

Subscription,  
book drive  
kicks off with  
strong start

BY MARY MARTIN

The Socialist Workers Party’s nine-week fall circulation drive to increase readership is ahead of schedule. The party has set a national quota of 1,500 subscriptions to the *Militant* and the same number of campaign books

DEEPER INTO THE  
WORKING CLASS

written by SWP leaders. Over the first week we sold 251 subscriptions and 211 books.

At the heart of the effort is knocking on workers’ doors to discuss the carnage that workers, ranchers and farmers are living through, imposed by the bosses and their government as they try to force the cost of the deepening crisis of their capitalist system on us. The goal is to get out broadly into cities, towns and rural areas.

In addition to branches of the SWP, members and supporters of Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada,  
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Fall Campaign to sell  
Militant subscriptions  
and books  
Sept. 16 - Nov 21(Week 1)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	95	14	95	21
Atlanta	85	11	85	7
Chicago	115	17	115	10
Colorado	30	4	30	5
Lincoln	30	3	30	3
Los Angeles	135	15	135	14
Miami	45	5	45	1
New York	180	37	180	38
Oakland	125	33	135	21
Philadelphia	70	14	70	17
Seattle	105	17	105	15
Twin Cities	75	8	75	15
Washington	80	13	80	4
Total U.S.	1,170	191	1,180	171
Prisoners	20	3		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	65	13	65	3
Manchester	60	9	60	3
Total U.K.	125	22	125	6
CANADA				
Montreal	60	13	60	10
Vancouver	45	6	45	9
Total Canada	105	19	105	19
New Zealand	50	10	50	7
Australia	45	6	45	8
Total	1,515	251	1,505	211
SHOULD BE	1,500	167	1,500	167

Puerto Rico crisis product  
of capitalism, colonial rule



AP/Carlos Giusti

Traffic tie-up as residents try to leave Toa Baja, Puerto Rico. Authorities gave them no advance warning, then released water from Laka Plata reservoir, flooding area. Nine people drowned.

Social disaster leaves people  
without electricity, water

BY SETH GALINSKY

The social disaster unfolding in Puerto Rico is magnified many times over because it is a U.S. colony. Well before hurricanes Irma and then Maria hit, the state-owned electrical grid and other infrastructure were in disarray. Basic maintenance had been shunted aside as the colonial regime was directed by Washington to prioritize making payments on its \$74 billion debt to wealthy bondholders.

Puerto Rico’s economy has been “adjusted” by its colonial masters in Washington for decades to meet the interests of U.S. capitalists. Starting in the 1940s U.S. companies there were exempted from many taxes, which, coupled with low wages, led pharmaceutical and other bosses to set up shop on the island. In the 1990s many hospitals, telecommunications and some hotels were privatized.

After World War II the emphasis on  
Continued on page 7

Massive aid to Puerto Rico!  
End US colonial rule!

The following statement was released Sept. 26 by Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York. Hart was in

SOCIALIST WORKERS  
PARTY STATEMENT

Puerto Rico in May participating in celebrations there when longtime political prisoner Oscar López won his freedom and discussing the common interests of Puerto Ricans and workers in the United States in fighting U.S. colonial rule over the island. In June he spoke for the party at U.N. hearings on decolonization, backing the call for independence for Puerto Rico.

It’s U.S. imperialism’s colonial exploitation of Puerto Rico that turned hurricanes Irma and Maria into a  
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Football players ‘take a knee’  
to defend the right to protest

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

More than 200 National Football League (NFL) players took a knee during the U.S. national anthem prior to their games Sept. 24. Hundreds of others locked arms with their coaches, and in some cases even team owners, a number of whom had supported Donald Trump’s campaign for president. These protests were in response to comments by the president that athletes who do not stand during the singing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” should be fired for not respecting the flag.

Actions occurred at virtually ev-

ery stadium where NFL games were played. Three teams — the Pittsburgh Steelers, Seattle Seahawks and Tennessee Titans — stayed off the field while the anthem was sung. A league official said teams that did so wouldn’t face fines, though NFL rules say they could.

Such protests began a year ago when Colin Kaepernick — at the time quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers — refused to stand during the national anthem to demonstrate opposition to racial discrimination and cop killings of Blacks and others around

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Millions vote  
‘yes’ for  
independent  
Kurdistan!



Reuters/Thaier Al-Sudani

Kurdish women show ink-stained fingers after voting for independence in Kirkuk Sept. 25. ‘Yes’ vote garnered over 92 percent.

BY JIM BRADLEY

Over 3 million Kurds and others in Iraqi Kurdistan and tens of thousands in the Kurdish diaspora around the world defied Washington and its imperialist allies, the United Nations Security Council, the European Union and the majority of the capitalist regimes in the Middle East by turning out to vote in the Kurdistan Regional Government’s independence referendum Sept. 25. Authorities there report 92.7 percent of the returns in the non-binding vote were cast for “Yes.” The overwhelming vote opens a new stage in the centurieslong struggle of the Kurdish people for a homeland.

The ballot was written in four languages, Kurdish, Arabic, Turkmen and Assyrian, reflecting the participation of the nationalities living in the Kurdistan region. There were 12,000 polling stations spread across the region, including KRG territory recognized by Iraq as well as areas also claimed by the Iraqi government, including the oil-rich Kirkuk province. Over 72 percent of the 4.5 million eligible voters participated.

“We have a language. We have a history. We have a geography. And  
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How revolutionary Cuba responds to hurricanes 7

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Chicken plant bosses seek to jump line speeds 25%

Chicago airport ‘pay raise’ gives up workers’ rights



## 2



# Subscription, book drive

### Continued from front page

New Zealand and the U.K. are using the drive, which runs to Nov. 21, to introduce the communist movement.

The drive runs concurrently with the SWP’s \$100,000 fall fund to finance the party’s ongoing work. Below is a chart showing party fund goals.

SWP members and supporters who work in industry and retail are organizing to win new readers among their co-workers and working with them to introduce the party and its literature to their friends, relatives and neighbors. For example, party supporters who work at Walmart are discussing a goal of selling 150 subscriptions and a matching number of books.

In an exciting part of kicking off the drive, SWP members in Miami were joined by party members from Atlanta to campaign in southern Florida on the heels of Hurricane Irma (see article on page 8).

Party members from a number of cities sent reports on their experiences in the first week of the drive. SWP members Diana Newberry and Alyson Kennedy made a trip to the Arkansas Valley of Southeast Colorado, a ranching and agricultural area. They met workers door to door in three small towns along Route 50.

In Rocky Ford they spoke with Loretta Herrera, Kennedy said, who told us that workers from Mexico come to the area every year to work in the fields picking cantaloupes, melons, onions and other crops. “When I went to college I was in the United Mexican American Student group and we would bring Cesar Chavez from the United Farm Workers union to speak about the grape boycott,” Herrera said. “Today farmworkers have the same problems. Planes fly over the fields and drop pesticides while they are working.”

She got an introductory subscription to the *Militant* along with a copy of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes.

“My family has a legacy of fighting for Hispanic people, so it’s nice to see people who care about what is going on,” Herrera said. “I voted for the Clintons, but I didn’t appreciate what they did afterwards.” By the end of the weekend Kennedy and Newberry had sold three campaign books, two in-

troductory *Militant* subscriptions and seven single copies.

