

‘What SWP says about the economy is really true’

BY DAN FEIN

“What you say about the economic problems facing workers is really true,” Stephanie Russell in Kenosha, Wisconsin, told me as she filled out her *Militant* subscription blank. Along with two other Socialist Work-

SWP FALL ‘MILITANT,’ BOOK, FUND DRIVE

ers Party members I was knocking on workers’ doors, introducing the party and its literature.

“The Chrysler auto plant here shut down around eight years ago and my dad lost his job,” she said. “Before Chrysler, American Motors owned it and my grandfather worked there. I gave them rides to work. My husband now has to commute to Milwaukee for his factory job at Snap-on after that plant closed here.”

I told her that her story is part of the carnage experienced by millions of working people in towns like Kenosha. “The working class needs to unite

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Workers still face social crisis 5 years after Sandy

Capitalism, not ‘climate,’ caused catastrophe



AP/Charlie Neibergall

New Jersey protesters during Iowa speech by Gov. Chris Christie, March 2015. Thousands in N.Y. and N.J. still face crisis, and little has been done by government to prevent future disasters.

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — Five years after Hurricane Sandy ravaged New York and New Jersey, thousands of workers — who the propertied rulers and their government left to fend for themselves before, during and after the storm — are still suffering the consequences. And they’re still waiting for long-promised government aid.

“Public housing is still concentrated in the flood plains. Condemned houses are still standing,” Patricia Kane, treasurer of the New York State Nurses Association, told an Oct. 28 Brooklyn climate change protest on the anniversary of Sandy. “New developments are still being built in marsh areas and flood plains. If another su-

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Washington, Baghdad drive to prevent independent Kurdistan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While vowing to continue the fight for Kurdish independence, backed by over 90 percent of the vote in a Sept. 25 referendum across Kurdistan, Kurdish Regional Government President Masoud Barzani announced his resignation, effective Nov. 1.

Barzani’s resignation comes amidst an ongoing drive by Washington, other imperialist powers and most capitalist regimes in the region — in particular Baghdad, Tehran, Ankara and Damascus, where millions of Kurds reside — to oppose Kurdish independence. Washington insists on the territorial integrity of Iraq.

Barzani, who had served as KRG president since 2005, made the announcement after elections for president and parliament had been postponed for at least another eight months.

The 3 million Kurds who voted for independence cannot be “erased by history,” Barzani said in a TV address three days before he stepped down. “Even if the referendum wasn’t held, there was a plan to attack Kurdistan areas and destabilize the situation in

the Kurdistan region,” he said. Iraqi government troops and the Tehran-backed Hashd al-Shaabi militia moved against the KRG Oct. 16, seizing Kirkuk and some 30 percent of

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As we go to press ...

‘Militant’ overturns Florida prison ban

Florida prison authorities reversed their impoundment of our Sept. 11 issue. They had claimed that two front-page articles under the headline, “Socialist Workers Party: Protest Racist Attacks!” somehow threatened the “security, good order or discipline” of the prison system.

“This is a victory for the constitutional right of workers behind bars to read the literature of their choosing and follow politics in the U.S. and worldwide,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “And a victory for the *Militant*’s right to reach its readers within prison walls.”

So far this year Florida’s prison Literature Review Committee has reversed bans on four issues of the *Militant* and upheld three.

Vote Socialist Workers Party: Our party is your party!

Vote for the Socialist Workers Party, the working-class party, *your* party Nov. 7, in mayoral elections from Miami to Seattle! And vote for the Communist League in Canada for mayor of Montreal Nov. 5!

Join the party in talking with workers in cities large and small across the country, before and after the elections, discussing on doorsteps and kitchens

EDITORIAL

a way forward for our class. There is a broad discussion going on about the depth of the crisis we face — crumbling health care, homelessness, crappy jobs or no jobs, an opioid epidemic, police brutality, bulging prisons, farmers who can’t make a living, and, on top of it all, wars and devastation facing returning workers in uniform.

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Workers: Look to your class, not to your country!

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Contentious North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiations between Ottawa and Washington, as

AS I SEE IT

well as Mexico City; trade disputes over softwood lumber exports and tariffs; Canadian dairy quotas challenged by Washington; and a threatened 300 percent U.S. government

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Fall campaign to sell Militant subscriptions and books

Sept. 16 - Nov 21 (Week 6)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold
UNITED STATES				
Albany	95	55	95	44
Atlanta	85	61	85	54
Chicago	115	84	115	65
Colorado	30	8	30	7
Lincoln	30	16	30	14
Los Angeles	135	78	135	46
Miami	45	23	45	24
New York	180	112	180	97
Oakland	125	105	135	101
Philadelphia	70	52	70	40
Seattle	105	68	105	50
Twin Cities	75	39	75	51
Washington	80	58	80	38
Total U.S.	1,170	759	1,180	631
Prisoners	20	22		
UNITED KINGDOM				
London	65	58	65	36
Manchester	60	42	60	29
Total U.K.	125	100	125	65
CANADA				
Montreal	60	36	60	38
Vancouver	45	31	45	25
Total Canada	105	67	105	63
New Zealand	50	34	50	23
Australia	45	31	45	19
Total	1,515	1,013	1,505	801
SHOULD BE	1,500	1,000	1,500	1,000

She complied with all of Texas' onerous abortion laws, including mandatory anti-abortion "counseling" and ultrasound examination of her "baby." Determined to make her own decision, she was able to get the assistance of Jane's Due Process, a group that assists women in her situation, and the American Civil Liberties Union. She took the government agency to court, arguing that she should not be stopped by the fact she couldn't get parental consent. On Sept. 25 the state court ordered the shelter to take her to a nearby

Jane Doe didn't agree. "No one should be shamed for making the right decision for themselves," she said in her public statement. "I would not tell any other



These attacks have “been made easier by the character and content of the 1973 court ruling,” Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, writes in *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-*

“At the same time, the court allowed state governments to ban most abortions after ‘viability,’” Barnes wrote, “something that medical advances inevitably make earlier in the pregnancy.”

ABORTION
is a **woman's right!**

KEEP YOUR LAWS OFF MY BODY

Pat Grogan
Evelyn Reed

pathfinderpress.com

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

Militant/Betsey Stone

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$10 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$7 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £10 • France, 8 euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

Minneapolis: ‘Only SWP speaks for working class’

BY TONY LANE

MINNEAPOLIS — One candidate, David Rosenfeld of the Socialist Workers Party, spoke for the working class as 10 candidates for mayor here debated before an audience of more than 100 students and others at Metropolitan Community and Technical College Oct. 25.

Incumbent Mayor Betsy Hodges told students that “the purpose of government is to provide basic services” like affordable housing.

“Government today serves the interests of the ruling capitalist class, from the federal level down to the Twin Cities here,” Rosenfeld countered. “Unless you recognize this class reality, you can’t address why working people have inadequate housing. If we leave this to the bosses’ government and the real estate interests, the capitalist market and its dog-eat-dog values, we will continue to face the problems we live under today.

“The only way to make progress towards affordable, clean and comfortable housing,” Rosenfeld said, “is organizing the working class to fight in our own interest.

