‘Openings to recruit’—SWP sets up in Nebraska
BY JOHN STUDER
DES MOINES, Iowa—“Celebrate the launching of the Socialist Workers Party branch organizing committee in Lincoln” and “2012 Iowa Socialist Workers Campaign—David Rosenfeld for U.S. Congress, 3rd CD” read two banners displayed at a March 3 public meeting held at the Socialist Workers campaign headquarters here.

“We think there are openings to recruit to our movement today,” Joe Swanson, organizer of the newly formed party branch organizing committee in Lincoln, Neb., told the meeting. “We are establishing a presence in Lincoln to strengthen the party’s ability to participate in workers’ resistance to the bosses’ increasing attacks and to discuss the need for a revolutionary party with fellow workers.”

Rosenfeld, who chaired the meeting, announced the launching of the party’s election campaigns in three states: Washington, Illinois and Iowa.

“We are running to give a voice Continued on page 7

Frame-up charges are ‘clear attack on union’
2 locked-out sugar workers say ‘not guilty’

Locked-out workers picket American Crystal Sugar in Moorhead, Minn., Feb. 6. Two members of union negotiating committee face trumped-up charges for alleged picket line incidents.

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
MINNEAPOLIS—Two workers locked out by American Crystal Sugar Co. are fighting trumped-up criminal charges for alleged incidents while on picket duty at two of the company’s seven facilities in the Upper Midwest. Some 1,300 workers—members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union—were locked out Aug. 1 after rejecting the bosses’ union-busting contract proposal.

Brad Knapper, from the American Crystal factory in Moorhead, Minn., continued on page 5

Europe joblessness on rise as rulers push to deepen exploitation of labor
BY EMMA JOHNSON
The worldwide crisis of capitalism, rooted in a slowdown in production and trade, is manifest in rising unemployment in much of Europe. Within the eurozone, the 17 nations that share the euro as a common currency, average unemployment reached 10.7 percent in January, the highest since the eurozone’s inception in 2002. An additional 1.2 million joined the workforce.

Continued on page 4

Virginia defenders of abortion rights win round, keep fighting

Defenders of women’s right to choose abortion rally at Virginia State Capitol March 3. Thirty protesters who were arrested on Capitol steps are fighting “trespassing” charges.

BY JOHN STUDER
Some 1,000 protestors marched through downtown Richmond and rallied at the Virginia State Capitol March 3 to “demand that the legislative attacks on abortion, contraceptives, and women’s rights in general stop immediately.” The action was the latest in a series of protests against bills in the state legislature aimed at curtailing women’s right to choose abortion. The demonstrations have been successful in pushing back a number of the attacks.

A so-called “Personhood” bill, continued on page 3

New York City Saturday, March 10
After Labor Resistance and Solidarity: What’s the Revolutionary Political Road Forward for the Working Class?
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Mary-Alice Waters
Editor, Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution
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Also Inside:
Campaign to win long-term readers enters final stretch 3
Gov’t snubs revolutionary’s request to visit sick brother 4
Rally protests anti-immigrant laws in Georgia, Alabama 4
Illinois rally protests cop killing of Black youth 9
Vale disregarded safety hazard before mine deaths

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL—The United Steelworkers issued a report Feb. 29 calling for the Ontario government to consider criminal charges against the Vale Ltd. mining company and its management in the deaths of two miners in Sudbury, Ontario. Jason Chenier, a supervisor, and Jordan Fram, a member of USW Local 6500, died on June 9, 2011, after a torrent of wet mud and ore flooded the tunnel where they were working at Vale’s Stobie mine.

“Vale management pursued a ‘production first’ philosophy in which the ‘focus was primarily on production,’” the union report states. “Stobie mine management knowingly accepted risky practices and failed to address known hazardous work conditions.” The union is also calling for a government investigation into the fatalities.

Vale, based in Brazil, is the second biggest mining company in the world. Since the deaths at the Stobie mine, two other workers have been killed at Vale mines in Canada. The company and union are conducting joint inquiries.

