

## Slings and Arrows\*

Many people are seriously conflicted about voting for the Biden/Harris ticket in this election. This educational takes that conflict seriously. It takes the position that “Dump Trump,” while necessary, cannot be an endorsement of the policies of the Democratic Party. How, then, do revolutionaries take part in the electoral arena in a time of rebellion? That is what this educational explores.

\*This, from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take up Arms against a Sea of troubles,

### Slings and Arrows: To Biden or Not to Biden, that is the Trump Question

1. New Class as a Social Force: Electoral Work in a time of Rebellion (attachment below - report to the LRNA Secretariat June 28, 2020)
2. Working class response to Sanders/ Defeat Trump (attached below)
3. Fox News interview with BLM leader Hawk Newsome in New York: [https://video.foxnews.com/v/6167816733001?playlist\\_id=930909788001#sp=show-clips](https://video.foxnews.com/v/6167816733001?playlist_id=930909788001#sp=show-clips)
4. Dump Trump by Hakim Green [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2Vb2\\_LgQ24](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2Vb2_LgQ24)
5. March March by The Chicks [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwBjF\\_VVfvE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwBjF_VVfvE)
6. John Legend Why Vote <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QfsnG00j7s>
7. Voting isn't just “Harm Reduction” (BYP) <http://blackyouthproject.com/voting-isnt-just-harm-reduction-for-marginalized-people-who-have-to-face-the-consequences/>

Things to think about

- What is electoral work in a time of rebellion?
- Why bother to vote?
- In what way is “Dump Trump” not an endorsement of Joe Biden? How is it not a vote for the lesser of the two evils?

**THE NEW SOCIAL FORCE: ELECTORAL WORK IN TIME OF REBELLION**

In the past two years the League has been involved in an effort to implement the LRNA Program and work to build an organization of revolutionaries inseparably connected to the spontaneous movement. The 2020 election campaign has helped to focus the tasks of revolutionaries, politicize the fight for basic needs, and provide a backdrop for leaders of the new class to advance their program - and thus for LRNA to work to implement its Program.

In 2018, the LRNA Central Committee noted the following, "All social motion takes place within the advancing technological revolution that our program describes. Polarization describes the process that electronics has initiated, by creating a new class that is separated from capitalist relations. In advancing their program, this new class is revealing itself as a social force demanding that the government intervene on behalf of their goals, not those of the corporations. In a period like this, which we have described as a leap, a break in continuity, the changes we are describing can accelerate. Our class is emerging from a Rip-Van-Winkle-like slumber. That which has been roiling beneath the surface for more than 20 years is about to erupt..." (Central Committee Report on Midterm Elections).

The acceleration we projected has happened. The rapid series of social crises has remolded our class more and more into a social force that is driving an objective revolutionary movement. The deadly COVID-19 coronavirus has caused 120,000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations. The economic shutdown has thrown some 40 million workers into the unemployment lines. The brutal murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd have put the horrors of deadly force that Black and Brown workers have borne for centuries suddenly on full display for all to witness. Millions of morally outraged Americans of all colors rose in rebellion against police forces who were accustomed to being accountable only to themselves.

### The Shaping of a New Consciousness

The first breakthrough in the pandemic was the sudden understanding and appreciation of the masses for the essential workers - not just the nurses and doctors, but also those washing the floors and rooms in the medical facilities, the shuttle drivers, truck drivers, grocery store workers, immigrant farm and food workers, and others.

The second breakthrough was observing the role of the government. On the one hand, there was the fact that the government has the resources to issue stimulus checks and enhanced unemployment benefits. On the other hand, there was the gross injustice that not all workers were eligible to receive these benefits, and that even for many of those who did, they were not sufficient to survive the shutdown. Finally, there was the fact that the overwhelming majority of bailout funds did not go to people in need at all, but went to billionaire investors in airlines, cruise ship lines, banks, etc.

