

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Venezuelan peasants' fight for land met by gov't, landlord attacks
 — PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 14 APRIL 8, 2019

UK rulers face crisis as toilers push for break from the EU

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — As the March 29 deadline for the U.K. to leave the European Union loomed without any agreement over how this division would be managed, the capitalist rulers here and those who control the EU in Berlin and Paris agreed to postpone the break. The U.K. rulers — the large majority of whom really oppose any split from the EU — are wracked by a deepening governmental crisis and factional warfare within their parties. The political crisis is rooted in the decline of the U.K.'s propertied ruling families against their rivals, and their growing fear of what's building among working people.

"If you want to know why so many people in this area voted leave, look no further than what we're facing today," Angela Pattinson told Hugo Wils, Communist League candidate for Manchester City Council, when he knocked on her door March 15 in Murton, County Durham.

Continued on page 6

'Times' scribe urges liberals to declare war on rural America

BY TERRY EVANS

Leaders of the Democratic Party and the rapidly growing number of contenders for the party's presidential nomination are caught in a dogfight over the best strategy for victory in 2020. Should they try to compete with President Donald Trump for workers' votes in smaller towns and rural areas Obama won in 2008 and 2012 and Trump swept in 2016 or turn their back on those they consider hopeless "deplorables."

Nobel prize-winning *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman says history shows the answer is clear — they and their communities should be left to decline and die. He declares war on wide layers of working people in his March 18 column titled, "Getting Real about Rural America."

At root is the fear he shares with others in the meritocratic elite who grease the workings of the capitalist system. They dread workers, farmers and small proprietors who are

Continued on page 8

Workers, farmers face social disaster in floods

Catastrophe is product of workings of capitalism



McCook Gazette/Connie Jo Discioe

Volunteers from McCook, Nebraska, organize "flood buckets" of supplies to take to areas battered by flooding. Government officials had left those hard hit to fend for themselves.

BY JOE SWANSON

LINCOLN, Neb. — The government on all levels has left farmers, ranchers and other working people to fend for themselves in the face of flooding that destroyed crops, silos full of grain and livestock

on hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland. It has also damaged thou-

sands of homes and hundreds of miles of roads in the Midwest.

The flooding is wreaking havoc on working farmers and ranchers, already

battered by the capitalist crisis and being pushed off the land and into bankruptcy by

prices that are less than the cost of pro-

Continued on page 4

BUILD ALLIANCE OF WORKERS AND FARMERS!
 — SWP campaign statement p. 8

SWP launches campaign in Troy, NY: 'Workers can unite, fight boss attacks'



Troy Record gave front page coverage to announcement of Socialist Workers Party campaign March 21. Campaigners are fanning out in region knocking on doors to introduce the party.

BY ROY LANDERSEN

"We think the problems that working people face in Troy are really similar across the country and the world," Samantha Hamlin, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor, told a well-covered press conference March 20 at Troy City Hall in upstate New York.

Hamlin was speaking alongside Lawrence Quinn, SWP candidate for Troy City Council President. The two were featured on WNYT-TV Channel 13

newscasts throughout the day and on the front page of the March 21 Troy Record.

"The socialists' agenda calls for a massive public works program. It favors amnesty for undocumented workers. And they're demanding the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. military from around the globe," the TV station reported. "They envision a worldwide movement that they believe will also benefit the people of Troy."

Continued on page 3

'We got out truth,' Hawa Bah says after win over city in son's killing

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — The city government here announced March 20 that it was dropping its appeal of a civil court decision that found two New York cops

liable for the killing of Mohamed Bah, who was emotionally ill, in Harlem in 2012. The city will pay \$1.9 million to Bah's family and attorneys.

The victory is the result of the persistence of Hawa Bah, Mohamed's mother, and the support she received from working people and other oppo-

Continued on page 8

Boeing bosses sacrificed safety to defend profits, market share

BY ROY LANDERSEN

More information continues to come to light making it crystal clear that the crashes of two Boeing 737 Max 8 planes in Indonesia and Ethiopia were not accidents. They were the direct result of cold-blooded decisions by Boeing bosses to put maximizing profits ahead of safety, with the complicity of the U.S. federal agency that was supposed to "regulate" them. Under the lash of competition with archrival Airbus, they drove the

Continued on page 7

Inside

Protests grow after cop who killed Antwon Rose gets off 2

Mueller report derails liberals' witch hunt against Trump 2

Amid economic 'recovery' more farmers driven off land 4

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Iceland hotel workers strike for higher wages, better conditions

Hundreds of New York nurses rally in contract fight

Protests grow after cop who killed Antwon Rose gets off

BY MALCOLM JARRETT

PITTSBURGH — Hundreds walked out of high schools and colleges or took time off work to join almost daily protests in Pittsburgh after a jury acquitted East Pittsburgh cop Michael Rosfeld in the June 19 killing of African-American teenager Antwon Rose.

“Say his name. Antwon Rose!” protesters shouted. “How old was he? Seventeen!” and “Three shots to the back, how you justify that?”

The teen, who was unarmed, tried to run away after the cop pulled over the vehicle he was riding in with two other youth. The car had been involved in a drive-by shooting earlier. Rosfeld shot Rose in the back, arm and side of his face, killing him.

Protests broke out across the city after the slaying. Prosecutors charged Rosfeld with homicide. His jury trial began March 18 and lasted only four days.

Immediately after the killing a witness heard the cop say he didn’t know why he shot Rose. But Rosfeld told the jury he “thought one of them was pointing a weapon at me.” A video showed Rosfeld shooting from at least 30 feet as the youth ran away.

Cops always claim they are afraid for their lives, and the law is written to excuse them for whatever comes next. Retired Pennsylvania State Police Trooper Clifford Jobe testified for the defense that Rosfeld didn’t do “anything wrong. He was following his training.” He called the shooting “textbook.”

Prosecutor Jonathan Fodi countered that “we don’t shoot first and ask questions later,” pointing out that Rosfeld had acted as “judge, jury and executioner.” But working people know that is exactly what cops are trained to do.

The 12-person jury, which included three Black jurors, found Rosfeld not guilty after deliberating for just four hours March 22.

Protests began right away in Oakland, East Liberty and other neighborhoods across the city.

On March 24 several dozen people gathered and put up a banner reading “He was seventeen” near the basketball courts Rose liked to play on. It is inside the Hawkins Village public housing complex where Michelle Kenney, his mother, lives.

Kenney said the outpouring of solidarity gave her hope and strength. “If this amount of people can put this together in 24 hours,” she said, “can you imagine what we could do to change the world?”

