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US presidential election

Viewpoint: Defeating Trump

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The September-October and November-December 2019 issues of *Against the Current* carry a debate on the 2020 U.S. presidential election with articles advocating support for Bernie Sanders, support for the Green Party's Howie Hawkins, and "anybody but Trump." The first two articles have been republished in *International Viewpoint*, here is the third position. [1]

Dianne Feeley's VIEWPOINT in *ATC 202* (September-October 2019) "[What Sanders' Campaign Opens](#)" very well describes the possibilities that Bernie Sanders' pursuit of the Democratic Party's 2020 presidential nomination opens up for socialists. I agree with this presentation, but I think that it incorrectly omits the critical need to defeat Donald Trump next year even if we have to actively support a more mainstream Democrat for this purpose.

There are two basic reasons for what may be for some a shocking proposition: first, Trump is systematically, and with considerable success, bringing about fascism in our country; and second, he is destroying whatever defenses we presently have to help avoid the climate change which will be catastrophic for the whole world.

This suggested course of action would certainly have been shocking to me until very recently, for until then I had been adamant in rejecting any collusion with the Democratic Party, realizing that it like the Republican Party is a creature of the 1% and that its role for countless decades has been to emasculate and absorb any serious challenge to their rule.

Attempts to "capture" and transform the Democratic Party into one serving the needs of the vast majority of our populace have been demonstrated, time and time again, to be a fool's errand. Nonetheless, the political situation with which we are now faced is so grave that it is imperative to do whatever is possible to deprive Trump of an even more devastating second term of office – we simply cannot avoid to stick our heads in the sand and hope that things work out for the better.

Regarding Dianne Feeley's article, I am less pessimistic than she is about the prospect of Sanders garnering the Democratic Party's nomination – he's running a highly active grassroots-based campaign, and he may be able to pull it off in spite of the Party's leadership.

But more to the point is the refusal of the Democratic Socialists of America, through a resolution passed at DSA's national convention in August, to support any Democratic Party presidential candidate other than Sanders. Her take on that decision seems to be supportive, pointing out that it demonstrates that Sanders' candidacy doesn't trap individuals and organizations inside the Democratic Party.

My own take is rather different, that it is highly dismaying, demonstrating that DSA is not yet able to do that which is absolutely necessary at this time, i.e. to work as hard as possible to prevent Trump's continuation as president. It's fine to have strongly socialist politics, but not if your (well justified) antipathy to the Democratic Party results in your dropping the ball.

What to Do?

I've been highly active in the Green Party for many years, serving as treasurer for its electoral campaigns at all levels including for federal office.

As usual, the Green Party will be running a candidate for president next year, and it was therefore natural for me to

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come up with a proposed set of objectives for its candidate's campaign, keeping in mind the overriding necessity of defeating Trump while also not watering down its own excellent political stance. I came up with the following four points:

1. The presidential campaign should encourage everyone to defeat Trump by voting for the Democratic Party nominee in any state in which the race is at all close, and to help get out the vote in those states. The Green Party should become clearly identified with the struggle to prevent a second term for Trump and substantially contribute to defeating him.
2. The campaign should support the campaigns of local Green Party candidates, as the necessary first step in building the party. Running presidential and statewide candidates with no chance of winning is basically a waste of time and energy.
3. The campaign should promote the Green Party as a genuine progressive electoral party, which will occur naturally through promotion of the first two objectives, as well as in campaigning in the absence of local Green Party candidates. On the one hand it will establish the political maturity of the Party through its active and highly public involvement in the effort to dump Trump, and on the other hand it will be advocating a full progressive political platform for serious consideration.
4. The campaign should still seek to get a high vote total for the Green Party presidential candidate. Although this will be a secondary objective contingent upon satisfying the first three objectives, it is still desirable to demonstrate substantial voter support in states in which it cannot possibly hinder ousting Trump.

The foregoing objectives could of course apply for any progressive third-party presidential campaign, but my intention was to convince the Green Party (at its presidential nominating convention next July) to approve this course of action for its nominee.

But after investigating prospects for such approval, I've been convinced that there is no chance of these objectives being obtained, and I have accordingly decided to no longer waste my time and to withdraw from active participation in the Green Party, which evidently has no capability of becoming the sort of progressive electoral party which is so needed.

The reader may be interested in my article "Relation of Progressives to the Democratic Party" which was published in the July 2019 issue of Works in Progress of Olympia, Washington; it is available at

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PS:

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[1] See Dianne Feely "[What the Sanders' Campaign Opens](#)" and Howie Hawkins "[Which Green New Deal?](#)", and [Solidarity](#).