“The SWP says we need to fight for a massive public works program to provide jobs to millions at union-scale wages, to build things workers need, from schools, hospitals, day care centers, and thousands and thousands of housing units,” he said.

In discussing immigration and other social issues, several candidates of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, the name the Democrats go by in Minnesota, blamed President Donald Trump for the crises workers face.

“The problem didn’t start with Trump,” Rosenfeld replied. “Obama was the deporter-in-chief. You can’t solve the problem by electing Democrats. They all worked hand in hand creating the system we have today, where the government considers a whole layer of the working class — 11 million of us — to be illegal, without the same rights, the same jobs as others. They’re super-exploited and scapegoated.

“We need to unite the working class,”

he said. “My party calls for amnesty for all those here who have no papers, and no more deportations!”

Candidate Al Flowers, a long-time opponent of police brutality, took issue with Rosenfeld’s criticism of the Democrats. “We are going to change the Democratic Party. It’s a good party,” Flowers said. “I don’t want young people to say ‘no,’ the way that David talks. We can make change from something that is decent.”

The forum reflected a debate in ruling-class circles here over what steps to

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David Rosenfeld, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, speaks at candidates’ debate Oct. 25 at Metropolitan Community and Technical College.

‘What you say about the economy is really true’

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to fight the attacks from the bosses, who try to solve their problems at our expense,” I said. “Ultimately we need to take power out of the hands of the capitalists.”

Going door to door Oct. 29 in neighborhoods like Russell’s, we found interest in discussing the crisis facing working people and what can be done about it. Seven ended up getting subscriptions to the *Militant*, along with a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road the Workers Power*, and two copies of *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

The five books on special with a subscription are listed in the box below.

Reports like this from members of the Socialist Workers Party across the country and Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom show the interest we find in working-class politics and the party. Going door to door, meeting and talking with workers, is the foundation of the fall circulation campaign to sell 1,500 subscriptions to the *Militant* and an equal number of the books on special.

Concurrently with the effort to expand the reach of the party’s literature, the SWP is asking workers to help raise \$100,000 to finance the party’s work.

Some SWP members who work at Walmart campaign near where they

work. Sometimes they run into co-workers and people they’ve met shopping at the store.

Going door to door near the Oakland, California, Walmart where she works, Carole Lesnick met one of her co-workers, who invited her in. The co-worker was interested in the party’s politics presented in the *Militant* and got a copy, saying she wants to get a subscription when she gets paid.

Helen Meyers and Jacquie Henderson met with one of Meyers’ former Walmart co-workers in Minneapolis at a restaurant where they discussed working-class politics for an hour. He decided to get a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and said he is interested in discussing and going to meetings to learn more about the Cuban Revolution.

Bev Bernardo and another Communist League member in Montreal visited a neighborhood where one of her co-workers from Walmart lives who had previously purchased *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* They sold that book and a *Militant* subscription to a hospital worker. A self-employed worker from France picked up a French-language copy of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*.

Past co-workers of SWP members in mines, mills, factories and stores like Walmart remember the party and its unflinching commitment to fight in the interests of the working class.

In New York, Vivian Sahner and another campaigner knocked on the door of Alix Dupiton in the Flatbush neighborhood in Brooklyn. “I remember the socialist party and its members from where I used to work at a Ford auto plant in New Jersey decades ago,” he said. It turns out Sahner was one of those workers. He made a \$5 contribution to the fund, subscribed to the *Militant* and got a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

Joe Swanson in Lincoln, Nebraska, reports setting up a table at a church where Thomas Frank spoke. He is the author of the book *Listen, Liberal: Or What Ever Happened to the Party of the People?* which argues that while the Democrats seem to have a great program, they always seem to end up standing for the rich and powerful.

Three participants signed up for subscriptions — a college student, a teacher who also got *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, and a meat cutter who contributed \$3 for the fund drive.

If you would like to help us get *Militant* subscriptions for your family, friends and co-workers, and introduce them to the books on special — or contribute to the party fund — contact the Socialist Workers Party office nearest you listed on page 8.

Dan Fein is co-director of the SWP’s fall circulation campaign along with Mary Martin from Seattle.

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Socialist Workers Party Fund Drive			
Sept. 16 - Nov. 21- Week 6			
Area	Quota	Collected	%
Albany	\$5,000	\$2,829	57%
Atlanta	\$11,200	\$5,363	48%
Chicago	\$12,000	\$6,717	56%
Colorado	\$700	\$500	71%
Lincoln	\$300	\$106	35%
Los Angeles	\$9,400	\$6,425	68%
Miami	\$3,500	\$1,495	43%
New York	\$17,000	\$6,652	39%
Oakland	\$14,500	\$6,330	44%
Philadelphia	\$4,200	\$1,481	35%
Seattle	\$8,200	\$4,875	59%
Twin Cities	\$4,800	\$1,066	22%
Washington, DC	\$7,250	\$3,215	44%
Other	\$1,200	\$500	42%
Total	\$99,250	\$47,554	48%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$66,667	67%

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.

Communist League campaign: ‘Workers need to take power’

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO
AND PIERRE-LUC FILION

MONTREAL — “You’re the first candidate to knock on my door since I arrived here from Argentina 30 years ago,” said Alex Gaeta, a 47-year-old mechanic employed by the school board here, when Philippe Tessier introduced himself Oct. 28. Tessier is the Communist League candidate for mayor, on the ballot in the Nov. 5 election.

They got into a discussion on how capitalism’s dog-eat-dog values seek to pit workers against each other. “The biggest battle in front of us is to understand our own worth, and we can only accomplish this through struggle,” Tessier said. “That’s what you can learn from the Cuban Revolution. As the revolution developed, working people were transformed and new values took hold. We see it today with Cuban electricians and doctors, who are volunteering to go throughout the Caribbean to help rebuild after hurricanes Irma and Maria, while Cuba itself is mobilizing to rebuild there.”

“I’ll read your program seriously and consider voting in an election for the first time in my life,” Gaeta said.

Since January the Communist League in Montreal has been using Tessier’s campaign to help get a broader hearing for the League’s revolutionary program and activities. The heart of the campaign has been knocking on doors in working-class communities across the city and beyond, explaining the roots of the world capitalist crisis today, and how the only way forward is for workers to organize independently to take political power.

They’ve used the campaign to increase the reach of the *Militant* and revolutionary books by leaders of the international communist movement in French, English and Spanish.

Being on the ballot helped the League get wider media attention. In October the *Montreal Gazette*, English language CBC News and French-language Radio Canada all covered the campaign.

Radio Canada explained that Tessier and the League fought against attacks on Muslims and mosques in Canada. They referred to a campaign statement “demanding an end to the frame-up against rail workers Thomas Harding and Richard Labrie,” currently on trial on frame-up charges from the 2013 derailment and fire in Lac-Mégantic that killed 47 people.

“Philippe Tessier, 24 years old, thinks that workers have to take political power, ‘to resolve the crisis of the capitalist system,’” the *Métro*, a daily French-language tabloid distributed free at area subway stations with a circulation over a million, wrote Oct. 26. “In his campaign platform he gives the example of Cuba, how ‘working people can transform ourselves by making a socialist revolution.’”

“Tessier is also in favor of a \$15 an hour minimum wage, and against the deportation of refugees,” the paper said.

