

Voice of Iraqi Workers

Nr.5

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Statement of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq on the Governing Council's Resolution that Appoints Representatives for the Iraqi Workers

On January 27, 2004, the Governing Council passed its resolution number 3, which appoints an organization as the official representative of the Iraqi workers inside the country and internationally. This organization consists of the representatives of the parties grouped in the Governing Council

The Resolution 3 is a continuation of the Baathist tradition which appointed trade unions through orders and from above. This resolution contradicts all international conventions, resolutions, and agreements which stress that establishing trade unions and labour organizations is the affair of workers themselves and that workers should elect their representatives freely from among their ranks.

We, in the FWCUI, believe that the Governing Council has no right to pass any resolution preventing workers from electing their representatives. Therefore, we totally reject this resolution and regard it as an attempt to enforce the practices of the ousted Baath regime which denied workers

any control over their own affairs and erected bureaucratic and repressive bodies which had nothing to do with the interests of workers. The resolution number 3 is a part of the attempts by the state apparatus to control workers despite all rhetoric about freedom.

The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq calls for a general conference, which embraces all labour activists in Iraq. The FWCUI also calls on the international labour organizations to attend this conference.

Genuine and influential labour organizations, which represent workers, can only be established when workers themselves freely elect their own representatives.

Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq
February 19, 2004



Falah Alwan's speech, leader of FWCUI at the demonstration held in Bern-Switzerland on March 20, 2004

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~~Iraqi People is the Victim of the War of the Terrorists.~~

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE OCCUPATION AND FOR LABOUR RIGHTS IN IRAQ

REPORT ON THE DELEGATION TO THE ILO OFFICE IN GENEVA (March 15, 2004)

PRESENTATION

On March 15, 2004, an international delegation of representatives from US Labor Against the War (USLAW), the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), the International Liaison Committee of Workers and Peoples (ILC), the Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI), and the Unemployed Union in Iraq (UUI) went to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) office in Geneva.

All these organisations are participating in the International Campaign Against the Occupation and for Labour Rights in Iraq.

The delegation was composed of Gene Bruskin, co-convenor, US Labor Against War (USA); Daniel Gluckstein, Coordinator, International Liaison Committee of Workers and Peoples (ILC); Falah Alawn, President, Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI); Khadije El Husaini, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU); Aso Jabbar, Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UUI); Olivier Doriane, International Liaison Committee (ILC), France; Jean-Pierre Barrois, Member of the delegation that went to Iraq in October 2003, (France); Max Robert, Hosting committee for the conferences in defence of ILO conventions (Switzerland).

They went to the ILO office, where they delivered a Memorandum with adjoined documents. After this meeting, they adopted an international appeal which they submit along with the Memorandum to the whole of the international labour movement.

M E M O R A N D U M

submitted by the delegation of the International Campaign Against the Occupation and for Labour Rights in Iraq to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on March 15, 2004

The delegation that presents this memorandum to the Workers Group of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) represents the "International Campaign Against the Occupation and for Labour Rights in Iraq."

This campaign was launched at an international meeting in defence of ILO conventions, in June 2003, by US Labor Against the War (USLAW), the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), and the International Liaison Committee of Workers and Peoples (ILC).

We have been opposed to the war and remain opposed to the war and to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. On behalf of democracy, we decided last June to launch a global campaign for the recognition of labour rights in Iraq. This is the purpose of the memoran-

dum we are presenting to the ILO today, March 15, 2004.

* Considering that the reconstruction of Iraq and the introduction of democratic self-rule will only succeed if the Iraqi people themselves exercise their sovereignty to develop the reconstruction process as they see fit;

* Considering that this is especially true with regard to Iraq's workers, most of whom are currently unemployed and who fear that their economic well-being has been taken out of their control and in fact depends on the occupying forces;

* Considering that it is the people of Iraq themselves who must be in charge of drafting their own Constitution and their own laws, including their own labour law and the dispositions providing for the right to unemployment benefits;

* Considering that the Iraqi workers fear that the decisions made by the occupying forces, particularly in the economic field with the privatisation, would continue the plundering of the Iraqi resources by the multinational corporations;

* Considering that it is the Iraqi workers with their duly elected representatives who should formulate their demands towards the elaboration of a labour law, which can only be written in Iraq by the Iraqi workers themselves;

* Considering that at the last annual ILO assembly, in June 2003, the ILO Workers Group adopted a statement which says :

"The Workers Group believes that in the rehabilitation exercise, support must be provided for all the people of Iraq, especially the poor, **To P. 3**

MEMORANDUM

the disabled, and vulnerable groups. The Group calls for the immediate resumption of work for all Iraqi workers, with due protection for their wages. It also demands that the oil resources of Iraq be used solely by the people of Iraq and exclusively for their benefit.

"In the new Iraq, there must be, consistent with ILO standards, full freedom of association, guaranteeing the Iraqi workers the right to organise and to bargain collectively; there must be democracy with full civil liberties, permitting trade unions to choose their own leadership independently and without interference; there must be the right to self-determination by the Iraqi people."

