

FREEDOM SOCIALIST PARTY

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March 2008

Five Years Too Many: End the War by Building a Militant Movement!

The U.S. "Liberation of Iraq" is a total disaster by any measure. Since the invasion in March 2003 over one million Iraqis have died and two million have fled to neighboring countries. Almost 4,000 U.S. troops have been killed and at least ten times that number are wounded. The Iraq economy is in such shambles that four million people have no guarantee of food. The central Iraqi government is so dysfunctional it cannot even meet U.S. demands for regional elections and turning over the oil industry to U.S. corporations.

On this fifth anniversary of the invasion, the public is fed up. Nearly *two-thirds* of voters want the U.S. to withdraw troops from Iraq immediately or within one year.

A new president won't end the occupation or much improve life in the U.S.

People participating in Democratic Party primaries and caucuses hope the ballot box can end the horrific occupation. But just as the Democratic majority in Congress refuses to cut off war funding, none of the major presidential frontrunners is putting forward a plan for withdrawing the troops. All are bought by corporate war profiteers and talk openly about keeping huge numbers of troops in Iraq to maintain military bases, protect the U.S. embassy and support corporate interests. If they won't risk alienating the military-industry complex in order to end the war, they won't challenge big business to improve the economy.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are costing \$10.3 billion a month. This enormous sum, plus the \$2.34 billion a year given Israel to brutally occupy Palestine, leaves little for healthcare, rebuilding New Orleans, helping workers avoid foreclosures, or public works jobs.

In addition, the perpetual drumbeat of militarism saturates U.S. society with fear, substitutes patriotism for civil liberties, breeds an anti-social culture of individualism *über alles* and encourages rabid America-Firsters. The poison spreads throughout the world and fosters Turkey's attacks on the Kurdish region, Colombia's invasion of Ecuador, and Israel's total blockade of Gaza.

Women, people of color and immigrants who bear the brunt of this attack are fighting back the hardest because they have no other choice.

A movement could stop the war on working people

No individual group can succeed alone. However, by working together the U.S. working class is capable of stopping the U.S. government. It's the only force on earth that can.

People in the streets halted Jim Crow, won votes for women, attained the eight-hour day, and forced the U.S. out of Vietnam. A similar kind of movement will succeed today *if* it is a real coalition of antiwar groups, based on democratic decision-making and an international perspective, and works in conjunction with labor, political radicals, and military resisters in and out of uniform.

It's time for unity in action!

There are two encouraging opportunities for antiwar activists, labor militants and community groups to work together. An Open National Antiwar Conference has been called for June 28-29 in Cleveland by the National Assembly to End the Iraq War and Occupation. The conveners invite "everyone, every organization, every coalition, everywhere in the U.S. -- all who oppose the war and the occupation -- to attend an open democratic U.S. national antiwar conference ... The objective is to place on the agenda of the entire U.S. antiwar movement a proposal for the largest possible united mass mobilization(s) in the future to stop the war and end the occupation." Learn more at natassembly.org and plan to attend or send a representative.

In addition, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) has announced that it will shut down West Coast ports on May 1 to demand an immediate end to the war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East. The ILWU is reaching out to other labor organizations to build support for a wider international boycott. Their announcement gives over six weeks for antiwar activists to convince their unions and co-workers to build a huge work stoppage on May Day.

We demand:

- The immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and mercenaries from Iraq and the closing of all U.S. military bases.
- Hands off U.S. troops who refuse to fight and veterans who protest the war.
- Redistribution of the military budget for U.S. social services and reparations in the Middle East.