The third breakthrough was the uprising after the Arbery, Taylor, and Floyd murders. A new, partisan, class view of workers against the system emerged as people viewed images of those described as essential workers treated like animals, and people who peacefully protested were set upon by militarized

police forces armed with rubber bullets, flash grenades, tasers, tear gas, and vicious dogs.

The world can never unsee the murder of George Floyd. The uprising is now a month old with no sign of abating. The American people led by the young took an uncompromising stand of solidarity and embraced the “Black Lives Matter” slogan, because they began to understand that until Black Lives Matter, no lives can matter. On June 9, the Washington Post reported a 33-point increase in white disapproval of police since 2015.

The young leaders of this movement proceeded quickly from protest to programmatic class demands to defund and/or abolish the police. A policy proposal that was until recently a distant vision for reimagining public safety is now being immediately demanded by the new class acting as a social force in every municipality and every legislature in the country.

The uprisings mark a shift from economic polarization to social and political polarization. Polarization takes place from *inside* of a thing. Polarization is not a simple split between a progressive and conservative pole in society. As development proceeds, there is further splitting. The progressive pole splits - into progressive and revolutionary poles; the conservative pole splits - into conservative and fascist poles. Out of this unconscious process, the emergence of the class acting as a social force is something new.

The movement for Black lives is objectively on a collision course with the capitalist system that prioritizes private property over human lives. Although the system is particularly harsh in its disregard for Black lives, all human lives (and other living things) are inconsequential to this rapacious ruling class. The dramatic escalation of unemployment, housing insecurity, and homelessness is fueling the protests in every state in the country.

The immediate gains won by the broad, multiracial movement that has formed demonstrates the value of the new class united and moving as a social force. Murderous and brutal cops have been fired and even arrested all across the country, reforms have been enacted, and some jurisdictions have actually begun defunding police departments, including removing police from public schools and colleges. Revolutionaries understand that the new class has power when it acts in a united manner to fight for its practical demands. It can transform the national narrative with lightning speed. Members of the new class are beginning to contemplate using the electoral platform to resolve their problems. Their starting point is the reality of a new equality based on the common poverty of people discarded by the tech economy. They are focused on defeating the efforts of the rulers to shut them down and deny their vote. They are focused on defeating Trump and any and all other candidates who stand in the way of their demands.

### Fascism and Resistance

Fascism comes to power as the party of attack that we are witnessing today. The new class is living in an escalating civil war being made on them by the rulers, led by the Trump administration’s racial and cultural attacks designed to solidify its social fascist base. The antagonism between such profound social destruction and the concentration of wealth and abundance

of the digital revolution cries out for revolutionary reconstruction to heal and save the people and the planet.

In the era of the electronic revolution, during the leap from private to public property, the days are gone when elections are understood *only* as a gauge of consciousness, and the place where the rulers manage/control the new class. Elections are also an arena for class battle. The 2020 election in particular is a referendum on whether or not America will accept an open fascist dictatorship.

Revolutionaries strategically position themselves in electoral campaigns, but they do so with a purpose. Our purpose, from within the various arenas of struggle, is to push from the inside and shepherd the consciousness of the revolutionaries through the stages of its development. All collectives need to assess their situation and determine the stage of consciousness and the revolutionary potential in the work around them. Our class is beginning to make its demands on the government to meet its needs. It cannot win without revolutionaries advocating and organizing independent class politics based on those demands.

The Democratic Party is under siege from the programmatic demands of the new class, even where it is solidly in control. It is not monolithic anymore. Like the Republican Party, and virtually every other political organization today, the Democratic Party is in the process of disintegrating. Part of preparing for the elections means assessing the possible development of a third party. If Republicans split between Trump fascists and Romney reactionaries, a split among Democrats between new class forces and corporate politicians may not be far behind. Third party activity is not equivalent to independent class party activity. The task of conscious revolutionaries is always to assist the new class to form up and act on its own class interests at every step of the process.