* Considering that none of the demands of the Workers Group expressed in June 2003 have been fulfilled;

* Considering that the Conventions of the ILO and more specifically Conventions 87 and 98 providing for the right to organise and join the union of one's own choosing, the right to bargain collectively, have been ignored and therefore should be enforced for all the workers in Iraq as well as all over the world;

* Considering that it is in the interest of the workers all over the world and the workers in Iraq to exert mutual solidarity;

* Considering that the war and occupation of Iraq have resulted in extremely hazardous working conditions in Iraq and the widespread violation of internationally recognised Convention 138 against child labour;

We present a series of documents containing:

- The documents that were collected by the international independent delegation which travelled in occupied



Iraq in October 2003. These documents were collected by the international delegation and circulated to the international labour movement — in particular in the United States, where they were presented at a national assembly organised by USLAW in October 2003 and also at the AFL-CIO headquarters in February 2004.

- The documents of the Union of the Unemployed in Iraq (UUI) and of the Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI). These documents were presented to the regional representative of the ILO in Beirut.

We also present the Draft Labour Law proposed by the Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI), as well as the report "The corporate invasion of Iraq", which was compiled by USLAW and which gives evidence that the multinational corporations operating in Iraq violate labour rights as they violate other laws in the United States.

Other documents which may have been collected by and which may be in the possession of the ILO are also part of the documents we have submitted.

All these documents reveal the dreadful living conditions of the Iraqi workers and establish that more than 70% of the workforce are unemployed.

These documents give evidence that today the right to strike, the right to affiliate to the union of one's own choosing, the right to negotiate and the right to bargain collectively do not exist in Iraq.

These documents give evidence that organisations that were set up by the Iraqi workers themselves are not recognised and that Iraqi workers have been threatened and attacked for striking.

They give evidence that the shameful law passed by Saddam Hussein in 1987 banning the right to strike in all public enterprises has not been repealed.

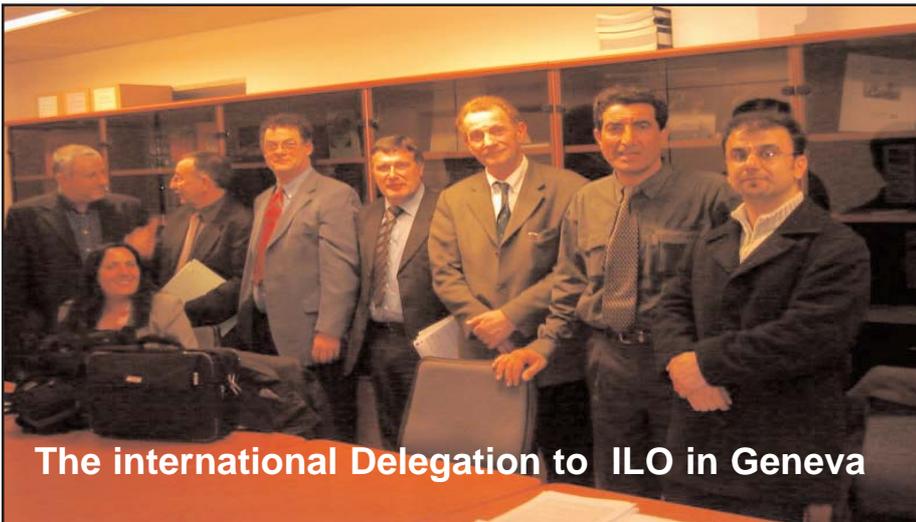
The facts clearly establish that ILO conventions 87 and 98 are not respected: On January 27th, 2004, the occupying authorities decided to give full recognition to one union federation with the Public order N°3, therefore declaring or implying that the others are illegal.

We are asking the five following questions:

* Is it not a violation of Articles 1 & 2 of ILO Convention 87, which stipulate respectively that "workers and employees without any distinction have the right without prior authorisation to set up organisations of their

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From P.3 **MEMORANDUM**

The international Delegation to ILO in Geneva

own choosing as well as the right to join these organisations" (Article 1) and "workers and employees organisations have a right to elaborate their rule book and to elect freely their representatives" (Article 2)?

* Is it not a violation of Article 3 of Convention 87, which stipulates that, "public authorities must abstain from any interference, any act restricting those rights or at preventing the legal exercise of these rights"?

* Is it not a violation of Article 1 of Convention 98, which stipulates that, "The organisations of workers and employees must be adequately protected against any mutual interference when for instance company managers threaten to dismiss workers for joining unions which are considered illegal"?

* Is it not a violation of ILO Convention 87 when trade unionists are sent to jail because of their activities and when their union offices are invaded by the authorities?

* Is it not a violation of ILO Convention 98 when the authorities take the right to decide which organisations should be recognised and so doing choose who should be negotiating?

