

# A CALL TO ACTION



## Labor Conference to **STOP THE WAR!**

*October 20, 2007 at 9:00 am  
ILWU Local 10 at 400 North Point St.  
San Francisco, California 94133*

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As the war in Iraq and Afghanistan enters its seventh year, opposition to the war among working people in the United States and the world is massive and growing. The "surge" strategy of sending in more and

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more troops has become a fiasco for the Pentagon generals, while thousands of Iraqis are killed every month. Before the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, millions marched against the war in Britain, Italy and Spain as hundreds of thousands took to the streets in the U.S. to oppose it. But that didn't stop the invasion. In the U.S., this "war on terror" has meant wholesale assault on civil liberties and workers' rights, like the impending imposition of the hated TWIC card for port workers. And the war keeps going on and on, as Democrats and Republicans in Congress keep on voting for it.

As historian Isaac Deutscher said during the Vietnam War, a single strike would be more effective than all the peace marches. French dockworkers did strike in the port of Marseilles and helped bring an end to the war in Vietnam. To put a stop to this bloody colonial occupation, labor must use its power.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union has opposed the war on Iraq since the beginning. In the Bay Area, ILWU Local 10 has repeatedly warned that the so-called "war on terror" is really a war on working people and democratic rights. Around the country, hundreds of unions and labor councils have passed motions condemning the war, but that has not stopped the war. We need to use labor's muscle to stop the war by mobilizing union power in the streets, at the plant gates and on the docks to force the immediate and total withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.

The clock is ticking. It's time for labor action to bring the war machine to a grinding halt and end this slaughter. During longshore contract negotiations in the run-up to the Iraq invasion, Bush cited port security and imposed the slave-labor Taft-Hartley Law against the ILWU in collusion with the maritime employers group PMA and with the support of the Democrats. Yet, he did nothing when PMA shut down every port on the U.S. West Coast by locking out longshore workers just the week before!

In April 2003, when antiwar protesters picketed war cargo shippers, APL and SSA, in the Port of Oakland, police fired on picketers and longshoremen alike with their "less than lethal" ammo that left six ILWU members and many others seriously injured. We refused to let our rights be trampled on, sued the city and won. Democratic rights were reasserted a month later when antiwar protesters marched in the port and all shipping was stopped. This past May, when antiwar

protesters and the Oakland Education Association again picketed war cargo shippers in Oakland, longshoremen honored the picket line. This is only the beginning.

Last year, Local 10 passed a resolution calling to "Strike Against the War – No Peace, No Work." The motion emphasized the ILWU's proud history in opposing wars for imperial domination, recalling how in 1978 Local 10 refused to load bombs for the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. In the 1980's, Bay Area dock workers highlighted opposition to South African apartheid slavery by boycotting ("hot cargoing") the Nedlloyd Kimberly, while South African workers waged militant strikes to bring down the white supremacist regime.

Now Locals 10 and 34 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union have called for a "Labor Conference to Stop the War" to hammer out a program of action. We're saying: Enough! It's high time to use union power against the bosses' war, independent of the "bipartisan" war party. The ILWU can again take the lead, but action against the war should not be limited to the docks. We urge unions in the San Francisco Bay Area and throughout the country to attend the conference and plan workplace rallies, labor mobilizations in the streets and strike action against the war.