In the deaths of Chenier and Fram, the USW carried out an independent examination, saying the company put too many limits and restrictions on a joint investigation. Among many issues, the USW found that Vale management had ignored ongoing problems with flooding in the mine, including plugged drain holes and accumulations of several feet of water in sections of the mine above the level where Chenier and Fram were killed. The report reveals that senior managers knew about the water, which combined with rock and sand caused the fatal muck slide.

Prior to the incident, Chenier had erected double guardrails, safety barriers in the area. The company “should not be dumping or blasting this ore pass until the water situation is under control,” he wrote in an email to management. In the two days leading up to the deadly muck flow, the report states, “it is apparent that the double guardrail had been removed a minimum of three times for production purposes.”

“We believe Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram would be alive today if Vale management had followed Chenier’s warnings,” USW Local 6500 President Rick Bertrand said in a news release.

On March 1, Vale issued a statement by Kelly Strong, a vice president and the general manager of operations in Ontario, in response to the union’s report. “We reject the USW’s allegations of negligence and are prepared to defend the company and our employees fully if required,” he wrote. The company’s internal investigation concluded that the deaths were the result of “a number of factors” with “no single cause or individual at fault,” he said. Vale has not released its report on the deaths to the public, according to the company’s office in Sudbury. Cory McPhee, vice president of corporate affairs, has not returned a call from the Militant requesting comment.

Among the 165 recommendations listed at the end of the union report is that workers be allowed to directly file “079” reports documenting safety issues. Since July 2010, following a year-long strike by 3,000 USW members that ended with many concessions, the company has required a supervisor’s approval to submit these reports. In the recent period, the union investigated “frequently workers were discouraged from reporting hazards.”

“One thing that stands out for me is that the union is pursuing holding the bosses accountable. The company says that safety is their number one concern,” Tim Levesque, an underground miner at Vale, told the Militant. “I don’t believe it for a minute. The allmighty dollar is more important.”

The Militant

Workers in Greece resist boss, gov’t attacks

Capitalist rulers from Greece to the U.S. and worldwide are driven by the crisis of their system to assault the wages and living conditions of working people. The ‘Militant’ points to workers’ resistance and the road toward the fight for political power.

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“A port trucker involved in a fight for a union with other truckers who work for Toll Group renewed his subscription,” reports Ellie Garcia from Los Angeles. “He said reading the *Militant* has helped him understand better the experiences he is going through.”

“A frequent sale at the entrance to the union hall is a *Teamster Rebellion* and a *Pipe Plant* to have an impact on workers there,” writes Jacqui Henderson from Houston. Socialists worked there have sold several subscriptions to those who saw the paper outside. “Earlier this week,” adds Henderson, “one of these workers renewed his subscription and said to all those who would listen in the break room, ‘The Militant gives me a lift every time I read it.’”

### Virginia abortion rights fight

Continued from front page which would declare the cells formed immediately after fertilization as a human being with full legal rights, has been shelved. Also taken off the table were bills that would have banned abortions after 20 weeks and cut off state funding for women lacking money for an abortion if their fetus was found to be “grossly deformed.”

A bill that would have required women seeking abortion to undergo an ultrasound to see a clear image of the fetus, which in most cases would have meant an invasive procedure, was dumped. It was replaced with a bill, awaiting the governor’s signature, that requires an extern ultrasound.

“We sent the clear message, to the legislators and Governor McDonnell, that we will not accept these laws now, next year, or ever,” said Speak Loud with Silence, which organized the series of demonstrations, in a statement after the march. “If they continue this assault on women’s rights, they will be met with an even stronger, wiser and more organized force.”

The demonstration was met by a show of force by Capitol and Virginia State Police, many in riot gear.