Being informed that the Ministry of Labour in Iraq signed a "cooperative agreement" with the ILO, we request that these documents be made public.

We are addressing the International Labour Office and its Workers Group a demand formulated by the Iraqi workers and their trade unions in line with the demands of the international labour movement requesting that the ILO conduct a full investigation of the violations of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 and the situation of the workers of Iraq so that the full and documented report establishing all the facts be presented to the delegates at the next yearly assembly of the ILO in June 2004.

We request that the ILO use all its authority and its prerogatives so as to ensure that ILO Convention 87 and Convention 98 are fully enforced in Iraq.

It is our intention to respect the prerogatives of all workers' organisations in Iraq and all over the world and to support the rights of workers in Iraq. We are not in competition with any organisation; the aim of our campaign, in full respect of the prerogatives of each organisation, is to provide a contribution to the struggle for workers' rights in Iraq, which are part and parcel of democracy.

The delegation:

- **Gene BRUSKIN, co-convenor, US Labor Against War (USA)**
 - **Daniel GLUCKSTEIN, International coordinator of the International Liaison Committee of Workers and**

Peoples

- **Falah ALWAN, President of the Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI)**
- **Khadije EL HUSAINI, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU)**
- **Aso JABBAR, Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UII)**
- **Olivier DORIANE, International Liaison Committee (ILC), France**
- **Jean-Pierre BARROIS, Member of the delegation that went to Iraq in October 2003, (France)**
- **Luis BLANCO, Trade union officer of the Federation of Steelworkers (FTMH) (Switzerland)**
- **Luc DELEY, Hosting committee for the Conferences in Defence of ILO conventions (Switzerland)**
- **Max ROBERT, Hosting committee for the conferences in defence of ILO conventions (Switzerland)**

I endorse publicly this Memorandum

In my own capacity

In the name of my organisation

I will send a cheque for _____ euros/dollars to help defray the outstanding expenses of the international labor delegation to Iraq.*

Name:
 Address
 City
 State
 Country
 E- Mail
 Telephone/Fax
 Organisation:
 Capacity:

APPEAL from the international Delegation

Our delegation was composed of

Gene BRUSKIN, co-convenor, US Labor Against War (USA);

Daniel GLUCKSTEIN, International coordinator of the International Liaison Committee of Workers and Peoples (ILC);

Falah ALWAN, President of the Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI);

Khadije EL HUSAINI, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU);

Aso JABBAR, Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UII);

Olivier DORIANE, International Liaison Committee (ILC), France;

Jean-Pierre BARROIS, Member of the delegation that went to Iraq in October 2003, (France);

Max ROBERT, Hosting committee for the conferences in defence of ILO conventions (Switzerland).

Today, March 15, 2004, an international delegation was received by the ILO in Geneva, on the eve of the commemoration of the first bombings of Iraq, which took place on March 20, 2003.

We call upon all the workers, all the organisations that opposed the war:

We call upon all those who are going to participate in the demonstrations of March 20, 2004, against the occupation of Iraq, against war:

On March 15, we went to the ILO offices in Geneva to assert again our total opposition to the war and occupation of Iraq, which are organised under U.S. aegis. We asserted our commitment to the defence of nations' and people's independence and sovereignty. We asserted our rejection of the war and military occupations, which are putting in jeopardy the unity and sovereignty of nations

all over the world. We reject the big powers' "broad regions framework" forced upon people to destroy the unity and sovereignty of nations.

We have come to emphasise the need for the international labour movement to take up the fight against the illegal and immoral occupation of Iraq. Again we say what we have been constantly saying since we launched our common campaign nine months ago: there can't be democracy in Iraq if the people of Iraq cannot decide themselves the disposition of their resources, their fate and their future — and establish their own control over their own economy, if the Iraqi workers are not free to set up the organisations of their own choosing.

Our delegation was composed of Gene BRUSKIN, co-convenor, US Labor Against War (USA); Daniel GLUCKSTEIN, International coordinator of the International Liaison Committee of Workers and Peoples (ILC); Falah ALWAN, President of the Federation of Workers Councils and Trade Unions in Iraq (FWCUI); Khadije EL HUSAINI, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU); Aso JABBAR, Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UII); Olivier DORIANE, International Liaison Committee (ILC), France; Jean-Pierre BARROIS, Member of the delegation that went to Iraq in October 2003, (France); Max ROBERT, Hosting committee for the conferences in defence of ILO conventions (Switzerland).

The delegation delivered a memorandum to the ILO. After waging a campaign in over 70 countries, we asked to be received by Mr. Juan Somavia, director general of the ILO. We met Mr. Ahmed KHALEF and Mr. Luc DESMARET, members of the activity bureau for the workers linked to the ILO Workers Group. After they explained that they were receiving us in their personal capacity, the delegation submitted its memorandum and a debate that concerns the whole labour movement then began.

- To the question: "Could we expect a

response from the Workers' Group?", the answer was: "We cannot assure you that you will get a response but as you referred to the Workers' Group statement, it can be logically expected."

