Against All Odds
Voices of Popular Struggle in Iraq

Organizing & Study Guide

WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

Against All Odds:
Voices of Popular Struggle in Iraq

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"I UNDERSTOOD SO CLEARLY WHAT THIS MOVEMENT WAS AND HOW IT COULD CHANGE THE LIVES OF WOMEN. EVEN IN THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH THE PRESENCE OF ISIS AND VARIOUS MILITIAS, WE ARE ABLE TO OPEN NEW SAFE HOUSES, LIKE THE ONE WE STARTED TEN DAYS AGO. THERE IS A KIND OF MADNESS TO OUR WORK..."

JANNAT AL GHEZZI
MEDIA DIRECTOR WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN'S FREEDOM IN IRAQ

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BY ALI ISSA FORWARD BY VIJAY PRASHAD

AGAINST ALL ODDS
VOICES OF POPULAR STRUGGLE IN IRAQ

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Section I: Understanding Iraq and Against All Odds

Welcome to the Against All Odds Organizing and Study Guide!

Thank you for checking out *Against All Odds: Voice of Popular Struggle in Iraq*, and being interested in the thoughts and lessons of fierce Iraqi social movement activists and organizers. We made this Organizing and Study Guide to help organizers, activists, and students around the world who have not had access to learning about Iraq and Iraqi activists. We hope this guide supports you in better understanding *Against All Odds* and engaging with the words you read within, as well as connect with the work and dreams of Iraqi organizers who are building the Iraq they dare to envision.

Goals of the Organizing and Study Guide

1. To break down the words and concepts in *Against All Odds* for a spectrum of people by using accessible language and popular education ways of learning.
2. To give activists a chance to connect your own organizing with Iraqi organizing through understanding how and what Iraqis organize about and what solutions they have for their struggles.
3. To promote connecting across borders and reviving internationalism.

Against All Odds Glossary of Terms

Communiques: An official announcement or statement, especially one made to the media, such as a press release.

Contractor: This refers to oil contractors, who maintained or created new contracts for oil drilling in Iraq, and historically profited from war and conflict, such as BP & Exxon & Shell.

Despotic rule: Despotic rule, or despotism, is a government led by one person/group/political party in absolute power, like a dictator.

(Ethno) Sectarianism: Sectarianism is the practice of viewing people's identities into religious sects/offshoots of a larger religion, and then privileging one over the other. Ethno-sectarianism adds an element of ethnicity to this privileging.

Fascism: A reactionary authoritative nationalist politics that rose in Europe after World War I. As a right-wing project, fascism opposes Marxist communism, anarchism, and liberalism.

General strike: Also known as a mass strike, a general strike is an epic collective action when a huge number of the total labor force in a city or country refuse to work until their demands are met.

Green Zone: The Green Zone is an area in Baghdad that served as the headquarters for occupation forces throughout the 2003 invasion, and today houses the world's largest embassy, the Embassy of the United States.

Halliburton: A US multinational corporation and one of the world's biggest oil companies (in eighty countries). Halliburton's CEO, Dick Cheney, was also US vice president at the time of the US-occupation of Iraq.

Ilisu Dam: The Ilisu Dam is a massive artificial dam under construction on the Tigris, near the village of Ilisu, and along the borders of Mardin Province & Sirnak Province in Turkey. It is merely one of twenty-two dams to be constructed through the Southeastern Anatolia project

for hydroelectric power production, however, because it will flood portions of ancient Hasenkeyf, it gained international attention and lost its funding in 2008.

Iraq Hydrocarbon Law: A law that aimed, among other things, to remove parliamentary oversight over government decisions on energy contracts with multinational corporations. The Iraqi government and occupying forces pushed hard to make this law pass, but Iraqi civil society ultimately defeated it.

Jaafari Law: A personal status law, introduced in March 2014 by the Iraqi Council of Ministers, which hinders the rights of women in areas of divorce, inheritance, polygamy, and child marriage.

Labor Law 150 of 1987: Instituted by the regime of Saddam Hussein, this law banned public sector trade union activity and robbed workers of their right to organize.

Luminary: A person of brilliance, vision, and inspiration to movement building everywhere.

Maqluba: Literally "upside down" in Arabic, it is a traditional one-pot dish of layered rice, meat, and vegetables, that once cooked is flipped upside down onto a large platter. Although there are regional variations, Iraqi *maqluba* usually includes lamb, eggplant, and tomatoes.

Muhasasa/Sectarian Quota System: This system was implemented in 2003 by the Coalition Provisional Authority under the direction of Paul Bremer, making sectarian affiliation the basis of government representation.

Narco-trafficker kingpins: A leader of a narcotic trafficking system.

National referendum: A direct vote, often on a ballot, when an entire electorate, or constituency, is asked to vote a specific proposal.

No-fly-zone: A no-fly-zone (NFZ) is an area no aircraft may fly over without risk of being shot down. The no-fly-zone over the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government was established by the United States and others from 1991-2003.

"The oil law": The oil law, drafted in 2006, was created in order to give multinationals a leading role in the development of Iraq's oil industry, to outline the nature of the relationships of those multinationals with various actors in Iraq's new federal system, and to strip parliament of its decision-making powers with regards to oil.

Oil sovereignty: The right of people [Iraqis] to the oil on their lands, to be shared fairly among people, without foreign interference and ownership.

Oil privatization: Turning over public or common resources of oil of a people, or government, into a commodity for private profit and control (usually by multinational corporations or foreign investors).

Oil reserves: The amount of recoverable oil (both actually and economically) in wells, reservoirs, field, nations, or for the world.

Order 8750 in 2005: This parliamentary order froze the accounts of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Iraq as part of a broader effort by occupation forces and their allies to stifle the union movement.

Pasha: A word of Ottoman Turkish origin, used as an honorary title to refer to a general—or any elite—though was used in 2011 to insult the US-occupation leader, George W. Bush.

Pragmatism: A logical way of thinking about something, or doing things that is based on dealing with specific things in life, instead of on ideas or theories.

Ramadan: A global Muslim holiday, beginning on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and one month long, that involves fasting, prayer, internal reflection, and community building.

Sanctions: An order or action that is made to force a country to obey international laws. Usually this includes stopping trade, economic aid, and blocking travel, as well as removing all diplomatic ties.

Shinina: A light and refreshing savory yogurt drink that is very popular in Iraq, usually served cold. Also called *ayran* or *laban ayran* in other regions, and is very similar to *kefir*.

Sit-ins: When a group of people sit down (usually in an organized protest) and refuse to leave until their demands are met.

Sykes-Picot: An agreement struck by the British and French governments after WWI, and negotiated and signed by Mark Sykes and Francois Georges-Picot, by which they outlined their respective spheres of influence over soon to be formed Arab states.

Technocrat: A scientist or technical expert who has a lot of power in politics or an industry.

Tribunals: A court of justice given the authority to judge or determine a dispute or conflict.

Key Organizations

Al-Qaʻida: Al-Qaʼida is a global, militant organization founded by Osama bin Laden and others at some point between 1988 and 1989 with origins in the Soviet war in Afghanistan. The organization, along with other forces, has contributed significantly to instigating sectarianism in Iraq.

Aswat al-Iraq: An independent news agency in Iraq which was founded in 2004, receives funding from the United Nations Development Program, and produces stories in Arabic, English, and Sorani, a Kurdish dialect.

Ba'th party/Ba'thists: The Ba'th Party, whose ideology was founded by Syrian philosopher Michel Aflaq, first came to power in Iraq in 1968, through a coup, which overthrew then-president Abdul Rahman Arif. Saddam Hussein led the party as President of Iraq from 1979 until the 2003 US invasion. "Ba'thists" is the name for members of the Ba'th Party.

The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) (under Paul Bremer): The CPA, administered by Paul Bremer, was a temporary, transitional governing body formed in the immediate aftermath of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. The authority dissolved in 2004.

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ): CPJ is an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom globally, defends journalists' right to report, and supports journalists who are threatened, imprisoned, or killed.

Equality Radio [Al Mousawat]: Al Mousawat is a radio station launched by the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq in October 2009, and has served as a platform for OWFI to reach women and provide them with a support network, with its focus on struggles against sexual violence and discrimination. The station was closed down in June 2014 by the Iraqi government, and efforts to lift the ban on it are ongoing.

The February 25 Revolution Coalition: The February 25 Revolution Coalition, in conjunction with several organizations, including the Popular Movement to Save Iraq, the Popular Front to Save Kirkuk, the Student and Youth Organization of a Free Iraq, the Movement in Steadfast Basra to Liberate the South, and the Iraqi Association of the Tribes of Southern and Central Iraq, led the 2011 Iraqi protest movement and organized the "Iraqi Day of Rage" in Baghdad's Tahrir Square on 25 February of that year.

Interior Ministry: The Iraqi Ministry of Interior oversees policing and border control and is comprised of the Iraqi police, the Department of Border Enforcement, and other related agencies.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): The IMF is made up of 188 countries claiming to end poverty, facilitate international trade, and secure financial stability, though in reality, it centralizes financial control to countries traditionally in power and prevents sovereign economic development.

International Research and Exchange (IREX): IREX is an international nonprofit organization which does work in the areas of education, media, conflict resolution, technology for development, youth, and gender, and has partners in more than 125 countries.

Iraqi Council of Ministers: The Iraqi Council of Ministers is the Iraqi government's executive branch. The Prime Minister appoints its members.

IS/ISIS/ISIL/Islamic State: The Islamic State is a Salafi jihadi militant group, which has gained control over territory in parts of Iraq and Syria, and to a lesser extent Libya and Nigeria. Its leader is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was a prisoner in the US-run Camp Bucca prison in southern Iraq in 2004.

***Jadaliyya*:** *Jadaliyya* is an independent e-zine produced by the Arab Studies Institute, the umbrella organization the also produces *Arab Studies Journal*, *Tadween Publishing*, *FAMA*, and *Quilting Point*. The e-zine is run primarily on a volunteer basis.