From Oct. 14 to 22 Tessier joined other Communist League and Young Socialist members from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. at the World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia. The festival drew more than

20,000 people, mostly from Russia itself. The revolutionary delegation used the campaign at book tables, meetings and forums, where they sold hundreds of books on revolutionary strategy and perspectives.

After a long discussion on the world-wide crisis of the capitalist system, a young Russian from Irkutsk in Eastern Siberia got a *Militant* supplement with the introduction to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

“You guys are different from all the other groups here. You’re the only ones who say workers can accomplish something and make a revolution,” he said. “Other people I’ve talked here say workers are more racist today and that fascism is looming.”

Workers: Look to your class, not to your country

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import levy on Canada’s Bombardier C-Series planes are all reflections of the bosses’ heightened competition in the midst of the ongoing worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade.

And the bosses in both Washington and Ottawa are relying on job losses and national propaganda to draw workers in behind their competing campaigns to protect “our economy.”

“We are fighting very hard at the NAFTA negotiating table for the interests of all Canadian workers and for Canadian jobs,” Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland told Parliament Oct. 2.

On both sides of the border union officials echo this, urging members to rely on their governments to “save our jobs” at the expense of workers elsewhere.

The United Steelworkers organizes some 40,000 forestry industry workers in Canada. When the U.S. government announced hefty tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber imports — used in home construction — USW North America President Leo Gerard said this is “a direct attack on our Canadian industry.”

In the U.S., the same union’s website criticizes NAFTA, saying, “It is about the outsourcing of good paying American jobs that these agreements facilitate.”

And union officials in both the U.S. and Canada take aim at Mexican workers. Speaking during the recent auto-workers strike against GM Cami in Ontario, Jerry Dias, Unifor union president, decried “Mexico and \$3-an-hour jobs.” He told the *Globe and Mail*, “We really have to isolate Mexico from future investment.”

But there is no such “we” — there are two contending classes, the workers and the bosses, with diametrically opposed interests. The union officials’ strategy is a deadly trap.

There is no such thing as a “Canadian job” or an “American job.” Under capitalism, the bosses establish protectionist barriers against their competitors abroad or allow trade to flow freely across borders to protect markets and profits. For the same reason, they lay us off, drive down wages and seek to bust our unions.

Proponents and foes of the trade pact on both sides of the border seek



Militant/John Steele

Guy Trépanier signs up for *Militant* subscription on his doorstep Oct. 5 after political discussion with Philippe Tessier, Communist League candidate for mayor of Montreal.

to pit workers at home against workers abroad, who are out to “steal our jobs.” The bosses seek to break down human solidarity, to make it easier to assault all workers living standards and democratic rights.

NAFTA is a protectionist North American trade bloc against competing imperialist powers like those in the European Union and Japan. It also regulates trade between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, with the northern powers profiting from the exploitation of Mexico’s workers. Workers in Canada and the U.S. should stand with Mexican workers against imperial pillage.

Softwood lumber tariff battles

Sixty-nine percent of all forestry and wood products in Canada are exported to the U.S. So when the U.S. housing market crashed in 2007, it dealt a blow to lumber bosses’ profits on both sides of the border. U.S. housing starts continue their historic decline today.

More than one-third of all jobs in the forestry industry in Canada have disappeared, with over 100,000 workers thrown out of work. U.S. workers face similar devastation. Since 2005, almost 20 percent of all U.S. sawmills have closed, and over 300,000 workers have lost their jobs.

Under these pressures, Ottawa and Washington have squared off in repeated disputes and negotiations over softwood exports. Aiming to protect their shrinking profits, U.S. lumber bosses convinced Washington to impose tariffs of up to 31 percent on Canadian softwood lumber imports last spring.

Western Forest Products said these tariffs played a role in its decision to close down the Port Alberni mill on Vancouver Island in July.

The tariffs meant lumber prices rose, and U.S. construction bosses who were forced to pay more for building materials screamed bloody murder. At the end of August, most of the tariffs were lifted temporarily as negotiations between Ottawa and Washington continue.

To shore up their falling profits, bosses have also turned to speedup, with deadly consequences for workers. British Columbia’s forestry industry remains one of the most dangerous places to work. In 2012, two sawdust mill explosions killed four workers and critically injured many more.

Testifying at the inquest on one of

the explosions, Claude Briere, a machinist and millwright at the mill, told *Tyee* magazine that “conditions ‘totally changed’ after shifts were extended to 10 hours from eight hours in an effort to boost production.”

Way forward for working people

I and other Communist League members and supporters have visited sawmill workers at their doorsteps or at mill gates here in the last couple months, discussing the crisis and introducing them to the League, the *Militant* and books by revolutionary working-class leaders.

Randy Baust stopped to talk with me as he came off shift in the Interfor sawmill in Maple Ridge on the Lower Mainland Oct. 18. A sawmill worker since 1976, he is USW local secretary. Baust said that six mills in the immediate region had closed.

To fight the devastation, I said, we have to start with seeing that our allies are not the Canadian bosses, but the workers in the U.S. who are on the receiving end of the same treatment we are, sometimes from the selfsame bosses.

Look at the rulers’ cynical reaction to hurricane devastation in Texas and Florida. Scotiabank economist Brett House told the media that the storms are “an incentive” for a softwood deal! This, while working people all over the Caribbean, Florida, Texas and California are in dire need of building materials.

Our unions in both the U.S. and Canada should demand that Washington and Ottawa give no-strings-attached aid to those in the Caribbean battered by the storms. And the unions should demand both governments fund emergency efforts to put us to work to fill the construction needs of all those devastated in North America. That would point the way to building a fighting union movement in the interests of workers across all borders.

Our answer to Mexican workers’ \$3-an-hour wages must be to extend the hand of solidarity in a common fight to raise their pay, not unite with our bosses in a futile attempt to deny them jobs. Any other strategy, and we lose our soul.

Michel Prairie in Montreal contributed to this article.

Rail bosses, gov't responsible in 2013 Lac-Mégantic disaster

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE
AND JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — The government's frame-up trial against rail workers Tom Harding and Richard Labrie, seeking to hold them responsible for the 2013 Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway train derailment that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, is running into some trouble. Under cross-examination, witnesses have admitted the rail bosses ordered Harding and other engineers to stop using simple practices that would have prevented the derailment.

Harding, the engineer on the train, is the main target in the government frame-up. The government and rail bosses accuse him of not setting a sufficient number of hand brakes on the parked train, which allowed it to roll into Lac-Mégantic and explode.

Michael Horan, former Montreal, Maine and Atlantic's assistant director of transportation, admitted on the stand that he received a 2012 email from railroad management directing him to tell Harding to stop using the train's automatic braking system to secure the train at the Nantes stopover near Lac-Mégantic.

These brakes, activated by a hand switch inside the locomotive, are a back-up system that uses air pressure to lock the wheels on the entire train.

In March 2016, the Toronto *Globe and Mail* published an exposé on the disaster, reporting that the use of the automatic brakes would have held Harding's 72-tanker train from rolling down into Lac-Mégantic while Harding slept in a hotel there.

