

Passion and principles

Introducing the FSP candidates

Stephen Durham for president

by Susan Williams

Stephen Durham brings abundant experience and a generous heart to the electoral arena. Dedicated to changing conditions at their root, he is a lifelong radical in the best sense of the word.

In the 1970s and '80s Durham, now 64, was the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) organizer in Los Angeles; he has since guided the New York City branch.

From the party's storefront in Central Harlem, it's a short subway ride to the international heart of capitalism. Durham has ridden that train many a time to confront the corrupt financial elite — in recent months, often to march with Occupy Wall Street and conduct teach-ins on economics.

Durham was radicalized as a student and campus worker at the University of California at Berkeley (UCB), where he participated in the movement against the Vietnam War and became a conscientious objector. He also stood shoulder to shoulder with students of color in the historic battle for Third World Studies at UCB.

As a pioneering queer activist, he took part in the first national lesbian and gay conference in 1969. A consistent advocate of women's rights and supporter of female leadership, Durham fights to keep feminist issues up front in all the movements.

Durham became a union militant while working as a waiter in California and then New York City. He provided rank-and-file leadership

in the 1985 NYC Hotel Trades Council strike by 16,000 workers, predominantly people of color, women, and immigrants.

Durham's long involvement in Latin America began during high school as an exchange student to Brazil during the military dictatorship. Fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, he has traveled in Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean, building bonds and joint work with other leftists and revolutionaries.

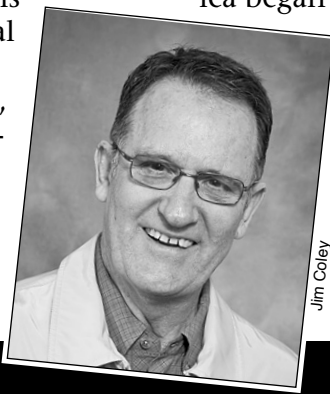
Running for New York State Assembly in 1998, Durham campaigned door to door in the largely Latino and African American 71st District. His campaign was endorsed by Puerto Rican activist Father Luis Barrios, longtime Harlem radical Yuri Kochiyama, former state Assemblywoman Marie Runyon, and Haitian immigrant rights advocate Ray LaForest, among others.

A thinker as well as a doer, Durham has written on topics from the AIDS crisis to the Cuban Revolution, from freeing Lynne Stewart to the environmental disaster of hydraulic fracking.

Now Durham brings his global perspective and decades of valuable political experience to a working-class campaign for president. □

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