In addition to *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, the books on special are *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* both by Barnes; *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters; and “*It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System*” by the Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries who spent up to 16 years in U.S. prisons for their actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Michele Smith reports that she and party supporter Rashaad Ali in Seattle met Sandra Stubbs at her home and discussed the fight against racism and the history of the battles to defeat Jim Crow segregation. Stubbs got an introductory subscription to the *Militant* and the books *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*

“I believe in what you two are saying and have some similar ideas,” Stubbs said. “A lot of people today have their eyes closed and they need to be opened. Please call me again and we can set up a time to get together with a few of my friends and family to talk politics.”

Joanne Murphy from Washington, D.C., reports that party members went door to door in some apartment buildings there. “We met Withyawuth W. Hong, who was forced into the Cambodian army as a teenager, then captured and put in one of Pol Pot’s labor camps,” Murphy said. “He escaped and when he got to the U.S., spent 12 years in the U.S. military. He said he thought the one thing the U.S. didn’t understand about either Vietnam or Cuba was that “all Washington’s military might was not strong enough to defeat the people’s will to fight for freedom.”

He signed up for a *Militant* subscription and got a copy of *Cuba and Angola: The War for Freedom* by Harry Villegas, a book that describes the revolutionary Cuban government’s assistance to the Angolan people’s fight against intervention by apartheid South Africa in the 1970s and ’80s, Murphy said. Then the next night we got to talk

### Oscar López: ‘Colonialism is a crime against humanity’

PHILADELPHIA — “Colonialism is a crime against humanity,” Oscar López Rivera — framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government for 36 years for his activities promoting independence for Puerto Rico — told an enthusiastic crowd of several hundred supporters at Taller Puertorriqueño here Sept. 18. It was exactly four months and one day since he won his release from prison.

“This is a very humbling and very moving moment. I am profoundly grateful to all of you,” he said, referring to everyone in Philadelphia and beyond who helped win his freedom. “My honor and dignity are stronger than the day I was put in prison.”

“This is a moment of crisis in Puerto Rico, a very, very critical moment,” López said. The fight to decolonize Puerto Rico is the only way to make sure it “will be a free, independent, strong nation.”

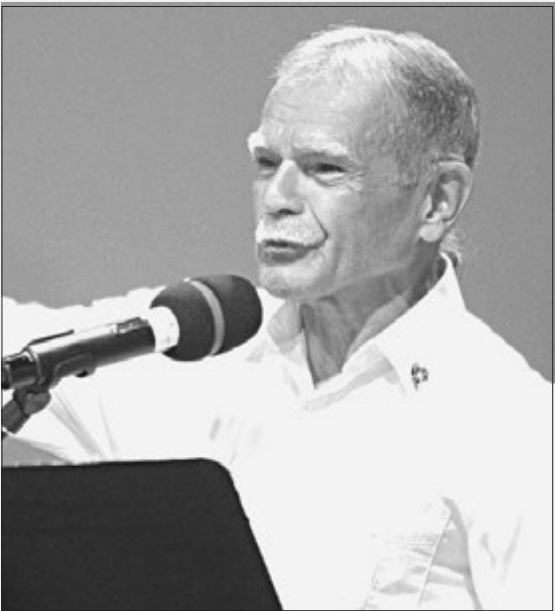
“We don’t need anything else but to act united, and we can do it independent of our ideological differences, independent of religious preferences, even in spite of prejudices we have,” he said. “We can do it because we can transcend those few things that prevent us from coming together.”

López said he draws inspiration and hope from the hundreds of young Puerto Ricans, both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland, who are ready to continue the struggle he and comrades of his generation have been waging.

The meeting was organized by the National Boricua Human Rights Network Philadelphia to coincide with Grito de Lares, which marks the 1868 uprising when Puerto Ricans launched their fight for independence from Spain. It was co-sponsored by community organizations and local elected officials.

“We salute you for your efforts to decolonize Puerto Rico from the wicked grip of the colonial rule of the U.S.,” said a message from nine prisoners in Graterford, a maximum security prison outside Philadelphia, read to close the meeting. “Your victory is an inspiration to all of us living under oppressive and dehumanizing conditions.”

— RUTH ROBINETT



more when he came to the Militant Labor Forum to see “All Guantánamo Is Ours,” about the Cuban people’s fight to reclaim the U.S.-occupied naval base there.

Members of the Communist League in Vancouver, British Columbia, report they talked to workers door to door in an evening campaign team joined by Philippe Tessier, the League’s candidate for mayor in Montreal. He was in town to campaign for a few days on his way back from a week of political campaigning in the Philippines. They said one person they talked to gave \$20 for *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Re-*

*cord*, saying the change was a donation. That’s the second \$10 donation they’ve received in the last couple weeks.

SWP members in a number of cities report they’ve gotten contributions from workers on their doorsteps to help advance the party’s work. These donations to the SWP Fall Fund are an important part of meeting the \$100,000 goal.

If you would like to sign up friends or others you know to receive the *Militant* or campaign books, to invite a party member to come visit with you and your friends, or to donate to the Party Fund, please contact the nearest SWP office listed on page 8.

**Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund**  
**Sept. 16 - Nov. 21**

Area	Quota
Albany	\$5,000
Atlanta	\$11,200
Chicago	\$12,000
Colorado	\$700
Lincoln	\$300
Los Angeles	\$9,400
Miami	\$3,500
New York	\$17,000
Oakland	\$14,500
Philadelphia	\$4,200
Seattle	\$8,200
Twin Cities	\$4,800
Washington	\$7,250
Other	\$1,200
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>\$99,250</b>
<b>Should be</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

**MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION & BOOK SPECIALS**

**Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power**  
by Jack Barnes  
\$15. With subscription: \$10

**These books just \$5 each with a Militant subscription**  
*(trial offer for new readers: 12 weeks \$5)*

**Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?**  
*Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*  
by Jack Barnes

**The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record**  
*Why Washington Fears Working People*  
by Jack Barnes

**Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?**  
*A Necessary Debate Among Working People*  
by Mary-Alice Waters

**“It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System”**  
*The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class.*

**\$7 EACH WITHOUT SUBSCRIPTION**

*To subscribe or purchase books at these prices, contact Socialist Workers Party or Communist League branches listed on page 8.*



# Massive Kurdistan ‘Yes’ vote

**Continued from front page**  
we have suffered,” 73-year-old retired lawyer Saleh Mohammed told the *Wall Street Journal* coming out of his polling booth. “There have been wars and uprisings, and after every uprising, negotiations and agreements that were never implemented.”

“Today is a historic day,” said KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani after casting his vote. “Our message on this day is: The people of Kurdistan with all its components who live here want to peacefully and democratically express their opinion about their future and how it should look like.”

Celebrations of the vote spread across the border into the Kurdish region in Iran as well. Social media sites were full of photos and videos showing enthusiastic mobilizations in Bana, Saqqez, Mariwan, Mahabad, Bokan, Sardasht, Shno, Piranshar, Kamyaran and other cities. The largest celebration was reported in Sanandaj, where Rudaw reports nearly 20,000 people took part, chanting “Sanandaj supports you” in the city’s Freedom Square.

The over 30 million Kurds are the largest nationality worldwide without a state, divided by the imperialist victors in World War I between Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey.