Forbidden by management from setting the automatic brake system, Harding left the engine running to keep the locomotive brakes on and prevent movement of the train. He was the only person on the crew and had reached his 12-hour limit of service for the day. He had to get some sleep before starting up again in the morning.

But during the night a small fire broke out on the engine, and volunteer firefighters unfamiliar with the train turned off the engine when they put the fire out. It was later determined the fire was caused by Montreal, Maine and Atlantic officials' decision to cut back on maintenance to cut costs.

The railroad called Harding to tell him about the fire and he offered to go back to the train, but was told to get his sleep, that everything was under control.

Without power, the locomotive air brakes bled out and the hand brakes Harding set on seven tanker cars couldn't hold the train.

The *Globe and Mail* explained that the company policy of forbidding engineers from engaging the automatic back-up air brakes was designed to save time and therefore money at the morn-

ing start up, since it could have taken up to an hour to re-pressurize the system.

Profits over rail safety

The reason there was only one crew member on the train was a special dispensation to Montreal, Maine and Atlantic by Transport Canada, the federal government rail oversight agency. Horan told the court that in 2003, in order to cut costs, the rail bosses asked Transport Canada for approval to reduce crew size to one.

Horan, who was in charge of safety and training for all Quebec MMA employees, said the agency approved the request in 2009. The only safety precaution imposed by the government to make up for slashing the crew size was the company had to install a side-view mirror on the locomotive engineer's side of the train.

He told the court that no significant changes were made to the company's rules and practices when they reduced the size of the crews.

In response to questions from Thomas Walsh, one of Harding's attorneys, Horan admitted workers didn't like the crew reduction.

In their coverage of the trial, some of the media pointed to the bosses' imposition of the one-person "crew" as an important factor in the disaster. It could "weigh heavily in the trial," the Quebec City daily *Le Soleil* wrote in an editorial on the eve of the trial. The paper's editors have called the trial an "injustice."

Locomotive engineer Francois Daigle, one of three along with Harding who regularly ran the Nantes route, was another prosecution witness. He revealed a new example of Montreal, Maine and Atlantic negligence, testifying that the train that Harding took that night was in fact nearly 3,000 tons over its allowed weight limit. Daigle said rail bosses wouldn't allow him to refuse to run a train he knew was over the maximum weight and it was common practice for the company's top management to play loose with established railway regulations.

Harding and Labrie, both members of

Crimean Tatar leaders win release from Russian prison



AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky

"You must stay strong," Crimean Tatar leader Akhmed Chygoz, right, who landed in Kiev after winning his freedom from imprisonment in Russia, told other Tatars still in prison for fighting for their national rights in Crimea. "That will anger them, but in the end you will win."

Chygoz, who arrived with Ilmi Umerov, left, a fellow prisoner and deputy head of the Mejlis, or parliament, was welcomed by a crowd of supporters at Boryspil airport Oct. 27. He had been held in prison for nearly three years for participation in protests defending Tatar rights and Ukrainian sovereignty in 2014. After massive Maidan protests overthrew the Moscow-backed regime of Viktor Yanukovich, Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces invaded Crimea and seized the peninsula from Ukraine. They closed down the Mejlis, expelled its leaders and barred them from returning to their homeland.

"I am definitely going home, no matter what awaits me there," Umerov defiantly told reporters. Longtime Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, center, also welcomed them. Turkish authorities had negotiated the release of Umerov and Chygoz.

The vast majority of Tatars oppose the Russian takeover of their homeland. Many had joined the mass mobilizations that overthrew Yanukovich. Russian authorities tried to prevent an annual event in May marking the forced removal of the entire Tatar population from Crimea to the Russian interior by the Soviet regime of Joseph Stalin in 1944. Nearly half the Crimean Tatars' population perished.

Putin's forces have continued to harass and imprison Tatars and other opponents of Moscow's occupation of Crimea. On Oct. 14, they arrested 34 people, among some 100 who are mounting one-person protests opposing the ongoing attacks.

— TERRY EVANS

United Steelworkers Local 1976, could potentially face life in prison if convicted. The trial, which began Oct. 2, is expected to last into December. Jean Demaitre, a former low-level official of the now bankrupt and dissolved railroad, faces the same charges.

Messages in support of Harding

and Labrie should be sent to USW Local 1976 / Section locale 1976, 2360 De Lasalle, Suite 202, Montreal, QC Canada H1V 2L1. Copies should be sent to Thomas Walsh, 165 Rue Wellington N., Suite 310, Sherbrooke, QC Canada J1H 5B9. E-mail: thomaspwalsh@hotmail.com.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 13, 1992

A massive explosion rocked the Texaco Corp. refinery in Wilmington, California, on October 8, injuring 16 people, sending flames more than 100 feet into the air and triggering a neighborhood evacuation. Residents of the mostly Latino neighborhood within a two-mile radius of the refinery were evacuated on Los Angeles city buses.

The blast occurred at 9:45 p.m., just before shift change, when the operators were in the control room preparing their written turnovers for the oncoming shift. Union members from Texaco described the scene to other oil workers: the control room, designed to be explosion-proof, was compressed by the force of the explosion. The blast raised the floor and forced the ceiling downward. Workers were forced to crawl out to escape from the control room.



November 13, 1967

In the pre-dawn hours of Oct. 28, Huey P. Newton of the Oakland, Calif., Black Panther Party for Self Defense was shot and seriously wounded in the stomach by police. Newton was driving with a woman friend when police apparently stopped him. A struggle followed, and one policeman was killed and another wounded. Newton is being held on charges of murder.

It was around the issue of police harassment that Huey Newton and other leaders of the Black Panther Party organized. The Black Panthers initiated armed patrols of Black neighborhoods at night. The defense committee statement explained that "when they saw a policeman stop a Black person on the streets they would stand a few feet away to observe. Whenever they observed a cop getting out of line, they would speak up."



November 14, 1942

The exacting and exhausting demands made on the mechanized soldier in the present war have caused all the nations to turn for man-power to the youth. The United States is preparing to take the unprecedented step of applying conscription to those who are eighteen and over. Thus the youth are being called upon to make the supreme sacrifice in the imperialist war.

It seems that democracy ends where youth begins. The right to vote is reserved for their elders. The law which acknowledges their manhood by sending them to the battlefield, gives them the status of minors when it comes to politics. They are not asked to make up their own minds concerning any of the larger issues of the war or the post-war world. That will be done for them by those with greater experience, the experience that brought on the war.

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Drive against Kurdistan

Continued from front page

the territory previously held and protected by Kurdish peshmerga forces.

U.S. officials were pleased to see Barzani go, particularly given his sharp criticism of Washington for giving the green light to the recent attacks on the Kurds.

Immediately after the overwhelming independence vote, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ordered the KRG to turn all border crossings, airports and oil facilities in the Kurdish region over to control by Baghdad. Two weeks later Hashd al-Shaabi and Iraqi troops — deploying U.S. military equipment — launched their assault against the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.

They rapidly seized control of this historic Kurdish city as peshmerga commanders in Kirkuk, backing a wing of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan opposed to the Kurdistan Regional Government's course, ordered their troops to withdraw without a fight. The PUK and Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party are both part of the KRG.

Baghdad took control over oil production and the pipeline near Kirkuk, and arranged for British Petroleum to take over operations there.