- To the question about the involvement of the ILO into the ongoing process in Iraq, we were told: "As far as we know, the United Nations has been taken out of the process, so has the ILO, which is a subsidiary of the ILO".

- To the question about the existence of a document co-signed by the ILO and the Iraqi Ministry for Labour, the answer was: "We are not aware of such a document but if it does exist, you will be given a copy".

- To the question about the re-admission of Iraq in the ILO to take place next June, as announced by Mr. Paul Bremer's technical adviser, the answer was: "We are not aware of such a plan".

- To the question: "What could be done to prevent that Iraq — today — perpetuates the system of official selection and recognition of trade unions, excluding the right to organise in the union of one's own choosing", the answer referred to the ILO's mechanisms providing for the possibility for any Iraqi union which considered that ILO conventions are being violated, to lodge a complaint to the ILO trade union freedom committee.

We call upon labour organisations the world over: Can a labour organisation accept that Iraqi workers be excluded from the benefit of universally acknowledged ILO Conventions?

Can a labour organisation accept that after a so-called "war for democracy" — organised in fact on the basis of State lies concerning the alleged existence of weapons of mass destruction — all the measures taken by the former regime against workers and their trade unions are perpetuated and enforced by the occupation authorities?

to page 6

from P. 5 APPEAL from the international Delegation

Is it possible to talk about sovereignty when the American commander in chief of ground forces in Iraq, Ricardo Sanchez, announces publicly that the coalition forces will stay in Iraq for at least one more year?

We call upon labour organisations the world over and ask them to join our campaign for labour rights in Iraq. We call them to circulate as widely as possible our Memorandum, especially on the occasion of the March 20 initiatives and to endorse it. We call upon all to circulate it widely in their own trade unions, in their factories, among workers.



We call upon labour organisations the world over to sponsor the new delegation proposed by the trade union coalition against war in the United States, USLAW, which plans to go to Iraq on May 1st.

Considering that in the next annual assembly of the ILO, the Iraqi issue should be discussed, we call all the worker delegates at the ILO assembly to support our Memorandum, and to intervene to obtain answers.

We will present in the name of our organisations a report on the campaign for labour rights in Iraq to the 13th Conference for the defence of ILO Conventions (Sunday 13th, June 2004) called by the International Liaison Committee of Workers and Peoples.

We call on all the international labour movement to develop the struggle against the occupation, to wage the



struggle so that the Iraqi workers can set up the unions of their own choosing.

Our initiative is not opposing or challenging any other initiative. We are not in competition with any organisa-

tion; the aim of our campaign, in full respect of the prerogatives of each organisation, is to provide a contribution to the struggle for workers' rights in Iraq, which are part and parcel of democracy.

On January 27, 2004, the Governing Council passed its resolution number 3, which appoints an organization as the official representative of the Iraqi workers inside the country and internationally

The decision Nr. 3 should be abolished !

Join our campaign for unconditional right of Organisation and Strike for Workers in Iraq.

Draft of Labour Law Proposed by the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq

General Principles:

To meet the basic life and work-related needs of workers, the Labour Law should be based on the principles described below. These principles apply a modern standard to:

Wage rates, working hours, work leaves, social welfare and insurance, conditions of professional safety and work hazards, retirement age, and heavy labor occupations.

Political rights and union rights of workers to form labour organizations, go on strike, and hold general assembly meetings.

Article I: Working Hours and Retirement Age

Section 1. The immediate introduction of a maximum 30-hour work week (five 6-hour working days), with a 25-hour work week in heavy occupations. Included in the working hours is the time spent for lunch breaks, commuting, taking showers, literacy classes, technical training, and general assembly meetings. Also included is a periodic reduction in the number of working hours every five years.

Section 2. Prohibition of overtime. Prohibition of forcing workers to accept overtime hours, including the prohibitions of justifications such as preventing a disaster or other emergency situations.

Section 3. The retirement age for women and men will be 55 years, or upon the completion of 25 years of employment, whichever comes first. For heavy occupations, 55 years or after 18 years of employment, whichever comes first.

Article II: Working Conditions and Workplace Safety

Section 1. Assurance of a safe and healthy workplace by minimizing health and safety hazards in the workplace, without regard to cost. The most advanced equipment and technical resources in the world will be made available to workers. Periodic medical examinations will be provided to workers to protect against occupational hazards and illnesses. The examinations will be performed by medical providers independent of employers, and financed by employers and the state.

Section 2. Prohibition of assigning heavy work to pregnant workers, or to workers whose health would be at risk owing to their specific physical conditions. Every worker has the right to refuse to perform a task that the worker considers to be physically or mentally harmful.

Section 3. Prohibition of firing. Full remuneration will be made, at the same level as the last pay received, to workers whose workplace is shut down, and until new employment is found. The state has the responsibility to find comparable employment for workers who lose their jobs due to the closure of a business or enterprise. Vocational (re)training will be financed by the state for workers whose profession or line of work becomes obsolete due to technological advances.

