

CALL TO A NATIONAL LABOR ASSEMBLY FOR PEACE

OCTOBER 24-25, 2003 in CHICAGO

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The undersigned trade unionists invite you to join us for a National Labor Assembly on the issues of peace, prosperity, security, democracy and justice. Its purpose will be to forge an ongoing labor coalition that will challenge the U.S. foreign policy of permanent war and its consequences for working families both here at home and abroad. The Assembly will be held in Chicago on October 24 (evening) and 25 (all day), 2003.

In the months preceding the invasion of Iraq, hundreds of local, state and national unions, central labor councils and other labor organizations took official positions opposing war on Iraq. This led to the founding, on January 11 in Chicago, of U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW). On February 27 the AFL-CIO Executive Council adopted its own resolution opposing Bush's unilateral and preemptive military action. By the time the invasion of Iraq was actually launched on March 20, labor organizations representing almost one-third of all organized workers in the U.S. were on record opposed to the war.

U.S. troops are now committed to an indeterminate occupation of that war-devastated country. All the important questions about Iraq's future remain under a cloud, including what role the Iraqi people will have in shaping their own future and whether Iraqi workers will enjoy internationally recognized labor rights, including the right to organize freely, to bargain collectively and to strike.

Despite its rhetoric about liberation, it is increasingly clear that the Bush administration is motivated more by global ambitions and corporate interests than by the freedom of Iraqis. Consistent with its belligerent posture and preemptive war doctrine, threats of military action against other countries continue to emanate from the administration. Its announced decision to resume development of tactical nuclear weapons will escalate the arms race, making the U.S. and the whole world less, not more, secure.

Our nation is in the midst of its worst economic crisis in decades. Organized labor and working families are under a relentless assault from the Bush administration on every front. Government has become a willing ally of big business in attacking unions and the right to organize and bargain. More than 180,000 federal workers have lost the right to union representation in the name of "national security." While the social safety net is being shredded, the administration is massively cutting taxes for the wealthy. It has undermined cherished democratic ideals and eroded Constitutional rights with measures like the Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act. The budget for the military and prisons continues to grow, while social programs and public sector jobs and services are being downsized, outsourced, privatized or eliminated. Schools are being shuttered and teachers laid off by the thousands, veterans benefits are being slashed, millions are jobless, many millions more are without health care and adequate housing. In communities of color, among immigrants and the poor, these cuts will have a disproportionately painful impact. Children will suffer their worst effects. The \$200 billion being spent to topple Saddam Hussein and reconstruct Iraq could have been spent addressing these urgent needs.

The stakes at this moment in history are high. For many trade unionists who did not oppose the war earlier, the relationship between a militarized foreign policy and its effect on our domestic economy are becoming painfully clear. "National security" has become the cover for gutting many of the social and economic gains won by working people during the 20th century. The Administration is using the power of the US military to boost Bush's image in the face of the disastrous results of his economic policies.

This administration presents the most serious threat to the economic and social well being, civil liberties and civil rights, security of the nation and peace in the world of any in memory. Bush's defeat in the 2004 election is of paramount urgency. However, in seeking his defeat, we must assure the defeat of the policies he has promoted so that no matter who is elected, it will be politically impossible to pursue them. We believe organized labor can defeat these policies only by making the connection between the militarization of U.S. foreign policy and the militarization of our society, the curtailment of civil liberties and encroachment on our Constitutional rights, and the bankrupting of government services at all levels.

We propose to create a voice within the labor movement that is an energetic advocate for policies that strengthen international institutions so that conflicts between nations can be resolved through diplomacy rather than war. We seek a U.S. foreign policy that promotes global economic and social justice, not the use of military force. We want our government to meet human needs, not cater to corporate greed.