Cops moved in to try to push the protesters off the Capitol steps. About 40 sat down, refusing to leave, and 30 were arrested. They were detained in buses, with their hands cuffed behind their backs, for up to seven hours and denied food and water, according to Sarah Okolita, one of the organizers of Speak Loud with Silence.

“The demonstration was largely successful,” Okolita told the *Militant*. “However, the treatment of the women who were arrested was unnecessary and outrageous.”

“The bills we have pushed back were all tabled until next year,” she added. “So we are looking forward to an ongoing fight.”

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**Campaign to win long-term readers enters final stretch**

**BY LOUIS MARTIN**

Members of the communist movement and other supporters of the *Militant* are organizing for the final stretch of the two-week *Militant* renewal campaign. More than two-thirds into the international effort to increase the long-term readership of the *Militant*, 394 readers have renewed their subscriptions or signed up for subscriptions of six months or longer—79 percent of our overall goal of 500.

Meanwhile, four more areas—Chicago, London, Montreal and Seattle—have increased their quotas.

“Members of the Socialist Workers Party,” writes Mary Martin from Seattle, “gained seven renewal or new long-term subscriptions over the weekend in Seattle, Longview and Vancouver, Wash.”

In Longview, where members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union won an eight-month battle against the attempt by the company EGT to keep the grain terminal, Longshore members and supporters bought three one-year subscriptions and two three-month renewals.

These subscribers also picked up two copies of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs, one copy of *Malcolm X: Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, and one copy of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. The first two books are among five on special discount with a subscription. (See ad below.)

“It’s been a tough year for labor, but we are still standing tall,” said Alison Beam, a member of ILWU Local 21 in Longview. “What we have been through here shows you can’t run over Joe Worker.”

Beam renewed her subscription, she said, because “I really appreciate the Militant’s content and that it prints the facts.” She also picked up a copy of *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution*, a new book by Pathfinder Press, noting she had been following the case of the Cuban Five and other articles on Cuba in the *Militant*.

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The Militant March 19, 2012

**Gov’t snubs revolutionary’s request to visit sick brother**

**BY LOUIS MARTIN**

March 9—In a characteristically vindictive move, the Barack Obama administration and a federal court have so far refused to answer a Feb. 24 request by René González for permission to visit Cuba for two weeks to see his terminally ill brother Roberto.

González is one of five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries, who also include Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and Gerardo Hernández. The Cuban Five, as they are commonly referred to, were arrested in 1998 and convicted in 2001 on trumped-up charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder.

Before their arrests, the revolutionaries were gathering intelligence for the Cuban government on activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups in South Florida. These outfits have a long record of carrying out deadly attacks against Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution, including on U.S. soil, with the knowledge, if not complicity, of Washington.

The frame-up and treatment of the five is part and parcel of decades of unending hostility flowing from the U.S. rulers’ deep class hatred for Cuba’s socialist revolution and their determination to punish the island’s working people, who have defended their sovereignty and the political power they wrested from the capitalist exploiters following the 1959 overthrow of the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista.

René González finished his prison term Oct. 7 but has been forced to serve a three-year supervised release in the U.S. The other four are still in jail with sentences ranging from 17 years and nine months to, in the case of Hernández, double life plus 15 years. They are commonly referred to, were arrested in 1998 and convicted in 2001 on trumped-up charges that included conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Hernández, conspiracy to commit murder.

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Several trucking companies agreed "to boost the pay per load from $40 to $44 a trip; to compensate drivers stuck in line more than an hour; and to pay for drivers stuck in line for more than four months against moves to cut the workday to five hours, in essence a 40 percent pay cut."

"We have shown the power of collective action to defend the government under the non-Communist affidavit clause of the Taft-Hartley Act."

"I worked here for 13 years," Jose Ahmed was one of 100 port truck drivers on the picket line.
Women soldiers march in Burkina Faso, Aug. 29, 1985. The 1983-87 revolution encouraged organization, mobilization and education of country’s peasants, workers, women and youth.