Kurd(s): The Kurds are an ethnic group with significant populations in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran. They make up the majority population in two autonomous regions: Iraqi Kurdistan and Rojava, Syria.

Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP): The KDP is a ruling political party in Iraqi Kurdistan, which was founded in 1946 in Iranian Kurdistan. A central aspect of its ideology is Kurdish nationalism. The KDP, along with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, established the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government.

Kurdish forces: The Kurdish forces, also known as the Peshmerga, are the military forces of Iraqi Kurdistan. Made up of both forces from the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, they have complete jurisdiction over the region's defense and security.

Kurdish nationalist forces: Kurdish nationalist forces are comprised of all bodies, parties, and individuals who support and seek to secure Kurdish nationalism, including the KDP, PUK, and Kurdish military forces.

Kurdistan Construction Workers' Organization (KCWO): The KCWO is an independent trade union which was launched in July 2011 and has been campaigning for recognition by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The organization has over one thousand members and organizes both Iraqi and Iranian Kurds, as well as construction workers from India, Pakistan, and other countries.

Kurdistan Regional Government/semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government: The Kurdistan Regional Government is the governing body of the semi-autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan region, and is comprised of a unicameral parliament known as the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament.

Majlis al-nuwwab/Council of Representatives: The Council of Representatives is Iraq's unicameral legislature which meets in Baghdad's Green Zone. Its role, as outlined in the constitution, is to pass federal laws and oversee the executive branch, as well as elect a president who in turn elects a prime minister.

Ministry of Culture: The Ministry of Culture is a government cabinet responsible for promoting cultural expression and the arts, as well as protecting national historic sites, museums, libraries, and other sites of cultural and historic significance.

Ministry of Industry: The Ministry of Industry is a government cabinet, which oversees the country's industrial development, and whose headquarters is located in Baghdad.

Ottoman Empire: The Ottoman Empire, led by Turks in Anatolia and founded in 1299, reached the height of its power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when it controlled parts of Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus, Western Asia, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. It collapsed at the end of WWI.

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan/PUK: The PUK is a Kurdish political party in Iraqi Kurdistan, which was founded in 1975 by its current president, Jalal Talabani, as well as others. Talabani also served as president of Iraq from 2005 to 2014. The PUK, along with the Kurdish Democratic Party, established the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government.

"Regime": A government, especially an oppressive or undemocratic one.

*Sada***:** *Sada* (Echo) is a non-profit project supporting new arts practices for young artists (18-35) in Baghdad through education initiatives, production support, and development of public programs. Sada recently suspended its work as a formal project in April 2015.

Saddamists: Saddamists may refer to members of Saddam Hussein's regime who ruled Iraq from 1979 to 2003, or to Ba'thists, members or followers of Hussein's Ba'th Party.

South Iraq Oil Company: The South Oil Company in Basra, Iraq is a national company responsible for oil in the country's south and is part of the Iraq National Oil Company, which was founded by the Iraqi government in 1966 to run all aspects of the oil industry.

Turkmen: The third largest ethnic group in Iraq, constituting over ten percent of the population, and the majority population of Kirkuk. Although the population is predominantly Sunni Muslims, there is no defining religious makeup, comprising also of Shiites and Chaldean Christians. They are of central Asian Turkic origins and not to be confused with Turks *from* Turkey. Historically marginalized, Iraqi Turkmens are often forgotten in media representations of Iraq.

US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): The CIA is an external intelligence-gathering agency that focuses on collecting overseas national security information as opposed to domestic intelligence, which is the domain of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Women's Empowerment Project: The Women's Empowerment Project is a central project of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), which protects women from honor killings and provides safe houses for women and girls.

Yazidis: An ethnic and religious minority in Iraq. Their monotheistic religion is influenced by Christianity, Sufi Islam, and Zoroastrianism; and, includes elements of ancient Roman and Assyrian religions. Although predominantly Kurdish-speaking, Yazidis are not ethnically Kurdish.

Key People

Allawi, Ayad: Ayad Allawi currently serves as one of Iraq's three vice presidents, and was interim prime minister from 2004 to 2005.

Al Lamie, Aya: Aya Al Lamie is an activist from the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq who was kidnapped and tortured by Iraqi security forces on 30 September 2011 for her active participation in Tahrir Square demonstrations.

al-Mahdi, Hadi: Hadi al-Mahdi was a journalist, filmmaker, and playwright who was assassinated on 8 September 2011, as a result of his role as a demonstration organizer and his coverage of political issues on his radio show including sectarianism and government corruption.

al-Maliki, Nouri: Nouri al-Maliki served as Iraq's Prime Minister from 2006 to 2014, and currently serves as one of three vice presidents. He is a leader of the Islamic Dawa Party and worked closely with the Iranian regime as well as US occupation forces during his time in office.

al-Musawi, Shatha: Shatha al-Musawi is a member of the Iraqi parliament, to which she was elected in 2005. In the Iraqi Supreme Court, she challenged the first of several contracts that the Iraqi government awarded to foreign oil companies, but her challenge proved unsuccessful.

al-Nujaifi, Atheel: Atheel al-Nujaifi was the governor of Nineveh Province, where Mosul is located, from 2009 until May 2015 when he was discharged by the Iraqi parliament. He supported protests and the defiance of a government-imposed curfew and denounced Maliki's violent crackdown on protesters in April 2011.

Ben Ali, Zine El Abidine: Ben Ali was President of Tunisia from 1987 to 2011. He came to power through a coup that ousted Tunisia's first president, Habib Bourguiba, and was later deposed by mass demonstrations known as the Arab uprisings.

Bouazizi, Mohamed: Mohamed Bouazizi was a Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire in December 2010, an act that inspired the Tunisian uprisings, which led to the ouster of then-president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali as well as the wider Arab Spring protests.

Eyal, Ali: Ali Eyal is a Baghdad-based visual multimedia artist who was affiliated with Sada. His work focuses on the complex relationships between community and politics, particularly in the context of Baghdad and Iraq.

Hussein, Saddam: Saddam Hussein was the fifth President of Iraq from 1979-2003, whose reign was characterized by increasingly extreme authoritarianism, including the suppression and at times massively lethal violence against all political opposition movements and ethnic minorities. The ruling Ba'ath Party, of which he maintained sole control, maintained power through two very costly wars and a harsh sanctions regime, e.g.: Iraq-Iraq War (1980-1988), Gulf War (1990-1991), and sanctions (1990-2003). In 2006, during the US-led occupation which dismantled the Ba'ath Party in 2003, Saddam Hussein was executed with charges of murdering 148 Shi'ites in 1982.

Key Events

1990 Gulf War: The Gulf War of 1990-1991 was a war waged by US-led coalition forces against Iraq in response to Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. That invasion also resulted in crippling economic sanctions against Iraq by the United Nations Security Council, which lasted until the 2003 war.

2003 Iraq War: The 2003 invasion of Iraq by US-led coalition forces, also called "Operation Iraqi Freedom" by former US president George W. Bush, his government, and coalition allies, deposed president Saddam Hussein and his government. The destructive impacts of this war, which was waged on the basis of falsified claims that Iraq harbored weapons of mass destruction, are still being seen today.

2011 Egyptian uprising: The 2011 Egyptian uprising, also known as the January 25 Revolution, was part of the Arab Spring. Millions of protesters gathered in Cairo, Alexandria, and other Egyptian cities, and they succeeded in their demand of the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak. The overthrow of Mubarak and his regime was one of many demands, which included a range of political and economic issues such as unemployment, low wages, emergency law, and police brutality.

Anbar Protests: The anti-government protests of Anbar, Nineveh, and Salah al-Din which began on December 21, 2012, with participation that sometimes reached hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, led to the blocking of a major Iraq-Jordan-Syria highway. Protesters' demands included releasing prisoners, ending the death penalty, and combating sectarianism. In January 2013, pro-government thugs attacked protesters.

"Arab Spring": The Arab Spring was a wave of protests that began in 2010 with the Tunisian Revolution and spread to several other Arab nations, with a broad range of varying demands as well as outcomes. Rulers were forced from power in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen.

Arab Uprisings: The Arab uprisings were the various protests and demonstrations that made up the Arab Spring.

Great Iraqi Revolution: The Great Iraqi Revolution is one of the core groups responsible for organizing protests in Iraq, which saw mass mobilization and participation in 2011, particularly on 25 February of that year.

Halabja Massacre: The Halabja genocidal massacre, also known as the Halabja chemical attack, was an attack against the Kurdish people on 16 March 1988 in Halabja, a city in Southern Kurdistan. The massacre was part of the Al-Anfal campaign, which targeted Kurds as well as other Iraqi minorities, and was, in part, a response to Iranian influence in Kurdistan towards the end of the Iran-Iraq War.

Occupy Wall Street: Occupy Wall Street was a protest movement against social and economic inequality that began on 17 September 2011 in Zuccotti Park, in New York's financial district. It was inspired in part by the Arab Spring as well as anti-austerity protests in Spain and inspired the broader, global Occupy Movement.