SIGNATORIES

(list in formation)

ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS

1199 New England/SEIU
1199P/SEIU by President Thomas De Bruin, Harrisburg, PA
AFSCME Dist. Council 1707, NYC, by President Brenda Stokely
AFSCME Local 2627, by Vice Pres. Gary Goff, Brooklyn, NY
AFT Local 212, Milwaukee, WI
AFT Local 2121, San Francisco, by President Allan Fisher
Arabs Building Community – Bay Area (CA) Labor Committee
Bay Area (CA) Labor Committee for Peace & Justice
Black Workers for Justice, by Saladin Muhammad, Chairperson
California Federation of Teachers, by President Mary Bergan
Calumet Project, by Kim Scipes, Executive Director, Gary, IN
Chicago Labor Against the War, by Treasurer Larry Duncan
Chicago Labor for Peace Prosperity & Justice, by Executive Director Elena Marcheschi
Christians for Peace, Justice & Equality by Terrence Rothman
Coalition of University Employees (UC – CA) Anti-war Caucus
CIRSU, by Anne Mitchell, Treasurer, New York, NY
Communications Workers of America, Local 1180, NYC, NY by Bill Henning, President
Contra Costa County Central Labor Council, CA by John Dalrymple, Executive Secretary–Treasurer
DC Labor for Peace & Justice, Washington, DC
Detroit Labor Committee for Peace & Justice
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), by action of Executive Board
King County (Seattle) Labor Council, by Executive Secretary Steve Williamson
LaBOR aRT & MuRAL Project, by Mike Alewitz, New Britain CT
Labor Party, by action of the National Interim Council
Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, Local 1521, by the Executive Board
Maryland Workers Union, by Director Edward Rothstein, Baltimore, MD
Massachusetts Labor for Justice With Peace
Monterey Bay Central Labor Council
National Writers' Union Local 3, UAW Local 1981, by action of the Steering Committee
New Jersey Labor Against War, by Carol E. Gay, Interim Chair
New York City Labor Against the War, by Co–Convener Michael Letwin
Oakland Education Association, by Exec. Bd. Member Bill Balderston
Open World Conference Continuations Committee
PACE Local 8–675, Carson, CA, by Secretary–Treasurer David W. Campbell
Philadelphia Central Labor Council
Plumbers, Steamfitters & Refrigeration Fitters Local 393, by Vice President Fred Hirsch, San Jose CA
Pride at Work by Co–President Nancy Wohlforth and Executive Director Marta Ames
PSC–CUNY/AFT Local 2334, by Senior College Officer Nancy Romer
Red Lake Casino Hotel & Restaurant Employees, by Alan Maki, Dir. of Organizing, Minnesota
San Francisco Labor Council, by Secretary–Treasurer Walter Johnson
SEIU Health Care Workers Local 250 (CA) by President Sal Rosselli
SEIU Local 660, Los Angeles
SEIU Local 790, San Francisco
Sign Display & Allied Crafts Local 510, by Ann Worth, Treasurer, San Francisco
South Bay Labor Council, San Jose by Phaedra Ellis–Lamkins, Executive Officer
So. Bay Labor for Peace & Justice, by Louise Auerhahn, San Jose, CA
South Central Federation of Labor, Madison, WI
St. Louis Labor Against the War, by Joan Suarez, Co–Convener
Union of Professional Employees, by Al Kagan, President, Champaign, IL
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers, by General Secretary–Treasurer Bruce Klipple
UE District Eleven, by President Carl Rosen, Chicago
United Educators of San Francisco, by the UESF Executive Board
United Health Care Workers of St. Louis, by Sharon Penrod, President
Washington, DC Metropolitan Labor Council, by President Joslyn Williams

INDIVIDUAL ENDORSEMENTS

(organizations and titles for identification only)

Amatullah Alaji-Sabrie, President of Local 3, Coalition of University Employees (UC - CA)

Fred Azcarate, Executive Director, Jobs With Justice

Thomas Balanoff, President, SEIU Local 1 and International V.P. of SEIU

Alan Benchich, President, UAW Local 909, Warren, MI

Alan Benjamin, Co-Coordinator, OWC Continuations Committee, OPEIU Local 3, San Francisco