Under increased pressure, the KRG offered to suspend results of the referendum in an effort to open negotiations with the Iraqi government. Abadi rejected the offer, saying any hint of independence must be annulled. Iraqi forces and the Iranian-backed militia then pushed deeper into the autonomous Kurdistan region. One focus has been for control over the border crossing in the Kurdish town of Fishkabour, located where Turkey, Iraq and Syria meet. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces has used this crossing in its operations against Islamic State, including in Raqqa and Deir el-Zour province. And the U.S. military uses this crossing to supply its special operations forces in Syria.

The Fishkabour crossing is also the route through which aid is brought to some of the more than 270,000 refugees who fled Raqqa since fighting began there in June.

With Iraqi and Hashd al-Shaabi troops and artillery outside the city, after being repulsed by peshmerga forces, a cease-fire was declared Oct. 27. Meetings between Iraqi and Kurdish representatives have taken place

in Mosul, with “the U.S. overseeing the talks,” reported Rudaw.

Shifts in Syria, Iraq

Tehran, with close military and political relations with the Shiite majority in the Baghdad government, is seeking to connect its forces and allies from the borders of Afghanistan through Iran and Iraq into Syria, hooking up with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Washington wants to prevent this.

A fight is shaping up against Islamic State's final stronghold on the Syrian-Iraqi border, including the Syrian city of Abu Kamar and Al Qaim in Iraq. Dictator Bashar al-Assad's Syrian government forces — backed by Tehran-backed militias and Moscow's air power — are advancing on the Iraqi border on the western bank of the Euphrates River. U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, led by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), are moving along the river's eastern bank.

At stake for Assad is control over more territory previously lost as well



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Protest in Washington, D.C., Oct. 30, against attacks on Kurdistan. In 1975 Washington withdrew protection for autonomous Kurdish region and Saddam Hussein's government invaded, forcing 100,000 Kurds to flee. By 1980, Iraqi bombs had destroyed 5,000 villages.

as oil resources. For Tehran and Washington, it's the struggle for political and military influence in the region.

And here, as in Iraq, the Kurds may face a situation where their continued autonomy no longer serves the inter-

ests of Washington.

Speaking about Raqqa, Syrian Information Minister Mohammad Ramiz Turjuman said Oct. 23, “We don't consider any town to be liberated before the Syrian army enters it.”

Madrid takes over in Catalonia, calls snap elections

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The Spanish government met with little organized resistance when it imposed direct rule over Catalonia after the government there had declared independence. Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy defused any serious protests by calling for snap regional elections Dec. 21.

Catalonian President Carles Puigdemont, who had called for “peaceful opposition” to Madrid's rule, announced from Belgium Oct. 31 that the pro-independence parties would contend in the special election and he would respect the results. Puigdemont and other government ministers fled there when they learned that Spanish Attorney General José Manuel Maza had filed charges against him and 19 other officials that carry sentences totaling 45 years.

The Spanish Senate voted Oct. 27 to impose direct rule after Catalonia's parliament just minutes before had declared independence, defying the government's order to stand down. Rajoy appointed Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría to head the Catalanian government and run its ministries from Madrid beginning Oct. 30.

A mass march opposing separation took place in Barcelona Oct. 29. Police put participation at 300,000 people. It was organized under the rubric, “We are all Catalonia.” Participants chanted, “We will vote,” and “Long live Spain, long live Catalonia.”

Both the Catalan branch of Spain's governing People's Party and the Catalan Socialist Party supported the march.

Government officials who had been sacked were given time to collect their belongings, but were told that if they tried to work they would likely face charges. Teachers, firefighters, police and most other public sector employees turned up for work with no widespread absenteeism.

The chief of Catalonia's police force, who was removed from his post, issued a statement urging the 17,000 officers to comply with the orders from Madrid.

The Catalan branches of the two biggest trade unions, Comisiones Obreras and Unión General de Trabajadores, issued a joint statement Oct. 27 in favor of the elections, calling it “an essential step” for Catalans to express themselves democratically and against any resistance in the streets.

Madrid hopes its suspension of Catalan self-rule will quell the movement for national rights that has grown in recent years. The clash came to a head Oct. 1 when the Spanish government sent thousands of police and soldiers to attempt to stop a referendum on independence. The attempt failed and the vote passed overwhelmingly, but less than half of eligible voters took part.

Catalan government leaders had counted on a favorable reception to their moves from leaders of the European Union, but the opposite was the case. Across the board, they were told they would never get into the EU without approval from Spain.

Support for Catalan national rights had surged in the preceding years after a 2010 ruling in Spain's Constitutional Court revoked major aspects of Cata-

lan autonomy, including recognizing “Catalonia as a nation” and preferential use of the Catalan language. Regional elections in 2015, with a turnout of nearly 80 percent, had resulted in a parliamentary majority for pro-independence parties.

Different class responses

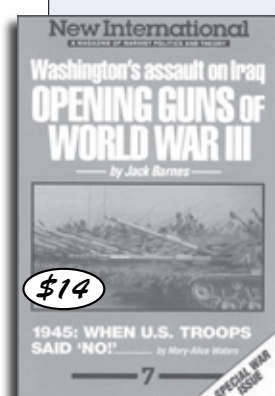
In addition to the sizable pro-union march Oct. 29, there have been demonstrations of hundreds of thousands over recent weeks to protest Madrid's attacks on the referendum, imprisonment of independence advocates and thuggish police assaults.

The different responses reflect class divisions. Catalonia's strong industrial base means it's one of the better off provinces in Spain. Substantial sections of urban professionals and middle-class layers, university students and many farmers press for independence with anti-working-class arguments that Catalonia would fare better on its own, no longer saddled with subsidizing the central government budget. They say that provisions in the Spanish Constitution that guarantee preferential treatment and larger allocations for social aid to regions in Spain where workers face lower wages and worse working and social conditions place an undue burden on Catalonia. These social layers form a large part of the base of the pro-independence organizations.

While still significant, support for separation is lower in the working class. The 2007 capitalist financial crisis hit Spain hard, and previous pro-independence governments have pushed through harsh anti-working-class “austerity” measures. Over many decades, workers have moved to Catalonia both from the rest of Spain and elsewhere in search of jobs and improved living conditions, and some don't speak Catalan. Many see unemployment, wages, health care, pensions and other social protections as more pressing needs than splitting from Spain.

NEW INTERNATIONAL

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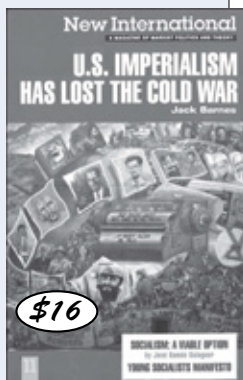
“The Gulf War sounded the opening guns of sharpening conflicts and class battles that will decide whether the horrors of World War III are inflicted on humanity ... or a road is opened by working people to a socialist future of international human solidarity.”

Jack Barnes in New International no. 7

U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War, the Socialist Workers Party concluded after the collapse of regimes and parties across Eastern Europe and the USSR. Capitalism's present world disorder is confirmation of that conclusion.

New International no. 11

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Five years after Sandy

Continued from front page

per storm were to take place today, we would be no better prepared.”