The electoral arena is an indispensable battleground between the rulers and the new class. It is central to the social response of the new class to the civil war being launched against it. These rebellions are *schools for revolution*. We have the opportunity to teach about the need for class power to take government out of the hands of the corporations and put it into the hands of we the people. Insurgents have ideas and solutions; they are hungry to learn how to succeed. We need a simple but flexible education model that attracts emerging and existing revolutionaries, based on understanding of our program as the program of the new class. The new class in motion as a social force requires new propaganda focus as society moves from rebellion to transformation.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Working Class Response to Sanders/Defeat Trump - Report to the LRNA Secretariat**

This report assesses the response of working-class voters to the withdrawal of Sanders from the race and the approach of revolutionaries to the movement to "Defeat Trump."

**On the response to the withdrawal of Sanders from the race -**

The Bernie Sanders campaign brought the life or death issues and a vision of a society that cares for everyone into the living rooms of ordinary Americans. It shifted discussion to the left in a way that was unthinkable a few years ago, like the Green New Deal and universal healthcare, (which continue to be top issues, across the political spectrum.) Hundreds of thousands of Americans attended Bernie rallies; two million contributed financially, resulting in 10 million donations. Sanders had raised more money than any other Democratic candidate by January 2020. "Our Revolution" had a quarter-million members.

The forced withdrawal of Sanders from the presidential race was met by grief, disappointment and anger. Some of Sanders' supporters are mad at Sanders and others are mad at the Democratic establishment and the corporate media. Overall, the sentiment is that the Sanders' campaign was not about Sanders, but about the movement, and that the movement will continue, and that while Biden is generally disliked, Trump must be defeated. Key movement groups called immediately for action to continue to push for the demands of the Sanders' program.

An example: A coalition of eight youth leaders immediately after Sander's announcement sent Biden a letter outlining policy recommendations that included: embracing the Green New Deal legislation, committing to a transition to 100% clean energy by 2030; working towards gun violence prevention; expanding DACA and closing the vast and cruel web of detention camps; Medicare for All; ending the failed War on Drugs; supporting free tuition at public colleges and vocational schools; and repealing the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs that have resulted in nearly two decades of overseas war. The letter also demanded that Biden show that he understands the corporate grip on the Democratic Party must be loosened.

In general, there was an understanding among people that Medicare for all, free public college tuition and other proposals represented a threat to corporate profits. Some saw this threat as what prompted the Democrat's coordinated effort to block Bernie's rise. As one activist stated, "Democratic Party 'bosses' [and Obama] coordinated their push for Biden by cajoling Buttigieg and Klobuchar to drop out just before Super Tuesday, helping to prevent some states from holding primaries/caucuses, cutting severely into Bernie's votes . . . [we're] screwed again." A delegate to the DNC said, "I hate Biden. None want Biden. [But] it's so important to defeat Trump. We are discussing how to push the platform, healthcare and [addressing] environmental racism at the convention. It's absolutely about the platform." An organizer said, "We must build independence from our two major parties. However, we first need to work together before we can even get there."

A question raised by many is: will people get out and vote? "We're organizing and getting our people to the polls in 2020," said a Latino vote group. Some say younger voters are turned off. An organizer for the Bernie campaign in a rural area who is a delegate to the DNC said, "Yes. People are upset enough that they will go to the polls. It's crap about the young people

not voting. They were waiting in lines after 2nd or 3rd jobs [to vote]. Its voter suppression that is making it hard to vote.”

### **On the approach of revolutionaries to the movement to “Defeat Trump”-**

Trump’s policies and tactics have done extreme damage to the working class since he took office. Among other things, he deliberately mishandled the coronavirus crisis, has continued his vicious and divisive assault on immigrants, and his racist dog whistles have made the pre-existing assault on black Americans in particular much worse. The Trump administration has also: lifted 100 environmental regulations; increased the threat posed by climate change; revoked native reservation status; installed young, rightwing federal judges whose rulings will have a long-term impact; attacked the homeless; encouraged police violence and violence by the far right; isolated America internationally; and put as heads of federal agencies corporate hacks and privatizers. Trump’s policies have aroused resistance among the workers and made him the public face of fascism in the eyes of the movement.