John Braxton and Karen Schermerhorn, Co-Presidents, Faculty Federation of the Community College of Phila. AFT Local 2026

Sheila Buell, psychotherapist, Toledo, OH

Beverly Bullock, Legisl. Affairs Chairperson, Assoc. of Flight Attendants, Alaska Airlines, Lake Forest Pk. WA

Anna Burger, Secretary-Treasurer, Service Employees International Union

Chris Butters, AFSCME Local 1070, DC 37, Brooklyn, NY

Gene Carroll, Director of Union Leadership Program, ILR, Cornell University

Robert Christensen, IBEW Local 6, Pleasant Hill, CA

Polly Connelly, Intl. Repr. (ret.), UAW Local 719, Chicago, IL

Miguel Contreras, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Los Angeles County Federation of Labor

Jeff Crosby, President, No. Shore Labor Council, Lynn, MA

Alice Dale, President, SEIU Local 49 and International V.P. of SEIU (Portland)

Elizabeth A. Davis, Building Representative, Washington Teachers' Union, AFT Local 6, Washington, DC

Gerald H. Deneau, Secretary-Treasurer, GCIU, Washington, DC

Art Doherty, President, Philadelphia Area Local APWU, V.P. Philadelphia CLC, V.P. PA State Federation of Labor

Maria Elena Durazo, President, HERE Local 11, Los Angeles; VP of HERE

Sandy Eaton, Secretary, Massachusetts Nurses Association, Quincy, MA

Michael Eisenscher, Coordinator, Bay Area (CA) Labor Cmte. For Peace & Justice

Jerry Fishbein, Director, SEIU Local 767, Hyannis MA

.....*continued*.....

Martin Fishgold, President, International Labor Communications Association; Editor, The Unionist, AFSCME Local 371, New York City

Kevin Fitzpatrick, Advocacy Coordinator, NY Taxi Workers Alliance, NYC

Conny Ford, Secretary-Treasurer/Business-Manager, OPEIU Local 3

David Foster, Director, United Steelworkers of America, Region 11 (MN)

Dennis Gallie, member, UAW Local 325, St. Louis, MO

Dorothy Gilles, Organizer, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Edwardsville, IL

Michael S. Goodman, unemployed, former member, OPEIU Local 39, Madison, WI

Aaron Gregonis, Secretary Guard, NE MO. Labor Legislative Club; member, PACE 5-205, Hannibal, MO.

Andy Griggs, Co-Chair, Human Rights Cmte., UTLA/SAG/AEA/ LA-USLAW, Santa Monica CA

Ken Heard, Diversity Officer, NWU Local 8, UAW Local 1981, Philadelphia, PA

Bill Henning, Vice President, Communications Workers of America, Local 1180, New York City

Heddy Hilbum, Louisville KY

Fred Hirsch, Vice President, Plumbers & Fitters Local 393, San Jose

Marty Hittelman, Vice President, CA Federation of Teachers

Claudia Horning, Statewide President, Coalition of University Employees (UC-CA)

Charles Hoyt, Univ. of Wisc. Student Labor Action Coalition, Madison, WI

Ed Hunt, member, SEIU Local 1925; Out Front Labor Coalition/Pride at Work, Seattle

Charles Jenks, President, Taprock Peace Center, Deerfield MA

Tom Johnson, Casual Strategic Campaign, USWA, Washington, DC

Paul Johnston, member, UC-AFT 2199, member of the Executive Board of the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council; Executive Director, Citizenship Project

Dan Kaplan, Executive Secretary, San Mateo Community College Fed. Teachers, AFT Local 1493, San Mateo CA

John Kirk, Chief Grievance Officer, AFT Local 1493, San Mateo County Community College Faculty

Kitty Krupat, Associate Director, Queens Coll. CUNY Labor Resource Center, NYC, NY

Zev Kvitky, President, United Stanford Workers; Vice-President, SEIU Local 715

Craig Kysar, Writer, Sherman Oaks CA

John Lamphier, member, AFSCME Local 9, Waconia, MN
Nancy Lessin, USWA 9358 (Boston); Co-founder of MFSO