Kane was working as a nurse at Staten Island Hospital during the storm. Twenty-four of the 43 dead in New York were on Staten Island.

In the face of government inaction, hospital workers took the initiative to go door to door after the storm, Kane said, looking for people who needed medical help.

The social catastrophe workers faced — and many still face — was the product of the workings of the capitalist system, which puts profits before human need.

At first city officials said no evacuations were needed since national weather “experts” predicted that by the time Sandy arrived it would no longer be a full-fledged hurricane, the *Washington Post* revealed Oct. 27. They argued that nursing homes near the water hadn’t flooded when Hurricane Irene hit the year before, so why order a “costly” evacuation now? It was worth taking a chance. For them.

The result — at least 29 nursing homes flooded in Queens and Brooklyn leaving 4,000 nursing home and 1,500 adult home residents without electricity, water, heat or food. It took three days to rescue them.

Like public housing, these facilities were built on low-lying land, regardless of the danger, because it was cheaper.

Mayor Bill de Blasio and Gov. Andrew Cuomo claim that even though it’s five years since Sandy, “we’re” making progress. But nearly 20 percent of the 12,713 families enrolled in the city’s Build It Back program are still waiting for their homes to be rebuilt or raised up above flood level, the *New York Daily News* reported. More than 11,000 other people who had applied were disqualified or gave up in the face of bureaucratic red tape and delays.

The billions of dollars allocated by government agencies supposedly to be better prepared for future storms have enriched legions of “consultants” and “planners,” as well as some construction bosses and real estate moguls. With little to show for it.

Five years after Sandy, anniversary stories in the press are riddled with reports of anti-flood projects still “in the planning stage” or that “will begin” someday.

Out of 18 major projects to protect public housing that flooded during Sandy — moving generators, electrical controls and heating equipment out of flood-prone basements — only one has been completed.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman Joseph Lhota has been boasting about advances in preventing a recurrence of the flooding that disabled the subways. The progress? Flood-prevention devices have been installed at *less than half* the station entrances that need them.

Five years later!

Press accounts point to a lot of talk about floodgates, berms and seawalls to prevent coastal flooding, but few have gone beyond the design stage. There *is* one that was completed by the Army Corps of Engineers last year — a \$28 million project to protect Brooklyn’s Sea Gate, a wealthy gated community, from Coney Island beach erosion.

This social disaster for workers in New York caused by the for-profit values of capitalism is being repeated today in Texas, Florida and in the colonial and semicolonial territories in the Caribbean. Two months after Hurricane Harvey tens of thousands who lost their homes and apartments in Houston are still living in hotels and shelters.

And the catastrophe in Puerto Rico from hurricanes Irma and Maria is a hundred times worse, because it’s a colony of U.S. imperialism. More than a month after the storms, more than 70 percent of the island remains without electricity.

The official death toll in Puerto Rico now stands at 51. But no one really knows. The colonial regime recently admitted it has given permission to funeral homes to cremate the bodies of hundreds who died since the hurricanes hit, while refusing to count any of them as storm-related.

In sharp contrast to the response to the hurricanes in the capitalist U.S. — the richest country on earth — and its colonies, the revolutionary government in Cuba organized working people through their mass organizations to evacuate 1.8 million people in advance of Hurricane Irma. They don’t gamble on people’s lives on the pretext that protecting them is too “costly.”

They didn’t need “consultants” or face red tape from bureaucrats to immediately begin rebuilding homes and repairing the electric grid. Cuban President Raúl Castro explained that the revolution would not “leave anyone on their own.”

Capitalism is to blame

The Oct. 28 “5 Years After Superstorm Sandy” demonstration drew some 1,000 people to march from Brooklyn to Manhattan, and focused its blame for the social calamity resulting from the storm on climate change and workers’ use of fossil fuels.

One marcher told me, “If we don’t stop global warming, it won’t matter if you’re for capitalism or socialism, because it means death of the entire world.”

As part of its broader program, the Socialist Workers Party calls for Washington to unilaterally enforce controls on emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by industry and agribusiness. But hysterical cries that the world is ending or that “global warming” is the cause of the social calamity for working people from recent hurricanes are false and disorient working people.

The social catastrophe from hurricanes Sandy, Irma, Maria and other storms is a result of the capitalist profit system, which is responsible for building on flood plains, the refusal to protect or evacuate nursing homes in low-lying areas, the lack of adequate food and water in shelters and the inability to restore electricity in Puerto Rico.

These questions are addressed in a statement, “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor,” by SWP leaders Jack Barnes, Steve Clark and Mary-Alice Waters, adopted by a party convention in 2007 and published in *New Internationalist* magazine No. 14.

“So long as the extraction of surplus value in warlike competition for profits dictates the production and distribu-

Chicago brigadistas report back from Cuba



Militant/Betsy Farley

CHICAGO — Some 30 people gathered at Trinity Episcopal Church here Oct. 27 to hear reports from returning participants in the recent “In the Footsteps of Che” brigade to Cuba. The meeting was sponsored by the Chicago Cuba Coalition. “The Cuban people could repair and rebuild immediately after devastating Hurricane Irma, and still offer help to others in need,” said Zakiyyah Muhammad, speaking, a home health care worker and member of the Service Employees International Union.

Laura Anderson, a railroad worker who got a leave from work to go on the brigade, spoke about the example the Cuban Revolution is for workers and youth everywhere. “We learned what a difference a revolution and a government in the hands of working people makes,” Anderson said. “Che Guevara’s ideas are alive today, that through voluntary work like the massive organizing effort before, during and after the hurricane, workers’ imagination and capacities are realized.”

Additional speakers included Bob Brown, of the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party; Dan Fein, of the Socialist Workers Party; and brigade participants Harvey McArthur and Julie Wolenski.

Meeting participants were urged to join the Nov. 1 protest here demanding an end to Washington’s economic war against Cuba, U.S. out of Guantánamo, and an end to all “regime change” programs against the Cuban Revolution. Similar actions are planned around the country.

— BETSY FARLEY

tion of wealth, land will remain private property and rental housing for the toiling majority will be built where the propertied classes don’t want to live. It will be constructed where workers can ‘afford’ the rent, including often on flood plains.”

“The capitalist system, and the propertied families who benefit from it in

imperialist centers and semicolonial countries alike, will inevitably continue to ravage humanity and the planet we inhabit,” the SWP leaders say. “It cannot be stopped without uprooting capitalism itself.”

And that’s exactly what workers and farmers in Cuba, led by Fidel Castro and the July 26th Movement, did.

Disaster for working people in Puerto Rico continues to unfold

BY SETH GALINSKY

Tens of thousands of homes destroyed. Most of the island still without electricity. Washington dispensing aid with an eyedropper. A decision to stop counting the growing number of dead from the storm. This is the social catastrophe for working people in the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico weeks after hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Washington’s bipartisan Financial Oversight and Management Board, known in Puerto Rico as the junta, was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2016 to squeeze the island’s workers to pay Puerto Rico’s \$74 billion debt to profit-hungry bondholders. It is not looking to cut working people there any breaks.

At its meeting in San Juan Oct. 31, board members said they face a problem because tax collections are down in the wake of the hurricanes and thousands of

workers are leaving the island.

