From the Editors

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Even though it is only half over, 2020 has already proved to be one of the most tumultuous—and inspiring—years in recent political history. It has been a year of dramatic swings backwards and forwards, with hope giving way to despair, and despair being replaced almost as rapidly by a massive, unexpected, and international uprising against police violence and racial inequality.

The year began with many leftists in the United States holding high expectations for the presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders. After Sanders garnered the most votes in the Iowa caucus and then won the New Hampshire and Nevada primaries in February, the enthusiasm reached fever pitch. An article in *Jacobin* announced that "After the Nevada Blowout, It's Bernie's Party Now," and even some commentators in the mainstream media began viewing Sanders as the favorite to win the Democratic Party nomination. These hopes were short lived. When Joe Biden won big in South Carolina, the Democratic Party establishment united in lockstep behind him. A week later, Biden swept the Super Tuesday primaries and Sanders' challenge was effectively over. The establishment had demonstrated that the Democratic Party remains a capitalist party in their grip—their party, not ours.

Just as the Sanders campaign was winding down, the United States found itself facing the worst public health crisis in living memory, which the Trump administration, with its lack of preparation, its refusal to take the crisis seriously, and its general incompetence made even worse. By mid-March, much of the country was in lockdown and the economy was in free fall, with unemployment soaring to over twenty percent. The U.S. and world economies were facing serious problems before the emergence of a new and deadly coronavirus, but the pandemic accelerated and exposed the underlying economic weaknesses of the capitalist system.

One effect of the economic crisis was to sharpen inter-imperial rivalries between the major powers, particularly the conflict between the United States and China. As tensions on a world-scale increased, authoritarian leaders in a number of countries—Trump here, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Modi in India, etc.—moved further to the right. In the United States, Trump cheered on right-wing protesters who held armed demonstrations around the country demanding that the economy be re-opened immediately. While there were walkouts and strikes by low-paid essential workers opposing unsafe

working conditions, the pandemic seemed to have largely muted opposition to Trump's policies.

All that changed on Memorial Day, with the brutal police murder of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man, in Minneapolis. Floyd's death, the result of officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on his neck for nearly nine minutes, with Floyd—who was already handcuffed—gasping that he could not breathe, was caught on video. The response was as explosive as it was unexpected. Mass protests against racial injustice broke out, first in Minneapolis, then in every major U.S. city and smaller communities, and then in cities around the world, Suddenly there was a movement led by Black youth but multiracial in character, bigger than anything we have seen in this country for decades. Polling showed that the protests had the support of a large majority of the population.

Predictably, Trump's instinct was to meet the uprising with mass repression. But his threat to invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807 and mobilize the army against the protesters backfired. Leading military figures (including his own Secretary of Defense), aware of significant support for the protests in the ranks, spoke out publicly against using the military against U.S. citizens. For the time being, the resistance has been strengthened and Trump's poll numbers are dropping, making November's election look more like it's the Democrats' to lose, though Biden has many problems, including facing a contested accusation of sexual assault by a former member of his staff, Tara Reade.

However, as socialists we know that getting rid of Trump will not be enough. Joe Biden has built his political career on coddling corporations and the rich, expanding the prison industrial complex, and supporting U.S. military interventions around the world. Biden has no solutions for the problems we face, from systemic racism to the climate crisis, and a Biden administration would need to be opposed just as vigorously by the left as Trump. The good news is that the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement against police violence, racism, and inequality provides the chance to rebuild a new, stronger left.

The articles in this issue of *New Politics* take up many of these themes:

Black activist Haley Pessin discusses why "The Movement for Black Lives is Different This Time." We thank her for writing this article even as the events were taking place and she was involved in organizing in New York City.

Dan La Botz and Sherry Baron look at the impact of COVID-19 and the economic depression on the United States. Alejandro Reuss examines the pandemic and its effect on the world economy. And Gérard Chaouat discusses how different national health systems have dealt with the disease and with research to deal with such plagues.

We ask: What will those who supported Bernie Sanders and his progressive platform do now? Taheerah Barney, Bill Fletcher Jr., Mindy Isser, and Natalia Tylim offer their views on organizing after Bernie, commenting on social movements, electoral politics, the Democratic Party, and the role of socialists.

With militarism and authoritarianism on the rise worldwide, there is a crucial need for updating and strengthening a politics of socialist anti-imperialism. So in this issue we have the symposium, "Anti-Imperialism and the Rise of Authoritarianism, 'Left' and Right."

In addition, Lee Wengraf examines U.S. imperialism in Africa, Ann Ferguson offers a review essay on capitalism, patriarchy, and racism, and Frederick B. Mills on the Pink Tide in Latin America. Also Jordy Cummings gives us a music review of Bob Dylan's latest song, and as always there are several book reviews. Finally we have an exchange on surrogacy between Sara Lee and Alexandra

Holmstrom-Smith.

We know that as some of you are isolating and some observing social distancing while participating in the protests against racism and police brutality, and as all of us are concerned about the national reopening of the economy and the coming presidential election, you will find sustenance and solidarity in these articles.