Operation Desert Storm: Operation Desert Storm was the combat phase of the Gulf War, waged by coalition forces led by the United States against Iraq from 17 January through 28 February 1991. The earlier phase of the war, from 2 August 1990 to 17 January 1991, was named Operation Desert Shield.
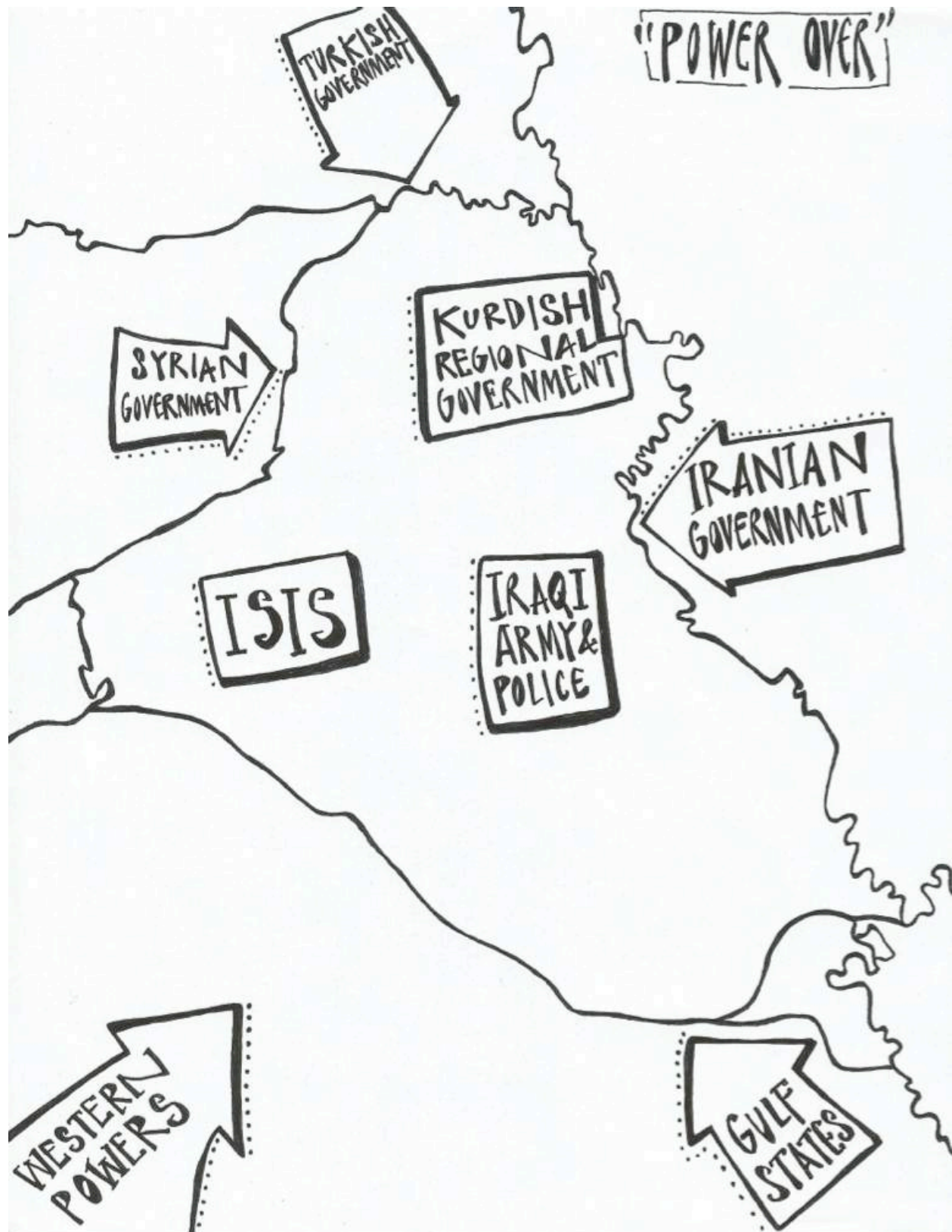
Revolts of Tunisia and Egypt: The revolts of Tunisia and Egypt were the first revolts of the Arab Spring protest movement, both of which resulted in the removal from power of their nation's leader.

Syrian Uprising: The Syrian uprising began in the spring of 2011 as part of the Arab Spring protests. Because Syrian president Bashar al-Asad responded with a violent crackdown on protesters, the uprising resulted in an ongoing armed conflict.
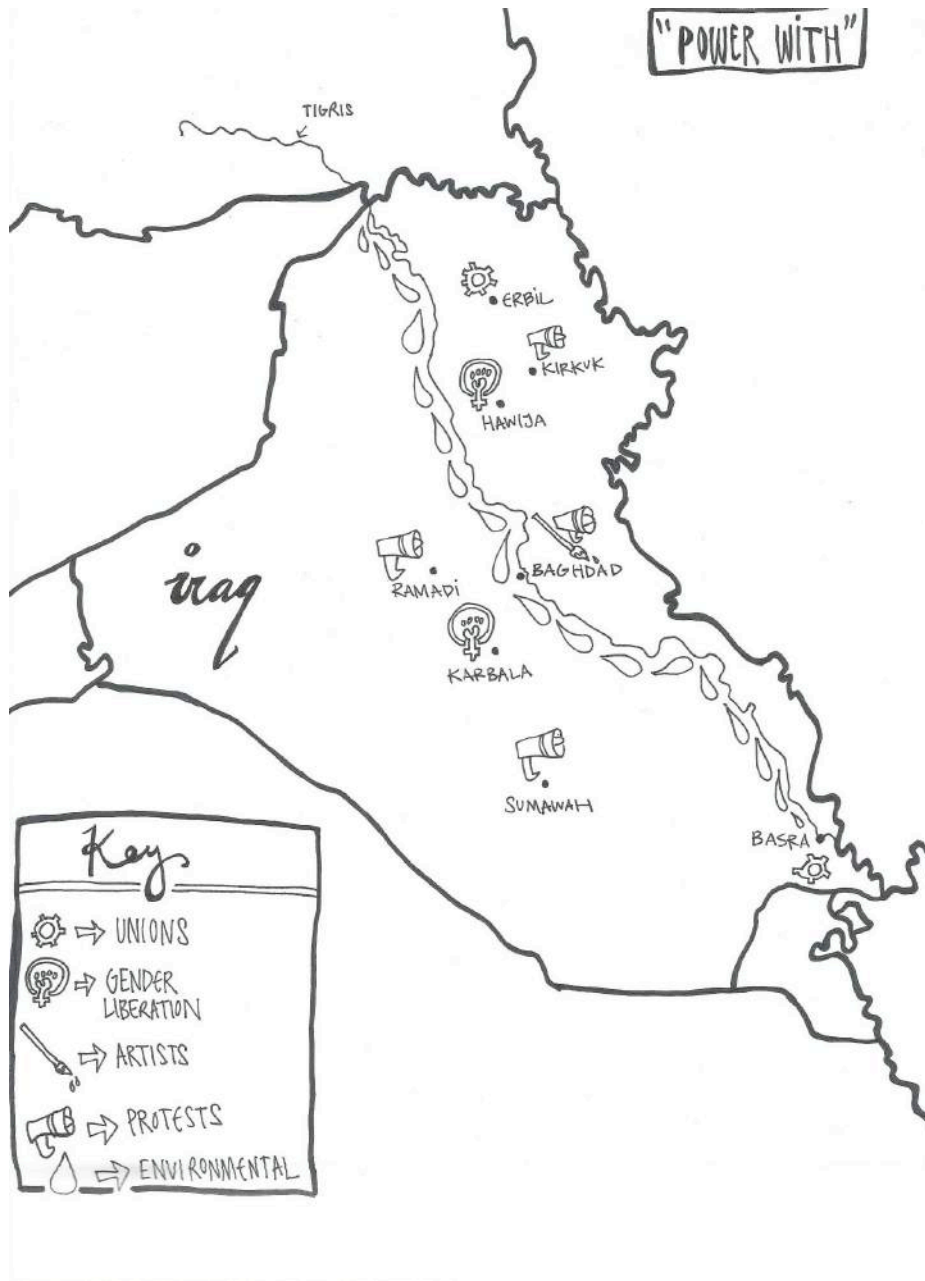
Geographic Map of Iraq

Power-over Map

TURKISH GOVERNMENT

"POWER OVER"

KURDISH REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

SYRIAN GOVERNMENT

IRANIAN GOVERNMENT

ISIS

IRAQI ARMY & POLICE

WESTERN POWERS

GULF STATES

Power-with Map

Section II: Popular Education: Connecting with Iraqi Organizing

Introduction to Workshops

In section II of the *Against All Odds* Organizing and Study Guide, you will find four complete curricula and a number of discussion questions to accompany the book. These workshops focus on four main themes: dismantling US centrism, media blackouts, misrepresentation, and finally, solidarity. This guide is designed to support facilitators in navigating complex conversations around Iraqi struggle, and how to take the lead of Iraqi organizers when connecting to popular struggle in Iraq.

Time needed: 4 Hours total for workshop, or spread over time.

Workshop Goals:

1. Make the connections between participants' organizing and Iraqi organizing through understanding what Iraqis organize around, what problems they struggle with, and what solutions they have.

2. Leave the workshops feeling educated about Iraq and inspired by Iraqi organizing. Participants are steeped in the values of cross movement, cross issue, cross sect unity as a liberation strategy for all.

3. Feel motivated to uplift the narratives of Iraqi people, and celebrate the resilience of their resistance to oppressive forces.

Notes for Facilitators

Before workshops:

1. Read through goals: Frequently look back to them to ground yourself during the workshop.

2. Read the workshop thoroughly: Be clear about your political framework during the workshop so you are helping to shape where you want participants to land after each section.

3. Participants do not need to have read the entire book to participate in the activities or conversations but the facilitator should have ideally read the book. That way you can participate in your own way by referencing the book where you see

connections being made! If you feel insecure answering tough questions, see if a comrade knowledgeable about Iraq can sit in on your workshop as a resource!

4. Prepare yourself:

    a. Be familiar with what you are going to lead workshop participants through —it is the responsibility of the facilitator to hold the feelings that come up, and also move participants through the hard ones. Since this workshop is rooted in how people are repressed and murdered, hard feelings might come up for workshop participants. Be ready for that. The more you prepare for the workshop, the more grounded you will feel during it.

    b. Make all your wall-charts beforehand!

    c. Print the "Power With" blurbs beforehand and make sure they are each on a sheet.

During workshops:

1. Before any activity, be sure to set the space with intention by collectively creating space agreements. Some topics that will arise can be heavy, hard, and might be triggering. Participants should feel safe, heard, and to have support to feel through triggers and heavy feelings.

2. Always throw questions back to the group, to encourage participants to use their own skills and knowledge to land where you want them to land.

3. Set up your physical space well to encourage participation and comfort, especially if participants do not know one another. If someone is particularly new to the topic, arrange for him/her to have a buddy beforehand that can help guide him/her through the workshop so they are not lost.

