Labor/Community Output Outpu

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3



March 1999

THE NEW 'NEW DEAL'

By Mike Rhodes

On 27 January, Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation AFL-CIO, addressed, addressed the delegates of the Central Labor Council in Fresno – a group energized by their recent victories. At the meeting, the first held since Gray Davis took office, Pulaski articulated organized labor's agenda for this post election period. It is called, 'Rebuilding Prosperity'.

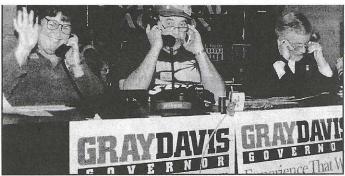
With the help of organized labor, the Democratic Party now controls the three branches of California government for the first time since 1982. Organized California labor now believes that the two key issues facing legislative leaders are the rebuilding of prosperity for working families, and correcting the legacy of sixteen years of anti-worker government.

- The average family works 1.5 more days each week than in the 1970's. But hard work is not bringing home bigger paychecks. Real wages are lower than in 1979.
- California ranks fifth in the nation in the gap between rich and poor. The gap is growing. Good paying jobs with a future are disappearing from communities, replaced by low pay, part time and temporary jobs in an underground economy.
- Since 1980 California's poverty rate has increased 63%. Only six states have a greater share of their populations living in poverty.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE Fresno Unified Explores the Edison Project 3 SEIU Union Locals Merge in Valley 4 Medicare For All 5 March Labor/Community Events 5 FASTA Subs Say Union Yes! 6 AFL-CIO Call Nationwide Boycott. 10

With the newly elected, labor supported, officials now in office, it is time to put the heat on for much needed changes. In 1999 organized labor will turn it's attention to rebuilding California's economic infrastructure. Workforce preparedness and giving working families hope for the future are top priorities. In Fresno and the Central Valley, elected officials will be reminded of how hard organized labor worked to get them into office. We will call on them to actively implement an era of prosperity for working people as well as for the corporate elite.

(continued on p.7)



Working the phones to elect Gray Davis: Local 535 Vice President Janet Atkins. Executive Director David Kramer, President Bruce Peaslee (I-r).

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY LUNCHEON



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom will host a 'Celebration of Labor Women' on Saturday, March 13th, from 11:30 until 1:00 pm, at Arte Americas, located at 1630 Van Ness in Downtown Fresno.

Speakers will be Shirley Kirsten, organizer of the new Substitute Teachers' union at FUSD,

and Elizabeth Anderson, organizer of the Transportation Department of the Fresno Bee. A buffet (\$7.00) will precede the speakers. For reservations call 229–9807 or 441–7612.

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of Labor/Community Alliance is threefold: (1) to strengthen and unite the labor movement and the progressive community in the Central San Joaquin Valley through information sharing, (2) to promote and defend the rights of local working people, and (3) to help organize the unorganized. This publication is printed monthly and includes a calendar of events.

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LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Organized labor is the only hope we have to start a grass roots demand that will remove two dreadful U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

The first dreadful decision was rendered in 1896 or '97. It made corporations individuals. It was a product of the 13th and 14th Amendments to the constitution that were passed to make freed slaves voters and citizens after the Civil War. Of course, at the same time, the Supreme Court was making laws to support "Jim Crow" and made no decision to stop the lynchings of African Americans.

Like Frankensteins's 'monster', the Supreme Court's man-made individuals, aka Corporations, have no soul. The soulless monster is wrecking havoc not on a single community, as did Frankenstein's monster, but world wide. Most of the destruction is aimed at the working people of the world. The monster must be stopped!

An equally evil decision is more current. The Court ruled that money was 'Free Speech'. OK, it's 'Free Speech' for the rich, fine. Since 2 % of the people have 98% of this 'Free Speech', the time has come to give the American workers a lot more 'Free Speech' in *their* wallets. This is America. We believe in equality. More 'Free Speech' in workers pockets would it easier to make ends meet at home, but would also give *us* more equality, as well as clout! **By Valta Pointer**



This photo matted framed under non-glare glass, 32" by 40" \$250

Inspiration for home office school community group

One of George Elfie Ballis's most noted movement photographs. At peace march in San Francisco.