### Threats against Kurds intensify

Washington and its imperialist allies, the capitalist rulers in Baghdad, and almost all the capitalist regimes in the Middle East demanded the KRG cancel the referendum right through the vote. Since then some have advanced political, economic and military threats against the KRG.

“The propertied rulers in the U.S., today’s dominant imperialist power, fear the Kurds’ battle for independence,” said Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York in a Sept. 20 statement. So do the rulers in Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran, where most of the Kurdish people live.

“This is because every step forward for the centurieslong struggle for the Kurdish people for self-determination anywhere,” Hart stated, “opens the door to new advances, inspiring Kurds wherever they live and others fighting imperialist domination, oppression and exploitation.”

Since the overwhelming independence vote, the anti-Kurdish drumbeat has grown shriller.

“We hope for a unified Iraq to annihilate ISIS [Islamic State]” and “to push back on Iran,” White House spokes-

person Sarah Sanders cynically stated. Washington has maintained a tactical military alliance with Kurdish fighters in both Iraq and Syria as the most effective fighting force in combating the reactionary Islamic State. The U.S. rulers have used and betrayed the Kurds over decades when useful to advance their imperialist interests in the region.

The Iraqi parliament — with Kurdish delegates boycotting — called on Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to send troops to Kirkuk to retake control. The Kurdish peshmerga defended the city, after Iraqi government troops fled when Islamic State swept across hunks of Iraq in 2014.

Baghdad also demanded the KRG relinquish control over the international airports in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. Some regional airlines, including Egyptair in Cairo and Middle East Airlines in Beirut, said they would suspend flights there beginning Sept. 29.

“We will call to account anyone who participated in the referendum,” Abadi said, threatening retaliation.

One pro-Tehran member of parliament went further. “The step that was taken by some racists in Kurdistan will bring instability to the entire region for years to come,” said Mowaffak al-Rubaie from the ruling Shiite National Alliance. “The representatives of such efforts had established the state of Israel in 1948.”

The Iraqi government does not recognize the Israeli state, the only government in the Middle East that says it would recognize an independent Kurdistan.

The rulers of neighboring regimes with large oppressed Kurdish populations are united in targeting the KRG,



Thousands of Kurds in Sanandaj, Iran, celebrate Iraqi Kurdistan independence vote Sept. 25.

fearing the example it sets. Iranian and Iraqi troops are conducting joint military exercises, as are Iraqi and Turkish troops, on their borders with the KRG.

The Turkish regime of Recep Tayyip Erdogan is threatening to retaliate. The KRG is landlocked and its biggest source of revenue is oil that reaches the market through a pipeline across Turkey.

“After this, let’s see,” Erdogan said, “who they sell [their oil] to. The valve is with us. It’s finished the moment we close it.”

But the KRG also has some defenders. “The Turkish policy will fail,” said Hadiye Yusuf, co-chair of the founding council administering the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Syria. If the KRG is attacked or blockaded, the Kurds there can count on support from Syrian Kurds, he said, and the Simalke

border crossing from Syria into the Kurdistan region area will remain open.

While threats are flying, there is yet no combat on the ground. And the Turkish rulers have not closed their border with Kurdistan.

The Kurds were able to organize the referendum because of the space opened by the coming apart of Syria and Iraq and the conflicts between Washington, Moscow and competing capitalist regimes in the region seeking to bolster their national economic and political interests.

Its serves as an inspiration to others fighting to advance their rights around the world, like the people of Catalonia, currently fighting to vote on an independence referendum Oct. 1 over the fierce objection of the Spanish rulers.

## Days left before Cuba brigade, youth festival in Russia

**BY ALYSON KENNEDY**

Some 250 people from around the world will arrive in Cuba on Oct. 1 for the 14-day “In the Footsteps of Che” International Brigade. “Armed with rubber boots and gloves, 68 activists from the U.S. will join the brigade,” Cheryl LaBash, co-coordinator of the U.S. delegation, told the *Militant* in a Sept. 26 phone interview. They are prepared to work alongside Cubans cleaning up and rebuilding after Hurricane Irma.

The brigade was initiated by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples to commemorate the legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, on the 50th anniversary of his fall in combat. With Fidel Castro’s backing, Guevara went to Bolivia to join the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of René Barrientos.

Guevara was wounded and captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-organized operation on Oct. 8, 1967. He was assassinated the following day.

While in Cuba, brigadistas will see firsthand what it means when there is a revolutionary government with workers in power. Days before the hurricane hit, the entire population began preparations. They organized an evacuation of 1.7 million people and as soon as it was safe to go out began reconstruction.

Led by brigades from the Cuban electrical workers union, almost all the electricity was restored in Cuba after the first week. During a phone conference of brigadistas preparing for the trip, it was reported that 10 members of the

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers union from Miami went to Cuba to help.

In stark contrast, in Puerto Rico, the colonial government predicts it could take six months or longer to restore electricity. A colony of the U.S., Puerto Rico, was first grazed by Irma and then devastated by Hurricane Maria.

“I want to learn how Cuba mobilizes and recovers so quickly after a hurricane and helps those most in need,” Milly Guzman-Young, who was born in Puerto Rico and is going on the brigade, told the *Militant*. “Cuba and Venezuela offered to help Puerto Rico. The U.S. is blocking the aid. The U.S. is not providing help for my people and yet they have the audacity to deny and reject our neighboring brother countries from helping us.”

Supporters of the Cuban Revolution in many cities have organized dinners, events and media work to publicize and raise funds for the brigade and to prepare for reportback meetings. On Sept. 30, the day before brigade members leave for Cuba, the D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution will hold a fundraising party featuring Miguel Fraga, the first secretary of the Cuban Embassy.

The four people going on the brigade from Hartford, Connecticut, have been holding classes on *Socialism and Man* by Che Guevara and *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* to politically prepare for participating in the trip.

A sendoff garden party for brigadistas from Los Angeles will take place in San

Pedro Sept. 30. It will also raise funds for delegates traveling to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Russia a couple of weeks later. On Sept. 23 supporters of the Cuban Revolution in San Jose had a chili dinner and video showing and raised \$250.

Some 20,000 young people from over 120 countries are expected to attend the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia, Oct. 14-22. Over 100 young people are going from the U.S. The festival provides an opportunity to discuss, share experiences and learn about anti-imperialist struggles worldwide.

This year the festival will be honoring Fidel Castro. Some 250 young revolutionaries from Cuba will be attending. The Union of Young Communists (UJC) announced that outstanding leaders in history, science, medicine and sports will be guests of the Cuban delegation there.

Susely Morfa González, the first secretary of the National Committee of the UJC, told *Juventud Rebelde* Sept. 19 that prominent Cuban musicians and artists will be performing during the opening and closing ceremonies of the youth festival. The Cuban delegation’s goal at the festival “is a question of building strategies to fight against imperialism and in favor of a world of peace, solidarity and social transformations,” she said.

To request someone from the Cuba brigade speak to your group, school or union, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

**—MILITANT  
LABOR  
FORUMS—**

**CALIFORNIA  
Oakland**  
**Support Kurds’ Right to an Independent State!** Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. 675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

**UNITED KINGDOM  
Manchester**  
**UK, US Hands Off Korea! For a Korean Peninsula, Pacific and Asia Free of Nuclear Weapons!** Speaker: Dag Tirsén, Communist League. Fri., Oct. 6, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House. 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.