Section 4. Prohibition of piece-rate work such as piecework and contract work..

Section 5. Prohibition of child labour. Prohibition of the employment by a business of children and youth under the age of 16.

Section 6. Prohibition of night work. Double-rate pay will be provided to

professions that require night hours, such as health care providers, electricians, firefighters, etc. Night jobs are defined as jobs performed at any time between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. The employment of any worker in more than one night shift will be prohibited.

Section 7. Provision at the workplace of modern childcare facilities meeting standards that ensure the well being of workers' children. Two half-hour breaks will be provided for the breastfeeding of children, and these breaks will be included in the working hours of the breastfeeding worker.

Section 8. Employers and the state are to take all appropriate measures to prevent occupational illness and injury.

Section 9. Employers and the state are to provide all necessary tools and equipment such as special footwear and gowns, gloves, goggles, masks, and helmets, in order to prevent occupational hazards and to minimize occupational injuries and illness.

Article III: Women's Working Conditions

Section 1. Pregnant workers are entitled to a 4-hour work day.

Section 2. Pregnant woman are entitled to sixteen weeks fully paid pregnancy and confinement. Mothers are entitled to 18 weeks of fully paid maternity leave in order to perform child care labour in her domicile. Women are entitled to two days off during each menstrual period.

Section 3. Workers who provide primary care for children are entitled to not accept nightshift or overtime working hours. Pregnant workers are entitled to perform only suitable work and to refuse unsuitable work. **to P.8**

from P.7 Draft of Labour Law

Article IV: Wages

Section 1. A minimum wage will be set by the workers' representatives.

Section 2. Automatic rises in the minimum wage will be made proportional to economic inflation.

Section 3. Determination of the minimum annual raise in wage levels will be made by a collective bargaining agreement at the national level, by a group consisting of representatives of workers' organizations, representatives of employers, and representatives of the state.

Section 4. Equal pay shall be provided to women and to men for performing similar work.

Section 5. Prohibition of paying wages in-kind. Prohibition of delay in wage payments.

Section 6. Prohibition of fines or any other deductions from pay under any pretext. Full wages shall be paid for valid absences, periods of illness and recuperation, strikes, or for the stoppage of production for any reason, or for reasons due to the actions of the employer.

Section 7. Prohibition of linking workers' pay to any circumstances and factors other than the actual labor itself (e.g., increased input, productivity levels, disciplinary actions, production targets, etc.). Workers' pay shall be paid in one periodic unit of payment as wages.

Article V: Leaves and Holidays

Section 1. Two consecutive days off each week, and a minimum 36-day holiday leave each year. Workers are entitled to brief emergency leaves, without reduction in pay, in order to attend to unforeseen personal problems. Such emergency leaves are in addition to annual holiday leaves.

Section 2. The first of May will be a public holiday, International Workers' Day.

Section 3. The eighth of March will be a public holiday, International Women's Day.

Article VI: Social Welfare and Insurance

Section 1. Adequate unemployment benefits, according to the wages level last received by the worker, will be provided to every unemployed person over 16 who is ready to work. Adequate unemployment benefits and other necessary allowances will be provided to all those who are unable to work for physical or psychiatric reasons.

Section 2. Pensions upon retirement equivalent to the maximum wage received by the worker during the worker's working years. Automatic raises in pension wages will be made proportional to increases in the general wage.

Section 3. Full insurance of workers against injuries and damage due to work will be provided whether such injuries and damage occur inside or outside of the workplace. The worker need not prove negligence on the part of the employer or management to be so compensated. Full payment of pensions will be made to workers who become incapacitated as a result of injuries resulting from work.

Article VII: Fines and penalties

Section 1. Prohibition of fines, deductions from pay, or firing of workers under various pretexts. Any form of punishment by employers against workers are prohibited. Representatives of the workers are responsible for investigating and taking appropriate measures against any violations of the above.

Section 2. Formation of adjudication and arbitration councils, with members elected by the workers.

Section 3. Drafting and enforcement of the internal regulations of workshops, economic, and production units by workers' elected representa-

tives.

Section 4. Formation of workers' inspection commissions to supervise the correct implementation of the labour law throughout the country in all workplaces and establishments (including domestic service workplaces)

Section 5. Obligation of the employer to consult with the workers' representatives on any decision that substantially alters the work methods, working hours, the worksite, or the number of employees.

Section 6. Right of workers' representatives to inspect the books of the enterprise in which they work. The employer is obligated to provide the workers and their representatives with all the information they need during the course of the inspection.

Article VIII: Right to Organization

Section 1. Full and unconditional freedom for workers to organize. Workers are free to seek any form of organization to defend their rights. Obstructing workers' endeavors to organize their ranks is prohibited. Prohibition of forcing workers to join any organization. Any organization endorsed by workers must be recognized and dealt with as the workers' representatives before their employer and the state.