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Labor/Community Alliance Web Page http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Congress/1885

Here you will find:

- ➤ Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter
- Calendar of events in the Fresno organized labor and progressive community.
- ➤ Directory of Fresno-area labor and community groups
- ➤ Links to other sites and more E-mail Alert Network
- ➤ If you have an e-mail address you can receive:
- Updated weekly calendar. Find out about events not included in the newsletter calendar.
- Activist alerts! When a quick response about a community issue is called for you will be the first to know.
- ➤ Information about web sites useful to labor and community activists.

The e-mail alert network is a free service of the Labor/Community Alliance. If you are interested in subscribing, send a message to: <clr2@igc.apc.org>

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FRESNO UNIFIED EXPLORES THE EDISON PROJECT

SCHOOLS, INCORPORATED?

By Louise Drake

At the urging of administrators, a group of staff members from four FUSD elementary schools visited an Edison Project school in the Ravenswood School District in East Palo Alto. The Edison

Project is a for-profit company which currently runs 51 public schools in 12 states. The Project claims it can raise student achievement and standardized test scores in the FUSD. Under the Edison Project, these schools would join the growing ranks of alternatives to public education.

Teachers have been enticed by the Edison Project curriculum, their potential ability to enforce compliance of strict moral codes, school uniforms, longer school days and school years, not to mention Edison Project's promise of a computer in every student's home in the second year.

Edison schools in California receive large grants from the Fisher family foundation, and a \$25 million pledge by Don Fisher, the founder and chairman of The Gap clothing store (Ed. note: The guy who brought us sweatshops.) and a top Republican party funder. The grants provide for a one year start-up plan which provides a stipend for intensive teacher training, and materials needed to begin the first year. As for funding for years beyond the first, the sites will have to depend on the usual state and federal monies (our tax dollars).

The staff attendees did some investigation on the Internet. When Edison representatives came to meet with them, the reps were bombarded with numerous questions and concerns. Can they really achieve the promised results? As they have only been in the business of running schools

since 1996, the Edison Project does not provide strong evidence of its claims.

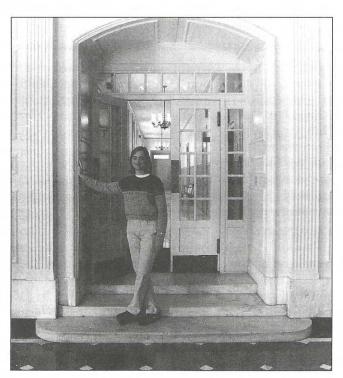
Many teachers wondered if what the Edison Project proposes to do couldn't be done by schools under public management, including implementation of their touted curriculum called 'Success for All'.

Edison Project teachers would not enjoy the benefits of the current contract with Fresno Unified, and *all* employees *and* students would have to reapply each year to stay in the program.

Teachers had enough concerns to warrant a memo from FUSD administrator Carlos Encinas who declared a halt to continued exploration and discussion of the Edison Project by FUSD staff.

There remains, however, great dissatisfaction with the low academic achievement of our students, and schools are continuing to explore programs to enhance the education provided by Fresno Unified. Some educators are intrigued with Edison's program and promises and the Edison Project may yet be proposed as a solution.

People concerned about education, the encroachment of corporations into our lives, labor conditions for those working in the school system, and about profits being made by their tax dollars, would be wise to monitor developments such as the Edison Project. Its founder, Chris Whittle, told venture capitalists to "compare the Edison Project to Home Depot, McDonald's or Wal-Mart." Enough said?



Girl in front of classrooms at Samuel Phillips Hall at Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass, 1998.



Girl in front of public classroom building at H.B. Lawrence Elementary School, Holyoke, Mass.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCALS TO MERGE IN VALLEY

By Pam Whalen

SEIU 752, a Fresno-based local is in the process of merging with the state-wide SEIU local 535. Members will vote on the merger on February 25 and 26. This merger is part of a larger SEIU strategy to build power in what has historically been a politically conservative and low wage area of the state. SEIU has already targeted the San Joaquin Valley for an aggressive organizing effort, with 3 successful union elections in less than a year.

The merger will bring together workers at several large public entities: Fresno County, Fresno Unified School District, and Madera County. SEIU hopes to mobilize these workers to add members through internal organizing and agency shop campaigns. The goal is to elect progressive pro-worker candidates in the local, statewide, and federal levels.

