

SPECIAL REPORT

The U.S. Labor Party Mobilization for Debt Moratorium

NEW YORK, March 27 (IPS) — The following report was prepared by the U.S. Labor Party's national operations staff here earlier this week.

Since the U.S. Labor Party began the mobilization on behalf of debt moratorium enactment this month, sales of *New Solidarity*, the newspaper of the USLP, have increased 20 per cent throughout the continent and will reach very near 45,000 this week. From well-tested surveys we know that direct contact with *New Solidarity* can be estimated at levels of ten times direct sales, or 450,000, and the multiplier effect of exposure to working-class families and work-places is now well over three million.

From this mass readership we have estimates of regular readers making calls to federal, state and local legislators on behalf of debt moratorium legislation of a rate of between 2,000 and 3,000 daily. Our estimates are based on field reports where from 50-70 per cent of the readership is pledging to make such calls. During the peak of our last continental mobilization in the December-early January period, when NATO was carrying out its Hilex-75 nuclear war threat, our national center was monitoring definite calls at 2,000 daily.

The U.S. Labor Party last week issued 25,000 copies of its Emergency Employment Act proposal to be distributed through its more than fifty branch offices in the U.S., and through the affiliated North American Labor Party offices in Canada. Sales to date of 3,968 copies of the EEA follow the sale of over 50,000 copies of the EEA and the proposal for the International Development Bank (IDB) in booklet form, and over 30,000 of the latter in *New Solidarity*. Never before in history have such levels of programmatic literature circulated throughout the North American working class.

Early field response from the mobilization shows the following critical patterns: wide-spread support for debt moratorium throughout the black and hispanic working classes with explicit action being taken by a number of caucuses, NAACP chapters, and neighborhood — and church-related groups and individuals; strong support among particularly municipal and construction sectors throughout the northeast; unprecedented levels of *New Solidarity* sales in textile mill-towns around Charlotte, North Carolina; massive sup-

port in steel and auto workers in the Midwest, especially among the recently unemployed; rapid spread of support in the Seattle-Everett industrial belt of primarily skilled aerospace workers; and similar support in the Bay area of San Francisco, including municipal workers.

In the Northwest the most effective combination of industrial workers, pro-development industrialists and municipal workers so far achieved has forced hearings on the EEA in the Washington state legislature. The bill failed to get committee endorsement by only 5-4 vote despite bi-partisan support including the Republican minority leader, the minority whip and the Democratic Committee chairman. A motion to table was also defeated so the legislation can now be brought to the floor through individual member action. A petition signed by 3,000 workers in Vancouver, British Columbia endorsed debt moratorium and calls for a debate between Labor Party representatives and the Canadian provincial finance minister. In the Bay area calls are being generated at a rate of over 100 daily to support the debt moratorium initiatives of Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) and Assemblyman Ken Meade (D-Oakland).

The result of this continental support is that in response to Rep. Badillo's (D-NY) public statement of March 8 on the need to draft debt moratorium legislation, and Rep. Dellums' similar statement of March 13, New Democratic Coalition Chairman Bernard Sorokin said, "On the face of it, we would probably support debt moratorium. Undoubtedly a number of our people are involved in your debt moratorium proposals in New York and California." Rep. Don Fraser (D-Minn), Chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) stated that he "would be very sympathetic to anything New Yorkers come up with, including debt moratorium." Cong. Badillo has read into the Congressional Record the article by former Democratic gubernatorial candidate in New York Howard Samuels, in which he calls for debt moratorium and support for Badillo's bankruptcy legislation.

Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) has told USLP representatives that he supports debt moratorium and would like to discuss joint work around it. Connecticut State Senator Wilber Smith (D-Hartford), who has introduced the debt moratorium proposal in Connecticut, is also chairman of the state NAACP.