4. Balancing needs: Make sure you are helping the conversation and process along, but balance that with allowing participants to feel empowered in their experience and knowledge. Facilitate, do not dominate.

5. Be calm: Do not push through the agenda if people are lost. Make sure people are clear about activity instructions.

Finally, Some Love for You:

1. Remember: This facilitator guide is full of suggestions. You do not have to say exactly what is written in the guide, be natural. Make sure you communicate the key components to moving the workshop along, but you do not have to use it word for word.

2. Take care of yourself! If possible, have two facilitators so you will have support. The wellness of participants is a priority, but so is the wellness of the facilitator(s).

3. Lastly, thank you. Thank you for taking time to lift up Iraqi organizers and work on connecting our struggles across borders.

Please note: Depending on whether every participant knows each other or not, if you are doing the activities one at a time, or in a workshop sequence, add additional time for check-ins, introductions (e.g.: Name, PGPs (preferred gender pronouns), what group you are with) and set space agreements. Allow for extra time for check-ins.

Workshop I: US-Centrism [1 hour]

Goal: Participants will develop political analysis that our oppression has many sources and we fight against all levels of power, not just those centered in US narratives. Participants will understand how these levels prevent people from achieving the goals that are mentioned later in Section III: Take Action. Finally, participants will see that in order to achieve the demands of Iraqi organizers across movements, we must oppose all sources of oppression (regional, global, and local).

Print out and gather all materials in the materials list for this activity.

Materials (Supplemental materials can be found at the end of the workshop):
Thumbtacks
Any kind of thread or string.
Print "Power Over" & "Power With" maps (in Materials List)
Print "Power Over" & "Power With" blurbs
Blank wall-chart paper
Markers, other materials participants can use to be creative with their Report Backs. (Glitter could be fun.)

Workshop Prep:
Post both maps on wall, cut out all the blurbs and group them together with their corresponding map. Make sure both teams have all materials for the activity.

Note to Facilitator: Participants will use the thumbtacks to attach the string to a location on the map and connect the other end of the string to a description of an organization/force, so have enough space for folks to gather around the maps on the wall.

Intro [5 MIN]

SAY: Our oppression has many sources. The US-centered narratives we hear of Iraqi oppression and experience of Iraqis is harmful because it not only misrepresents US-involvement, but also does not address the global, regional and even local oppressive forces impacting Iraqis. Today we are going to identify who/what those forces are based on the experiences captured in the book.

Activity [30 MIN]

DO: Guide participants to look at the maps on the wall.

SAY: There are two maps. The first map shows some of the oppressive forces impacting Iraqi people, who use power-over tactics. This map is called "Power Over". The second map shows some of the organizers, activists, and groups of people using people power-with tactics. This map is called "Power With". A lot of the oppressive forces and organizers are in the book.

SAY: We are going to break up into two groups. Each group will have a map and a collection of short blurbs describing the landscape of either oppressive forces or organizers, which you will talk about among yourselves. You will use the string to attach the blurb to the map and the thumbtacks to pin it all in place. It might work best if you do a go-around reading the blurbs to each other to understand who your players are. Then, together you will prepare a report back based on the blurbs your group got. Finally, we will come together and each group will teach each other what they learned!

DO: Ask if there are any questions.

SAY: Your report back can look however you want it to.

DO: Split the group into two groups (participants can count off by 1, 2). Designate separate sides of the space for each group to be on. Hand Team A the "Power Over" blurbs, and Team B the "Power With" blurbs.

Give each group 20 minutes to talk through their blurb, and 3 minutes to present their report back.

(If participants have read the book, this is a good time to brush up on what they have learned. If they have not read the book, it is still okay to guess and learn more in the debriefing.)

Debrief [20 MIN]

SAY: Thanks everyone. Let us all come together in a group now to debrief! [Ask these questions and allow for some discussion after each one:]

1. How was that for everyone? What is something that surprised you/did you learn about a new player?
2. Why do you think we did this activity?
3. Why have we not seen this kind of information about both oppressive forces and organizers before?
4. How do we decentralize the United States (both as an oppressive government force and US-based organizers) while also holding the United States and Western powers accountable for the occupation and continued oppression?

Check out [5 MIN]

SAY: Thank you for all of your brilliant reflections. I hope we all feel better prepared to go back to our organizing knowing we are holding a lot of complexity. Now we will do a check out with each other:

What is one thing you are bringing back to your community/organizing from today?

US-Centrism Workshop I Materials List

Note: This workshop has a number of printable material, so as facilitator you will need some paperclips. Each map should ideally be printed the size of a full sheet of paper. All definitions should be cut out separately.

1. Power-with Map
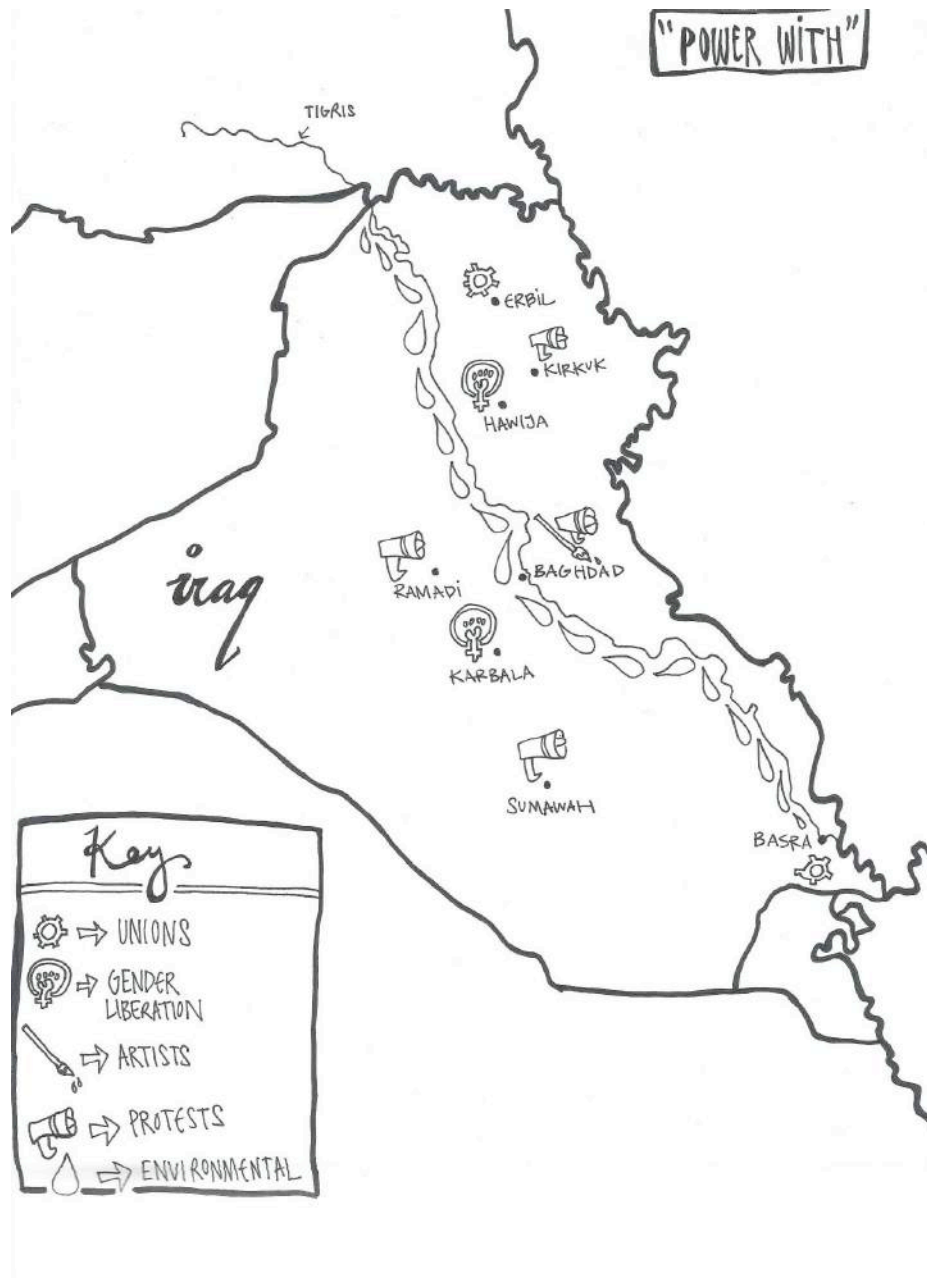
Power-with Blurbs

Gender Liberation [Hawija, Karbala]

Groups in Iraq, such as the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, are working to provide support for survivors of gender violence and build a movement to end its root causes. They also tackle issues of inheritance, divorce, polygamy, and child marriage. The support they provide, in some cases, takes the form of sheltering women who have faced or are at risk of facing gender violence. In addition to providing protection, these shelters have become spaces for building the movement for gender liberation as well as leftist movements more broadly. As explained by Jannat Alghezzi of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, gender liberation and women's liberation go hand in hand with economic liberation and the liberation of workers, particularly because a woman's economic independence is an important factor in her liberation. Thus, these groups often work closely with workers' unions. OWFI's presence includes Karbala and Hawija among many others.