Many of the local 752 members are very excited about the potential for increased worker power that this merger represents. "I think it's the right time to merge with 535", said Gene Garcia, a Fresno County Mental Health

Specialist. "When we join with 535, we'll gain more respect. By merging the two unions, the new union will represent everyone in my building from the janitor to the licensed clinicians. It's a very powerful move", he added.

Valley and we need to be a part of that. With the merger, Fresno County workers with 752 might get a more powerful voice within the county. To be heard, to provide real good services to the public, you have to get administration



SEIU 752 members David Chavez, Albert Garcia, Gene Garcia, Richard Solis and Bob Solis in MLK march last month.

Bob Solis, a nurse with Fresno County, agrees, "535 has been spear-heading a growth within the Central

to listen. And with the combined population of union members, administration will listen".

MEDICARE FOR ALL

By Ray Ensher

Over the past few years, we have witnessed the steady rise of the ranks of the uninsured; the erosion of basic quality health care; the failure of managed care to curb health costs, and a tremendous increase in health care reform legislation. We have sadly watched the "dumping" of thousands of seniors from Medicare managed care plans, and daily media coverage of problems within our health care system. We are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with, and distrustful of, the current health care delivery system. Managed care companies and forprofit health care entities have spent billions of patient premium dollars on

administrative costs and enormous salaries for their CEO's and executives. A recent report revealed that the health care industry, last year, spent \$60 million on lobbying efforts to defeat health care reform legislation. Finally, the winds are blowing in favor of a better, more equitable, comprehensive and universal system of health care for our nation.

America's health success story is under attack as never before. A national bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare has been appointed to make recommendations to overhaul Medicare. In response to the growing threats to Medicare, Health Access and other consumer concerned groups have organized the National Campaign to Protect, Improve and Expand Medicare, also known as 'Medicare for All'. They are promoting

a petition drive to influence the recommendations of the national Commission, which, they feel, is moving in the wrong direction. Here are some thoughts to consider.

Medicare is a national insurance program based on contributions by workers and their employers, which guarantees that affordable coverage will be available when they and their families become eligible. Medicare improves the health and life expectancy of 39 million seniors and persons with disabilities, and provides health care to the hardest to care for populations. It is the most efficient insurance program in the nation, with only 2.1% overhead. Medicare could, and should, be our best national medical insurance plan, with a full package of modern, cost effective benefits and services.

(continued on p. 9)

Calendar of Events MARCH 1999



Sunday, February 28 6:00 PM

An evening with Phillip Wheaton & Amado Avendano Figueroa. International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 653, 544 W. Olive. Call 438-1805 or 278-2855. Check out the back page for details.

Monday, March 1 5:30 PM

Empty Bowls fundraiser at Pardini's restaurant. This project promotes educational awareness and contributes to ending hunger locally. Contact Ray at 439-8140.

Saturday, March 6 Noon

A national day of protest against The Gap for its abuse of garment workers in Saipan, a US territory. Join us for leafleting the store at Fashion Fair mall. FYI, The Gap is opening a major distribution site here in Fresno. No doubt they will hear more from all of us! Call Mike at 226-0477.

Saturday, March 6 6:30 PM

A World of Choices benefit for Planned Parenthood at Temple Beth Israel, 6622 N. Maroa in Fresno.

Saturday, March 6

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Conference in Berkeley. This is a planning meeting for the "Millions for Mumia" mass demonstration to be held in San Francisco on April 24. Local organizing is under way. Call (415) 821-0456.

Tuesday, March 9

Potluck at 6:30, Program at 7:30

This 2nd Tuesday: A slide show, 'Saving Sierra Forests', will be presented by Bob Brister who is with the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N Van Ness Ave.

Saturday, March 13

Corky Gonzalez will speak at Arte Americas. Rodolfo Gonzalez was one of the first Chicano activists to organize the community during the Chicano Movement of the 60's and 70's. He was the founder of the Chicano organization Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado. He was one of the main organizers of the first Chicano Youth Conference. Gonzalez continues organizing the Chicano community because the injustices continue. Call 225-6828.

Saturday, March 13

Monthly Board Meeting of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. All are Welcome! Call 266-2559.

Saturday, March 13 11:30-1:00 PM

International Women's Day luncheon sponsored by WILPF. Check out the front page for more information.