Over 1,000 university and high school students and others joined together the next day for a protest in the rain. When their march reached the Allegheny



Jake Mysliwicz

University, high school students walk out March 25, protest acquittal of East Pittsburgh cop Michael Rosfeld.

County Jail, they stopped and waved up at the prison windows in solidarity. Prisoners inside flicked lights on and off in response. The warden ordered a lockdown until the protesters left.

Antwon Rose “was unarmed, and he did not pose a threat to the officer or to

the community,” his family’s attorney S. Lee Merritt said after the verdict. The acquittal “today says that is OK, that is acceptable behavior from a police officer.” Merritt said the family plans to challenge the verdict in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court or federal courts.

Mueller report derails liberals’ witch hunt against Trump

BY SETH GALINSKY

After nearly two-years “investigating” President Donald Trump — cheered on by a relentless “resistance” of Democratic liberals, NeverTrump Republicans and the entire middle-class left — special counsel and former FBI Director Robert Mueller submitted his final report. He was forced to admit that there was not a shred of evidence of “collusion with Russia” by Trump or anyone in his family or administration.

This deflating end to the witch hunt deals a blow to the Democrats and to the FBI — the capitalist rulers’ political police, which had been substantially transformed into a partisan tool of the anti-Trump crusade.

The Russia conspiracy theory was pushed by a range of former and current FBI and CIA officials, from ex-CIA chief John Brennan to former FBI Director James Comey, as well as Mueller.

The main target was never really Trump — who like his Democratic Party opponents is in the business of defending the interests of U.S imperialism — but “deplorable” working people, especially in smaller cities and the countryside, who dared to vote for him, hoping to “drain the swamp” in Washington, and those who didn’t vote at all.

The attempt to use the FBI and criminal prosecutions to settle political differences within the capitalist class is new, and a danger to the working class. The FBI is tasked by the propertied

rulers with going after working-class fighters and political organizations, like the Socialist Workers Party, the unions, Black rights groups, opponents of imperialist war and the like.

There was never any evidence of collusion with the Vladimir Putin regime. The so-called dossier the political police used to justify opening the witch hunt was a product of the Hillary Clinton campaign. Mueller’s gang ended up filing a series of unrelated charges against former associates of Trump.

Mueller’s failure to indict or impeach Trump is a death blow to the “resistance” and will intensify the Democratic Party’s internal fractures between “progressives,” “socialists” and others. Barring something like a new economic crisis, it sharply increases the odds of Trump’s re-election in 2020.

Next week’s *Militant* will take a look at these developments and the political crisis of the capitalist rulers’ parties — and the stakes for the working class.

THE MILITANT

Algerian toilers fight to bring down gov’t!

Hundreds of thousands in Algeria are demanding the resignation of the dictatorial regime of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, a regime supported by U.S. and French imperialism. The ‘Militant’ covers the fight of working people throughout Africa for political and democratic rights.

AP photo/Anis Belghoul

Protesters gather in Algiers March 13.

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Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

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

'Workers can unite, fight'

Continued from front page

In the lead article in the *Record*, Hamlin was quoted saying, "Our jobs increasingly don't pay enough to feed a family and many work multiple jobs just to stay afloat." She said that today's crisis of the propertied rulers' capitalist system is confronting working people with "lack of adequate health care, lack of worker safety regulations, opioid and alcoholism epidemics and the suicide rate among veterans."

Quinn told the press, "We need to organize and fight politically for a massive public works program across the country to build schools, hospitals, and affordable housing" and rebuild the "deteriorating infrastructure in this country."

"We want to raise the minimum wage to union scale for all workers. Provide unemployment payments until workers can find a job. And give workers control of safety on the job," Quinn is quoted saying in the *Record*.

'Alliance of workers and farmers'

"The Socialist Workers Party is for building an alliance between working people and small farmers," Hamlin said at the press conference, to "take power from the superwealthy rulers and reorganize production of all society based on working-class solidarity and human need." To build that alliance, Quinn said, "the labor movement must demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including adequate living expenses."

"Without our campaign, the working class doesn't have a party to vote for that speaks in its interests," Hamlin

told WNYT.

The *Record* reported that Hamlin had attended a rally in Albany, New York supporting driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants a few days earlier. She also called, the paper said, for "amnesty for all undocumented workers, a halt to farm foreclosures and end to ongoing wars overseas."

Hamlin, who had "joined a solidarity brigade to Cuba in 2018," pointed to the Cuban Revolution "as an example of how working people can transform ourselves in struggle, take political power and wield it in the interests of workers and farmers worldwide," wrote the *Record*.

The SWP candidates asked workers and young people to join their campaign in "door knocking in Troy and across the region to discuss and debate how to build a working-class movement," the paper reported.

This is one of the central activities of the Socialist Workers Party, taking the party, its books and the *Militant* to workers in smaller cities and towns and to farmers in rural areas to expand its reach.

After the press conference, Hamlin was joined by her Walmart co-worker, John Milne, in talking to working peo-



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Uber driver and gas station worker Jamie Groff, right, told Samantha Hamlin, SWP candidate for Troy mayor, and her Walmart co-worker John Milne that she was concerned about youth involved in criminal activity, March 20. Hamlin explained crime rates dropped during the mass movement for civil rights in the 1960s when young people were drawn into the struggle. "What is more meaningful than changing our own conditions?" Hamlin said.

ple in the area about the SWP campaign.

When they knocked on the door of Darlane Moshier, a retiree from the state Department of Motor Vehicles, she told them that the governor in Albany "says things are good, but things are not so good for normal people." Milne, also a former state worker, said, "We had some rallies at the capital here because [then New York Governor George] Pataki wasn't going to budge," pointing to past fights by state workers. "We won some raises although it was a compromise." It wasn't what they had been demanding.

Hamlin showed Moshier *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

She explained workers "need to chart our own independent working-class political course and break from the two capitalist parties." She got the book as well as a copy of the *Militant*.

While there aren't a lot of strikes today, there is a deep discussion among working people about the debilitating effects of the capitalist rulers' crisis on their lives and what can be done. In this context, the SWP finds real interest in its campaigns, program and publications.

To get more information and to join with members of the SWP, and the Communist Leagues of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K., campaigning at workers' doors, contact the branch nearest you (see directory on page 4).

SWP to launch drive for books, 'Militant,' funds

BY TERRY EVANS

The Socialist Workers Party is launching a seven-week campaign to broaden interest in the party's program and activity among working people. It will be centered on expanding the readership of revolutionary books and the *Militant*, and will run from April 6 to May 28.

