If we have that land," she said, "can't anybody starve us out." But the economic and political realities of the time did not allow them to be successful.

UNITY AND POLITICAL POWER

Economic and political rights require political power to make them happen, and working class power requires unity. King and Hamer understood this even in the 1960s. They supported the Black Power movement's impulse to unify and elevate African Americans, but resisted its attempts to exclude white workers who also were facing poverty.

Defeating Project 2025 is therefore not about supporting Biden or any other Democrats, although tactical voting should be part of it. It is a path for defending and building the revolutionary movement. This means

working step by step for the unity of the various sectors of our movement, beginning especially where the economy throws workers together in a growing equality of poverty. It is about bringing together the people fighting for basic economic needs, for freedom for Palestine, for health care and reproductive freedom, for the planet, for migrant rights, for Black Lives Matter, for a 2028 general strike. Voting is a weapon that we dare not discard. Electoral campaigns – local, state, and national – can play a powerful role in building political unity. Building unity means patiently educating each other, and refraining from "vote-shaming" of either Democrats or the existing third parties.

In spite of the bloodshed, in spite of the enormous obstacles, and even whether or not we defeat Project 2025 this time around, we have no choice but to hold on to our vision. Technology that the ruling class uses to throw people out of work can also be used to set people free. By impoverishing millions, the system is creating a class of people that Plato called "in love with revolution." We only have to learn how to unite ourselves, and build the political power necessary to replace corporations and financial institutions with publicly owned entities for public benefit. ■

I Question America

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Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolman, for me to lay down on a bunk bed on my face. And I laid on my face, the first Negro began to beat me.

And I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted. I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side, because I suffered from polio when I was six years old.

After the first Negro had beat until he was exhausted, the State Highway Patrolman ordered the second Negro to take the blackjack.

The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat to sit on my feet -- to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one

white man got up and began to beat me in my head and tell me to hush.

One white man -- my dress had worked up high -- he walked over and pulled my dress -- I pulled my dress down and he pulled my dress back up.

I was in jail when Medgar Evers was murdered.

All of this is on account of we want to register, to become first-class citizens. And if the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?

Thank you. ■

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We fight alongside all who seek to abolish: poverty, ecological disaster, fascism, war, white supremacy, gender oppression and other attacks on the working class. We fight for a government that takes care of people first.

Our articles especially lift up the fight for humanity's basic needs, which propels every other social struggle. We focus our work, along with other fighters, on developing strategic thinking that can unleash the energy of the millions of people who are driven to fight for a better world.

Together we can participate in the reconstruction of society, on a new foundation, where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need.

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Today, whether through words or deeds, vast numbers of socially conscious people declare themselves revolutionaries in opposition to the degenerating social and economic conditions.

The League's mission is to unite with other revolutionaries around the demands of the working class, especially the class of displaced workers and show that the solution is a cooperative, communist society where social wealth is owned in common and distributed according to need.

The demands of this new impoverished class for food, housing, education, healthcare and an opportunity to contribute to society are summed up as the demand for a cooperative society.

Such a society must be based on the public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of the social product according to need.

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A new strategy for the union movement is emerging

When times were better, the trade union movement was how many workers fought to achieve the American Dream, but now unions are increasingly necessary just to survive in the new economy. And even a union contract no longer guarantees families a secure future if they belong to the new social class that is rapidly becoming dispossessed of secure employment, housing or healthcare.

Today's high-tech global capitalism is dispossessing millions worldwide as a relative few "make it." Workers young and old are now pushed toward low-paid service work, or temporary gig jobs, or even onto the streets. It's renewing efforts to organize unions, but that's made more difficult by anti-union policies imposed in the political arena, both through federal and regional laws, especially in the South.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court decisions like *Citizens United*, have greatly increased the power of capitalist donors to control the political process with their money. Unionists understand they need to get involved with legislation, which means participating in the 2024 election process. That requires dealing with issues like immigration and the Gaza genocide, which can affect the labor movement.