Monday, March 15

Deadline for submission of information for the April issue of the Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter.

Tuesday, March 16 7:00 PM

Health Care for All meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 855-2438.

Thursday, March 18 7:30 PM

Death Penalty Focus meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, Call 323-4871.

Saturday & Sunday, March 20-21

Peace Centers' Conference will be held in Sacramento. This will be a two day event. Call the Fresno Center for Nonviolence at 237-3225 or Richard Stone at 266-2559.

Wednesday, March 24 6 PM

Central Labor Council meeting at the UFCW office, 3485 W. Shaw. Call 275-1151.

Friday, March 26 Noon

The Coalition Of Organized Labor (COOL) meeting. For more information call 275-1129.

Friday, March 26 5:00 PM

Street Heat radio program on KFCF 88.1 FM. This months' show will feature information about the UFW and events honoring Cesar Chavez. Guests will include Carolina DeSoto, Jessie De La Cruz, and Jorge Rivera.

Monday, March 29 6:30 PM

Labor/Community Alliance & Jobs with Justice monthly meeting at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 226-0477.



April 9 & 10

1999 Celebration to honor the life of Cesar Chavez. Planning has started but subcommittee members are in great demand. "Many hands make light work" so it is said, and this gala multi-event



involves many tasks. Call Ray at 439-8140 for information about the planned events, and don't forget to ask how you can help!

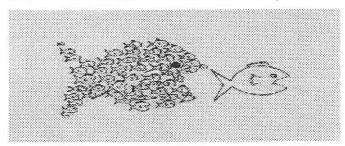
GOLDEN VALLEY HEALTH CARE WORKERS VOTE FOR UNION

On February 18, 1999 the workers at the Golden Valley Health Clinic voted to be represented by Service Employees Union Local 535. The vote was 119 for the union and 32 against.

Over 150 workers are involved at 11 mostly rural sites in Merced and Stanislaus counties. Included are direct patient care, clerical, and maintenance staff.

The union drive resulted after growing dissatisfaction over low wages, dangerous working conditions, and benefit take-aways.

This election victory represents a first for healthcare workers in the private sector in the Merced/Stanislaus area and is pivotal in addressing the issue of low wages for skilled healthcare workers in the Central Valley.



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- ☐ Yes! Put me on the "Volunteers for Justice/ Emergency Response Network" contact list. Alert me when there's a picket line, street action, phone bank, etc. for labor rights and social justice.

Name Union/Organization_____ Address State Zip Work Phone: Home E-Mail Fax Mail this form to:

Labor/Community Alliance P.O. Box 5077, Fresno, CA 93755 Call 226-2078 for more information.

LANDSLIDE VICTORY: SUBS SAY UNION YES!

By Pam Whalen

Substitute teachers at the Fresno Unified School District voted overwhelmingly last month to be represented by FASTA/SEIU Local 535. The vote was 6 to 1 in favor of the union: 294 to 49.

The ballots were counted by the Public Employment

Relations Board. The count was the culmination of a 1 ½ year effort to organize sub-stitute teachers at FUSD.

"This is a landmark event in the history of Fresno", said FASTA President Shirley Kirsten. "We've managed to do



Shirley Kirsten

the impossible. While we still have a great challenge ahead of us, this is the beginning of a new era of respect and advocacy for substitute teachers", said Kirsten.

The substitute teachers are currently drafting the proposal for their first contract and hope to begin bargaining in March.



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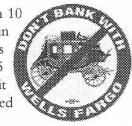
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WELLS FARGO BANK AND CF&I STEEL TARGETED BY AFL-CIO FOR NATIONWIDE BOYCOTT

CF&I Steel of Pueblo, Colo., Oregon Steel Mills, Inc., of Portland, and Wells Fargo Bank of San Francisco have all been added to the AFL-CIO's nationwide boycott list as the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) continues to seek a fair, new contract for the 1,100 hourly employees it represents at CF&I. The three corporations were added to the list at the request of the USWA.

CF&I, which does business as Rocky Mountain Steel Mills, brought in strikebreakers when the USWA struck its Pueblo mill, last Oct. 3. CF&I refused the union's unconditional offer to return to work on Dec. 30, and continues to operate with strikebreakers. Oregon Steel is CF&I's parent company.