Alongside this campaign, the annual Militant Fighting Fund will be organized to raise over \$110,000 to finance the paper. Contributions will come from the only reliable source possible — the

paper's working-class readership.

The campaign is aimed at extending the SWP's year-round weekly efforts to reach workers and farmers on their doorsteps in small towns and rural areas that have been hard hit by the economic and moral crisis of capitalism. And to learn more about their conditions of life and work, the communities they live in and their struggles. In the course of these back-and-forth discussions party members discuss what working people can do to meet the bosses' attacks, the consequences of the rulers' wars, and why we need to organize independently of the capitalist two-party system.

The party will also take this campaign to strike picket lines, social protests, farmers' meetings and other working-class actions.

Joining branches of the SWP in this effort will be members of the Communist

Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, readers behind bars and others who want to participate in the drive.

To encourage the widest possible interest in the party and its program, all titles published by Pathfinder — which contain the rich lessons from past revolutionary working-class struggles — will be offered at a 20 percent discount during the drive. In addition, half-price offers are being made on a number of titles by party leaders (see ad, left).

Campaigns by SWP candidates for election in 2019 in states across the U.S., and by CL candidates in other countries, will strengthen the drive.

The *Militant* will run a weekly column to cover the progress of the drive, including on the quotas adopted by party branches. Join us!

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See directory on page 4 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

Floods lead to social disaster

Continued from front page

duction and by growing debts to banks.

The cause of the flooding was rain that fell on ground saturated by water in September and October. The ground froze and was topped off by snow. With nowhere else for the water to go, more rain and warmer weather combined in mid-March to create a “perfect storm” of overflowing rivers, streams and lakes.

Some of the flooded farmland had been created in the 1940s and '50s with the transformation of the Missouri River into a deeper, narrower channel for river shipping. The low-lying flood-prone land was sold to farmers at low cost.

The flooding was made worse by levees and dams that were not in good shape, by lack of coordination between government departments, and policies that many farmers say favor protecting wildlife over farming and homes.

While the authorities urged farmers to prepare, they were left to themselves to meet the social catastrophe that unfolded. In other words, this “natural” disaster is a social and economic disaster because of the normal every-man-for-himself workings of capitalism.

In the face of government inaction, working people, small business owners and others extended solidarity and pitched in to help each other out.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reported how cattle rancher Jeremy Mahon in Boyd County rescued one neighbor with his tractor, which at one point floodwaters spun around 180 degrees. He switched to a boat to save three more. Mahon lost some 60 cows and calves.

His neighbor, Bob Crosley, pitched in

after the storm, loaning Mahon a tractor. Volunteer cowboys from the Professional Bull Riders club showed up with horses and two borrowed airplanes so he could check on his livestock.

Working-class solidarity

In a display of solidarity, thousands of working people across the states of Nebraska and Iowa did the same, helping sandbag ahead of the floods. Boats traveled the streets of flooded towns ferrying residents to safety.

“All of us neighbors are working together, and that’s how we’re going to get through,” Mahon told the *Star*.

Rancher Clint Pischel, 23, of Niobrara, told the *New York Times* that he spent all day March 18 gathering 30 dead calves he found under chunks of ice after his family’s ranch was flooded when a dam failed.

Now he worries how to pay off loans. “With death and everything else, you’ve got to answer to bankers,” he noted. “When you’re losing money to start with, how do you take on extra losses?”

Across the Midwest farmers filing for bankruptcy protection rose by 19 percent last year, the highest level in a decade, according to the American Farm Bureau. In Wisconsin, the second-largest milk producer in the country, more than 1,000 dairy farms have gone under in the last two years.

The flooding affected more than farms and homes. As of March 19 six public drinking water systems had been knocked out of operation. Nearly 50 wastewater treatment facilities, including for Omaha, Nebraska City



Courtesy of Lance Knigge

During March flood, breeding bulls were buried in ice on Anthony Ruzicka’s farm in Verdigre, Nebraska. “My farm is completely destroyed,” he said, after a 90-year-old dam nearby failed.

and Columbus, have reported problems. And Native American reservations have also been flooded.

“Just in Nebraska with so many roads washed out,” Par Stoddard, 50, a truck driver here for over 20 years, told the *Militant*, “this will take months to repair, let alone at least two dozen bridges destroyed or needing repairs.”

Union rail workers reported to this correspondent that washed-out tracks and bridges have limited the transportation of goods, and the bosses are pushing workers to ignore safety procedures, risking derailments.

Workers in Lincoln, which wasn’t flooded, like Patty Andelt, 26, and a few of her co-workers and friends loaded a semitrailer in a grocery store parking lot March 20 after collecting food, clothing and tools for those hit by the floods. “I

knew we had to do this because of how slow the government responds in a crisis like this,” she said.

Vern Jantzen, who farms 300 acres of corn and soybeans near Beatrice and drives a truck and a school bus for added income, told the *Militant* that “everyone he knows has at least one job off the farm.”

“There are often programs available to help working farmers and townspeople. The question is can you hold on until the check finally arrives, which takes awhile,” Jantzen said. “Folks in rural towns with businesses flooded and farmers that lost livestock and stored grain have bills and payments that are due now.”

Cancel the debts

In the face of the destruction — which is still not over as more snow melts — the government should order cancellation of the debts owed to the banks by farmers, ranchers and workers. No one should lose their land or home because of the flood.

Farmers and ranchers should get government assistance — including grants and long-term interest-free loans — to rebuild their farms and herds, as should workers whose homes are damaged or destroyed. And the unions should fight for a massive public works program to rebuild roads and other infrastructure destroyed by the floods.

Joe Swanson is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Lincoln, Nebraska, and a retired rail worker.

Crisis of capitalism today drives farmers off the land

BY JANET POST

In the midst of the capitalist economic “recovery” in the U.S. many workers are still living paycheck to paycheck and more working farmers are being driven deeper into debt or off the land altogether. This is exacerbated by social catastrophes like the far-reaching flooding in the Midwest.

The cost for inputs, such as seeds and pesticide, have gone up, but the prices farmers receive for their produce have fallen. Often, like on most small and middle-size dairy farms, they don’t even cover the cost of production.

In the 1980s, roughly 37 cents out of every dollar spent in the store on farm products went back to the farmer. Today, the figure is more like 15 cents. That means that more is being seized by monopoly capitalist processors, marketers and grocery chain bosses.