Environmentalists [Tigris River]

Groups working to confront the many threats to Iraq's many natural environments. These threats include the toxic remnants of US weapons, which have caused high rates of cancer and birth defects, particularly in areas close to military bases. Another major environmental threat is the building of major dams in Turkey, which threaten the Tigris River, Iraq's main water supply. The Save the Tigris & Marshes campaign works in areas dependent upon, and along, the Tigris River.
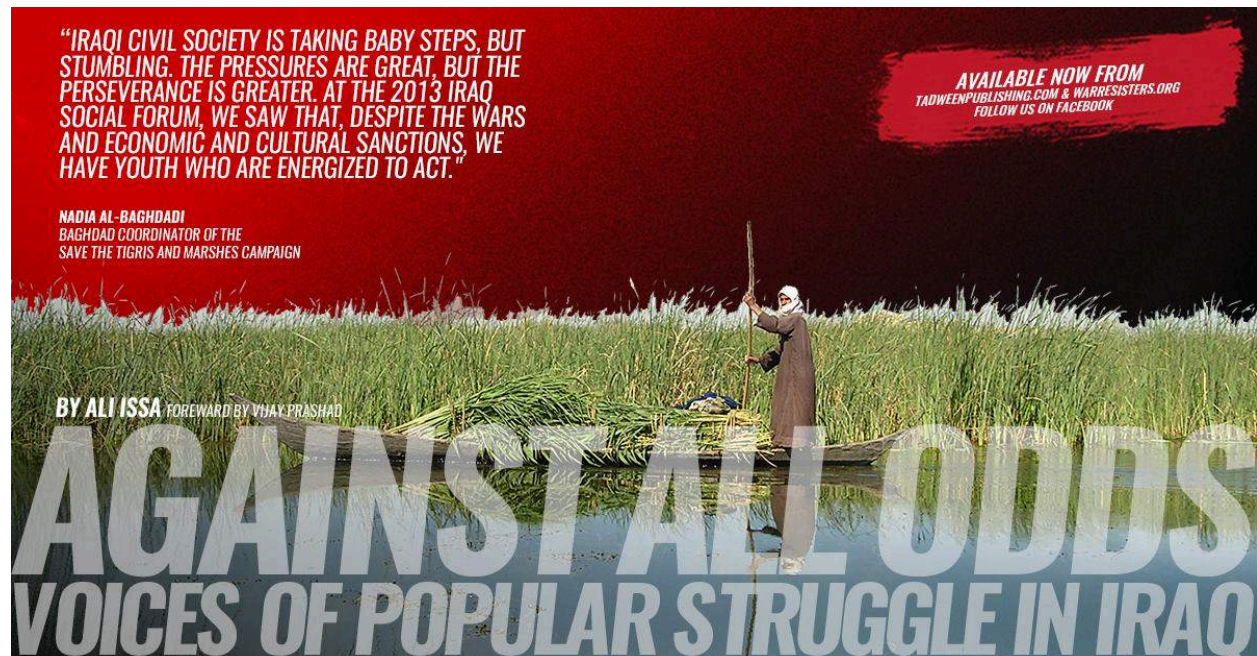
Artists [Baghdad]

Cultural workers engaged in producing beauty and ideas that sustain survival, critical thinking, and new possibilities. One example was *Sada*, a global project that supported emerging Iraqi artists. Their efforts support and encourage young artists through education and arts programming that are not available through more traditional educational institutions such as public schools due to the destructive impacts of the 2003 war. Baghdad-based artist Ali Eyal is one such artist (and the below painting is one of his!).

Unions [Basra, Erbil]

Labor unions in several industries and sectors in Iraq including electricity, oil, and gas have mobilized and campaigned for workers' rights despite challenges, most notably the maintenance of Saddam Hussein's 1987 law that criminalized union activity and organizing in the public sector. Significantly, unions were successful in defeating the Iraq Hydrocarbon Law in 2006-7, which would have removed parliamentary oversight over government decisions on energy contracts with multinational corporations. Unions are active all over Iraq, coming from a range of political views. For example, broad coalition of unions led strikes in Basra over the years, as well as labor justice organizing in Erbil.

Protests [Baghdad, Ramadi, Kirkuk, Sumawah]

Protests in Iraq have served to highlight several demands including ending the occupation; releasing political prisoners; improving social services; bringing down Maliki's government; revoking the sectarian quota system; eliminating foreign meddling in Iraq's affairs, particularly that of Iran; among others. Major protests in 2011 led to the resignations of several governors across Iraq, including two Basra governors. The Iraqi government responded violently to the 2011 protests with curfews, live ammunition, and wide scale arrests. To spread awareness about this, activists used cash to write the location and time of protests to mobilize large groups in Baghdad. Protests were prevalent all over the country, including Kirkuk, Ramadi, and Sumawah.

2. Power-over Map
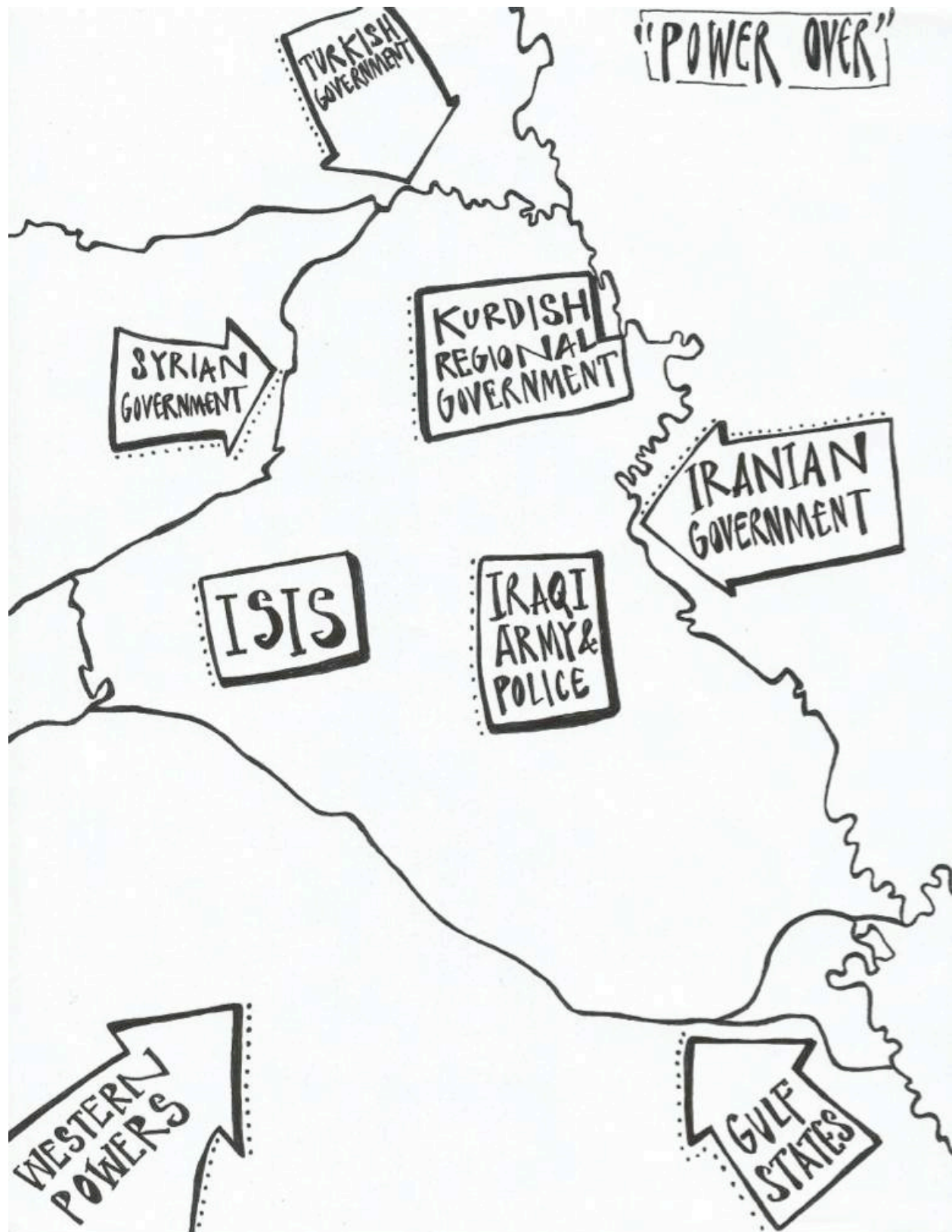
Power-over Blurbs

Iranian and Syrian Government

Due to the power vacuum left by the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the allied governments of Syria and Iran have increasingly gained power in Iraq. This increased influence was made possible in part by the divide and conquer policies utilized by the US government and occupying forces, as well as their de-Ba'athification policies which aimed to strip Iraq's institutions of any trace of the former regime but took on a sectarian form. Contributing significantly to the spread of sectarianism, the governments of Syria and Iran typically bolster Shiite militias and defend and support the Iraqi government, which is led by members of the Islamic Dawa Party.

Iraqi Army and Police

Although the Iraqi army and police were dismantled at the onset of the US occupation, the newly-formed, massive army and police forces were trained to crack down heavily on protests and demonstrations throughout Iraq with live ammunition, beatings, torture, and by taking no action while sectarian kidnappings occurred before their eyes.

Kurdish Regional Government

Decades of severe repression against Kurdish people have allowed the Kurdish Regional Government and its composite nationalist and exclusionary parties to convince people that US intervention is the best way to ensure Kurdistan's safety from outside regional intervention. Despite that challenge, Kurdish people have built awareness of the economic and political interests of the Unites States and its allies in Kurdistan and Iraq. The ruling Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan have repressed opposition and civil organizing, and have become increasingly militarized.

Islamic State (IS)

The Islamic State is a Salafi jihadi militant group, which has gained control over territory in parts of Iraq and Syria, and to a lesser extent Libya and Nigeria. Its leader is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was a prisoner in the US-run Camp Bucca prison in southern Iraq in 2004.

Turkish Government and Gulf States

The Turkish government and its allied Gulf states, most significantly the governments of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have increasingly gained power in Iraq, as a counterforce to the governments

of Iran and Syria. Also contributing significantly to the spread of sectarianism, the governments of Turkey and the Gulf states typically bolster Sunni militias.

Western Powers

The governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and other European countries who are more or less aligned politically and economically. Driven by capitalist interests, they frequently wage both overt and covert wars domestically and abroad.

Workshop II: Media Blackout and Discussion Questions [1 hour]

Goals: Participants will learn how centers of power surveil and control media outlets, as well as commit violence against those trying to create/share media that exposes Iraqi struggle. Participants will connect how media blackouts isolate and challenge Iraqi organizing with media blackouts they face in their own organizing. Participants will learn from strategies Iraqis use to navigate the erasure tactic of media censorship, which isolates and creates obstacles.