UNIONS CONFRONT POLITICAL ISSUES

Job insecurity is being manipulated to turn many workers against migrants, and draw them towards "new fascist" politicians and policies. Former Immigration and Customs Enforcement director Tom Homan told a July 8 conservative conference "They ain't seen shit yet. Wait until 2025," because if Donald is re-elected "I will run the biggest deportation force this country has ever seen." Meanwhile, the Heritage Foundation is promoting Project 2025, its plan for a fascist re-shaping of the government that includes forbidding even legalized immigrants from using federal housing assistance and other benefits if some family members are undocumented.

Trump and the Heritage Foundation avoid mentioning that their anti-migrant policies are also aimed at crippling trade unions. Immigrant workers are playing major roles in building unions that represent workers at hotels, restaurants, and in janitorial and construction jobs. Intimidating them, or their family members without documents, weakens their ability to stand up for their workplace rights alongside other union members.

Unions are also confronting our government's support of the war on Gaza. Last October, UFCW Local 3000 and UE called on President Biden to pressure Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accept a ceasefire, and stop using billions of tax dollars for arming the Zionist Israeli government. Their letter was supported by 248 labor organization representing 9 million members, who helped form the National Labor Network For Ceasefire.

American Postal Workers Union President Mark Dimondstein told the press: "Working people and our unions are horrified that our tax dollars are financing this ongoing tragedy. We need a ceasefire now, and the best way to



PHOTO / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fighting united: 2021 rally for an Amazon union linked New York and Alabama workers, in two languages.

secure that is to shut off U.S. military aid to Israel." Over a thousand workers representing 375 groups signed up for the Network's July 9 webinar which he facilitated, featuring presentations by several Palestinian trade unionists.

DIFFERING TYPES OF LEADERSHIP

Union organizing campaigns, including strikes, have increased across America, including in the strategically important South. That region's white supremacist legislation and open racist terror had historically undermined worker unity, producing non-union, low-wage conditions that national corporations could use as an anchor to limit the gains of unionized workers in other regions. But the new economy is forcing Southern workers to launch new fights for unions.

In May, almost 200 workers attended a Southern Workers School in Charlotte, North Carolina, representing UAW, Carolina Amazonians United for Solidarity & Empowerment (CAUSE), Truckers Movement for Justice, El Futuro Es Nuestro, National Domestic Workers Alliance, National Nurses United and others. "When the working people in the South rise up and we come together on a common cause," said Jamie Muhammad, Vice President of the International Longshoremen's Association Local 1414 in Savannah, Georgia, "we can lead the rest of the nation where it needs to go."

Others are leading in a very different direction. Teamster president Sean O'Brien spoke at the Republican National Convention on July 15, claiming it served his members to call for bipartisan cooperation on labor law reform legislation. Though he criticized corporations because "their loyalty is to the bal-

ance sheet and the stock price, at the expense of the American worker",

he neglected to defend the thousands of immigrant Teamsters and their families, even after Convention leaders had prepared signs that called for "Mass Deportations Now!" His silence on the human rights of migrants in such a moment of crisis for both only serves the elite strategy of offering some employed workers benefits if they abandon those being dispossessed by capitalism.

In contrast, on July 23, delegates to the convention of the American Federation of Teachers passed a resolution that really would advance the practical unity of workers by setting May 1, 2028 as the expiration date for all AFT contracts, raising the possibility of a simultaneous strike by all teachers union locals. The Chicago Teachers Union had raised the idea of a common May 1, 2028 expiration, not only to strengthen the union's bargaining position but also to strengthen its political unity in defending public education. CTU vice president Jackson Potter called it a means of developing the strength

to win "more for working people in bargaining, at the statehouse, and all the way up to the White House."

The United Auto Workers had already adopted this plan, and the day after the AFT vote UAW president Shawn Fain told the convention "We want to create a mass movement – a general strike if we have to." A union strategy in the interests of the whole working class, including its dispossessed section, is starting to gel. During 2024, activists must organize new unions and strengthen existing ones. Meanwhile, they will use the current election process to defend the most vulnerable sections of society from fascists like Trump and the leaders of Project 2025, while supporting representatives who unite with them.