Wells Fargo, which operates in 10 states in the West, is the lead bank in a consortium of banks that is providing Oregon Steel with a \$125 million dollar revolving line of credit which, the USWA asserts, has helped prolong the dispute.



The union also points out that, since October, Wells Fargo has extended additional credit to Oregon Steel and twice has amended its credit agreement with the company to keep it from defaulting on loan agreements.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has issued a complaint against CF&I Steel charging it with more than 100 illegal labor practices. The NLRB also found that the USWA walkout was a strike against unfair labor practices. If upheld, that finding entitles the strikers to return to their jobs with full back pay from December 30.

The NLRB, meanwhile, has dismissed charges by the company against the union. The company has appealed, however, and has filed new allegations against the union.

In addition to CF&I in Pueblo, Oregon Steel also operates plants in Portland, Napa, Ca., and Camrose, Alta. in Canada. The plants' products include railroad rails, seamless pipe, steel plate for railroad cars, ships and other heavy equipment, and large welded pipe for oil and gas pipelines.

Wells Fargo operates more than 950 traditional bank branches, 520 in-store branches, 370 banking centers and 25 business centers in the following states: California, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington.

Contact Al Madrigal, Jr. of the United Steelworkers of America at (559) 264-5342 for more information.

THE NEW 'NEW DEAL', cont. from page 1

Pulaski unveiled a package of legislative goals aimed at benefiting the state's workers, both organized and unorganized.

Restoring overtime pay after eight (8) hours
Raising the minimum wage
Creating more living wage jobs
Protecting workers' right to organize
Increasing health and safety protections for workers
Providing health care for all
Improving public schools

Central Labor Councils throughout the state will be mobilizing union members and community activists to put pressure on their state legislators to support these pro-worker measures. Actions will be presented for your personal participation.

Organized labor will be working hard in the coming months to hold legislators accountable to working families in our state. You can count on being kept up to date on progress and action alerts in our future issues.



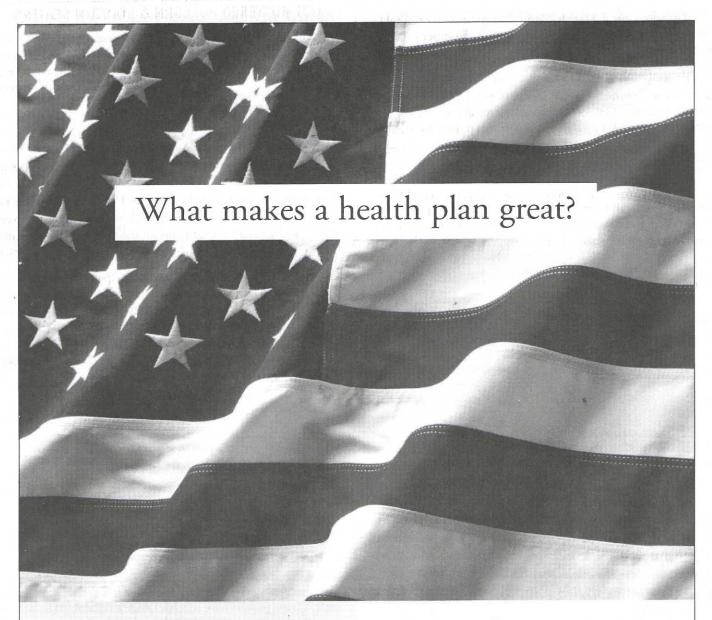
FARMWORKERS CALL FOR GALLO WINE BOYCOTT

ONE THIN DIME IN FIVE YEARS' TIME

The United Farm Workers won a union election at Gallo of SonomaVineyard on July 16, 1994, but still do not have a contract. Grape pickers have received only a 10 cent wage increase over the last five years and work under labor contractors with inferior working conditions.

Call Gallo Sales Company at 800/500-5534 to demand that Gallo of Sonoma Vineyard recognize the rights of their employees to have a union contract, and to tell them you won't buy Gallo wine. The UFW can send you flyers to hand out in front of your local market or liquor store. Contact UFW at 805/822-5571. Mail: United Farm Workers of America AFL-CIO, P.O. Box 62, La Paz, Keene, CA 93531.





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Health Net's HealthLine, a 24-hour telephone service that connects you to registered nurses for information and guidance on health questions. And WellRewards, the program that offers discounts of up to 50 percent on many health products and services. If you think a health plan should work as hard as you do, then join Health Net. To find

out more, just call 1-800-522-0088 or visit us at www.healthnet.com.