More land is concentrated in the hands of large capitalist farmers. Family farmers are caught in the squeeze.

While the number of farms has declined, farmers’ production has more than doubled, because of new machinery and mechanization, advances in animal and crop genetics, and widespread use of fertilizers and pesticides.

In 1935 there were 6.8 million farms in the U.S. By 2017 that number was down to 2.05 million. Farmers have been pushed to buy or rent more land and machinery to increase production to keep their heads above water.

As a result, farmers have to take out larger loans, which are harder to pay off, sinking deeper into debt. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, farm debt last year rose to more than \$409 billion, the highest since the 1980s

when the last big wave of farm foreclosures swept the Midwest.

Bankruptcies are at the highest level in 10 years. As family farmers struggle with overwhelming debt, the suicide rate in rural counties has risen steadily since 1999. Opioid and other addictions have also risen dramatically.

More than half of U.S. farm households today are losing money. The USDA estimates that median farm income was a *negative* \$1,548 in 2018.

Dairy farmers have been especially hard hit. The number of dairy farms in the U.S. has dropped by more than 93 percent since 1970 — from more than

640,000 to some 40,000 today.

Seventy-one percent of U.S. poultry farmers live on or below the official poverty line. Prices paid to farmers for grain crops have also tumbled. A bushel of corn sold for more than \$8 in 2012; now it sells for less than \$4. Most family farmers have to work jobs off the farm to survive.

Farmers who are Black face special discrimination from government farm agencies and others because of the racism rooted in capitalism. A century ago African-American farmers owned more than 16 million acres — today it is 2.5 million.

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to themilitant@mac.com or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Iceland hotel workers strike for higher wages, better conditions

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Workers from hotels in the Reykjavik capital area and nearby municipalities marched down Laugavegur Street here March 8, International Women's Day. The action was part of a one-day strike, the first of others to come, Anna Marta Marjankowska, a board member of the Efling Union, told the *Militant*.

The fight involves some 700 union members who work as cleaners, housekeepers and in laundry services in hotels and guest houses.

They marched behind a banner saying, "We're here! We're striking! Get used to it!"

Negotiations for a new contract have been deadlocked for months because the bosses have refused to meet workers' demands for an increase in the base wage, affordable housing and a shorter workweek.

"With the economic boom in Iceland, revenue in the tourism industry has matched that of fish exports. Iceland is currently the fifth largest

fish exporter in the world, and I believe tourism brings in just as much money," striker Stepnir Benediktsson told the *Militant* at the rally. "The workers deserve more."

Marjankowska got a good response from the crowd when she spoke at the rally about the importance of being united, visible and heard.

"Today is about solidarity, about showing we can unite in fighting for better working conditions," she said. "Together we are strong, we can change the culture where we work and protect each other."

— *Josette Hurtubise*

Hundreds of New York nurses rally in contract fight

NEW YORK — Hundreds of nurses, other unionists and supporters rallied outside Mount Sinai Hospital March 18 as the nurses' union told the main private hospitals here that its members could go on strike April 2 if a contract agreement is not reached with the bosses' NYC Hospital Alliance.

The New York State Nurses



Militant/Josette Hurtubise

March 8 International Women's Day protest by hotel workers in Reykjavik, Iceland, as part of a one-day strike demanding higher pay, affordable housing and a shorter workweek.

Association is demanding the hospitals hire more nurses. Current staffing levels are inadequate to give patients decent health care, the nurses say.

"Our main demands are for safe staffing and a decent package for retirees," Gina Hawkins, a nurse at the rally, told the *Militant*. The 10,000 nurses at Mount Sinai, Montefiore and New York-Presbyterian Hospital health systems in March voted by over 97 percent to authorize a strike if contract talks fail.

"Right now we have to pay for half the cost of our health insurance after we retire," Hawkins said. That can mean hundreds of dollars a month. It's not unusual for nurses to go on a 12-hour shift without taking a break, because the hospitals refuse to hire enough nurses.

At the request of the bosses' alliance, the U.S. Nursing Corporation, an agency that specializes in strikebreaking, is offering a \$70 an hour pay rate and \$1,000 bonus for scabs willing to cross the picket line if there is a strike.

— *Willie Cotton*

Amazon worker, who spoke out for union, challenges firing

NEW YORK — A worker who spoke out against poor conditions at the

Amazon fulfillment center in Staten Island is challenging his firing by the company. The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union submitted a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board March 20, charging the firing was illegal retaliation for union organizing.

Justin Rashad Long started working at Amazon in October. The company promised to provide a shuttle service to get to work, he said. Instead, his commute on public transportation took four hours a day. He participated in a union rally on the steps of City Hall Dec. 12. Long said workers often face 12-hour shifts five or six days a week, unreasonable production quotas and unsafe working conditions.

"They talk to you like you're nothing — all they care about is their numbers," he told Bloomberg News before the protest. "They talk to you like you're a robot."

Amazon issued a statement saying Long's "allegations are false."

The Staten Island facility employs a few thousand workers and uses robots throughout the plant. Amazon fired Long Feb. 12, claiming he violated a "serious safety policy." According to charges the union filed with the NLRB Long had stepped into a robot-only section to pick up a product that "fell off a robot, which was close to where he was working."

— *Brian Williams*



Militant/Willie Cotton

Hundreds of nurses rally March 18 at Mount Sinai Hospital, as New York nurses fight for new contract at major hospitals in city. Demands include more nurses to provide care.

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



April 11, 1994

The natural gas explosion that sent a fireball through an apartment complex in Edison, New Jersey, was not a freak occurrence or just an accident. Its ruinous impact on the lives of hundreds of local residents who were left homeless was a direct result of the priorities of the money-hungry bosses and their capitalist system that routinely discounts the lives of working people.

Texas Eastern Transmission Corp., like all capitalist enterprises, puts profits ahead of public safety in operating the gas pipeline. There were no sensors or automatic shut-off valves on the 33-year-old pipe, for example. This meant the gas flow continued for two hours, feeding the blaze, while workers fought to manually shut down the line. The pipeline was operating at high pressures that, while permissible under government regulations, put extra strain on the pipe.



April 11, 1969

The perpetual crisis which has afflicted New York City municipal hospitals for many years finally boiled over two weeks ago when the medical board at Harlem Hospital announced it was closing the hospital. Dr. Herbert Cave, medical director of the hospital, said that it was time to stop fooling the public into the belief that it could provide first-rate medical care with tenth-rate equipment, lack of staff, and insufficient money to operate the huge facility which serves central Harlem.

