

Democratic Socialists of America
National Convention November 11-13, 2005

Resolution Reaffirming National Political Committee Statement on Iraq

The Democratic Socialists of America, meeting in convention Nov 11-13, 2005 in Los Angeles, Cal., affirms its continued opposition to American military and economic intervention in Iraq and calls for an immediate end to the war. We reaffirm adherence to the perspective calling for U.S. Troops Out Now and the cessation of US-British privatization efforts and solidarity with Iraqi trade union and women's rights organizations that was adopted by the DSA National Political Committee and distributed at the Sept. 24, 2005 march and rally in Washington, D.C. The full text of the NPC statement follows:

Bring the Troops Home Now
No to Empire and Privatization

A Democratic Socialist Perspective for the Anti-War Movement

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is proud to be part of the movement against the war in Iraq, and stands with those calling for an immediate end to the U.S. occupation. An ever increasing number of Americans are coming to our view that the United States military plays no genuinely democratic or progressive role in Iraq and that U.S. troops must be brought home now. A stable civil society in Iraq cannot be instituted under U.S. auspices and certainly not through U.S. force of arms. All U.S. military bases must be dismantled, all intelligence agents and civilian occupation personnel repatriated, all “free-market” economic decrees annulled, and all sweetheart contracts and appointees made revocable and removable at the democratic discretion of the Iraqi people. The Bush regime must also accept the bloody consequences of its march to empire by committing reparations to fund Iraq’s reconstruction.

The anti-war movement organizes under the slogan “Out Now—Bring the Troops Home.” It is the only politically effective and morally appropriate stance to take. Not only does the U.S. have no right to occupy Iraq, it has no overarching good reason to be there. From the standpoint of “spreading democracy”—the Bush regime’s latest excuse for causing the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqis and nearly 2,000 Americans—that effort is backfiring. There are strong and growing indications that the majority of Iraqis oppose the U.S. presence and that continuing the occupation will lead to the strengthening of reactionary forces. Only an end to the occupation can undermine support for the violent insurgency and create the political space that could allow Iraqi democratic, secularist and trade union movements—the forces DSA supports—to grow. Calling for immediate withdrawal is also the only realistic lever the U.S. peace movement has in moving the Bush regime to even accept a phased withdrawal under international auspices, which those leery of a quick exit say they prefer.

But our opposition to the U.S. occupation of Iraq does not mean that we support the Iraqi armed resistance. While some participants in the insurgency are Iraqis legitimately angered by the brutality of the U.S. occupation and its affront to national dignity, the dominant political tendencies in the armed resistance are profoundly reactionary. The Ba’athist faction seeks to regain state power in the name of the Sunni minority, and is murdering its way through Baghdad. The political-Islamist wing—calling itself “Al Qaeda in Iraq”—seeks to establish a theocratic

totalitarian state where, in its own words, “we will fight a bitter war against democracy and all those who seek to practice it.” These currents have tortured and murdered trade unionists and election workers. They do not represent a national liberation movement for Iraqi self-determination, and genuine democrats cannot stand in solidarity with them. We believe that the whole of the anti-war movement must realize this and make it clear to all, lest we appear to ordinary Americans as apologists for cold-blooded killers, and hence no better than the Bush regime.

Moreover, the anti-war movement must follow the lead of U.S. Labor Against the War and act in solidarity with the Iraqi trade union movement. We applaud USLAW’s organization of the historic 25-city U.S. tour by leaders of the three Iraqi labor organizations—the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq, and the General Union of Oil Employees. We join in these leaders’ condemnation of terrorist attacks on civilians and targeting of trade union and other civil society leaders for intimidation, kidnapping, torture and assassination. The entire anti-war movement must do the same. Even if some other Iraqi unions refuse to get behind the demand of “Out Now,” and even if they make what we consider political errors in thinking they can buy time to build industrial democracy on the point of an American bayonet, we support their right to exist and the struggle of Iraqi workers against both the occupation and the anti-labor “resistance.” To denounce such unions as “quislings,” or a “Trojan Horse in the Antiwar Movement,” as a few U.S. radicals have done, is mindless cheerleading for some of the most reactionary forces in Iraqi society. It portrays the struggle in Iraq through an exclusively populist-nationalist framework rather than one shaped by social class. We want to empower Iraqi workers, not force them to live under a jihadist boot. That means supporting Iraqi workers’ right to organize trade unions of their own choosing and their struggle against both the occupation and the anti-labor “resistance.”

With sufficient international labor movement support—and the support of the anti-war movement—Iraq’s new labor movement will be better able to win battles for political and civil rights and liberties. It—along with the forces for democratic secularism and those religious leaders who recognize that the Iraqi state must not be theocratic—is the main hope for a democratic civil society in Iraq. It will be in a position to win over the angry, bewildered youth whom the political Islamists are currently recruiting. As USLAW has put it, “The role of U.S. and international trade unionists is to oppose the occupation while supporting all forces genuinely representing workers and fighting to assure that Iraq implements full internationally recognized trade union rights. The workers of Iraq will decide who they want to represent them as this process unfolds.”

DSA also urges anti-war and labor-movement support for the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq and other organizations campaigning against Islamist attempts to subject women to Shari’a law.

The continuing occupation of Iraq, combined with the Bush regime’s failure to secure the Gulf Coast against the threat of natural disasters, reveals a government whose priorities are skewed toward empire building, privatization and the narrow interests of corporate profiteers. Instead of conducting a brutal war in Iraq and leaving low-income communities at sea, we need a government committed to rebuilding communities at home and abroad.

Approved September 21, 2005