Charles Lester Political Director, Los Angeles County Federation of Labor

Michael Letwin, Co-Convener, NYC Labor Against War

Elena Marcheschi, Chicago Labor for Peace, Prosperity & Justice

Molly McGrath, researcher, Food & Allied Service Trades, AFL-CIO, Washington, DC

Eliseo Medina, Executive V.P., SEIU Western Region

Mary Beth Menaker, President, National Writers' Union/UAW Local 1981
Tim Nam, member, Coalition of Graduate Employees, Corvallis, OR
David Novogrodsky, Executive Director, Professional & Technical Engineers Local 21, San Francisco
Peter Olney, Associate Dir., Institute for Labor & Employment, Univ. of CA, Berkeley
Bill Onasch, Convener, Kansas City Labor Against War; Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1287
Margaret A. O'Neill, Member, Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice, Wallingford, CT
John Osborne, Airline Repr., AMFA Local 14, Seattle
David Oshige, Treasurer, CA Staff Organization, Sacramento
Mike Parker, member, UAW Local 1700, Detroit, MI
Robert Perrone, Executive Director, American Federation of Teachers Local 2279, Sacramento
Millie Philips, Steering Cmte., Bay Area United Against War, San Francisco, CA
Debby Pope, Director of Communications, Chicago Teachers Union, AFT #1
Charley Richardson, SEIU 254 (Boston) and Co-founder, MFSO
Louie Rocha, President, CWA Local 9423, San Jose
Ed Rosario, Co-Coordinator, OWC Continuations Committee; President, GCIU Local 4-N

Valerie Sanfilippo, Steward, SEIU Local 2028, San Diego
Karen Schermerhorn, Co-President, Faculty Fed. Of Community Colleges of Philadelphia, AFT Local 2026
Diane Scherrer, member, UAW Local 2322, Hadley, MA
Greg Shotwell, UAW Local 2151, Grand Rapids MI
Bob Simpson, National Writers' Union/UAW 1981, Chicago IL
Xavier Odessa Small Lenart, Steward, AFSCME Local 3337
Jeffrey Smedberg, President, SEIU 415, Santa Cruz
Joyce Stanger, member, IBT Local 597, Underhill, VT
Robbiy Stem, Spec. Assist. to the President, WA State Labor Council, Seattle, WA
Roosevelt Stewart, President, Amer. Postal Workers Union, St. Louis Gateway Area, St. Louis, MO
Hal Sutton, Trustee, UAW Local 1268, Belvidere, IL
Wendy Thompson, UAW President 235, Detroit
Kay Tillow, Director, Nurses Professional Organization, Louisville KY
Jerry Tucker, Executive Director, United Health Care Workers, St. Louis
Howard Wallace, Executive Committee, San Francisco Labor Council; Former National Co-Chair, Pride at Work
Dave Welsh, Letter Carriers Union Local 214, Berkeley, CA
Sue West, past officer, UAW Local 592, Loves Park, IL
Gerry Zero, President, Teamsters Local 705, Chicago

Updated 9/16/03

Add your organizational or individual endorsement to the call by returning the form below:

____ My labor organization endorses this call and wants to be listed as a cosigner.

____ I endorse the call and want to be listed as an individual cosigner with organizational affiliation and office for identification only.

NAME_____ DATE_____

OFFICE/POSITION_____

LABOR ORGANIZATION_____ LOCAL NO._____

ADDRESS_____ CITY_____

STATE___ ZIP_____ PHONE (____)_____ FAX (____)_____

CELL/PAGER (____)_____

EMAIL ADDRESS_____

___I PLAN TO ATTEND THE ASSEMBLY ___MY ORGANIZATION WILL SEND DELEGATES

nwu3/uaw1981/mee

Return to USLAW at info@uslaboragainstwar.org or
USLAW, P.O. Box 153, 1718 M ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20036