# Chicken plant bosses seek to jump line speeds 25%

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a drive to boost their profits, chicken processing bosses are pressing the federal government to relax U.S. Department of Agriculture rules and allow their companies to jack up factory line speeds by 25 percent — to plow through 175 chickens a minute, up from 140. That's three living, clucking chickens transformed into packaged products every second.

In August National Chicken Council President Michael Brown arrogantly claimed, "This change will not affect food safety — if anything, it will enhance it." But it's poultry workers already facing dangerous line speeds and working conditions who would bear the brunt of this latest attack.

Some 300,000 workers are employed in the poultry industry nationwide, many in plants in the South. The five major companies — Tyson, Pilgrim's Pride, Sanderson Farms, Perdue Farms and Koch Foods — have led the speed-up drive. Already some one-third of poultry workers get afflicted with carpal tunnel syndrome and three-fourths suffer nerve damage to their wrists and hands.

Bosses are now working on new plants designed to take advantage of the higher line speeds. Tyson and Sanderson both say their new plants will process more than a million birds a week.

The speedup drive was facilitated when the USDA cut back inspections of poultry plants in 2014, relying instead on companies inspecting themselves.

Pork plant bosses are getting on the

bandwagon. The USDA is considering new rules that would allow them to process 1,300 hogs per hour, 200 more than currently permitted.

Meat workers' injury and illness rates are nearly two-thirds higher than for other workers, higher than both mining and construction.

The packinghouse bosses hire a large number of immigrant workers, many without papers, aiming to keep the workforce divided and protests against lousy pay and conditions muted.

And the working conditions *are* lousy, with the bosses tailoring everything to maximize production and profits. In Arkansas, the second-largest broiler production state, 91 percent of chicken workers are denied sick leave, 80 percent can't afford health care, and nearly two-thirds report having been shorted on their wages by their employers, the Northwest Arkansas



Earl Dotter/Oxfam America

Workers hang chickens at poultry processing plant in Montgomery, Alabama. Bosses are pressing to crank up line speeds to process 175 chickens a minute, up from 140 — 3 every second.

Workers' Justice Center reports.

The bosses see workers as just another piece of machinery, to be tossed aside and replaced when broken or no longer able to keep up. But, as Swiss writer Max Frisch said about guest workers there, "We asked for workers,

but we got people."

Earlier this year some 800 poultry workers in Marshville, North Carolina, waged a successful fight to force Unifarm Inc. to pay them \$1.2 million, half for back wages and an equal amount in damages.

## Chicago airport 'pay raise' gives up workers' rights

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — "Chicago Set to Raise Airport Workers' Pay, Clear Path to a Union," read a headline in the *Chicago Tribune* Sept. 5. The next day the City Council unanimously approved an ordinance revising city licensing requirements for contractors hired by the airlines to employ cabin cleaners, baggage handlers, janitors, wheelchair attendants, security guards and others.

It mandates a raise in the base hourly wage to \$13.45 — a bit higher than the city minimum, which is scheduled to rise to \$13 in July 2019. Workers who get tips would get \$1 more than the city's tipped minimum wage, which is currently \$6.10. Officials of the Service Employees International Union, which lobbied Democratic Mayor Rahm Emanuel and city councilors for the changes, celebrated it as a big victory.

But if you look past the headlines, the trade-off for a much-needed pay raise is a weakening of workers' ability to bring their collective strength to bear through strikes, protests and other organizing activities.

The new regulations also require every contractor and any union that

represents or seeks to represent its employees to sign a "Labor Peace Agreement ... prohibiting the Labor Organization and its members from engaging in, supporting, encouraging or assisting any picketing, work stoppages, boycotts, or any other economic interference by the Labor Organization or by Licensee's employees."

"It's a win-win-win-win for airport workers, passengers, the city and the airlines," said SEIU Local 1 President Tom Balanoff in a union press release Sept 6. The ordinance passed unanimously.

Over the last 25 years, in Chicago and nationwide, airline bosses have outsourced more and more airport jobs to contractors, eliminating union protections and slashing pay. Just between 2002 and 2012, the percentage of baggage porters employed by contractors rose from 25 percent to 84 percent, and average pay of over \$19 an hour fell more than 45 percent.

Members of the SEIU and other workers seeking to unionize have organized pickets and rallies at airports across the country in recent years demanding higher pay and better working

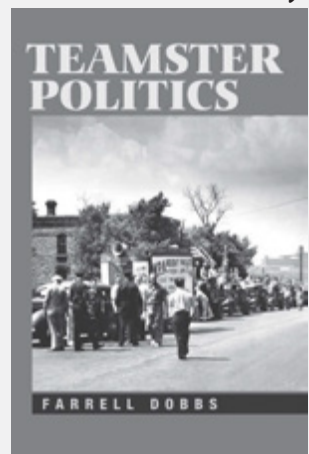
conditions. But the union officialdom has banked on "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party for any progress, as opposed to mobilizing the power of the workers. The Chicago ordinance, with its promise of no further protests or threats to the bosses' profits, is the latest example.

The only "contract" required by the city is for the bosses and the union to agree to prohibit the union from using any form of action as a means of "dispute resolution."

The higher wages aren't written into a contract the bosses have been forced to sign, and they could be rolled back — as the incremental raise to a minimum wage of \$11 passed in St. Louis was reduced by officials in the state government to \$7.70.

The only power workers can rely on is their organization, increasing unity and capacity to fight. Rather than orient to one or another of the bosses' political parties — a course that has led to the weakening of the labor movement over the past few decades, at the airport and everywhere — workers need to look to independent working-class political action.

### Recommended reading



"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."

— Farrell Dobbs

**Other books in four-part series:**  
**Teamster Rebellion**  
**Teamster Power**  
**Teamster Bureaucracy**  
 \$19 each or all four for \$65  
[pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com)

### 'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



October 9, 1992

BESSEMER, Alabama — "Who are we? Union!" "What time is it? Union time!" These chants rang out as some 150 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 9226 struck Trinity Industries and set up picket lines at midnight September 19. Trinity is the nation's leading producer of rail cars.

An impromptu rally began at the picket line when a local television news team arrived. "This company needed to be struck," stated Keith Witherspoon, a welder. "Skilled welders, painters, and machinists make \$10 an hour and pay \$50 a week for insurance. The pay's too low, and with so many layoffs we don't always get 40 hours." Management is also attempting to gut the seniority system.



October 9, 1967

U.S. ruling circles are more deeply split than ever over the Vietnam War. An important indication of this has been the emergence of a new crop of "doves" within the Republican Party, many of whom are calling for a Republican "peace" candidate in 1968.

The antiwar sentiment among capitalist politicians represents only a *tactical* difference within the ruling class over how best to defeat the world revolution — but it also creates new openings and opportunities for the antiwar movement. While no confidence can be placed in any capitalist politician, these opportunities should be seized and used to build the antiwar movement.



October 11, 1942

When, about two months ago, the Indian Congress decided to inaugurate a civil disobedience movement; when the British authorities arrested Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress; and when sections of the masses began to demonstrate against the government in different parts of India, the temptation was great to declare that the Indian Revolution had begun.