Article IX: Right to Strike and Protest

Section 1. Complete and unconditional freedom to strike. Strikes do not require the prior permission of the state or any state authority. Full payment of wages shall be made during the period of the strike. Equal right of access to the media shall be made to strikers so that they may state their case and respond to the claims of the state and employers. Banning strikes under any pretext, such as "national and patriotic interests," "state of emergency," or "war," shall be illegal.

Section 2. Prohibition against the employment of strike-breakers, police, or armed personnel used to

From P.8 **Draft of Labour Law**

replace strikers, in all businesses and enterprises, state and private.

Section 3. Right of workers to stop work during the period when their complaints regarding actions of the employers and their officials, including safety issues or unforeseen problems in the workplace, are being addressed or negotiated.

Section 4. Freedom of picketing. Freedom for all to join picket lines, whether or not they are employees of the enterprise concerned.

Note: this labour law is to be implemented in all workplaces in public and private sectors, permanent and casual, industrial and agricultural jobs, and also apply to domestic labor for wages (housework). Any employer or official who violates the articles of this law will be prosecuted.

The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq demands the immediate adoption and implementation of the articles of this law in Iraq. The Federation struggles for its implementation all over Iraq through the intervention of Workers.

The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq call upon all Iraqi workers, labour leaders, labour activists, and labour organizations to join the struggle to implement this law all over the country. It also announces that the General Assembly of Workers is the only vehicle that can ensure the direct and collective participation of workers in deciding their future and implementing this law.

Appendix of the Labour Law Draft

To complement the proposed labour law and cover related social issues under the title of social welfare and insurance, we call for additional demands as an appendix of labour law. The articles of this appendix are to be incorporated into the labour law. Similar to the above articles of labour law, the implementation of the articles of this appendix by employers and by the state is mandatory.

Article I: Social Welfare and Insurance

Section 1. Payment of unemployment benefits equivalent to no less than the official minimum wage will be provided to all unemployed persons over 16.

Section 2. Payment of state pensions equivalent to no less than the official minimum wage will be provided to all persons over 55 who lack a retirement pension.

Section 3. Placing under the guardianship of the state all children and youth under 16 whose sustenance and proper welfare is not provided through their families.

Section 4. Free and universal health care will be provided for all. This includes regular medical check-ups and the comprehensive vaccination of infants and children. An adequate and suitable diet will be guaranteed for all children without consideration of family income, region, place of residence, etc. Also included is the eradication of epidemic and infectious diseases arising from polluted and unhygienic environments. Regular medical examinations will be provided to everyone for the purpose of screening and diagnosing heart disease, common cancers, and other illness when a timely diagnosis is essential to effective treatment. There will be an improvement in the standards of public health as well as an expanded public health awareness. Medical and therapeutic resources will be expanded and organized in a manner that makes immediate access to a doctor, medications, and treatment the standard for all.

Section 5. Compulsory free universal education will be provided until the age of 16. Free and universal higher education includes university and specialization training. Adequate grants will be made to all students. There will be an eradication of illiteracy and an ongoing rise in the public's education level including scientific and technical awareness. Education is the right of every person, and access to education and training must

be independent of family income.

Section 6. Guaranteed suitable housing for all, in terms of adequate space, hygiene, safety, and utilities (electricity, warm and cold water, bathroom facilities inside the building, air-conditioning, heating, connection to telephone and TV networks, and access to local public services). Housing costs must not exceed 10% of the individual's or family's income; any extra cost shall be met through state subsidy. Homelessness or residing in substandard housing is unlawful and the state authorities are obliged under the law to provide suitable housing for all citizens immediately.

Section 7. Setting up special service centers, such as day-care centers, nurseries, canteens, self-service restaurants, modern laundrettes, etc., locally and in housing estates, to relieve the burden of housework and to enable the participation of all people in social activities.

Section 8. Creation of free sport, art, and cultural facilities in all localities, including gyms, theatres, and libraries and the provision of instructors and trainers.

Section 9. Provision of necessary alterations and facilities for the full and active participation of disabled and handicapped people in all areas of social life. Provision of special facilities and equipment for the physically handicapped, in public places, on roads, housing estates, etc. Free provision of necessary equipment, technical instruments, and other devices to facilitate the daily life of the disabled.

Section 10. Creation of facilities and service establishments that meet the needs of the elderly and to improve the quality of their lives. Provision of necessary resources and facilities to help the elderly continue to participate actively and creatively in social life.

Section 12. Extension of urban public services (electricity, water, telephone, educational, medical and cultural facilities, etc.) to all rural areas, and the elimination of the welfare disparity between town and country.