Note to Facilitators: This workshop starts with a discussion group and follows with an activity. If you are in a classroom setting, you can just use the discussion questions!

Materials:
Wall-charts
Paper
Markers

Workshop Prep: Write all Guiding Questions on wall-charts beforehand, so you can have it up when it is needed in the workshop. Be sure to have this butcher visible for all participants to look at. Keep a few empty butchers to take note of the answers participants give during the activity.

Intro [5 MIN]

SAY: Welcome everyone! Today we are going to be breaking down the power of media and the impacts of censorship/erasure in media, as well as the ways Iraqis fight that erasure, and the empowering media they create themselves.

Discussion Questions [15 MIN]
- What importance does people power have in political liberation movements?
- What tools/resources do we use in our own organizing to reach out to our communities?
- How can we support communities who don't have access to the tools/resources we just talked about?
- Why is mainstream media not an accessible resource for Iraqi organizing?

Activity [30 MIN] (Two facilitators are suggested for this activity)

Intro: This activity aims to address the tactics used by oppressive forces to weaken Iraqi organizing. These tactics are to target the outlets used to build community, to mobilize and to spread knowledge, such as journalists being brutalized, mainstream media being controlled and surveilled by the government, or FUBU[1] media being shut down (e.g.: the OWFI radio station, Al Mousawat). Media is an essential part of organizing, but it is not always a possibility, or the best way to communicate due to surveillance.

SAY: Welcome everyone to the space! Now, in the book we learned a lot of ways Iraqi organizers create their own media, and the strategies they develop to mobilize the community that do not include social media or government controlled media. How do we mobilize and communicate important information without Facebook you ask? Well, we are going to find out.

SAY: For this activity, we are going to have everyone split into two groups. Each team will have ten minutes to strategize a plan to hook the other team into going to your event. Here is a list of guiding questions you want to hit when you are outreaching to the community members. You want to make sure you hit them all, to get your best chance of a good turnout.

DO: Refer to Guiding Questions butcher.

Guiding Questions (Create a strategy that will answer these questions):
  1. Since you cannot use media to mobilize your community, what tactic are you using instead? *(Be creative!)*
  2. Does everyone feel informed about the event? *(Make sure they know Where, When, Why).*
  3. How do you hook them into going? *(Different people require different hooks. A hook is that one thing that makes someone really commit to going, for example).*

SAY: After both teams have had ten minutes to strategize, you are going to have ten minutes each to put your plan into action! Each team will take turns being the *outreachers* and the *outreachees*. Team A will convince Team B to come to a mobilization! After your ten minutes is up, teams will switch roles. Now, for the team who is being outreached to, you want to make sure they have hit the guiding points. Once they have convinced you to come to their

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[1] FUBU = For Us By Us

mobilization, move to the other side of the room. Remember, we are all here to support each other, so challenge the other team but be constructive about it. After the first team is done, we will start over with teams switching roles. The team with the most community members on their side of the room at the end of their ten minutes, wins!

SAY: Any questions?

DO: Split the group into two groups (have participants count off by 1, 2). Designate separate sides of the space for each group to be on. Hand teams blank butcher paper to write out their plan.

DO: Read the "Set the Scene" or ask a participant to read it with character.

Note: *This activity involves role play.*

SAY: **[Set The Scene: ask a participant to read this]** You are an awesome organizer in your community set in a city in Iraq. This setting brings with it organizing challenges we are all familiar with, but also successive wars and decades of dictatorship (and lengthy sanctions) have created legacies of mass trauma, deeply damaged infrastructure, and rampant torture by the state. Moments over past decades have seen intensified mass violence, followed by periods of relative calm. Different parts of Iraq also have been more or less impacted by all these legacies. These conditions create specific kinds of vulnerability, which both limit possibilities for progressive vision, but also offer openings, as the stories of the years since 2003 clearly show.

Now, you are creating a strategy with comrades on how you are going to reach out to your people about this mobilization to protest media censorship and surveillance. You have no access to social media, or any form of mainstream media, since, you know, the state is surveilling and censoring it all. This leaves you with one option: create your own media.

Your job is to successfully communicate the following information, and convince the other group to come to your action. The group that has convinced the most community members to come to the other side of the room, wins!

SAY: Now that we have set the scene, you have ten minutes to strategize! Go!

Note: Both teams should use the first ten minutes to strategize. Walk around the room as they do and offer support to help guide them if you see that they're stuck.

DO: After ten minutes, instruct Team A to put their strategy into action and convince Team B to come to their side of the room. After another ten minutes, guide the teams to switch positions on either side of the room, signifying their switch in roles. Start the clock again at ten minutes and have Team B put their plan into action!

Note: Facilitators should walk around and make sure participants s are implementing their plans and utilizing the checkpoints they used in their strategy session.

Debrief [20 MIN]

SAY: Now that time is up, let's come back together:

- How was that for everyone?
- What made your strategy challenging? What worked?

DO: Scribe responses to the questions as participants popcorn answers onto a butcher (they will support the discussion on solidarity and could be very useful in later activities to pull out.)

SAY: For Iraqi organizers, unity is so important after such a long ethno-sectarian government structure. Does everyone know what that means? (Allow for some discussion. See definition of ethno-sectarian in the glossary!). Let's talk about unity:

- What does it mean to have unity?
- What kind of divisions block unity in your organizing/community?
- How can this lesson of what Iraqis are doing inspire how we approach organizing here?

DO: Introduce the participants to Jannat Alghezzi, media director of OWFI, and play a portion of her interview about what people think about when they think of Iraq to close out the workshop: (Just play the first 30 seconds of the video.) http://bit.ly/1IFpSqs

Checkout [5 MIN]

SAY: Now we are going to go around the room, say your name, your pronoun, and something you are taking with you from this workshop to bring back to your community or organizing.

Workshop III: Misrepresentation [1 hour 15 MIN]

Goal: In this workshop, participants learn how Iraqis are represented as dehumanized, isolated, disempowered, and hopeless. Participants will understand this one dimensional narrative redefines the reality of Iraqi people, and perpetuates oppressive stereotypes that lead people to identify Iraq as a hopeless, victimized country—a misrepresentation that negatively impacts Iraqis. Participants will challenge the narrative often-expressed in mainstream media and encourage narratives voiced by Iraqi people: ones of resistance, resilience, and power. Participants will leave feeling that Iraqi people are the truth tellers of their own stories, and having identified the importance of "community". Participants will leave with tangible ideas to promote FUBU media.

> **Materials:**
> Wall-chart with Community and its definition written on it. [Community: people you feel at home with who share common ground such as identity and values, etc.]
> Markers
> Blank wall-chart
> Misrepresentation blurbs printed (if needed—depending on levels of participants. See "Facilitator's Note" below)

Workshop Prep: Keep a few empty wall-chart sheets for scribing popcorn answers.

Intro [10 MIN]

SAY: Welcome everyone! Today's workshop is on misrepresentation in media. In the book, we read a lot about the ways Iraqis are impacted by misrepresentation in global media. We also know a lot of organizing is happening to create media for and by Iraqis (FUBU). This is important since media plays a key role in communication, mobilizing movements, and sharing vital information to community members. How does media play a key role?

DO: Give 2-3 people a chance to answer.

SAY: Totally! Institutions in power often use media to misinform a community and shape views of people based on race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. Using propaganda to define what is unfamiliar is a large tactic used every day by government forces. IS is hyper visible in global

media these days, which shapes the narrative of Iraq as a source of danger to the United States and upholds a false sense of ethical reasoning for violence. Also, grassroots work and organizing happening in Iraq gets erased and invisibilized, thus creating a one-dimensional narrative. Today we are going to break down the misrepresentation mentioned in the *Against All Odds* book, and brainstorm ways to uplift the voices of Iraqi organizing.

Defining Community [5 MIN]

SAY: We are going to do an activity where we break down examples of misrepresentation and the impacts it has had on Iraqi people and organizing.

SAY: Before we get into our activity, we will ground ourselves in community. How do we define community?

DO: Pull out Community web butcher, let participants popcorn responses while you or a co-facilitator scribe.

SAY: This is the way community is defined by the *Against All Odds* crew. What do you think about this definition? What would you add?

DO: Let participants popcorn thoughts/additions and scribe them to the community web.

SAY: These are great thoughts [say affirming things about the participants' definitions]. Thank you for your responses.

Group Breakout [10 MIN]

Note to Facilitators: The fishbowl activity is a good way to encourage folks to move up by creating different ways to have a conversation. Participants who feel more comfortable speaking out to a big group, and participants who prefer smaller group interactions will both have opportunities to be in their comfort zone and opportunities to push themselves out of their comfort.

SAY: Now that we have defined community, and have our gears turning around the importance of community, we are going to do a fish bowl. A fish bowl is just a way to structure

a conversation. We have questions and we have brilliant minds. Let's share our thoughts. First we are getting into small groups.

DO: Have participants count off into groups, so that there are about five people per group. Have each group sit in their own circle. Together, they will answer Question 1.

SAY: Let's start off this activity with the micro: ourselves and our communities. In your small groups, ask each other:

1. How does media representation impact how we see ourselves and our communities?

DO: When time is up, have participants rearrange the chairs so there is an outer circle and a smaller circle in the middle with six seats. (***Tip:*** *Play upbeat music during this rearranging for a quick energizer if the space has low energy!*)

Fish Bowl [30 MIN]

SAY: This is when the fishbowl happens! [Ask for volunteers to start the fishbowl, acknowledging that it is scary but this activity is about witnessing and listening! Ask for a brave soul to start us off today!]

DO: Have them sit in the smaller circle, as they answer questions two through four (below) and converse only with each other. Participants in the outer circle will not participate in the conversation, but will listen and wait for their opportunity to switch in. As each person in the inner circle speaks and shares their thoughts, you should be alternating participants from the outer circle into the inner circle. You want to make sure each person has contributed thoughts before you switch them out of the circle.