A realistic evaluation of all the factors involved in the situation dictates the necessity of a certain amount of caution in predicting the emergence of a revolution from the present revolutionary situation. All indications point to the willingness and readiness of the Indian masses to get rid of the British rulers.



# SWP reaches broadly to workers with paper, books

## Workers' anger at capitalist carnage opens doors to communist political, union work

BY TERRY EVANS

NEW YORK — When President Donald Trump said in his inauguration speech that the “American carnage stops right now,” it resonated with millions of working people, Socialist Workers Party National Committee member Steve Clark told participants in a Sept. 22 Militant Labor Forum here. It was the demagoguery of “a bourgeois politician, but one who — far more than most in his class — saw the reality of the deepening crisis of the Republican and Democratic parties and used it to trounce his electoral opponents in both parties,” Clark said.

That carnage is the product of the global contraction of capitalist production, trade and employment. The percentage of the working class with jobs, as well as their wages and family income, are stagnating or worse, Clark said. Life expectancy is down, health care and pensions devastated and opioid addiction spreading among urban and rural working people.

The cumulative *political* effects of this social crisis — on workers' outlooks and the bourgeois parties alike — became clear to the Socialist Workers Party in 2011, after party members joined protests in Madison, Wisconsin, for several weeks against attacks on public workers' unions in that state. The SWP soon concluded that the weekly marches were going nowhere, since the aim of union officials, liberal activists, and middle-class radicals organizing them was to oust Republican Gov. Scott Walker and replace him with a Democrat.

The SWP, Clark said, knew this goal was not only a will-o'-the-wisp (Walker's second term ends in November 2018), but more importantly it fostered the self-defeating illusion that workers and our unions have a stake in backing candidates of either of the bosses' parties.

The SWP leadership decided party members needed to get out of Madison, instead go door to door in working-class neighborhoods in smaller cities and towns across the state. “As we did so, we discovered deep changes in workers' thinking that presented new political openings for the party,” Clark said.

Wisconsin was one of four states where many workers cast ballots for

Donald Trump in 2016 who had voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, Clark said. These workers weren't motivated by “white racism,” as claimed by many on the liberal or radical left, nor were they “voting Republican.” They'd simply *had enough of capitalism's carnage and wanted a change.*

In fact, as a result of the gains of the Black rights movement in the U.S., more workers than ever today oppose racist and anti-immigrant bigotry, discrimination and assaults. That was shown, among other ways, by the broad response against the murder of nine Blacks in Charleston, South Carolina, by ultrarightist Dylann “Storm” Roof in 2015, as well as the outpouring of 40,000 in Boston in August against the racist, anti-Semitic “Tiki Torch” march of some 250 in Charlottesville, Virginia.

### Campaigning at workers' doorsteps

“Based on the Wisconsin experience,” Clark said, “the SWP concluded that every branch should put campaigning door to door in working-class neighborhoods at the center of its activity. We find many workers interested in talking with us about our working-class program and becoming readers of the *Militant* and books by party leaders. Some introduce us to family, friends and co-workers, come with us to social protests, take an interest in activities to defend the Cuban Revolution or want us to join fights or activities they're involved in.”

Deepening the party's week-by-week propaganda work in the working class is at the heart of this fall's drive to expand the circulation of the paper and the party's books.

The refusal of the class-collaborationist union bureaucracy to organize and mobilize the working class to respond to attacks by the bosses — with the officialdom's slavish orientation to the rulers' political parties, usually the Democrats — has meant union membership is plummeting, Clark said. In 1973 some 39 percent of manufacturing workers were union members; it's 8.8 percent today. Overall for workers employed by privately owned companies, the percentage has fallen to 6.4 percent.

“Top union officials and most of the U.S. left — whatever they say, and however they say it — are convinced it's not possible to organize workers into unions today,” Clark said. “And that's how the union bureaucrats and middle-class radicals *act*. None look to workers and our families as the agents of social change, much less the fight for an independent working-class political party and the revolutionary struggle for workers power.”

But the Socialist Workers Party, and its members and supporters employed by giant retailers like Walmart, in manufacturing industries, in transportation, and other jobs know differently. “We find the same kind of political response among co-workers to the party's program and activity — and interest in the *Militant* and books on working-class politics,” Clark said, “as we do going door to door in workers' neighborhoods.”



Top, Stephanie Keith; bottom, Militant/Jacob Perasso

Above, 40,000 march in Boston Aug. 19 in response to racist, anti-Semitic “Tiki Torch” march of 250 a week earlier at University of Virginia in Charlottesville. More workers than ever oppose racist and anti-immigrant bigotry. Below, Sergio Zambrana, left, and Ellen Brickley, right, speak to Sylvia Morales and Christine Cooke on their porch in Troy, New York, about Socialist Workers Party's program, literature. SWP is on fall drive to introduce the *Militant* and books by party leaders to workers on their doorsteps across the country.

No one can predict when working-class opposition to assaults on living standards and job conditions, union busting, racist attacks, the pushback against women's rights, social catastrophes, and wars perpetuated by the capitalists, their government and their political parties will give rise to a sustained social movement to rebuild our unions and to fight for broad working-class social and political demands.

But one thing is for sure, Clark said. “The political discussions party members and supporters have with their co-workers *today* — on the job, and off — and the books, *Militant* subscriptions, and party election campaign material we get into workers' hands, is necessary preparation for those class battles.

“The party's campaign this fall to sell subscriptions to the *Militant* and revolutionary books *is trade union work*,” Clark said, “as is reaching out to actions in solidarity with striking workers or protests against racist police killings, attacks on a woman's right to choose abortion, or imperialist wars.

“It's part of strengthening the nucleus of a working-class cadre in mines, mills, factories, giant retail stores and other workplaces who can and will lead successful union-organizing drives.”

That's why SWP members who are leading the effort where they work to expand the circulation of the party's newspaper and books are decisive to leading the campaign by party branches to reach out to working-class neighborhoods and political contacts across the country.

### Washington lost the Cold War

“It's increasingly clear the U.S. can't win the wars they're waging in Afghan-

istan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere today,” Clark said. “These brutal wars have resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths, maimings and the dispossession of millions. The Afghanistan War began 17 years ago, and Washington is now sending in several thousand additional troops again.”

Without conscription, the rulers rely on active duty “volunteers” plus the National Guard, forcing a small section of the U.S. population from working-class or farm families to do the fighting and dying, with multiple, wrenching deployments — sometimes as many as four or five. Only by bringing back the draft do the rulers have a chance at beginning to win wars again, but they face big political obstacles in even probing such a measure right now.

The propertied U.S. ruling families lost the Cold War, despite what they claimed, Clark said. U.S. imperialism continues to grow relatively weaker, although it remains the only power that can and does project massive military might in *every* part of the world. It's predominant industrial, trading and banking position is being shaken by the world capitalist crisis and accelerating competition of capitals — not only vis-à-vis its main imperialist rivals but other strengthening capitalist ruling classes. Instead of Russia and China becoming new fields of investment and growth for U.S. capital, they've become competitors worldwide.

This sharpening imperialist competition is tearing the European Union apart. This is what's behind Brexit, a move by a wing of the rulers in the U.K. to defend London's diminishing place in the im-

Continued on page 9



Militant/Mike Shur

Steve Clark speaking at Sept. 22 Militant Labor Forum in New York.