Junta Executive Director Natalie Jaresko — whose credentials include forcing concessions on working people in Ukraine to meet the terms of International Monetary Fund loans there — has a solution: accelerate government “rightsizing.” That’s their code word for more layoffs of government employees, reducing the workweek and pay, slash-

Continued on page 9

New International no. 14

The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor

“Under capitalist social relations, human hardship from natural occurrences falls in starkly different ways on different social classes. In New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, life or death, a home still habitable or forced diaspora — a few feet above or below sea level marked the class divide.” — *Socialist Workers Party statement*



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Cuba: ‘Being rooted in the people is fundamental to revolution’

Below is an excerpt from Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58, a participant’s account by Armando Hart. The Spanish edition is of one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for November. A founder of the July 26th Movement, led by Fidel Castro, Hart helped lead its urban underground and organize support for Castro’s troops in the mountains. Following the conquest of power in 1959, and Hart’s release from prison, he became the revolutionary government’s minister of education. Here he describes the mass literacy campaign of 1961. Copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ARMANDO HART

From then on, education and culture were placed at the center of political and social activity and of the challenges facing a nation located “at the crossroads” of the world, which had adopted as its own the highest values of Western culture placing itself irrevocably on the side of the poor.

In those days of January 1959 I arrived at a building in Old Havana that had been the seat of the House of Representatives during the initial years of the Republic and later the Ministry of Edu-



Liborio Novak

Hundreds of thousands of Cuban young people celebrate completion of literacy campaign Dec. 22, 1961. Campaign was “first great mass undertaking,” said Armando Hart, where Cuban working people gained experience, confidence and deeper revolutionary consciousness.

cation. I was twenty-eight years old. Inspired by Martí’s idea, “To be educated is the only way to be free,” I assumed the responsibility for guiding the radical transformation of education in Cuba on the basis of these objectives:

- Extending instruction to the entire school-age population, and eradicating illiteracy in the adult population.
- Promoting a general reform of instruction based on offering a scientific and rounded education combined with training in ethical and patriotic values inspired by Cuban culture rooted in Martí’s ideas.
- Facilitating communication and strengthening ties between the family, the school, and the community as a central element of the educational process.
- Promoting and fostering the people’s participation in the tasks of the ministry. Developing close relations with social and mass organizations.
- Having administrative and technical decentralization in order to achieve these purposes.

In Cuba more than a million people were illiterate; 50 percent of the school-age children had no access to education; high school and university education were far more limited. That is why one of the first measures taken by the Ministry of Education of the revolutionary government was the creation of classrooms all over the country. Five thousand classrooms for nine thousand unemployed teachers could be created just with the financial resources available

in the long list of “*botellas*” (bottles) formerly handed out by the Ministry of Education of the old regime. When I told Fidel I was going to devote myself to creating five thousand classrooms, he pointed out that we should talk to the teachers and ask them to cut their salaries in half and thus create twice as many classrooms — ten thousand — with agreement that their salaries would then be raised gradually in a short number of years. That’s what was done.

Broadening educational services was a priority from the very first moments, clearly exemplified by the creation of the ten thousand new classrooms, the conversion of garrisons into schools, and the nationalization of private schools.

I called on the specialists and educators of the country to cooperate in all these endeavors. The patriotic tradition of Cuban education inspired our policy. In fact, from my post as minister, I had the privilege of becoming a pupil of the best teachers in Cuba.

In 1960, at the United Nations General Assembly, Fidel announced that a national campaign against illiteracy was being organized, and that in 1961 Cuba would be free of that scourge that humanity suffered and still suffers today.

An entire generation of young people, students, and teachers, of cadres of mass organizations, began their revolutionary lives, and their historic contributions to the country, in that literacy drive, which had its most immediate

antecedents in the literacy efforts conducted by the Rebel Army during the insurrectional struggle.

During the 1961 campaign 300,000 Cubans were organized, among them more than 100,000 student brigadistas in the Conrado Benítez brigades, 121,000 popular literacy teachers, 35,000 teachers integrated as cadres and specialists, and 15,000 workers in the “Patria o muerte” brigades. To this we must add an untold number of workers in all areas, as well as administrative and service personnel, whose efforts were indispensable to assuring the material and organizational success of the campaign.

The high proportion of young people among that impressive mobilization of literacy teachers was an extremely important fact. That campaign became the first great mass undertaking by a new generation. Youth who were too young to participate in the struggle against the tyranny were given a no-less-heroic task at the triumph of the revolution: that of defending the country and the revolutionary program, one of whose points was the elimination of illiteracy. A legion of these youth went to every corner of the country — workbook, textbook, and lantern in hand — to teach reading and writing. They learned the first political lesson of their lives as literacy teachers. Our young students and teachers taught more than 700,000 Cubans, as they simultaneously learned from them that being rooted in the people as a whole is the fundamental thing in order to create and advance in a revolution.

The literacy campaign, in short, was an educational and cultural act that created revolutionary consciousness in new generations. It was part of the intense popular movement, with deep aspirations for the radical renovation the country was living through in the revolution’s early years. In those beautiful days, centuries of ignorance and exploitation came crashing down.

With the noblest of passions, the people brought tumbling down the old economic and social structures, the old customs, and the decrepit ideas that had accumulated over centuries of history but had no roots or strength in the consciousness of our nation. They were thus unable to withstand the growing momentum of the socialist revolution.

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Vote SWP! Vote Communist League!

Continued from front page

The Socialist Workers Party explains that we need to unite the working class and chart a course to end forever the rule of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system of exploitation, crisis and war.

Don't throw away your vote on the twin parties of capitalist rule, the Democrats and Republicans. Their continued power depends upon workers to hold their noses and vote for the "lesser evil." But they're all evil! They all seek to defend the profits of the bosses and bankers on our backs.

The SWP and its sister Communist Leagues in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom offer a perspective forward in struggle against the economic, social and political crisis we face.

Following the social disaster in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, Cynthia Jaquith, SWP candidate for Miami mayor, demanded the government "put millions of the unemployed to work at union-scale wages in an emergency, government-funded public works program to rebuild the areas' infrastructure and repair and put up new housing," in the U.S. and the devastated colonies of the Caribbean.

"Expropriate the drug, hospital and medical equipment corporations and place them under the control of those who work there!" Lisa Potash, SWP candidate for mayor of Atlanta, said to thousands at the military-run free medical fair in Hayesville, North Carolina, in August. "Working people need — and *deserve* — a health care system that provides free, quality, preventative health care, from cradle to grave, as a social right."

"We need to mount a systematic fight state-by-state against the restrictions that states are imposing on our right to abortion," Mary Martin, SWP candidate for mayor of Seattle, told women who joined a picket line to defend Planned Parenthood in Everett, Washington, in March.

"Workers need to build strong unions. We need solidarity to unite the working class to better defend *our* interests," Osborne Hart told workers across New York and beyond as he campaigned for mayor of New York, including on the picket

lines of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers members on strike for months against Spectrum's union busting.

And to build the unity we need, Hart explains, "the SWP demands amnesty for all undocumented immigrants. We say organize the unorganized, regardless of what papers a worker has."