By Thomas Sankara

[Op]e single night placed women at the heart of the people’s liberation and at the center of national solidarity. The dawn that followed the night of Aug. 4, 1983, brought liberty with it, calling on the women of Burkina Faso to mobilize, organize, and unify all the active forces of the nation, particularly women.

The Political Orientation Speech had this to say specifically in regard to wom- en: “They will be involved in all the battles we will have to wage against the various shackles of neocolonial society in order to build a new society. They will be involved—at all levels in conceiving projects, making decisions, and implement- ing them—in organizing the life of the nation as a whole. The final goal of this great undertaking is to build a free and prosperous society in which women will be equal to men in all spheres.”

There can be no clearer way to con- ceive of and explain the question of women and the liberation struggle ahead of us. “The genuine emancipation of women is one that entraps responsi- bilities to women, that involves them in productive activity and in the differ- ent fights the people face. The genu- ine emancipation of women is one that compels men to give their respect and consideration.”

What is clearly indicated here, comes from the people themselves, is that the struggle to liberate women is above all your struggle to deepen our democratic and popular revolution, a revolution that grants you from now on to the right to speak and act in building a society of justice and equality, in which men and women have the same rights and responsibilities. The democratic and popular revolution has created the conditions for such a fight. It now falls to you to act with the greatest sense of responsibility in breaking through all the chains and shackles that enslave women in backward societies like ours and to assume your share of the responsibilities in the political fight to build a new society at the service of Africa and at the service of all hu- manity.

In the very first hours of the demo- cratic and popular revolution we said, “Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted, it is conquered. It is for wom- en themselves to put forward their de- mands and mobilize to win them.” In this way, our revolution has not only laid out the goal to be attained in the struggle for women’s liberation but has also indi- cated the road to follow and the methods to use, as well as the main protagonists of this battle.

We have now been working together, men and women, for four years in order to achieve success and come closer to our final goal. We should be conscious of the battles that have been waged, the successes that have been achieved, the setbacks that have been suffered, and the difficulties that have been encountered.

This will aid us in further preparing and leading future struggles.

What has worked the democratic and popular revolution accomplished, with respect to women’s emancipation? What are the strong points, the weak points?

One of the main gains of our revolu- tion in the struggle for women’s eman- cipation has been, without doubt, the establishment of the Women’s Union of Burkina [UFB]. The creation of this organization constituted a major gain because it has given the women of our country a framework and sound tools for waging a successful fight. The cre- ation of the UFB represents a big victory because it makes possible mobilizing all women militants around well-defined and just goals in the fight for liberation, under the leadership of the National Council of the Revolution.

The UFB is the organization of mili- tant and serious women who are de- termined to work for change, to fight for victory, to fall down repeatedly, but to get back on their feet each time and go forward without retreating. This is the new consciousness that has taken root among the women of our country and we should all be proud of it. Comrade mili- tant, the Women’s Union of Burkina is your combat organization. It’s up to you to lead her forward so its blade will cut more deeply, bringing you more and more victories.

The different initiatives for women’s emancipation that the government has been able to take over a little more than three years are certainly insufficient. But they have made it possible to take steps towards the point where our country can today present itself as being in the vanguard of the battle to liberate women…

The fight of the August revolution has undoubtedly done much for the eman- cipation of women, this is still far from adequate. Much remains for us to do. To better appreciate what remains to be done, we must be more aware of the difficulties still to be overcome. There are many obstacles and difficulties. At the root of the latter lies the problem of literacy and low political conscious- ness—both of which are intensified by the inordinate influence that reactionary forces in backward societies like ours. We must work with perseverance to overcome these two main obstacles.

Sankara: ‘Women’s emancipation must be conquered’
Oppose rulers’ assault on workers rights

Attorney General Eric Holder’s assertion of the “constitutionality” of executive-ordered assassinations...
Locked-out workers in UK fight ‘hand-picked’ layoffs

By Catharina Tirsén and Pete Cliffeord

LIVERPOOL, England—Some 150 workers at Mayr-Melnhof Packaging here, organized by the Unite union, have been locked out since Feb. 18. They have maintained a daily picket line from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. This is the first lockout in the U.K. printing industry since 1958.