Committee in Solidarity with Iraqi Workers-New York City

The Union of the Unemployed in Iraq

12 years of genocidal sanctions and the U.S. war of aggression have caused over 1.5 million deaths in Iraq, wreaking havoc on Iraqi society. In short, untold misery and suffering have been imposed on the people of Iraq. The U.S. government has placed Iraq on the verge of total collapse and within arm's reach of dreadful scenarios like, civil war, religious sectarianism, ethnic cleansing, and tribalism. Yet, the downfall of Saddam Hussein's brutal regime has created the opportunity for workers and unemployed masses across Iraq to come to organize themselves, protest about work conditions, resort to action, and hold street demonstrations in many cities.

The Union of the Unemployed (UUI) in Iraq emerged as the first significant initiative by Iraqi workers to confront the massive unemployment caused by the destructive U.S. war against Iraq. The union was founded in May 2003 by a group of 20 unemployed, revolutionary workers that had gathered in the looted and abandoned building of the infamous, Ba'athist "General Federation of Trade Unions in Iraq." In a democratic process they elected their leadership committee, which in turn elected Qasim Hadi to be their leader. The main objective of the UUI involves pressing the C.P.A. (Civilian Provisional Authority) for unemployment benefits for workers in Iraq whose lives and economic well being have been turned upside down by the war. In fact, the one slogan most on rotation in the UUI reads, "Jobs or Unemployment Benefits for All." The UUI has also pressed the C.P.A. to ensure that unemployed workers play a major role in job distribution and allocation. They have managed to allocate 600 work opportunities for unemployed people. In addition, as a result of their protest actions, they have provided workers with free medical services.

The concerns of the UUI also extend

to the political sphere of post-occupation life. It is a well-known fact that the C.P.A. has assembled the current Iraqi Governing Council with hodgepodge abandon, mixing tribal leaders, reactionary elements, and ethnocentric forces with Islamist groups. At first glance, this seems like a democratic recipe. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that this policy will only further prolong instability and insecurity; it places the future of the country in the rocky hands of factions prone to in-fighting. Indeed, the UUI has played a vital role against any attempts to push Iraq's civil society into tribalism and religious fanaticism. The UUI is a social and egalitarian force that not only opposes the U.S. occupation and its puppet, the Governing Council, but also struggles against the dreadful and bloody scenario cooking in the kitchens of Islamists and other fascists and nationalists in Iraq.

The UUI has established branches in seven provinces in Iraq. Within a few months, it signed up over 150,000 members. The union has launched 13 demonstrations in Baghdad

and 7 protests in other cities. The UUI became a world-renowned, radical, working-class organization for its 45-day sit-in protests across from Paul Bremer's headquarters in Baghdad, despite continuous attacks and repression by American forces. The union leaders and members were repeatedly arrested, harassed, and repressed by occupation forces.

The UUI is a genuine representative of unemployed workers. They publish a paper in English called "The Voice of Iraqi Workers." The UUI, along with the Congress of Worker's Councils and Unions in Iraq, is striving to put forward a labor law as alternative labor legislation. Simultaneously, the UUI has established a representative network in Europe, Australia, and Canada to get international support for the workers in Iraq, and so far it has gained myriad solidarity letters from hundreds of trade unions, political parties, and

well-known figures.

As the progressive movement in the US struggles to end the US occupation of Iraq, we must extend our full support to Iraqi workers and their struggle for freedom and equality. They need our active solidarity so that they can build the power necessary to confront the reactionary and brutal regime which Washington is putting in place in Iraq. Only Workers solidarity and struggle, in and outside of Iraq, will guarantee a better future for Iraqi society and the working people of Iraq.

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Committee in Solidarity with Iraqi Workers-New York City

Bank Employees in Baghdad Hold a Conference All Arrested Employees Are to Be Freed

The employees of banking sector in Baghdad, supported by the Worker-communist Party of Iraq, the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq and the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq, held a conference on March 1, 2004 in Meridian Hotel in Baghdad. The conference, which was attended by 150 banking sector employees, was to coordinate and escalate the struggle against the attack by the authority on the employees of banking sector.

The Iraqi Finance Ministry accuses the employees of banking sector, almost all of whom are female cashiers, of stealing money during the Iraqi currency exchange that took place between Oct 15, 2003 and Jan 15, 2004. The exchange aimed to replace the Iraqi bills with Saddam Hussein's portrait with new bills. A new audit has discovered that the amount of new money given out during the currency exchange exceeded the amount of old money taken in by more than \$22 millions. These \$22 millions are either missing or have been replaced with forged bills. The Finance Ministry has sent out notices to hundreds of employees, demanding that they should pay the money or face imprisonment. Later, some 17 employees, all female cashiers, were arrested. All the arrests took place without warrants from court.

The employees insist that they are innocent and accuse the ministry of placing the blame on ranks-and files employees for its own corruption and failure. They insist that the money was handled by many others between the point it was signed off by cashiers and its final destructions. Falih Maktuf, a lawyer and the legal representative of WPIraq, who was appointed by the party to defend the employees accused the ministry of making the female employees scape-goats.