The party points to the powerful example of the Cuban Revolution, explaining that as Cuban workers and farmers built a revolutionary movement and took political power in 1959, they changed themselves, developing the courage and class consciousness necessary to end capitalist rule and build a new society based on working-class solidarity. This is possible here in the U.S. and everywhere else.

Margaret Trowe, SWP candidate for mayor of Albany, New York, and other party members and supporters of the Cuban Revolution have just returned from the "In the Footsteps of Che" brigade to Cuba, better equipped to explain why working people here should emulate their example.

That is a fight worth fighting, a life worth living. Join us to build the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues!

Vote Socialist Workers Party! Vote Communist League! For Mayor

Albany
Margaret Trowe

Atlanta
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Minneapolis
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New York
Osborne Hart

Seattle
Mary Martin

'Only SWP speaks for working class'

Continued from page 3

take in response to public protests against recent police killings in the Minneapolis area. Nekima Levy-Pounds, a past president of the Minneapolis NAACP, said that she has been very active over the past decade around police accountability. "Things would change under my leadership," she said. "I would work with

Chief Rondo, who I have a good relationship with, and would implement community policing models based on national best practices."

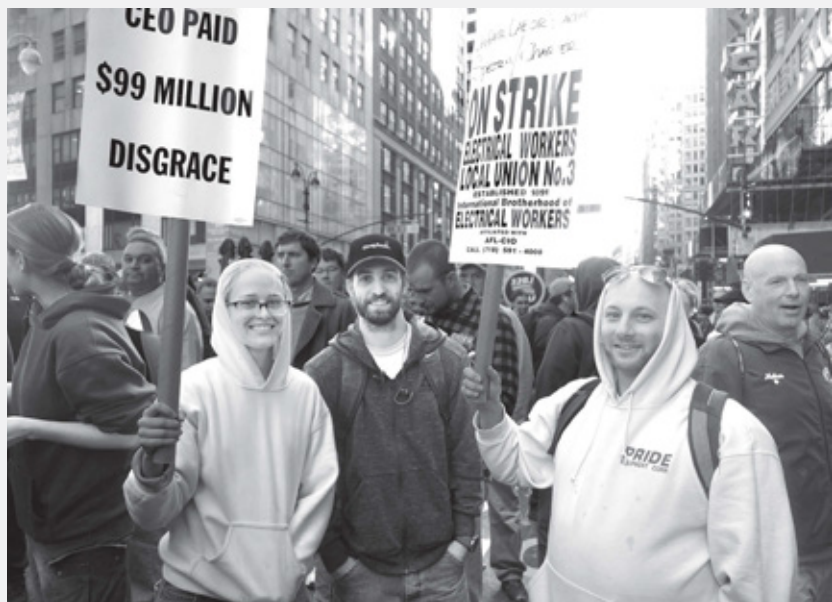
Medaria Arradondo, known by some as "Rondo," was recently appointed Minneapolis police chief, the first who is African-American.

Rosenfeld said working people need their own course. "The simple fact is you cannot 'reform' the police. They exist to defend the rulers' property and wealth, and to keep working people in their place," he said. "We need to trust ourselves, trust the exploited and oppressed. We have to continue to organize and fight to put cops in jail who kill and abuse us. No change will come through a policy in the mayor's office, only through a growing movement of working people."

"The fact is there is less racism and less hatred of immigrants than at any time in the history of the country, the product of our experiences and struggles, like the mighty social movement that overthrew Jim Crow segregation," he added. "We can build on that."

Several students came up to speak with Rosenfeld after the forum, to continue the discussion and learn more about the Socialist Workers Party.

NY: Spectrum workers rally against union busting



Militant/Sara Lobman

NEW YORK — Hundreds of workers rallied in Times Square here Oct. 30 to support 1,800 members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3 who have been on strike against Spectrum cable company since March. "They're trying to bust the union," said Shomari, a striker who asked that his last name not be used. "They don't want to pay anything towards medical or pensions."

— SARA LOBMAN

Crisis in Puerto Rico

Continued from page 7

ing government services and using the "savings" to pay down on the bonds.

In fact the debt just got bigger! After Gov. Ricardo Rosselló announced that the effects of the storms meant there wasn't enough cash on hand to pay public workers through the end of the year, the U.S. Congress responded by approving a new \$4.9 billion loan.

José Rodríguez Vélez, president of the Union Solidarity Movement (MSS), has a different solution. "Cancel the debt," he told the *Militant* Oct. 31 from Mayáguez. "The debt was unpayable before the storms. It's even more unpayable now." The MSS organizes workers at Coca-Cola, Pepsi and the India Beer bottling plants.

U.S. capitalists have plundered the wealth created by labor and land in Puerto Rico ever since U.S. troops wrested the island from Spain and made it a U.S. colony in 1898.

Even before Hurricane Maria ravaged the island Sept. 20, working people have been battered by more than a decadelong worldwide capitalist economic crisis, exacerbated by Puerto Rico's colonial status. U.S. colonial domination distorts the island's economy to increase profits for U.S. bosses.

Puerto Rico's gross national product contracted 18 percent since 2006. The government privatized hospitals, closed schools, raised sales taxes, cut pensions and laid off 30,000 government workers, including many electrical workers, leaving the grid on the verge of collapse.

"The government says that 30 percent of the island has electricity now," retired hospital worker Luis Pardo said by phone from Aguadilla Oct. 31, but he noted that figure is misleading. "Shopping centers, airports, factories, they all use up a lot more power than people. Probably only 15 percent of households have power."

"I'm one of the lucky ones, because I live on a main road to the airport," Pardo said. "Aguadilla is in the dark."

"Many people still don't have water," he said. "And for those that do it comes and goes, sometimes just a trickle."

It's worse up in the central hills of the island, Pardo said, where little or no aid has arrived.

Six weeks after the storm hit, the government announced it was reopening 119 schools, even without electricity. Another 1,000 remain closed indefinitely. Secretary of Education Julia Keleher said the government plans to permanently shut as many as 200 of them.

Less than 400 miles of the island's 5,000 miles of road had been cleared and reopened. A third of the hospitals are running on generators.

The state-run Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority was totally unprepared for the storm after years of government skimping on funds for maintenance and enforced reductions to the workforce.

"We are missing poles, crossheads, fittings, wires, trucks and insulators. There are areas where there are no boots for the workers," Freddyson Martínez, vice president of the UTIER electrical workers union, told *Caribbean Business*. Workers are going through scrap heaps to find salvageable parts and are working 10- to 12-hour shifts. At least 14 workers have been injured on the job in the last few weeks alone.

Bypassing Prepa's unionized workforce, the government of Puerto Rico has awarded contracts to private companies on the mainland to help restore power. Few believe that a majority of households will have electricity restored before sometime next year.

Without U.S. approval the Puerto Rican government is barred from accepting aid from other countries, and Washington has ignored the offer by revolutionary Cuba to send four brigades of electrical workers, a field hospital and 39 health workers.

Many workers are aware of Cuba's solidarity. "In addition to Cuba, the Venezuelan government and the electrical workers union in Mexico have offered help," union leader Rodríguez said, but have not been given permission by Washington. "It shows that we are a colony."

More than 100,000 workers have lost their jobs since the hurricane, Rodríguez said, "and many employers are cutting hours and benefits."