# Puerto Rico social disaster

**Continued from front page**  
agriculture was destroyed in the interests of expanding manufacturing. Today 85 percent of the island's food is imported.

In 2006 Congress dumped the main tax breaks, accelerating plant shutdowns under the impact of the worldwide economic crisis. Under the notorious Jones Act, all maritime cargo to Puerto Rico from U.S. ports has to travel on U.S.-built, U.S.-owned ships, greatly increasing the cost of goods on the island.

Of the island's population of some 3.5 million today, only 1 million have a job. And the colonial government is bankrupt.

When the hurricanes hit, the government in San Juan had done next to nothing to prepare. It didn't even place satellite phones in government offices outside San Juan, leaving most towns without any means of communication for days after Maria battered the island.

"They never came to clean anything. We did. They didn't come to pick up the branches or nothing," San Juan resident Eric Gil, 54, said in a video on the *Miami Herald* website Sept. 21. "We are working. Not the government."

Four days after the storm, mayors from around the island made their way to San Juan to meet with Gov. Ricardo Rosselló. They reported that many shelters, with thousands of people, still had no electrical generators and had run short of water and food.

At the same time, *El Vocero* reported that thousands of containers with basic necessities were stuck at the docks, because of a lack of fuel for trucks, no storage points and no distribution plan.

One thing Washington made sure arrived was the return of military police and cops from the mainland to keep an eye on the population. They also called up more than 1,000 National Guardsmen who were assigned to distribute food — but they gave out just four bottles of water and two GI-style rations per person in Barrio Obrero Sept. 24. They were the lucky ones. With bridges out and many roads blocked, much of the country is only accessible via helicopter.

The lack of electricity is life threatening. Insulin for diabetics has to be kept cool. People wait for hours on line to buy strictly rationed bags of ice or a little bit of diesel to fuel generators. That is, if you can afford a generator — and find one to buy.

As much as 80 percent of this year's crops from yam and sweet potato to banana and coffee were decimated. Dairy farmers who salvaged their herds are

pouring milk down the drain because there are no trucks to pick it up and no way to keep it cool.

## Storm's 'positive'?

But officials of the colonial regime's agriculture department told the *New York Times* that the destruction could be positive because it will give them a chance to "modernize" farming, which translates into profits for larger capitalist farmers.

The disdain the U.S. rulers and their colonial regime have for working people is captured by what happened in Toa Baja, where as many as nine people drowned. Authorities released water from the Lake Plata reservoir through five floodgates at 8 p.m. Sept. 20, sending water overflowing the riverbanks, but gave no advance warning to those downstream.

Gabriel Diaz, a university student who was at home in Toa Baja at the time, told the *Militant* by phone from San Juan Sept 22 that it was only after homes were flooding that emergency personnel arrived and said to evacuate.

Meanwhile, the Guajataca dam in the northwestern part of the island is cracked and in danger of collapse. Gov. Rosselló ordered some 70,000 people in the towns of Isabela, Quebradillas and parts of San Sebastián to evacuate. But as of Sept. 25 it was unclear how many people had left.

## Absence of government action

In the absence of government action, "everybody is pitching in," Diaz said. "It's individuals and groups who are clearing the roads, cleaning up, machete in hand. That's why I was able to travel



Reuters/Alvin Baez

**National Guard give out paltry four bottles of water and two military rations per person. Week after storm, water, medicine, diesel shortages are widespread, while thousands of containers are stuck in port because U.S. gov't and colonial regime had not organized to distribute aid.**

from Toa Baja to San Juan."

This has been true everywhere hit by the recent hurricanes — working-class solidarity in the midst of government indifference and capitalists' search for opportunities to make a buck.

On Sept. 21, Gov. Rosselló announced a curfew, which runs from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. "It's to protect private property," Diaz said, "And it's really the state putting an obstacle in the way of collective solutions. Many people won't even know there's a curfew and could end up in confrontations with the police."

"We're going to need lots of aid," Diaz said. But he said he's concerned the government and the U.S. appointed Financial Oversight and Management Board — which was imposed on Puerto Rico to ensure maximum payment on the debt — will use the crisis to privatize the electric company, and replace

affordable housing with luxury homes.

To add insult to injury, some 200 storm victims sheltered at the San Juan convention center were evicted out the back door Sept. 26. They were bused to the Nilmarie Santini gymnasium, which had no electricity, air conditioning, cold water or hot food. The reason: to make room for 2,000 U.S. agents and volunteers who arrived to "help."

Many capitalist investors see dollar signs when they think of government aid coming into Puerto Rico after the storm. One "wealth manager" told a columnist at the *Washington Post* last summer things were looking up for investors in Puerto Rico. "The only thing we need now is a hurricane," she half-joked. But it wasn't a joke. She was talking about the openings for profit that would open for the construction industry and investors. Buy stock in Home Depot, she advised.

# How revolutionary Cuba responds to hurricanes

After Hurricane Irma the revolutionary people of Cuba poured into the streets to provide emergency services to those who had been hit hardest, restoring power and beginning to rebuild — using the reserves which had been put away for just such an emergency. Copyright © 2005 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



## BY MOISÉS SÍO WONG

All countries have reserves. But the country that has the greatest assortment of items in its reserves is Cuba. Not just fuel, lubricants, food, medicines, and raw materials. But even paper and pencils, so schools can remain open.

There is a decree of the president of the Council of State in which Fidel defines our policy on the reserves. In the first "whereas" he says: "The increase, preservation, and monitoring of the material reserves is an indispensable condition for the security of the nation, for feeding the population, and for the people's well-being."

That is the role of the reserves. ...

A good example of why we have the reserves is Hurricane Michelle, which struck Cuba in November 2001. We were able to repair all the hurricane damage, and we did it in less than a year. Because we could count on a reserve of fuel, food, construction materials, roofs, power poles and cables, and so on. We were able to deal with the damage to 160,000 homes in seven provinces,

13,000 of them totally destroyed.

In July 2005 Hurricane Dennis battered ten provinces, damaging more than 175,000 homes, among them 28,000 completely destroyed, with total losses reaching US\$1.4 billion. It's the most destructive hurricane our country has faced since 1959. It was a Category 5 storm, the maximum on the Saffir-Simpson scale. The force of its winds reached more than 300 kilometers [185 miles] per hour. Some of the mountains in eastern Cuba suffered ecological damage that will take fifty years to heal.

In contrast to Cuba's approach, we've seen the consequences of natural disasters in countries far richer than we are, with much greater resources. A while back I was reading an article about relief claims made by people in Florida who had been affected by Hurricane Andrew, I believe. Andrew hit there in 1992 — the "storm of the century," they call it — and people are still waiting for claims to be settled. They haven't received aid promised by the U.S. government more than a decade ago!

But within a year after Hurricane Michelle we had repaired everything. And since agriculture was also hit, we supplied an additional quantity of rice, grain, and oil to those provinces that were affected. That's the way we respond to any natural disaster. That's what we are doing now to deal with the damages inflicted by Dennis.

## Cuban gov't offers electrical workers to Puerto Rico

The Cuban government has offered to send four brigades of electrical workers and a fully equipped mobile hospital with 39 doctors to help in rebuilding Puerto Rico after the U.S. colony was battered by hurricanes Irma and Maria, CubaDebate reported Sept. 25.