The conference was also to prepare for a general strike on scale of Iraq if the authorities failed to meet workers' demands. Bank employees demanded that all arrested employees should be released, workers must not be asked to pay for the missing currency, and a commission has to be formed to investigate what went wrong during the exchange. Samir Adil, the head of the Executive Committee of WPIraq, Yanar Muhammad, the chairperson of the OWFI, Falah Alwan, the president of the FWCUI and Qasim Hadi, the president of Union of Unemployed in Iraq addressed the participants. Falah Alwan urged the workers to form their own organization to defend their rights. In this conference a delegation was elected to negotiate with the Coalition Provisional Authority. In the

next day a delegation consisted of Samir Adil, Qasim Hadi, and Falah Maktuf, the legal representative of WPIraq visited and met with the arrested employees in jail. The delegation expressed its full support for the imprisoned workers and urged them to be patient. The delegation also told the arrested employees that the WPIraq will do its best to free them.

On the same day, a delegation consisted of Falah Maktuf, Yanar Muhammad, and nine members of the Committee for Defending the Banking Sector's Employees met with the officials including the representatives of Financial Ministry, Interior Ministry, and Justice Ministry and a few US generals at the Conference Palace. At the negotiations, the delegation presented all the infringements committed by the senior officials during the currency exchange, and after 3 hours of talks, it was agreed to free all arrested employees and investigate the issue.

Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq March 2, 2004

Teachers in Mosul Demand Unpaid Wages and Threaten Authorities with Strike

Returning to work after the holidays, hundreds of teachers gathered to protest and demand restitution for unpaid wages. Teachers gathered in front of the Education Directorate in Mosul, waving banners and placards demanding compensation for wages, which were already six months overdue. To avoid disrupting student exams, the teachers decided not to commence their protest until after the exam period. The ongoing protests and threat of a major walk-out by the teachers forced the Education Directorate to dispense 60 dollars as emergency pay for each teacher. In the case where state authorities refused to pay the overdue wages, tens of schools could potentially shutdown if these teachers were to make good on their threat to go on strike.

From the Correspondent of Al- Majalis Al-Umaliya (Workers Council) ,paper of the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq-FWCUI

5.03.2004

Falah Alwan's speech, leader of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq at the demonstration held in Bern-Switzerland on March 20, 2004



A year of war against the Iraqi Masses

A year of living under dark scenario

On Behalf of the Iraqi workers, the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq and on my own behalf, I extend warm greetings to everyone in this demonstration.

I take this opportunity to thank all freedom-loving people, civilised humanity, antiwar activists and opponents of terrorisms and occupation for their support for the Iraqi people.

Human tragedies and destruction caused by the latest war by the USA and its allies against Iraq are enormous. This war not only devastated the infrastructures but also caused deep suffering and human catastrophes across the country.

People around the world saw through the media coverage, how innocent people, including children, the elderly, and women were killed. We have once again seen the scene of corpses and destroyed buildings lying everywhere as the result of this barbaric war.

America lunched its war in the name of democracy and fighting terrorisms. However, what kind of democracy has America created for the Iraqi people?

The result was thousands of innocent victims as the direct result of

American war and occupation or as the result of the daily bombings as a consequence of this occupation, insecurity, uncertainty, millions of unemployed and thousands of displaced people, the rise of extremely reactionary and terrorist forces which are trying to impose their reactionary policies on the society, and possibility of ethnic and sectarian wars.

Amid these horrible circumstances, the Iraqi workers are standing up to the USA policies and the policies of the Iraqi Governing Council hand picked by the USA and formed of the most reactionary religious, and ethnocentric groups, head of tribes and mercenaries.

The progressive section of the Iraqi workers is in the forefront of the fight against war, and occupation and for freedom and civility.

While the bourgeois forces are in fierce fight on power and to define the society along religious, racial and ethnic lines, the Iraqi workers have demonstrated that they are the only force which struggles for the unity of the society and against ethnic and sectarian conflicts.

The USA wants to enforce its New World Order and is trying to make Iraq a model. This has been through two destructive wars, which turned Iraq to a field for settling international conflicts and striking new balances among international forces and reactionary poles.

The labour movement should also set its model in Iraq and world widely which defends civility and save the humanity using civilized and humanist methods.

The progressive workers and freedom loving people in Iraq have been in frontline in the struggle against the policies of the USA and the reactionary forces in Iraq.

Let's make Iraq the starting point for building such powerful labour movement

Lets escalate our protests for brining an end to the war of terrorists and for a better world. A world where people are free and equal. A world free of exploitation, poverty and deprivation, free of reactionary movements and thoughts, free of national and religious discrimination and free of reactionary ideas and thoughts.

Lets escalate our struggle for building a world of unconditional freedom of belief, expression and thinking. A world of full and unconditional equality between men and women. This can only be achieved by a strong freedom loving movement on the scale of the world united on the basis of these humanist aspirations.

Support the labour movement in Iraq Support its representative, the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq

Long live the international movement for freedom and equality.

Falah Alwan
Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq