

# From the Editors

July 2, 2017

Since Donald Trump has taken up residence in the White House, the country has faced a series of political controversies, a barrage of right-wing legislative and regulatory initiatives, a growing far-right movement, but also a broadening resistance from various sectors of society. The challenge is, in the midst of the chaos of the Trump presidency and the myriad assaults on the American working class, to build an independent movement committed not only to removing Trump and stopping the Republicans, but to fighting for a radical program of social reforms, from full employment to a national health care system, while opposing racism and Islamophobia and protecting women's rights, including reproductive rights.

As Elizabeth Drew suggested in the *New York Review of Books* (June 22), Trump's presidency may be "in peril" because of the firing on May 9 of James Comey, the head of the FBI, who was investigating the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. Comey is the third person involved in investigating Trump to be fired by the administration. We have not seen any political crisis as serious as this in over forty years. Trump's firing of Comey has been compared to President Richard Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" on October 20, 1973, when he ousted special prosecutor Archibald Cox, who was investigating the break-in at the Democratic Party headquarters, which Nixon had covered up. In response, Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William French Smith resigned. Nixon subsequently resigned to avoid impeachment.

Trump, in office for four months, has appointed a cabinet of billionaire corporate CEOs, a junta of military generals, and a congeries of rich, right-wing Republicans intent on destroying the welfare state, eliminating government regulation, reducing civil liberties, and restricting voting rights. He has three times attempted to pass a Muslim ban, worked to "repeal and replace" Obama's Affordable Care Act, and has proposed a budget that increases military spending and cuts all social programs and the Environmental Protection Agency. Trump's tax plan would, according to the *New York Times*, "amount to a multitrillion-dollar shift from federal coffers to America's richest families and their heirs." The plan would repeal the estate tax and cut corporate taxes from 35 to 15 percent. Dan La Botz takes up all of this and more in his article in this issue.

Many fear that Trump may launch a war against North Korea or some other nation to distract attention from domestic failures and to provide an excuse for repression of his opponents. And we are appalled by Trump's decision to leave the Paris climate accord, however inadequate it was.

The opposition to Trump has been enormous. Half a million people marched in the women's march in Washington DC on January 21, and four million participated in the sister marches across the country, the largest national protest demonstration in the nation's history. Some 200,000 joined the climate march in Washington on April 29, while tens of thousands of others joined similar marches in other cities nationwide. Two "Day Without an Immigrant" protests also had tens of thousands of participants. Tens of thousands of Americans have challenged their representatives at Town Hall meetings.

We fully support the resistance, but we have to recognize that so far it has largely been led by the Democratic Party through groups such as Indivisible, and even when not led by the Democrats, the politics of the movement have been liberal. While tens of thousands of radicals have been among the best organizers and builders of the movement, they have been unable to challenge the Democrats and the dominant liberal tone. So far, organized labor, divided between the Building Trades and coal miners anxious to cooperate with Trump, the public employees opposed to him, and the many unions

sitting on the fence, has been unable to play a significant role. We need to drive Trump from the White House, to defeat the Republicans in the 2018 elections, and to build a movement to challenge not only this administration, but to challenge all of the ruling class's political representatives and the capitalist system itself. As one frequently heard slogan has it, "Trump is the symptom, capitalism is the disease."

We continue in this issue our series on the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution with articles by Sam Farber, Tom Harrison, Stefanie Prezioso, and an interview with Suzi Weissman. We also have a section on the Middle East in which Steve Shalom writes on "The 1967 War" while Mike Noonan discusses the Palestinian teachers strike. We also have three articles on Latin America: Nicole Fabricant and Bret Gustafson write about "extractivism" and the struggle for socialism from below in Bolivia; Pedro Cabán discusses the PROMESA bill and the Puerto Rican financial crisis; and Edward Tapia discusses Dependency Theory. In addition Kim Moody provides an article on the state of the American working class and the labor unions, Robin Hahnel differentiates a left critique of U.S. trade policy from that of Trump, Anthony Pahnke looks at the politics of food, and Bennett Muraskin writes on the history of American Jews in the Industrial Workers of the World.

We also have our regular feature "Words & Pictures," this time with Paul Buhle writing about the work of Si Lewen, as presented by Art Spiegelman. And, of course, as always we have several book reviews. Finally, we remember and honor our former editor, Marvin Mandell.

We hope you enjoy the issue. We will see you in the resistance on the streets, walking out of the workplace, and shutting down the system. Let's take the future into our hands.

Saulo Colón

Nancy Holmstrom

Dan La Botz

Jason Schulman

Julia Wrigley

## CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE



"Where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter."

"I feel safe in the midst of my enemies, for the truth is all powerful and will prevail."

"You may hiss as much as you please, but women will get their rights anyway."

"You have been having our rights so long, that you think, like a slave-holder, that you own us. I know that it is hard for one who has held the reins for so long to give up; it cuts like a knife. It will feel all the better when it closes up again."

"Life is a hard battle anyway. If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier. I will not allow my life's light to be determined by the darkness around me."

— Sojourner Truth, abolitionist and women's rights activist

## Footnotes