If the U.S. government "allows us, we will be there to give a hand in whatever is necessary," said Fernando González, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, at a meeting in Havana Sept. 23 to commemorate Grito de Lares and support Puerto Rico's right to independence. That's the date of the 1868 uprising by Puerto Ricans against Spanish colonialism.

"We are eternally thankful for this gesture from our Cuban friends who — in the middle of adverse circumstances and everything they are doing to recover from the effects they suffered with the passage of Hurricane Irma — have once again shown their solidarity with the struggle of the people of Puerto Rico," said Edwin González, representative of the pro-independence Puerto Rico Mission in Cuba. "This solidarity is mutual and it will continue to be for the love and respect that our peoples historically have for each other."

— SETH GALINSKY



# Miami: SWP campaigns amid hurricane's carnage

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MIAMI — In working-class neighborhoods around the city, people have spent the last two weeks helping each other clean up, cook, make repairs — and try and keep cool — in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. The storm hit Miami Sept. 10, after wreaking widespread destruction in the Florida Keys, Cuba and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

In the midst of this carnage, members of the Socialist Workers Party here, helped by party members from Atlanta, organized to go throughout the metro area knocking on workers' doors to discuss the crisis they faced, the party's program, and the *Militant* and books by party leaders. And, in the middle of all this, Cynthia Jaquith, the party's candidate for mayor of Miami, filed and was placed on the ballot for the November election.

"The catastrophic social disaster unfolding in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean is not simply the result of massive rainfall, high winds and what the media likes to call 'a natural disaster,'" Jaquith said in a statement she released when she filed, and party members used as they knocked on workers' doors. "It is a direct product of the natural workings of the capitalist system, the dictatorship of capital."

"The SWP demands: Mobilize the necessary federal, state and municipal resources to provide immediate, free emergency medical care, food, shelter, clothes and fuel to all those affected by hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and any other storms that hit," she said. "Put millions of the unemployed in Florida, Texas and beyond to work — at union-scale wages — in an emergency, government-funded public works program to rebuild the area infrastructure and repair and put up new housing!"

Tens of thousands were without power here for more than a week. Nearly 4.5 million of Florida Power & Light's 4.9 million customers had their power fail, including 92 percent of accounts in Miami-Dade County. But Florida Power's shareholders needn't worry that costs for cleanup and repairs will cut into their profits, since they're guaranteed by law to be between 9.6 and 11.6 percent. To assure this bounty, utility bosses have already announced rate increases of \$400 million this year, followed by \$411 million more over the next three years.

"We had to live in our car for five days," Claribel Melendez, told SWP members when they visited her North Miami neighborhood Sept. 20. "I have four kids, including a seven-month-old infant. We couldn't stay in the house because of the heat and mosquitoes, so we lived and slept in our car and ran the air conditioning there."

Melendez, originally from Puerto Rico, has lived in Miami two years. "The neighbors here helped each other clear our yards and driveways," she said. But the huge piles of debris and garbage are still sitting there, since authorities haven't organized to remove them in many areas of the city.

In every neighborhood Socialist Workers Party members visited in the

past week, workers were angry about the indifference and incompetence of government officials in dealing with the hurricane's impact. Many pointed to the needless deaths of elderly patients at the Rehabilitation Center in Hollywood Hills who were left in unbearable heat for several days after their power failed Sept. 10. Eight died before they were finally moved *across the street* to Memorial Regional Hospital. Three others died a few days later and that number may rise. As of Sept. 23, the unofficial death toll for the state stood at 75.

"In this country, you're on your own," Peter Parker, 49, told socialist campaigners Sept. 23, when they knocked on his door in Ft. Lauderdale. His family came to the U.S. from Serbia when he was a teenager. He was heading to work when we met him. "My Trump sign got blown away in the



Militant/Susan Lamont

Cindy Jaquith, left, SWP candidate for mayor in Miami, files for ballot status Sept. 21. SWP demands public works program to rebuild housing and infrastructure in hurricane-hit areas.

storm," he said, with a laugh.

Parker said he was interested in what the socialists had to say about the need for workers to organize an independent movement to fight to end the dictatorship of capital and rebuild society in

the interests of working people. He decided to subscribe to the *Militant* and was also interested in *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record*. "I've got to get to work, but call me. I'd like to talk to you some more," he said.

## Gary Cohen: 57 years helping to build the SWP

BY JACOB PERASSO

BOSTON — Forty people attended a program here Sept. 17 to celebrate the political life of Gary Cohen — 57 years building the Socialist Workers Party. Members and supporters of the party, friends and family came from the Boston area, where Cohen lived for most of his life, as well as several other cities.

Before the meeting, SWP members and supporters campaigned at a rally protesting the U.S. government's immigration policies. They knocked on workers' doors to talk about the demonstration and what working people can do to fight against the effects of today's deepening capitalist economic and political crisis. A dozen books written by party leaders were sold, along with a similar number of subscriptions to the *Militant*.

The meeting was chaired by Ted Leonard, a supporter of the SWP in Boston, who worked with Cohen for years. Panel displays were mounted on the wall to showcase key political struggles that took place during Cohen's life and that he and the party were part of.

"We are celebrating Gary's six decades of dedication to the SWP," Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for mayor

of Albany, New York, told the meeting. She was in the SWP branch in Boston in the early 2000s. Cohen was affected by the big developments in the world that shaped an entire generation, Trowe said, from the victory and development of the Cuban Revolution, to the fight against the Vietnam War, to the struggle against Jim Crow segregation.

Cohen became involved in protests and sit-ins against racist segregation in the 1950s. He joined the Air Force and was stationed in Japan in the early 1960s, where his experiences deepened his opposition to imperialist militarism and war. "On his return he joined the Socialist Workers Party," Trowe said, "convinced of its perspective of organizing the working class to overthrow capitalism."

"Gary had confidence in the party and was a party patriot throughout his life. He was optimistic, with a wicked sense of humor," she said.

Paul Mailhot, a member of the Boston branch in the 1970s, spoke about the battle to desegregate the Boston schools that he and Cohen participated in. "It was a proud chapter in Gary's and all of our political lives," he said. "It taught us that a revolutionary party, such as the

one we are working to build, is indispensable."

Mailhot said the racist opposition to busing and violent attacks against the Black children on those buses were organized by top politicians of the Democratic Party. Boston's liberals responded by urging people to "keep calm," and not to antagonize racist forces.

"The SWP understood the importance for the working class of mobilizing against racism and took the lead in demanding the U.S. government send federal troops to Boston to protect schoolchildren and to keep the buses rolling," he said.

"In 1974, one week after racist goons nearly lynched Haitian immigrant André Yvon Jean-Louis in South Boston, the branch decided to sell 3,500 copies of the next issue of the *Militant*," Mailhot said. "And that's what we sold."

"The party was instrumental in the desegregation battle here," he said, "and party members became mass leaders in the struggle."

"Today the party has new political openings. We are going deeper into the working class," said Trowe. "We have the opposite view of the meritocrats,

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# Aid Puerto Rico now! End colonial rule!

**Continued from front page**

deep social crisis. The decrepit electrical grid and the deteriorating health care systems that collapsed under the weight of the storms are no accident. They are a result of the conscious decisions of the colonial regime and the U.S. ruling families to force the working class and farmers of Puerto Rico to pay the \$74 billion debt.