During a local Health Care Community Roundtable sponsored by Metro Ministry of Fresno, a number of consumers shared their experiences of living medically in need without insurance. I'll just mention Rose who suffers from diabetes and asthma. She and her husband had good insurance coverage when they were self employed but could not afford coverage after they closed their business. She is extremely anxious about coping with her health problems without insurance until she qualifies for Medicare. Rose wonders whether Medicare will even be there for her.

Health Access and 40 other endorsing national and California health care organizations believe the fundamental principle of the Medicare system must be protected and improved. America cannot solve its worsening health care crisis without a universal insurance plan. The best way to achieve such a plan is to begin expanding Medicare right now! Please join us as we call on the Commission, the Congress and the President to protect, improve and expand Medicare.

The national campaign is being pursued by local health care organizations including Health Care for All-Central Valley and the Metro Ministry Heal Care Roundtable. A speakers' bureau has been set up to inform groups about Medicare for All, and to promote community participation in the petition drive. To invite a speaker for your favorite group contact Ray Ensher (Fresno) at 439–8141 or Barbara Wauchope (Visalia) at 732–3910.



"The company cut my benefits...my health insurance is now UNSURE...ance."

HOT BUTTERED POPCORN & STADIUM SEATING!

A little known, under used feature of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence is its video lending library. For a \$5.00 annual subscription members can borrow videos, for 4 weeks, from our Peace and Justice collection.

Advisory Board member, Mary Hilpert, put together a catalogue for us in 1996. Some of the categories, with a sample of items, follows. These are just a few titles to peak your interest for challenging and engaging viewing not often found in your 'other' local video shops. For a 4 week borrowing, you and your organization could hold a video fundraiser! You could also simply replenish your spirit for the peaceful struggle.

PRISONER ISSUES

'Not in Catherine's Name; 'Dead Man Walking'

'Until Proven Innocent'

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES (Eco-Science/Psychology)

'A Sense of Place'; 'The Unfolding Story'; 'Who's Counting'
NUCLEAR ISSUES

Bound by the Wind'; 'The Cassini Project' 'Remembering the Bomb'

POLITICAL DECEPTION

'Deadly Deception'; 'Death in the West'

'The Panama Deception'

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

'Chicano!'; 'Rosie the Riveter', 'The Color of Fear'

'Peace Pilgrim'; 'Ghandi'; 'Diet for a New America'
FOREIGN POLICY

'Chiapas'; 'Pastors for Peace Caravans' 'Bosnia'; 'Russia' and 'Iraq' (Sanctions)

The <u>Center Report</u>, which Center supporters receive, is currently featuring a "pick of the month" video from our collection, with extended descriptions. Next month you will see it here, on our own page, in the LCA newsletter!

To check the catalogue, become a subscriber or to borrow videos, call Richard at 266-2559.



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Sunday, February 28 6 PM
CHIAPAS, HUMAN RIGHTS IN MEXICO, AND NAFTA
Phillip Wheaton & Amado Avendano Figueroa
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace
Workers Local 653,
544 W. Olive.

LET'S GET ORGANIZED

Are you tired of:

lousy wages;

x no benefits;

no respect on the job?

Call one of the following local union organizers to help you make the world a better place to work!

Central Labor Council of Fresno, Madera, Tulare & Kings Counties (559) 275-1151

Pam Whalen Yolanda Guerra Gerry Villero SEIU Local 535 Public Employees, Health Care, Social Services (559) 261-9312 Marc Scalzo
International Association of
Machinists & Aerospace Workers
Local 653
Auto Repair, Industrial, Retail
Consumer Electronics
(559) 264-2817

Doug Whipple Local 701 Carpenters (559) 268-3895

Kenneth McCormack International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 100 Electricians (559) 251-8241

Al Madrigal, Jr. United Steel workers of America Manufactioning (559) 264-5342 Jimmy Hammack Teamster Local 431 (559) 486-5410

Dave Otero Graphic Communications International Union Local 404 Printers (559) 237-4405

Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees Union Local 19 Restaurant Workers (559) 485-0601

United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1288 Retail Clerks, Wholesale & Poultry (559) 271-1288