After the elections, May 1, 2028 offers a rallying point for building to an intensification of the workers' struggle. Though it can't return the past era of more plentiful jobs, that struggle can be the foundation for erecting a new understanding of the class struggle, and a revolutionary vision for achieving a society without capitalists. **R**

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*Rise like lions after
slumber*

*In unvanquishable
number!*

*Shake your chains to
earth like dew*

*Which in sleep had
fallen on you –*

*Ye are many, they are
few!*

– Percy Bysshe Shelley,
1819

Defeat Project 2025

Demand that the government meet basic needs

Statement from the National Council of the League of Revolutionaries a New America

In this election season, we the people are being betrayed by a ruling class determined to keep the American people divided and powerless. Our corporate rulers use fascist tactics that are elements in the Heritage Foundation playbook called Project 2025. The prelude to Project 2025 includes the recent Supreme Court decisions legitimizing the attempted coup on January 6, 2021 encouraging criminalization of unhoused people, and taking away our rights to safe food, water, and air – and much more.

Project 2025 (and its companion policies put forward in Trump campaign speeches and in Supreme Court decisions) is the open replacement of even the limited US democracy with unrestricted, violent corporate dictatorship. The Insurrection Act invoked against peaceful protests. Presidential immunity. The reversal of efforts to ensure basic civil rights and protection from discrimination. Internments and/or deportations of tens of millions. Block-by-block military sweeps in neighborhoods of color to round up anyone without a government ID. Restoration of Jim Crow injustice.

A national abortion ban. Suppression of independent newspapers and other independent media. Increase of mass incarceration. Denial of housing and health

care subsidies. Deportation of Palestinian protesters. Suppression of LGBTQ communities. Elimination of environmental regulations. Destruction of all federal regulatory agencies. Doing away with the Dept. of Education. Fixing and/or overturning of elections (where they still exist). Stripping citizenship from children of immigrants.

IMPRISONMENT OF REVOLUTIONARIES

This is the promise, the nightmare of Project 2025. It represents the most immediate and dangerous tendency in the overall fascist offensive, and must be defeated. As the famous anti-fascist Georgi Dimitrov taught us, whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the corporate ruling class and the growth of fascism in its preparatory stages, will not be in a position to prevent its victory later.

Revolutionary tactics are meaningless unless they are part of revolutionary strategy. The League's long-term strategy is to strive continually for working class political unity, political organization, political independence and political consciousness. This is the only path to the power necessary to organize the cooperative society that modern digital technology demands. Project 2025 is deliberately aimed at preventing that working class unity through denial of basic human rights, terror and bloodshed.

Defeating it is indispensable to advancing the revolutionary process.

People dare not let themselves be deceived by the illusion that Project 2025 is not so bad, or not so different from the status quo. Project 2025 actually corresponds well to the classic definition of fascism – “a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie – bourgeois democracy – by another form – open terrorist dictatorship.”

Defeating Project 2025 is therefore not about supporting Biden or any other candidate. It is a tactic for building the revolutionary movement. It is about step by step working for the unity of the various sectors of our movement, beginning especially where the economy throws workers together in a growing equality of poverty. It is about bringing together the people fighting for basic needs that Project 2025 will keep them from attaining. Revolutionaries need to think politically about how to connect and engage with people who are feeling the pain and seeking ways to address it.

Electoral campaigns – local, state, and national – can play a powerful role in building political unity. While we cannot defeat Project 2025 by simply working in an electoral campaign, tactical voting can be an important part of it. Building unity means patiently educating each other, and refraining from shaming others based on how they cast their ballots.

Real victory today therefore requires defeating dictatorship and guaranteeing social-economic transformation in the interests of the working class, not simply in the interests of corporate private property. The working class has to have democracy to fight for the programs it needs to survive. In the long run, we can have neither real democracy nor economic security until our social movement organizes the political power to replace the private property economy with one that distributes society's wealth based on human needs, not private profit.

In spite of the bloodshed, in spite of the enormous obstacles, and even if we fail to stop the advance of Project 2025 this time around, we have no choice but to hold on to our vision. The same technology that the ruling class uses to throw people out of work can also be used to set people free. By impoverishing millions, the system is creating a class of people that Plato called “in love with revolution.”

The only way for our class to defeat Project 2025 and the fascism it represents is to fight for/a society where wealth is owned publicly and distributed according to need. Victory cannot be won until we gain the political power necessary to defeat fascism, organize the cooperative society we need, and create the peaceful and sustainable world that in our hearts and minds we know is possible. **R**