Note to Facilitators: This is where you will have to take an active role depending on the familiarity of workshop participants. If participants are knowledgeable/informed about Iraq and Iraqi politics, or have fully read the book, the following questions can be an organic fishbowl discussion, with your role being to land people in the suggested "landings". However, if participants are new to Iraqi organizing and politics, or shy about discussing it, we recommend having a few volunteers read out the "Misrepresentation" blurbs in the Materials Section at the end of this section.

2. How do Iraqi organizers describe the ways they are represented through media and the impact of media on their organizing?

Facilitator Note: Possible places to land:

1. Due to the hopelessness narratives pushed by mainstream and alternative media, other perspectives and narratives are not lifted up. Yes, there is violence and hopelessness, but there is also struggle and vision, as created by activists.

Use the quotes about Misrepresentation from the book found in the Materials section at the end of this workshop **(Misrepresentation Workshop III Materials)**.

3. What values and interests make up the representations of Iraqis in media?

Facilitator Note: Possible places to land:

1. *"If it bleeds, it leads"*: the value of Western culture to focus on gruesome murder and genocide.

2. Over-simplification in media that allows dichotomies and clear "bad" and "good," with, usually in US media, the United State and allies being good.

3. Amnesia: never referring to past or context that keeps politics ahistorical.

4. War on Terror economy: rely on dehumanizing Iraqis to either be terrorists or victims (e.g.: Christians).

Quotes about Misrepresentation in *Against All Odds*:

Page 55: "In the build-up to the 2003 war, Iraq was everywhere again. Reminiscent of the media spectacle of Operation Desert Storm, "Iraq" had once again become a buzzword-- detached from notions of home and the stories of our childhood. Instead, Iraq came to denote a purely militaristic target for those opportunists in Washington and other global power centers." **—Ahmed Habib (shakomako.net)**

Page 31: "The media, especially that which is allied with the Iraqi government and Western states, has been focusing on the Islamic State (IS) and its control over several Iraqi cities, provoking its audience against the militant group. Indeed, IS terrorist groupings do exist among armed groups there and its influence in the recent events is clear. However, it is also true that Iraqis generally reject IS, whether in the central or southern regions of Iraq or in parts of the country that are no longer under government control: the so called "Sunni" areas of the "Sunni Triangle," a term that intelligence services, particularly the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), devised as part of a plan to engineer sectarianism in Iraq...The fall of several Iraqi cities in the hands of armed groups does not represent the dreams of people who live there. Their demands to be rid of sectarianism are clear and direct. They expressed them through nonviolent sit-ins, but armed terrorist groups took advantage of this environment to take power." **—Falah Alwan (Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq)**

4. How do Iraqi organizers fight that misrepresentation?

Facilitator Note: Possible place to land:

1. By creating their own media like FUBU Media

Al Mousawat, Page 69: (Al Mousawat is a radio station of OWFI, though below is a quote about what OWFI means for one activist): "I   first got to know OWFI as a victim of this society. I had some problems with my family, and they threatened me. 'If you do not straighten up, we are going to kill you.' So OWFI really helped me with its shelter program. In 2007, I spent time in one of OWFI's safe houses. It saved my life. Right now, I could be a number at a morgue with my name on a stone. That   program also helped me see that I was not to blame for the situation I was in. You know what it means for someone to get a second chance? This was my second chance, so when I got back into society I wanted to work on these issues. I understood so clearly what this movement was   and how it could change the lives of women. Society mistreats women based on their gender: just because they are women, they are victims. So, when I started working on this, I went to a lot of trainings to get stronger as an organizer. This is the work that the empowerment project does. Since 2008, our safe houses have increased and developed. Even in the current circumstances, with the presence of IS and various militias, we are able to open new safe houses, like the one we started ten days ago. There is a kind of madness to our work...."
—Jannat Alghezzi, Media Director of OWFI

Shakomako.net, Page 56: "It was a rude awakening for a lot of Iraqis in the diaspora. As millions of Iraqis lived in the relative comfort of cities abroad, millions more inside the country were suffering a slow death. The need for a means of reflection and communication among us, one that linked back home, could not have been clearer. Rife with the contradictions of displacement, a group of Iraqi youth who had met in Doha in 2003 decided to create a platform to reclaim Iraq as it existed in the minds of people around the world. An online magazine, shakomako.net was thus born in the diaspora in 2004 and has since gone through several iterations." **—Ahmed Habib, shakomako.net**

Against All Odds, **Page 1:** "Terrorist or victim. Sunni or Shi'i or Kurd. Women or oppressor-of-women. These words again and again frame stories of Iraqis, making them invisible, and erasing the experiences and possibilities they live out every day. The pages that follow reject that limited horizon, making space for Iraqis to tell their stories-- and the   stories of their struggles—in their own words." **—Ali Issa, Author of *Against All Odds***

DO: Once the group has answered all the questions, have folks leave the small circle and join the rest of the group. Thank everyone for participating as you shift into closing out the workshop.

Debrief [10 MIN]

SAY: Let's come together now. Based on the media representation of Iraq and its people we have seen in mainstream media here in the United States, and the media we have seen created by Iraqis, let's discuss some questions:

- What are the differences?
- How can this lesson of what Iraqis are doing inspire how we approach organizing here?

SAY: Thanks for getting in so deep with each other. As we close out this activity, what is one thing you are taking back to your community/organizing?

Checkout [5 MIN]

DO: Do a go around and close out!

Misrepresentation Workshop III Materials (print and cut each section)

Question 2: Quotes from *Against All Odds*

1. Page 64: "I would not say the view the world has of Iraq is completely incorrect, but it is seriously lacking. Our civil society is taking baby steps, but it is stumbling. The pressures are great, but the insistence and perseverance is greater. At the 2013 Iraq Social Forum, we saw that, despite the wars and the economic and cultural sanctions, we have youth who are energized to act and have very clear visions and specific goals. These are qualities that, unfortunately, our generation of Iraqis does not have. Sadly, the past has ruined and twisted us. We are sick psychologically. What we have seen has made us sick. It is not a small thing what we have gone through. It means that we have gone through a split. These youth are different, they wanted to change things and they worked together. In the end, I had reached a point of despair after talking with politicians and doing the media work. Even the media is tied to parties and agendas. They would not publish what we wanted. If an official stood with us, then the story would become all about his presence, about this politician being there for the Tigris. but the youth did not care about those politics, so I saw another face of civil society work, wherein the government produces the barriers. It produces many many barriers" —**Nadia al-Baghdadi (Save the Tigris & Marshes Campaign)**

2. Page 55: "Why would I teach my son Arabic, Ali? Iraq is gone, finished." This is what a friend from Iraq now living in the United States told me in the summer of 2013, and I really did not know what to say. Although the specifics of contact with Iraq may differ- it might be about visiting Iraq, talking about it, or about "the region" as a whole--this is not uncommon sentiment in the Iraqi diaspora. In the context of this widespread feeling of despair, what is shakomako.net, "an independent digital magazine about everything Iraqi", to do? What role can its emphasis on resilience play in a mainstream media landscape that speaks a very different language? Where exactly does this dominant perceptions of Iraq come from anyway? Finally, how do tired concepts such as "Iraqi fatigue"-- whereby mainstream and even 'alternative' media feel they have covered Iraq enough-- relate to Iraqis' self-erasure, their own reluctance to push for filling that silence?" —**Ahmed Habib, (shakomako.net)**

Question 3: Quotes from *Against All Odds*

Page 55: "In the build-up to the 2003 war, Iraq was everywhere again. Reminiscent of the media spectacle of Operation Desert Storm, "Iraq" had once again become a buzzword-- detached from notions of home and the stories of our childhood. Instead, Iraq came to denote a purely militaristic target for those opportunists in Washington and other global power centers." —**Ahmed Habib (shakomako.net)**

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Question 4: Quotes from *Against All Odds*

Al Mousawat, page 69: (Al Mousawat is a radio station of OWFI, though below is a quote about what OWFI means for one activist): "I first got to know OWFI as a victim of this society. I had some problems with my family, and they threatened me. "If you do not straighten up, we are going to kill you." So OWFI really helped me with its shelter program. In 2007, I spent time in one of OWFI's safe houses. It saved my life. Right now, I could be a number at a morgue with my name on a stone. That program also helped me see that I was not to blame for the situation I was in. You know what it means for someone to get a second chance? This was my second chance, so when I got back into society I wanted to work on these issues. I understood so clearly what this movement was and how it could change the lives of women. Society mistreats women based on their gender: just because they are women, they are victims. So, when I started working on this, I went to a lot of trainings to get stronger as an organizer. This is the work that the empowerment project does. Since 2008, our safe houses have increased and developed. Even in the current circumstances, with the presence of IS and various militias, we are able to open new safe houses, like the one we started ten days ago. There is a kind of madness to our work…" —**Jannat Alghezzi, Media Director of OWFI**

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Workshop IV: Solidarity [1 hour]

Goal: Participants will understand how many global and regional solidarity movements with Iraq are irrelevant and out of touch. Participants will learn how many movements have used Iraq as a symbol to represent hopelessness, violence, and war. Participants will understand the nuances of how some movements have made attempts to be in solidarity with Iraq but ultimately were perpetuating oppressive beliefs. Finally, participants will define solidarity and create new ways to support Iraqi organizing that are informed for and by Iraqis.

Materials:

One wall-chart for each slogan/term for participants to answer critically how and why the examples are counterproductive.

One wall-chart paper titled Vision. This is for folks to write ideas/brainstorms of   a slogan for your organization/group to use in supporting and uplifting Iraqis.

A print out breakdown of each message/term.

Workshop Prep: Write out all your butchers beforehand and hang them up around the room, somewhere accessible for groups of participants to gather.

Intro [5 MIN]

SAY: Welcome everyone. Today we are going to talk about solidarity, what it has looked like in the past, how we can improve our solidarity efforts, and what we can realistically do to support Iraqi movements. To do that, we are going to do an activity where we can use what we have learned in the book to develop an analysis on solidarity with Iraqi organizing happening now.