Trump’s policies have helped the capitalists, but have also injured various capitalist interests, fueling opposition to the Trump regime within the capitalist class. There is infighting among the capitalists over how to respond to the challenges posed by labor-replacing technology and the rise of competitors to the US internationally. The various polarities within both classes are reflected in splits within the two parties and between them. The Democratic Party is being battered from within and seems to be on a path to breaking up. We have seen the rise of the progressive wing of the Democrats, essentially putting forward a program of nationalization in the interests of the workers. This program expresses the rising resistance by the workers to their conditions and the fight for it is part of the workers’ struggle for political independence, expressed both inside the party and outside in the streets.

Meanwhile we see the “establishment” Democrats increasingly exposed, making a show of opposing Trump while themselves blocking any program in the interests of the workers. The Trumpists have a program that relies on overt racism, violence, culture war, an extreme libertarian approach to the economy, and an “America First” approach to international affairs. The corporate Democrats have a seemingly “softer” and more “liberal” approach, but one that nonetheless leads to a corporate dictatorship in some form and that cannot serve the workers’ interests.

We should look at the question of “Defeat Trump” against the above background. Given the horrors of Trump, it appears there is an almost universal sentiment in the movement that Trump has to go, even if the byproduct of this is to elect a corporate Democrat. The Defeat Trump camp includes some people who genuinely favor Biden, and many others who reject Biden and the corporate Democrats, but who understand that Trump has to be defeated because of the further serious damage that will result if

he's re-elected. There is an intensifying demand that the Biden campaign address the workers' issues. Many people understand that before and after Trump is defeated, the movement in the streets has to continue in order to pressure the government to meet the people's demands.

It's not a question of "voting for the lesser of two evils," but a matter of political strategy and tactics—it's in the workers' interests at this moment to remove Trump, and the corporate Democrats cannot be fully exposed unless they're in power. This process will also help set the stage for a viable third party. It's not "Elect Biden," but rather "Defeat Trump." And after the election, as one writer put it, "be prepared to resist him [Biden] like you're resisting Trump."

Varshini Prakash, a co-founder of the Sunrise Movement, who was nominated by Sanders to serve on the Sanders-Biden Task Force on the Climate Crisis, said that, "When our movement voted to endorse Bernie Sanders, we said we'd keep fighting for a Green New Deal no matter what. We knew that work would include working to defeat Trump in November, then turning millions of people to the streets after that to disrupt business as usual to pressure the next President and Congress to begin legislating on the Green New Deal." She added: "We cannot afford another four years of Donald Trump....As if the fate of our planet wasn't enough, our democracy is also at stake. This election is about saying no to fascism and authoritarian rule....We must defeat Donald Trump, but our work neither begins or ends there..."

### **Suggested Readings:**

A Joe Biden Presidency Will Require Mass Protests, Too  
[https://jacobinmag.com/2020/06/joe-biden-donald-trump-resist-police-brutality-protests?utm\\_source=Jacobin&utm\\_campaign=879259b8ff-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_10\\_01\\_07\\_50\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_be8b1b2846-879259b8ff-85556218&mc\\_cid=879259b8ff&mc\\_eid=c8cedd68f0](https://jacobinmag.com/2020/06/joe-biden-donald-trump-resist-police-brutality-protests?utm_source=Jacobin&utm_campaign=879259b8ff-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_10_01_07_50_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_be8b1b2846-879259b8ff-85556218&mc_cid=879259b8ff&mc_eid=c8cedd68f0)

#2 Building on the Bernie Movement in Coronavirus Time  
<https://portside.org/2020-04-24/building-bernie-movement-coronavirus-time>  
by Robt Borosage in The Nation