Workers had begun a series of short strike actions on Feb. 10 after Mayr-Melnhof, an Austrian-owned company that produces food packaging, announced it was laying off 49 workers.

“We are unhappy with the redundancy payments, which are less than last time, and the selection process,” said Phil Morgan, a Unite official, in a Feb. 29 phone interview from Berlin where he was drumming up support from workers at the company’s factories in Germany and Austria.

“Fourteen of us went down to the other side of the factory,” in the U.K., at Deeside in Wales,” Dave Povey told the Militant. “We were well treated by the local papers and workers there are now coming over to back us up. They fear having similar conditions posed on them.” The union at the Deeside plant donated £900 ($1,425) to the locked-out workers.

The workers are especially angry at the attempt by the company to handpick those they want to lay off.

“The company designed a method of selection to get rid of outspoken people,” said locked-out worker Alan Moss.

“Get points for different things, different skills etc. You get one point for each 10 years you have worked in the plant, 10 points for being put on the ‘Recommendation board,’ where you get handpicked by managers because you did something ‘special’ for the company,” said John Scully, who has worked in the Liverpool plant for 40 years.

“I have never seen the kind of solidarity among us as I see here today,” he said.

Support messages for the locked-out workers can be sent to phil.morgan@unitetheunion.org.

UK protest counters anti-Muslim demonstrations

BY PETE CLIFFORD

HYDE, England—Several hundred people, mainly youth of Bangladeshi origin, mobilized Feb. 25 outside the Hyde Jamia Masjid Islamic Center here to counter nearby demonstrations of rightists from the English Defence League and British National Party.

The EDL and its allies are trying to foment racial divisions following a Feb. 4 incident in this town of Greater Manchester in which two Caucasian teenagers were allegedly beaten and robbed by eight South Asian youth.

One of the victims, Daniel Stringer-Prince, suffered a fractured skull and two fractured eye sockets. His mother, Cheryl Stringer, has accused the banned EDL rally. “It’s got nothing to do with us whatsoever,” she told the Manchester Evening News Feb. 20. “We don’t want this march to go ahead. … I certainly don’t want Daniel’s name dragged into something we don’t agree with.”

One 21-year-old South Asian man has been charged with assault. The police are treating the incident as a so-called hate crime.

Some 50 people attended the BNP action against “anti-English race attacks.” The EDL march in the afternoon drew about 600 people, many from out of town, according to the BBC. The rightist EDL, which campaigns against so-called Muslim extremism, had originally planned to march past the mosque.

The two rightist demonstrations were preceded by a racist attack in nearby Rochdale on Feb. 23. The BBC reports that as many as 200 people smashed the windows of Tasty Bites, an Indian-owned fast-food restaurant, and harassed others, some shouting support for the EDL. According to the media, the restaurant was a meeting location for young girls and one of 11 defendants on trial for child sex offenses that allegedly took place in the area in 2008-2009.

In the streets around the Hyde mosque, counterprotesters maintained a presence for five hours to keep away small groups of EDL members.

“I am disappointed with the police and media, they allowed this to become a racial issue,” Abdul Ahad, a council (municipal) worker, told the Militant.

“We wanted to show strength and unity,” said Saeed Miah, a leader of the Bangladesh Welfare Association. His organization plans to hold a march in the coming weeks.

Bangla TV News covered the counterdemonstration, which got less media publicity than the rightists’ actions.

“What working people need is unity and resistance to the employers and their government, not this divide and rule scapegoating,” Andrés Mendoza, Communist League candidate for Gorson North in the May 4 Manchester Council elections, told Bangla TV.

Press reports reveal extensive spying by NYPD

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The New York Police Department has for years been spyng on Muslims on campuses, mosques and in their communities. It has been building databases tracking their lives, according to secret police documents recently released by The Associated Press.