DO: Ask participants if there are any questions.

SAY: So, we know the struggle is real. There are so many issues impacting so many communities, and we know how important building people power is.

SAY: When have you witnessed something so powerful you were moved to respond in action? What action did you take?

DO: Take some answers.

SAY: Great, so we know solidarity is important; we know that everyone plays a significant role in every movement. It is important to uplift voices by sharing resources and the work being produced by marginalized communities.

Activity [40 MIN]

SAY: If you look around, you will see a bunch of wall-charts around the room. Each wall-chart has an example of a way organizing efforts have used Iraq to either be in solidarity with Iraq, or to use Iraq's misrepresented stereotypes to support another movement.

SAY: Before we get into that, everyone count off to 4. Everyone with the same number get together with your group.

DO: Hand out paper for notes to reach group. Let folks get into groups.

SAY: **[Breakdown]** Each butcher has a slogan that has been used to support a movement. You and your group will create an analysis of these slogans based on what we have read in the book and our own collective knowledge. Be critical of how Iraq is being used. The last butcher is a Visioning butcher. (Here, you and your team are going to come up with a slogan yourselves that you think is more empowering). When you are visioning, make sure to be realistic. We want to land with something concrete we can actually put into action. Each group is going to start out at a butcher. You will have ten minutes for each. After your ten minutes are up, you are going to move to the next butcher. This will keep going until everyone has had a chance to get to every butcher. Use these guiding questions to develop an analysis on the examples of misrepresentation. You should also use these questions when developing your own slogan. Does everyone understand?

Guiding Questions for Movement Analysis:
- What function does it have/what intention did the people who made it have?
- What assumptions does it carry?
- Does it make people think differently?
- What are the impacts of how it makes people think?

Solidarity with Iraq Misrepresentation Wall-chart and Visioning:

Don't Iraq Iran: "Don't Iraq Iran" is a phrase commonly used by activists who reject war and sanctions on Iran, as well as the fear-mongering which is used by the United States, Israel, and other powers to seek to justify intervention in Iran by such means. Although such efforts are admirable, this phrase diminishes Iraq to a war-torn, classic example of destruction and despair while ignoring the hope and hard-fought struggles of the people, as well as the simple fact of life persisting in Iraq (Please refer to the Workshop IV Materials list on page 50.)

Chiraq: Chiraq, a fusion of the names Chicago and Iraq, is a term used to describe Chicago because of its high crime rates and violence, and association with a place seen as "war-torn", abandoned and "failed". Iraq, here, is the ultimate symbol of violence and hopelessness. This term was coined by Chicago rapper King Louie back in 2009, and has spread to popular culture on the South and West sides of Chicago.

No Blood for Oil: This phrase was used commonly prior to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq to protest killing for the sake of financial interests, including oil. It implies that the only problem with war is that it is for oil, but murdering people for other reasons is legitimate.

DO: Have each group position themselves in front of a butcher. Start the clock and let them go!

DO: After ten minutes at a wall-chart, direct teams to move on to the next wall-chart. After each group has gone through each wall-chart, thank everyone for participating and have them come back together.

Debrief [10 MIN]

SAY: So, does anyone want to throw out a couple things your team wrote on how these movements were counterproductive?

DO: Let a couple folks respond. Encourage participants to explain their reasoning, and give concrete examples to support their statements. (You want folks to land understanding that our messages have power by analyzing the kind of powerful impact these messages have had on Iraqi communities).

Note to Facilitators: Reflect back what participants are saying and direct them back to how it contributes to misrepresentation, e.g.: "So what I'm hearing is _____. How do you think this contributes to the misrepresentation of Iraqi communities?"

DO: Let participants respond. Guide the conversation to include references to the book.

SAY: Now that we have that down, what are we going to do about it? What are the slogans/terms you and your group came up with to be in solidarity with Iraq and what did you learn from the examples we talked about when visioning your slogan?

DO: Let participants respond.

Checkout [5 MIN]

SAY: We are going to do a go-around and we will each say which slogan you would use (from the ones we came up with) and why. Remember, our messages have power; we have the power to shape solidarity movements nationally and internationally!

DO: Facilitator tally on butchers, which slogans participants like. Whichever wins, take a group selfie with it, and post on the Against All Odds Facebook page!
http://on.fb.me/1MqJjri

SAY: Thank you everyone. We are now going to do a check out. Go around the room, say your name, your pronoun, and one way you are going to promote this new slogan. Maybe you want to write an article, or take more selfies, start a hashtag, you name it!

DO: Once everyone is done checking out, thank them for coming and do not forget to post your selfie on the Against All Odds Facebook Page!

Solidarity Workshop IV Materials

Note: Each term should have its own butcher. You can print out each description and tape it to a butcher!

Don't Iraq Iran: "Don't Iraq Iran" is a phrase commonly used by activists who reject war and sanctions on Iran, as well as the fear-mongering which is used by the US, Israel, and other powers to seek to justify intervention in Iran by such means. Although such efforts are admirable, this phrase diminishes Iraq to a war-torn, classic example of destruction and despair while ignoring the hope and hard-fought struggles of the people, as well as the simple fact of life persisting in Iraq.

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Visioning: Using the collective knowledge in your group, how would you uplift Iraq and support the organizing work happening in Iraq today?

Section III: Study to Action

Goals: People feel motivated to uplift the narratives of Iraqi people, and celebrate the resilience of their resistance to oppressive forces. People feel empowered to support Iraqi organizers, share visions that are applicable transnationally, and connect across borders.

SUPPORT LABOR, GENDER, AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS IN IRAQ

Below are tangible ways you and your organization can support various movements led by and for Iraqi organizers. As conditions on the ground in Iraq continue to evolve, so do the strategies, demands, and requests of visionary organizations there. Below is a snapshot of and time-specific ways to support various movements. For a more fluid and updated source:

      a. **https://www.warresisters.org/iraqsolidarity**
      b. The *Against All Odds* Facebook Page: http://on.fb.me/1MqJjri

LABOR

How to support The Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq:

1. Ask your union or community organization to join Industriall (http://bit.ly/1Jjv71h) and push the Iraqi government to implement the following demands:

- Conversion of self-financed state companies to the central funding system
- Reconsidering the law regarding self-financing companies
- Formation of a joint committee from the Council of Ministers and Parliament
- Activation of resolution No. 88 of 2013 by the Council of Ministers, which obliges all state ministries to buy products from the Ministry of Industry and Minerals

2. The Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq does not have a website! They are also working to re-launch their longstanding print publication. We are working with them to develop a fundraising plan and connect them to a network of web workers and media support. Contact us if you are interested in helping get their message out there!

GENDER

From OWFI's Domestic and International Advocacy Strategy:

OWFI's advocacy targets four critical policy changes that would facilitate meeting immediate needs in the context of the conflict and create systemic changes that address pre-existing barriers to gender rights.

1. Lifting the Ban on Local NGO-Run Shelters

In Iraq, the establishment and maintenance of private shelters by NGOs is against public policy. Only government-run shelters, shelters managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs are permissible, though none currently exist. Amending this shelter provision to allow NGOs to run private shelters for displaced families and individuals would greatly aid the local Iraqi women's organizations already mobilizing an emergency response to protect at-risk individuals.

2. Creating Access to Identification Cards

Women fleeing IS brutality, attempted honor killings, trafficking, forced prostitution, or forced marriage cannot obtain legal identification in the absence of a male family member to verify her identity. The Civil Status Identification Document and Nationality Certificates are needed to access public services, including food assistance, healthcare, employment, education, and housing, as well as to obtain a passport. Unwillingness on the part of authorities to provide these documents denies a large number of women and children basic services and may render women and marginalized populations stateless, increasing their vulnerability to violence and discrimination. Internally displaced women and children are particularly at risk of torture, rape, trafficking, and other forms of sexual violence.

The Central government should adopt a policy of issuing temporary identification cards to displaced persons.

3. Accessing Health Care for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

Survivors of sexual violence often lack access to healthcare services. When visiting a health clinic, women and men who have been raped report being ridiculed, shamed, or blamed for what has happened to them. Sometimes they are turned away. As a result, many rape victims do not attempt to access medical treatment due to the social stigma attached to sexual violence.

The Minister of Health should issue a decree calling on doctors to provide services to sexual violence survivors and provide trainings to medical professionals aimed at reducing stigmatization associated with sexual violence, gender-based violence, and masculinities.

4. Lifting the Ban on Locally Run Radio Stations

In June 2014, OWFI's radio station, Al Mousawat, along with several other local radio stations, was closed down during a government raid, specifically by an order of the Communication and Media Commission (CMC). Al Mousawat radio station is an integral mechanism for disseminating messages of peace, tolerance, and respect for human rights and combating societal discrimination. It is the only radio station of its kind in Iraq to openly and progressively address the rights of women and other at-risk and marginalized groups. The radio conducted much-needed outreach to vulnerable individuals, broadcasting information about the services and support OWFI provides, and informing marginalized and at-risk populations that allies are within reach.

ENVIRONMENT

Ways You Can Join the Save the Tigris and Marshes Campaign:

1. You can join the campaign as an organization or individual
2. Read about the impact of the Ilisu Dam and the threats it poses to Iraq. Our aim is to make this information easily available. Go to our Resources and Documents page.
3. Stay up to date with Latest News about our actions and about the Tigris River
4. You can like and share our Campaign Page on Facebook and share it with friends
5. Join our Facebook Group
6. Sign the Petition to UNESCO to support the Iraqi Governnemt submission of the Central Marshes as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
7. Watch and share our Youtube video to promote the preservation of the Marshes. Also available in Arabic.
8. Follow our Twitter hash-tag: #Save_the_Tigris_Campaign
9. Contact the Steering Committee for any further inquiries. Send an email to the Campaign Coordinator: *johanna.rivera56@gmail.com*
10. If you would like to have the information on this page in Arabic, you can also use the following link: عربي