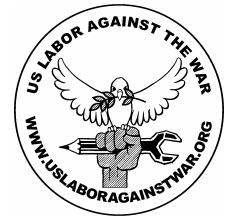


U.S. LABOR AGAINST THE WAR



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National Labor Antiwar Network Calls for End to Occupation, Return of Troops

U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW), a national network of 69 national, regional and local unions and other labor organizations* has issued a call for an end to the occupation of Iraq and return of all U.S. troops to the U.S.

Citing 743 deaths and 3600 wounded among U.S. troops and the death of more than 10,000 Iraqi civilians, the USLAW statement said, "We call for an end now to the U.S. occupation and for all military, political and economic authority to be transferred to the people of Iraq. . . . We call upon all public officials and candidates for office to oppose this war and the never-ending occupation and to support steps that can be taken immediately to end it. . . . It is time to acknowledge this tragic mistake and to hold to account Bush and those who prosecuted this disastrous war."

The statement charged that "Every reason Bush gave for going to war -- Iraq having weapons of mass destruction, Iraq collaborating with al Qaida and it being an imminent threat to the US -- has been proven false. . . . Our Government's senseless war and occupation in Iraq have been met by worldwide outrage and have provoked acts of terror in retaliation. In short, our country and the world are not safer and the crisis in Iraq continues to deepen. Rather than a solution to terrorism, the occupation has become the cause of continuing hardship and violence, death and suffering. It is time to end the occupation!"

Gene Bruskin, USLAW's national spokesperson, said, "The U.S. occupation of Iraq is in crisis. As any sensible union member knows, the first thing to do when you find you've dug yourself into a hole is to STOP DIGGING. The U.S. needs to find a way out of the mess that our government has gotten us into and stop digging this country deeper into Iraq."

Describing the war and occupation as "Bush's folly," USLAW decried the waste of \$150 billion to "pad the profit margins" of Halliburton, Bechtel and other corporate backers of the president while Iraqis continue to go without reliable electricity, clean water, food and jobs and

"social programs in the U.S. are being savaged, state and local governments are being driven into fiscal crisis, and our own democratic liberties are being eroded in the name of national security."

Calling for a massive turnout at the polls in November, the organization called upon the labor movement to "resoundingly reject four more years of bravado, unilateralism, and squandering of precious lives and the public treasury on corporate cronyism, militarism, and global domination." It continued, "No matter who is elected U.S. president in 2004, the anti-war movement, including its labor component, must be prepared to challenge U.S. foreign and domestic policies that harm our people and the peoples of the world and to hold all our elected officials to a course of peace and social justice at home and abroad."

USLAW condemned the continuing enforcement by the Occupation Authority of a law imposed by Saddam Hussein outlawing unions in state enterprises, where the vast majority of Iraqis with jobs are employed. The coalition of labor groups called for support of Iraq's emerging democratic labor movement and observance in Iraq of International Labor Organization standards for labor rights to organize and bargain free of government or outside interference. The organization called the Iraqi labor movement the most progressive secular force for a new , democratic, peaceful and prosperous Iraq"

USLAW has established the Iraqi Labor Solidarity Fund it to provide financial support struggling Iraqi unions. It urged union members and labor organizations to donate generously to the fund at its website at <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=1822>.

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* A list of affiliates is available at <http://uslaboragainstwar.org/article.php?id=3606>