New York City police have been conducting surveillance and harassing Muslims throughout the state, in New Jersey and beyond. In fact NYPD agents function in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia as part of police intelligence and interrogation units. Detectives have conducted interrogations in Afghanisthan, Egypt, Yemen, and Pakistan.

The AP stories have been met with a storm of protest from a number of government officials and big business press, underscoring the fact that the question is of great concern for U.S. rulers, going well beyond New York.

“Eternal vigilance in the war against radical Islam in a price that even pacifist New Yorkers must pay for the right not to get blown up at Macy’s,” Miichael Walsh wrote in the Feb. 19 New York Post. “And if that offendts the AP, too bad.”

The cops’ “cyber intelligence unit” monitored daily websites, blogs and meetings of Muslim Student Associations on campuses. This unit also placed informants in groups at six City University of New York campuses and St. John’s University. They also spied at Columbia and New York University.

In one case in April 2008 an undercover cop accompanied 18 Muslim students from the City College of New York on a whitewater rafting trip. The officer recorded students’ names for police files and how many times they prayed.

“I wasn’t surprised this police spying was happening on our community as news stuff was going on, but surprised it was happening on campus,” Aber Kawan, a member of the Muslim Student Association at City College, told the Militant in a phone interview.

Another intelligence report from January 2009 described a trip by NYPD officers to Buffalo where they met with a top Erie County Sheriff’s Department official. They agreed “to develop assets jointly in the Buffalo area, to act as listening posts within the ethnic Somali community,” the report said, including spying on professors and students.

The cops also spied on Muslim Student Associations across New York state and in New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has acknowledged the campus surveillance on the pretext that some individuals convicted on “terrorism” charges had been involved in Muslim student groups.

Police spying on student groups is part of a larger surveillance operation targeting Muslim neighborhoods, new details of which have become public over the past several months. “The NYPD built databases showing where Muslims lived, worked, shopped and prayed,” reported AP. “Plainclothes officers known as rakers侦查者, have responded with political frame-ups.”

Describes the decades-long covert counterintelligence program against socialists and activists in the Black and anti-Vietnam War movements.

Cointelpro: The FBI’s Secret War on Political Freedom

By Nelson Blackstock

Workers locked out by Mayr-Melnhof Packaging picket factory gates in Liverpool, England, March 1. From left, James Hull, Neil Parry (with sign), and Tony Phillipps.
‘Deacons’ prevented violence against Black struggle in ’60s
Home of former leader’s family targeted in arson attack

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The family of Robert Hicks, who was a leader of the proletarian Black rights movement that defeated a racist terror campaign and ended Jim Crow segregation in the eastern Louisiana town of Bogalusa, was the target of an arson attack on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Hicks, who died in 2010 at the age of 81, played a leading role in the founding of the Bogalusa chapter of Deacons for Defense; the largest Black armed self-defense organization during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The Deacons organized desegregation battles in parts of the South and defended working people fighting for Black rights, including during the famous 1966 “March Against Fear” from Memphis, Tenn., to Jackson, Miss.

Hicks’ daughter and widow, Barbara Hicks Collins, 65, and Valeria Hicks, 82, awoke at 3 a.m. Jan. 16 to a loud pounding on the door. When Barbara got to the door her car was on fire.

“They said the Klan was going to come to our house if we didn’t turn the前十iman onto us. They were young men. And this was not long after the Klansmen killed civil rights workers in Mississippi,” said Barbara Hicks. In June of 1964 Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney were arrested in Philadelphia, Miss., while there to register Black voters. They were turned over to the Klansmen by the police after dark and murdered.

“My mother said ‘No. They’re going to stay here,’” said Barbara Hicks.

“They made some phone calls. Soon many men armed with shotguns and rifles filed into the house. A few weeks later, Hicks arranged for leaders of the Deacons in Jonesboro to come to Bogalusa and help them establish a chapter there. His home became an organizing center.