The Socialist Workers Party says cancel the debt! All of it! Provide all the aid Puerto Rico needs with no strings attached! And abolish the U.S.-imposed financial board!

U.S. corporations suck out billions of dollars in profits from its colony Puerto Rico every year, exploiting the island's cheap labor and abundant natural resources. The U.S. rulers have been using the Barack Obama-appointed Financial Oversight and Management Board — which has dictatorial control over the island's finances — to bleed Puerto Rico dry to maximize payments to bondholders.

The colonial regime's criminal lack of preparations and the callous actions after the storms continue the "save-yourself-if-you-can" attitude that marked the response from Washington to the local governments in Florida and Texas to the hurricanes there.

Cuba shows what a difference a revolution makes. It was hard hit by Hurricane Irma. But unlike the colonial regime in Puerto Rico, in Cuba the revolutionary government organized working people *in advance* to take the necessary precautions and make sure that shelters were fully stocked with food, water, medicine and medical personnel. It put thousands of linemen and construction workers in place so that as soon as the storm passed, reconstruction and electrical repairs could begin immediately.

The revolutionary government mobilized the entire people and is providing the materials and tools to

do whatever is needed.

The Cuban response was organized under the principle that no one would be left on their own. And in the midst of the challenges they face, the Cuban people stepped up their internationalist missions to provide aid to fellow Caribbean nations ravaged by the storms.

The Cuban government's offer to send four brigades of electrical workers and a mobile hospital with 39 doctors to Puerto Rico — an offer Washington hasn't even acknowledged — shows that when Cuban revolutionaries say they "share what they have, not what's left over," they mean it.

The social crisis unfolding in Puerto Rico highlights why working people on the island need to emulate the Cuban Revolution and fight to replace the capitalist colonial regime with a government of workers and farmers, a fight that is intertwined with the fight for independence from Washington's colonial rule.

Workers in the United States should stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico because our interests are the same. Cancel the debt! Massive aid now! End U.S. colonial rule!



Militant/Linda Joyce

SWP New York mayoral candidate Osborne Hart speaks with workers in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during solidarity visit to Buen Consejo neighborhood in May.

## SWP reaches broadly with paper, books

**Continued from page 6**

perialist pecking order by breaking free from the "ever greater union" stranglehold of the EU. And the Spanish rulers' efforts to stop the people of the Catalonia region in northeastern Spain from voting on national independence Oct. 1.

And it opens the door to advances in the Kurds' fight for their own country. Clark urged forum participants to be ready to join in actions in defense of the Kurdish people's fight for independence.

### U.S. political crisis unwinds

The capitalist rulers face a deepening political crisis here at home as well, Clark said. Their parties — the Democrats and Republicans — are coming apart and will never be the same.

The liberals and left haven't given up on their "Resistance" drive to get President Trump impeached or indicted.

"The 'no-knock' raid on the home of former Trump campaign chair Paul Manafort highlights the dangers to the working class of the witch hunt against the Trump presidency," Clark said. The FBI's July unannounced break-in and seizure of Manafort's documents was part of Special Counsel and former FBI chief Robert Mueller's open drive to find a handle to go after Trump.

To obtain a warrant for the break-in, Mueller went to a secret FISA court, saying Manafort was likely to destroy the "evidence" he was after — which the liberal media jumped on as innuendo "that where there's smoke there's fire." Raids like this — and the FISA court itself — are police frame-up methods and tools the working-class vanguard has long and bitter experience with.

Clark explained that some in the Democratic

Party and sections of the Republicans seeking to drive Trump from the presidency have growing doubts about their ability to do so, and whether it would really solve the problem they see. "What these privileged, meritocratic layers fear in the United States today is not Trump, but the millions of workers who voted for him, seeking to 'drain the swamp' and find a way to end the carnage," Clark said.

They think they need to find a way to disenfranchise working people, who they don't deem smart enough to vote "the right way." Or they have illusions they can get rid of us with robots, replacing what they view as an increasingly "unskilled" and useless bunch of "losers" who aren't dying fast enough from opioid overdose or who are cutting into the capitalists' riches by drawing disability or jobless benefits. "That's their anti-working-class take on the shrinking labor force," Clark said.

As communist workers campaign door to door among fellow workers, Clark said, we can help explain and answer these rationalizations for exploitation and oppression by introducing working people to books such as *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP, and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by party leader Mary-Alice Waters.

Clark called attention to Barnes' introduction to one of the books the party is campaigning with: *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. The necessary road forward, Barnes says there, is building a proletarian party capable of leading "the revolutionary conquest of power by a politically class-conscious and organized vanguard of the working class — millions strong."

## Immigration curbs

**Continued from page 2**

tion from Foreign Terrorist Entry." It imposed a 90-day moratorium on the entry of citizens of Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Iraq — an ally of both Washington and Tehran in the Middle East wars — had been on the previous list, but was exempted because the White House said it had "improved" its vetting.

In June the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the revised March order was legal, but imposed some limits while legal challenges worked their way through the courts. The court said that anyone with a "credible claim of a bona fide relationship with a person or entity in the United States" could not be denied entry.

The new ban replaces the 90-day moratorium, which expired Sept. 24. The Supreme Court cancelled a hearing on the previous ban, asking both sides to submit briefs on whether the new order means the lawsuit is moot.

Hoping to prevent or overcome any legal challenges that argue the moves are aimed at Muslims, the U.S. administration this time says that the restrictions are based on objective criteria, including whether governments issue electronic passports with biometric information to prevent fraud and agree to work with Washington to report "serious criminals and known or suspected terrorists, as well as share identity-related information." The White House says the countries under review were given 50 days to comply.

The new restrictions vary from country to country. Immigrant, business and tourist visas are blocked for people from Chad, Libya and Yemen. Somalis are allowed in temporarily as tourists, but not allowed to immigrate. Iranians can come as students but like Somalis are subject to "enhanced screening." While any applicant for entry can apply for an individual exception, the order denies entry to all refugees from war-torn Syria.

No one believes that the restrictions against Venezuela and North Korea have anything to do with the White House's claim that the measures are aimed at keeping out "terrorists." They are politically motivated, another tactic to pressure their governments to give in to U.S. dictates.

## Years building SWP

**Continued from page 8**

Democratic Party liberals and middle-class radicals who look at the working class as 'losers.' We see the working class as the only force capable of changing society."

"Gary was a lifer, who joined the party as a young man and remained committed to the SWP and the fight for a better world," said Mailhot. "He didn't participate in the party's turn to industry in the late 1970s through the 1990s, when all members of the party were getting jobs in union mines, mills, factories and railroads. He wasn't in the center of the party's work then. Later, in 2001, he dropped out of the party and became a supporter."

Gale Shangold, who helps lead supporters' efforts to raise regular monthly contributions for the party — efforts she had worked with Cohen on — told the meeting how he put the party's politics front and center in raising funds.

Eric Brabham, who carpooled to the meeting with party members from Albany, New York, said he hadn't known anything about the busing fight in Boston, so he learned a lot. "And I learned a lot about the SWP," he said.

Participants at the meeting donated \$1,100 to the Socialist Workers Party in Cohen's honor.

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