Early in the current crisis, Mayor Lindsay had threatened to close down nine of the 21 municipal institutions.

Public sentiment against the curtailment of hospital and clinic services has run high. Mass meetings have been addressed by representatives of the organized labor movement, civic and civil rights organizations, and the churches.



April 8, 1944

Britain's greatest militant labor upsurge of the past 18 years again threatens to spread, as over 135,000 coal miners and shipyard workers continue their strike in defiance of the Churchill government's army draft threats and the frantic back-to-work appeals of their own traitorous union leaders.

Last week some 45,000 shipbuilding workers employed in the huge Tyneside, Clydeside and Belfast, Northern Ireland, shipyards joined the strike ranks of the 90,000 South Yorkshire coal miners who walked out over two weeks ago.

Government officials termed the current strike movement the "worst labor crisis" since the 1926 General Strike and spokesmen of the Fuel Ministry are voicing the fear that the Yorkshire struggle may spread amongst all the 700,000 British coal miners. The government has been powerless to lure the strikers back to work.

Maryland teachers rally for school funding, increased pay

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Some 5,000 teachers and their supporters rallied at the state Capitol here March 11 demanding more funding for public schools, expanded prekindergarten programs and increased teachers' pay. Organized by the Maryland State Education Association, the action brought more than 170 busloads of protesters from across the state, many wearing red knit caps and T-shirts in solidarity with fights teachers have waged in other states.

"I have two half-day prekindergarten classes," Andrea Fuller from James McHenry Elementary School in Lanham told the *Militant*. "We really need a full day to free parents from day care responsibilities."

Fourth grade teacher Deidre Daniels from the same school said that school districts decided to allow teachers a two-hour early dismissal when they said they were going to the protest.

— *Glova Scott*

Crisis for UK rulers deepens

Continued from front page

“My father was a miner and the pits are shut. My son is disabled and his monthly care hours have been cut by 80 hours,” she said. “The Urgent Care center in nearby Peterlee hospital has been closed. For a good while my husband was paid below minimum wage. There’s a lot of job competition here.

“The area is plagued by drug and alcohol abuse. And the government told us to hold on — to hold onto what they’ve been doing over all these years, and to hold onto the EU,” she said. Wils and other CL members were introducing the party to workers in the area.

“They should have left the EU the day after the Brexit vote,” Stephanie Hinds told Wils in nearby Shotton. “There was nothing to negotiate, then or now.” Hinds had worked for years as a sewing machine operator in two unionized garment plants, both of which are now closed. Her husband Joe, a member of the National Union of Mineworkers, worked underground for 30 years in five collieries.

These comments reflect a widely held view among working people facing the carnage of today’s capitalist crisis in the U.K.

U.K. rulers press for new vote

Prime Minister Theresa May secured unanimous agreement from EU members to postpone the deadline for the U.K. to quit the EU, now set for April 12. By then May hopes to win support for her Brexit-in-name-only “deal,” already twice rejected by Parliament. It would keep the U.K. tied to significant parts of EU membership.

As the political crisis builds here, there are growing calls for May’s resignation, including from two dailies that have been supporting the government. The campaign by the rulers to overturn the vote taken in 2016, in which a majority — 17.4 million people — voted for the U.K. to leave has gone into overdrive. Some politicians from the main capitalist parties want to force workers to vote over and over, if need be, until they get it “right” — by voting to remain in the EU.

In a March 13 House of Commons vote, Members of Parliament voted to

take “no deal” Brexit off the table under any circumstances. An online petition to revoke Article 50, which under the Treaty of Lisbon gives a member state the right to quit the EU, has been signed by 5 million people. Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn refuses to rule out revocation. The party favors keeping U.K. in the single market and customs union, and is open to a new referendum. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of London March 23 in a demonstration for a second referendum addressed by Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and “independent” MPs, who recently split from the two major capitalist parties.

In a joint statement March 21, leaders of the Confederation of British Industry and Trades Union Congress demanded Theresa May seek a long extension to the U.K.’s membership.

EU President Donald Tusk says all options remain on the table — “a deal, no deal, a long extension or revoking Article 50.”

In a letter to the *Spectator*, former Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson says John Kerr, the British diplomat who composed Article 50, told him its purpose “was to make it as difficult as possible for a country to leave the European Union.” Lawson said Kerr “did a good job.” Nonetheless, working people here have demanded the U.K. get out.

“Workers have no voice in all this,” John Pearton, another former miner in Murton, told Wils. Pearton’s comment highlighted the fact that the entire debate between those wishing to leave or remain is dominated by parties that



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Angela Pattinson from Murton, County Durham, U.K., described competition for jobs, low wages, and drug and alcohol abuse plaguing the area to Hugo Wils, Communist League candidate for Manchester City Council, March 15. For years the rulers “told us to hold onto what they’d been doing and hold onto the EU, but we voted to leave,” she said.

look after the interests of the bosses.

While the EU is ballyhooed as a great common economic and political union, in fact it’s a protectionist bloc and benefits first and foremost the most powerful bosses in Europe, those in Germany and, to a lesser degree, France. The EU and its common currency means it attracts profits at the expense of weaker capitalist rulers in the bloc, like those of Greece. The growing capitalist crisis and increasing competition means the EU is fraying at the seams — with sharpening divisions among Germany, France and Italy, the three founding members and among the largest economies in the EU.

Talking with Andy Welford at his family’s dairy farm in north Yorkshire, Wils said that he had participated in a

yellow vest protest alongside thousands from rural France. “Solidarity with these rural toilers would be strengthened by the U.K. getting out of the EU now,” he said. Welford said he tends to support staying in the EU.

“We need to reject the trap of lesser evil capitalist politics and the illusion of a European *union*. The EU is a den of thieves and it’s coming apart,” Wils said. “Workers and farmers have nothing in common with either London or Brussels.

“Getting out of the EU means we’ll confront directly the chief source of workers’ problems here — the British capitalist rulers,” he said. “We should look toward working people of town and country as a force capable of fighting for and winning social change.”

UK gov’t revoking citizenship is blow to workers’ rights

BY DAG TIRSEN

LONDON — The government’s decision to revoke the citizenship of Shamima Begum, who left the U.K. at the age of 15 to join Islamic State in Syria, has stirred heated discussion here. The capitalist rulers in a number of countries are debating what they will do with the thousands of other members of the reactionary sect seeking to return home as IS is defeated in Iraq and Syria.

Born in the U.K. to Bangladeshi parents, Begum joined IS in 2015 along with two school friends. Interviewed in a Syrian refugee camp in February, she said that she didn’t regret joining Islamic State but now wanted to go back to the U.K. with her child. Instead, Home Secretary Sajid Javid revoked her citizenship. Banned from returning home, Begum’s child died in the camp.

Knocking on doors to introduce the Communist League in east London, in the area where Begum was brought up, this correspondent and Julie Crawford spoke to Aziz Ali, a young ac-

countant, in Bethnal Green.

Asked whether she thought Begum should be allowed to return, Ali said, “Well she left the country.”

“Yes, she was attracted to the reactionary course of Islamic State, but working people should oppose the government’s move to revoke her citizenship,” Crawford responded. “Workers have a stake in this because the government will use it as a precedent against people engaged in working-class struggle.”

Ali considered this. She noted that Begum, was only 15 years old when she left.

“My standpoint is not out of sympathy for her,” Crawford said. “She voluntarily joined this brutal outfit. My concern is what is in the interests of the working class.”

During its reign of terror across large parts of Iraq and Syria, IS drove millions from their homes and slaughtered others it accused of breaching its edicts or who held different religious beliefs. As its despotic rule comes to an end, cultural and literary events that Islamic State forbade are beginning to flourish in towns and cities where it once held sway and better conditions exist today for working people to engage in political activity.

In 2002 the Labour government made it easier to revoke U.K. citizenship, as part of a raft of “anti-terrorist legislation” that restricts workers’ rights. Three years later Prime Minister Tony Blair called for making it “simpler and more effective” for the government to deprive

a person of citizenship.

An amendment to the law, adopted in 2014, further simplified this process. Then Home Secretary Theresa May ruled this could be done “if the secretary of state ‘is satisfied’ that a second citizenship can be obtained elsewhere.” The number of people deprived of British citizenship has surged since then, from 14 in 2016 to 104 in 2017.

There have been challenges to the new powers taken on by the government. In November 2018 the Special Immigration and Appeals Commission struck down a court decision to deprive two men accused of being “Islamists,” of their citizenship. The court ruled that the order rendered them stateless and therefore violated international law. The government is appealing the verdict.

The Bangladesh foreign ministry denied claims that Begum is a Bangladeshi citizen. “She is a British citizen by birth and has never applied for dual nationality with Bangladesh,” the ministry said. “There is no question of her being allowed to enter into Bangladesh.”

Begum remains at the al-Roj refugee camp in northeastern Syria. Elsewhere in Syria at least 12,000 women and children, including thousands from abroad, are trapped in limbo in similar camps. Aid workers report having insufficient tents, water and food supplies there to meet the needs of the rising numbers of people seeking protection after Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces attacked and then took Baghouz, the last IS-held town in Syria.

For further reading ...

Jack Barnes

CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER



\$25

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS
AT THE MILLENNIUM

“How long ago was it that many ruling class figures in Europe were insisting that the European imperialist powers were on the road toward political unity?

“The opposite actually happened however. Despite all the talk about unity, the evolution of world capitalism has increased uneven development across

Europe and made its character more explosive.” — Jack Barnes
in *Capitalism's World Disorder*

www.pathfinderpress.com

Venezuelan peasants' fight for land met by gov't, landlord attacks

BY RÓGER CALERO

Thousands of peasants and rural workers in Venezuela have been fighting for land and the means to till it since 2001 when then President Hugo Chávez adopted a Law on Land and Agricultural Development that allowed the state to expropriate idle or unproductive land and distribute it to those who wanted to farm it.

Since then, Venezuela's countryside has become a battleground where over 350 peasants and rural workers have been killed by hit men hired by capitalist landowners targeting those who have received land under the measure. Since July, 12 were killed and 19 others were framed up by authorities, peasant organizations say. Not a single landowner has been convicted for contracting these murders in the nearly two decades since Chávez and political forces around him came to power.

The peasants' and rural workers' fight drew national attention last July when hundreds marched 270 miles from Portuguesa state — the country's most agriculturally important region — to Caracas, to demand resolution of their land claims. They also demanded the government take action against landowners' attacks on them for what they call land "invasions."

In response, President Nicolás Maduro, who succeeded Chávez, met with march leaders Aug. 2 and "ordered" that those responsible for the killings — and their accomplices within the government — be brought to justice. But despite the promise, three more peasant leaders were killed two hours later in Barinas state.

These questions are important today, as Venezuelan workers and farmers face a deep economic and social crisis, a product of the workings of capitalist exploitation, enhanced by interference by the U.S. capitalist rulers, who seek a regime more subservient to their interests.

Chávez came to power in 1998 in the midst of a rise in struggles by workers and farmers who were hopeful his election would strengthen their struggles. However, Chávez, and Maduro after him, never intended to carry out a fight to end capitalist exploitation and lead the working class to take power into their own hands as workers and farmers did in Cuba in 1959 led by Fidel Castro.

Instead, the Chavistas aimed to "manage" capitalism and establish a welfare state that would "redistribute the wealth" and hand down aid to working people in the form of social programs. While revenue from high prices of



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

March in 2005 in Caracas, Venezuela, to protest killings of peasant leaders and demand land and credit. Land law proclaimed by Hugo Chávez left big landowners largely untouched.

Venezuela's rich oil resources allowed the government to fund programs for a time, when prices fell the underlying class crisis became clearer.

Chávez said the land law opened a "war" against big landholdings, but in fact it has not changed the entrenched property structure on the land. Big landowners have been left largely untouched.

'Worse situation today'

"We have an even more difficult situation today," said Arbonio Ortega, a leader of Platform of Peasant Struggles, an umbrella coalition of peasant organizations, small cooperatives and other groups, in a January interview on the website La Iguana TV. In addition to the old landowning bourgeoisie, "now we have a large rising 'revolutionary bourgeoisie,'" of politicians and high-ranking military officers in the government who are vying for land.

According to government figures, there are 6,000 pending cases of peasants who received a plot of land but not the title to go with it, leaving them open

to forcible removal by capitalist forces who want the land. This is often done with the complicity of the National Land Institute, which is responsible for implementing the land law, along with local governments, courts, and national guard and police. Even when they hang onto the land, these peasants are denied access to credits and subsidized inputs that are only available to titled landowners.

In addition to retaining most of the land, larger capitalist farmers benefit from other measures and policies implemented by both the Chávez and Maduro governments. Large growers, for example, have received significant amounts of credit and machinery through the state-run program AgroVenezuela Mission, which also sells agricultural inputs at subsidized prices. They purchase en masse and stockpile it, leaving small farmers no choice but to buy these products on the illegal market at inflated prices, peasant leaders say.

Government bureaucrats often try to justify giving priority access to credits and other hard currency for imports to

large capitalist growers and state enterprises by claiming small producers are inefficient.

Following this logic, officials justify making alliances with capitalist enterprises because they supposedly *do* know how to produce, peasant leaders told ALBA TV. But while the agricultural capitalists get richer, the food crisis in Venezuela just gets worse.

Example of Cuba's revolution

Academics and others in nongovernment organizations, who make a living out of advising governments on what to do about the "land" crisis, often compare the Venezuelan land law to the far-reaching land reform carried out by the July 26 Movement-led government after the 1959 revolution in Cuba.

But the comparison is fundamentally false. The agrarian reform carried out in Cuba was part of a revolutionary program and strategy to mobilize workers in the cities, together with peasants and rural workers, in the millions, in a fight for state power. The new revolutionary government expropriated millions of acres of the largest landed estates and issued titles to hundreds of thousands of landless peasants in the opening years of the revolution. Capitalist property relations in city and countryside were overthrown, and toilers established a state power that served the interests of all working people.

To this day, Cuban farmers are guaranteed access to land, cheap credits, favorable prices for their produce, as well as all the social gains of the revolution.

In Venezuela the working class is not in power and the capitalist character of the state has not changed. This is a fight still ahead for working people there. Workers and farmers in the U.S. can help by extending solidarity and demanding Washington end its sanctions and interference with Venezuela's sovereignty. U.S. hands off Venezuela!

Boeing bosses sacrificed safety to defend profits

Continued from front page

planes into production with calculated disregard for the threat to human lives.

Boeing bosses are hoping they can make quick software and other changes to get the worldwide grounding of the planes lifted and keep airlines from switching orders to Airbus.

A March 23 article in the *New York Times* notes that in 2011, Boeing bosses were planning an entirely new mid-size plane. But they learned that American Airlines, "an exclusive Boeing customer for more than a decade," was on the verge of ordering hundreds of new, fuel-efficient jets from Airbus. Billions of dollars in sales were at stake.

So Boeing's bosses pulled out all the stops, deciding to update the company's top-selling 737 instead. This meant the 737 Max 8 could be ready in a record six years.

"Engineers were pushed to submit technical drawings and designs at roughly double the normal pace," the *Times* reports. Bosses told them, "Limit changes to hopefully avert a requirement that pilots spend time training in a flight simulator before flying the Max 8."

To win out over Airbus, Boeing told

customers that pilots wouldn't need expensive new simulator training because, they claimed, flying the 737 Max 8 was essentially the same as the old model.

Minimizing or avoiding extra training is a key selling point in the eyes of the commercial airline bosses, who don't want to cut into their profits. Boeing's strategy succeeded and the company got orders for thousands of planes.

To increase fuel efficiency and range enough to compete with the Airbus A320neo, the Max 8 was fitted with larger, more fuel-efficient engines. The new configuration gave the plane a tendency to nose up too high under certain conditions, which could cause a stall.

Their hurried solution was to design automated software, activated by a sensor, which would take over control and force the nose down. This sensor apparently malfunctioned in both crashes. Post-crash simulator tests March 23 showed that pilots only have 40 seconds to override the automatic system to avert disaster.

Boeing could have connected an additional sensor to a warning light flashing at any problem, but to get this, you had to pay more. Neither the Ethiopian nor Indonesian planes had this feature.

This system and others were never in-

spected by the Federal Aviation Administration, which allowed Boeing to use its own engineers to certify that their work on the Max 8 was safe.

Flight crews were not told about, much less trained on, the new software. On old 737s a tug on the yoke turned off the autopilot. They were never told that this wouldn't work on the Max 8.

Boeing bosses made a cold-blooded judgment that risks of a crash weighed less than their profits. Over Boeing's initial objections, the plane was grounded by governments worldwide.

Boeing now plans to install one of the "optional" safety features in 737 MAXs as standard equipment and is readying a software upgrade to prevent any recurrence. Bosses hope they will secure the FAA safety certification within weeks.

Meanwhile, their planes sit on the ground. The airline bosses who bought the Boeing planes are facing disruptions to service — and to profits. There are threats by some airlines to cancel orders and Boeing stock is in free fall.

To guarantee safety and lives of passengers and airline workers, the unions need to fight for workers control of production and safety in the air. Pilots should have the power to say, "Stop! This plane's not flying if it's not safe."

The First and Second Declarations of Havana

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Build fighting alliance of workers, farmers

The following statement was released March 24 by John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council At-Large in Philadelphia. Staggs grew up on a family farm in Illinois.

Working farmers are victims of conditions over which they have no control. But these are not primarily natural conditions — flooding or freezes or insect attacks. They are social conditions that result from the workings of capitalism — usurious interest rates; monopoly-rigged pricing of farm machinery, fertilizer, seeds and fuel; and monopoly control over marketing.

The only way out of this crisis is for a fighting alliance of workers, who are wage slaves, with exploited working farmers, who are debt slaves. Farmers and workers face the same enemy, the capitalist system, which puts the profits of the bankers and corporations ahead of the needs of working people.

Our unions and organizations of farmers need to demand that farmers get a price for what they produce that covers the cost of production plus enough to live on. Farmers should be guaranteed the right to work

the land without fear of foreclosure. There should be a permanent moratorium on taking away their land.

The rents and mortgages system saddles family farmers with big payments and debts just to use the land they work on. The produce of their labor is sucked off by landlord and banking parasites.

The Cuban Revolution in 1959 solved this problem by nationalizing the land and turning it over to those who worked it. Peasants in their millions, backed by workers and the new revolutionary government led by Fidel Castro, led the land reform. This is an example that can be emulated here.

I will be one of the participants on this year's May Day brigade to Cuba April 21-May 5. We will do volunteer work on farms there and meet with members of the farmers' organization. I will tell them about the struggles of farmers and workers here and bring back the truth about what Cuban toilers have accomplished to share with farmers here.

If you would like to join with me, contact one of the Socialist Workers Party branches in the directory on page 4.

'We got out truth' about cop killing of Bah's son

Continued from front page
nents of police brutality.

She has organized protest marches, joined with the mothers of other victims of police brutality in common actions and has spoken out at numerous forums demanding the city admit its responsibility for her son's death.

"The city and cops fought against us all this time and that's not right," Hawa Bah told the *Militant* March 22. "But we were able to get some of the truth out."

"We continue to demand that [police detective Edwin] Mateo, and all the other officers involved in Mohamed's murder, be fired," Bah said. "My son is dead but the police who are responsible for his death are still collecting their paychecks."

Mohamed Bah, a cab driver and immigrant from Guinea who went to high school and college here, was shot eight times by the police after his mother called 911 asking for an ambulance and doctor for her son because he was depressed and acting strangely.

"The police showed up at Mohamed's apartment with heavy guns like they were military," Bah said. "They broke down his door even though I told them I didn't call you, I called for an ambulance. Go away!"

The cops claimed the shooting was justified because Mohamed Bah had a 13-inch knife. After cops entered his apartment, they fired Tasers, accidentally hitting officer Mateo, who fell to the floor and shouted, "He's stabbing me. Shoot him." The cop later admitted he had never been stabbed.

Mateo also claimed that he shot while on the floor

with Bah towering above him, but evidence showed that Bah was shot while on the ground.

The cops claimed key evidence was destroyed when the New York Police Department warehouse was flooded during Hurricane Sandy. In the middle of the trial, the cops announced some of the "missing" items, including the clothes Mohamed Bah was wearing when he was killed, had turned up in NYPD custody.

"It is unforgivable to me that either through malice or incompetence this would not have been discovered," Judge Kevin Castel said, after the announcement.

In November 2017 the jury in Hawa Bah's civil suit found Mateo guilty of "excessive force" and his supervisor Lt. Michael Licitra guilty of "failure to supervise" and awarded Bah's family \$2.2 million in compensation along with over \$1 million in legal fees.

The city's Law Department appealed the verdict. In dropping the appeal, the city government agreed to pay \$1.9 million, which includes legal fees. Law Department spokesmen still claim "the officer acted reasonably."

"The police should not be first responders for mental health problems, period," Bah told the *Militant*. "People with mental sickness need someone who will treat them with love and help them."

"No mother, no family should have this happen to them," she said. "We have to keep fighting to save lives to make sure that future generations will get liberation."

LETTERS

Mary Watkins

Mary Watkins, who helped lead the fight for workers' rights at Walmart in Washington state, passed away Feb. 12 after a long battle with cancer. Mary's brother Larry, and her sons Nicholas, Mark, and Kacey, along with the pastor of the God's Kingdom Christian Fellowship church in Tacoma put on a "Celebration of Life" service March 2. In attendance were family, former co-workers and unionists Watkins worked with.

In 2013, Mary turned my life around and got me involved with "OURWalmart," an organization which helped defend workers on the job. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made, getting me to fight back as part of an organized effort. Fighting for workers' rights was very dear to her. She

was treated wrongly by Walmart and witnessed a very dear friend of ours die at work because the company wouldn't give her the time off to go see a doctor. Mary participated in actions in Seattle for \$15 an hour and went to protests around the country opposing Walmart's treatment of its employees.

In explaining who his mother was, her son Nicholas wrote, "Mary was brave. She stood

down fear and Walmart's attempts to consistently silence her from speaking out."

"I have spent my time advocating for an increased minimum wage in Washington state, drawing strength from my faith in God and the power of workers to make change," Mary wrote after she was illegally fired for the second time — she had won her job back once already. "I worked hard every day in my store and did my best to model dignity in the workplace."

Pat Scott
Federal Way, Washington

The letters column is an open forum for subjects of interest to working people. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. 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. Or donate online at www.themilitant.com

War on rural America

Continued from front page

increasingly looking for ways to fight to reverse years of grinding economic, social and cultural assaults and the effects of the capitalist rulers' never-ending wars.

Krugman says the pointlessness of advancing any aid to working people in the countryside was proven after the fall of the Berlin Wall and fusion of East and West Germany. The capitalist rulers there poured funds into the former east, which was underdeveloped and crisis ridden. But, he says, this was an utter failure.

He points to the outcome of the 2017 German elections. All the rulers' generosity failed to prevent "more than a quarter of East German men" from voting for what he calls the "white nationalist Alternative for Germany" (AfD).

The AfD is a capitalist party. It increased its vote totals in the eastern part of Germany where working people have faced worse conditions for decades. The decline in votes for Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition wasn't a vote for "white nationalism," but a vote against the governing coalition that millions hold responsible for the carnage they face.

Krugman and his ilk firmly believe that rural workers are inveterately racist, reactionary and irredeemable. "Rural Americans," he says, "many of whom rarely encounter immigrants in their daily lives," are deeply prejudiced against them. In fact, many bosses and big farmers there are dependent on immigrant labor, and over years solidarity has been knit between workers of all kinds living and working in these regions. This was graphically shown in the town of O'Neill, Nebraska, last August when native-born workers joined actions to defend immigrant workers after a raid by the rulers' immigration cops.

'Nothing can be done for them'

The conditions facing millions in rural areas, Krugman argues, are produced by "forces that nobody knows how to stop."

He knows this is a lie, but he fears the answer. The devastation that affects these areas is a product of the same economic crisis bearing down on working people in the cities. It's a consequence of the capitalist rulers' efforts to offset the decadeslong decline in their profit rates by going after the living and working conditions of *all* working people.

Small-scale dairy farmers are burdened by debt and receive declining prices for their products from the giant milk processing companies. Many are being driven off the land. Deaths from drug overdoses occur at a higher rate in rural regions than in the cities. But Krugman says these worsening conditions should be ignored because they affect dangerous people who vote the wrong way.

It was teachers in West Virginia and Kentucky — the sorts of states derided by Krugman — where school workers drew on the traditions of decades of coal miners' battles to wage their own battles last year, providing an example to working people across the country.

The fact is there is deep working-class solidarity in these areas. After flooding swamped parts of Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri last week, thousands of people volunteered to help those affected by the devastation. "Nebraskans and Iowans are country folk who know how to stick together and offer to help their neighbors," Sharon Kroese, who came to help from Branson, Missouri, told the *Des Moines Register*.

But these kinds of people are given "hugely disproportionate weight," in elections, Krugman moans. So Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren and others propose restricting the franchise of those living in rural areas by abolishing the Electoral College. It was set up to force presidential candidates to garner broad geographic support to get elected — not just backing from a few heavily populated big-city states on the two coasts.

The Socialist Workers Party takes its campaigns, books by party leaders and lessons of past working-class battles, and the *Militant* to smaller cities and towns and rural areas. We seek to learn about the conditions working people face and discuss how working people can fight effectively against the attacks of the bosses and their government. This is the road to building a party capable of uniting the entire working class.