“My husband could never go out without someone protecting him. They would carry him to work and pick him up at the end of the day. There was always someone in the house,” said Vale- ria Hicks. “It was the only form of protection we had. At one point they tried to take the guns away from us, but they couldn’t. We had the right to bear arms, we had the right to protect ourselves. But it was so unusual for Black men to stand up for their rights.”

Preventing Klan violence

A group after a series of Klansmen had badly beaten Yates, Valeria Hicks recounts how she helped prevent further assaults.

“Several white men had surrounded his car and they wouldn’t let him get out. He was across the street from my home, so I took my pistol and brought him on the door,” said Mrs. Hicks. “Once he got to my property they wouldn’t dare touch him.”

Later that night the Klansmen returned and fired a shot at the Hicks’ home. Seven armed Deacons inside opened fire on the carload of Klansmen.

“The Deacons will help the civil rights movement win further victories, by reducing the terror which helps prevent Negroes from winning new rights and exercising rights already won on paper,” the June 21, 1965, Militant said.

“Everyone who is for civil rights and Negro equality should give the Deacons every support and encouragement, and should defend their right to exist and grow, free from gov- ernment harassment.”

“Our whole world changed when we got in the movement,” said Charles Hicks, Robert Hicks’ son and a labor and civil rights activist and retired li- brarian, in a Feb. 15 interview with the Militant near his home in Washington, D.C. “We didn’t sleep in beds, we slept on the floor. No pajamas, we slept in our clothes. We began to be a marked fam- ily, others didn’t want to associate with us. The Klan was powerful.”

Illinois rally protests cop killing of Black youth

CALUMET CITY, Ill.—Some 100 people marched from the police station to City Hall here Feb. 25 to protest the killing of Stephon Watts, a 15-year-old Black youth, by local cops. “We are 100 percent in support of the family until we get justice,” said Samuel Anderson (with microphone), president of the Chicago-area local of the American Postal Workers Union. Other speakers included David Lowery, president of the Southside NAACP, and pastor Lance Davis. The postal workers’ local passed a resolution support- ing the fight after a member brought it to the union’s attention. Stephon had Aspergers syndrome, a form of autism. His family said that police had been called to the home many times over the years, but this time they used deadly force, shooting the boy twice in front of his father. Cops claim Stephon lunged at them with a knife. Family members say Stephon was holding a butter knife. More than 700 turned out for his funeral Feb. 19.

—ALYSON KENNEDY

The Bogalusa Deacons and the Civic and Voters League launched a successful boycott of Bogalusa’s segregated businesses and Hicks led almost daily protests at them.

“Black people were loading up in vans and buses and going to Covington and New Orleans to do their shopping,” said Charles Hicks, who was expelled from Southern University in Baton Rouge as part of the Louisiana state government’s pressure to end the boycott. “The town is 30 percent African-American, if 22 percent aren’t shopping there that has an impact. By the time the movement was over, Columbia, the main street, was dead. All the businesses had closed.”

The movement in Bogalusa had a seven-point program and forced the city to agree to its demands by the end of 1965. This included ending discrimination in public and private employment and municipal licensing; equal educational opportunities and desegregated schools; desegregation of public accommodations and facilities; sewers, paved roads, and street light- ing in the Black community; enforced housing coves; inclusion of Black lead- ers in city and parish government; and industrial and development planning boards; removal from city ordinances of unfair laws; and hiring Black city policemen.

But it took years of further struggle to make real progress along these lines—a process that Robert Hicks remained at the center of.

The example of the Deacons spread to other areas. Some 17 official chapters were set up in the South and many oth- ers followed the example.

“Our once community had the Dea- cons, well you couldn’t just go in there,” Charles Hicks said. “They knew who we were in and out. So the Klan couldn’t go in. So Black men began to form their own self-protection. That began to hap- pen throughout the South.”

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