

Call To Action
Educational Actions Called for AFL-CIO Convention
by progressive labor activists and the Latin America Solidarity Coalition

- **Yes to International Solidarity – No to Bush Administration/NED Funding**
- **Pass the "Building Unity and Trust" Resolution at the AFL-CIO Convention**
- **International Labor Solidarity is a Must. Don't Taint it with Bush Money!**

We urge the AFL-CIO Convention, meeting in Chicago, July 25-28, 2005 to adopt the "Building Unity and Trust Among Workers Worldwide" resolution.

This resolution would end dependence by the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS), more commonly known as the Solidarity Center, on US government/NED taxpayer funding.

An organization that receives the vast majority of its funding from the Federal government can not be an independent voice of labor solidarity -- it can only be an instrument of George W. Bush's interventionist foreign policy. In FY 2003, the Solidarity Center received over \$31 million in direct and in-kind federal monies. Only \$600,000 came from AFL-CIO coffers. This was a typical year.

The Solidarity Center gets the most of its operating funds from the mis-named National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a taxpayer-funded "private" organization. Besides the Solidarity Center, NED includes the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Chamber of Commerce's Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) – strange bedfellows for an organization supporting worker rights. NED was created in 1983 and one of its founders, Allen Weinstein, said in 1991, **"A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA."** Much of what the NED does to influence other countries' elections today would be illegal if a foreign power did them to influence U.S. elections.

There is true international labor solidarity work to be done. In Haiti, for instance, the Solidarity Center has supported the organization of workers in certain sweatshops, and has advocated for labor reforms. But, at the same time, the IRI, trained the violent thugs who precipitated the coup against democratically elected President Aristide, and NED funded Haiti's Group of 184, which includes proprietors of some of the Western Hemisphere's worst sweatshop industries. **The Solidarity Center should not keep such anti-worker company.**

In Venezuela, the Solidarity Center's work undermined progressive unions and social movements. The primary recipient of Solidarity Center funding in Venezuela has been the Confederación de Trabajadores Venezolanos (CTV) whose leader, Carlos Ortega, was one of the 2002 leaders of the aborted coup against democratically elected President Hugo Chavez. Even Solidarity Center organizers admit that the CTV is profoundly corrupt. CTV leadership's collaboration with business groups to overthrow the democratic government was traitorous to both working people and the nation. The Solidarity Center cannot evade its responsibility for supporting anti-democratic, anti-worker forces in Venezuela.

The Solidarity Center is making a major move into Iraq, seeking millions of dollars in NED funding. **Workers are justifiably concerned.** Solidarity Center resources will be used in violation of the AFL-CIO's commitment to workers' self-determination. Projects will be designed to give exclusive support to the union officially sanctioned by occupation and interim governments, while undermining the development of independent unions.

ACILS was formed in 1997, following the closure of AFL-CIO foreign offices which had operated as covers for the CIA. Among their most notorious activities was support for the overthrow of Chile's elected President Salvador Allende, in 1973. This support was funneled through the old American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). International solidarity activists inside and outside of labor looked forward to a new day of labor solidarity. But, in all too many cases ACILS has continued the anti-democratic, anti-worker mission of AIFLD.

The solution to this quagmire of intrigue and anti-worker activities is offered by the "Building Unity and Trust Among Workers Worldwide" resolution passed by the California Labor Federation, which represents one out of six AFL-CIO members. The resolution, forwarded for consideration to the AFL-CIO convention in July, calls for a clearing of the air regarding AFL-CIO activities in Chile, Venezuela, and elsewhere. It further calls for an end to Solidarity Center dependency on NED and other government funding in favor of mutual international worker solidarity programs funded primarily by union dues, and with open books, accountable to, and operated by, union members.

What You Can Do:

- 1. Endorse this call by visiting the LASC web page www.lasolidarity.org and filling out the endorsement form. 2. If you are a union member, ask your local, central labor council, or international to pass the "Building Unity and Trust" resolution before the convention.**
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- 3. Come to Chicago on July 24-25 for leafleting and rallies in support of the resolution.**
- 4. Send this call and the resolution (posted on www.lasolidarity.org) to your union friends and ask them to endorse the call and have their organizations pass the resolution.**