

MAKING
OPPRESSION
BACKFIRE

by Srdja Popovic
& Tori Porell



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Srdja Popović, Victoria Porell, Isabella Cuomo,
Marcella Alvarez, Ana Djordjevic-Petrovic

Making Oppression Backfire
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Introduction

The history of nonviolent conflict is often connected to noble goals: human rights, democracy, social and economic equality. However, the ugliest face of oppression has also always been a part of the people power history: arrests, use of security forces, teargas, beatings, long jail sentences, torture and even the firing of live rounds towards those who demand change is a harsh reality of this type of struggle.

Oppression, the exercise of power in a burdensome or unjust manner, in the face of a nonviolent movement is a harsh reality of nonviolent struggle. It unites people against a common enemy. The primary reason for oppression by an authority is two-fold: it punishes disobedience, but also prevents future disobedience by sending a personal warning. It can vary in the nature and intensity, from mild to lethal, and in the frequency, from occasional to everyday, but it is always based on similar rules.

Similar to other tools in the activist's kit, like picketing, public speeches and hunger strikes, capitalizing oppression is an important skill set for nonviolent activists. When oppression is preventing a movement from moving forward, there are certain measures that can be taken, allowing for your enemy's exploitation of power to become a benefit and step towards success for you. Tapping into resources at your movement's disposal including international media, jail occupation and leaders that become martyrs, your movement will strengthen its legitimacy while shaming the authority it opposes.

Faced with oppression, activists across the globe have understood these rules and discovered different ways to deal with an authoritarian regime's oppression. They have employed methods to prevent it from disrupting their movement, put a high "price tag" on governmental action against peaceful protesters, and used it as a tool for political jiu-jitsu, harming the authority of the oppressor.



HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

This book is a secondary asset to other theories, books and methods including, but not limited to 50 Crucial Points by the Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies, and Methods of Nonviolent Action by Gene Sharp to non-violent activists, individuals and movements. It highlights tactics and manners in which one may handle oppression and ultimately, make it backfire against those who originally used it.

In these pages, three phases are outlined, Phase I: Preparing for Oppression, Phase II: Facing Oppression and Phase III: Capitalizing Oppression. Each is designed to aid your movement and the methods that it has chosen to utilize. It also contains sub points that detail different methodologies and recommendations for making the best of an oppressive situation at any stage in the movement's development. It pertains to the idea that there are ways in which oppressive actions can work in activists' favor.



PHASE I: Preparing for Oppression develops on the concept that understanding and preparing for oppression properly is vital to your movement. It will allow for your activists to gain confidence when combating fear and make your movement a legitimate and even lethal opponent to your oppressor.



PHASE II: Facing the Oppression focuses on the measures that must be taken when facing oppression directly. If you utilize certain methods it will allow for the oppression to backfire rather than injure your movement.



PHASE III: Capitalizing Oppression acts as a follow up preceding the actual repressive acts. After oppression has occurred, your movement's main objective should be to turn the opportunity into your advantage. This is the follow through procedure for making sure oppression backfires and continues to do so long after single acts have already occurred.

MAKING OPPRESSION BACKFIRE is intended to be read as a manual or type of guidebook. One that can be taken, evaluated and directly implemented into a movement's chosen path of methodology. It contains lengthy descriptions as well as tips for quick recommendations and case studies.



PHASE I:

Prepare for Oppression



UNDERSTANDING AND PREPARING FOR OPPRESSION PROPERLY IS VITAL TO YOUR MOVEMENT. IT WILL ALLOW FOR YOUR ACTIVISTS TO GAIN CONFIDENCE WHEN COMBATING FEAR AND MAKE YOUR MOVEMENT A LEGITIMATE AND EVEN LETHAL OPPONENT TO YOUR OPPRESSOR. IT IS PRIMARILY ATTAINED THROUGH A PROCESS OF:

-
- (A.) UNDERSTANDING FEAR AND THE NATURE OF OPPRESSION**
 - (B.) ACCEPTING OPPRESSION AS A PART OF THE JOB**
 - (C.) LEARNING AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ABOUT THE OPPRESSION**
 - (D.) DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY TO WIN OVER OPPRESSION**
 - (E.) TRAINING YOUR TROOPS TO FACE OPPRESSION**
-



A UNDERSTAND FEAR AND THE NATURE OF OPPRESSION

AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS USE OPPRESSION TO PHYSICALLY DISRUPT ANY CHALLENGE TO THEIR POWER, BUT THESE MEASURES ARE ALSO INTENDED TO INSPIRE FEAR AND PROMOTE SELF CENSORSHIP IN THOSE WHO WOULD OPPOSE THEM.

Russian boy faces Riot Control Police in Moscow



TIP:
FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN IS A POWERFUL FORCE; ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND IT AND OVERCOME IT-YOUR MOVEMENT WILL MOVE FORWARD MORE PRODUCTIVELY.

Fear is one of the most effective forms of control and many oppression strategies are based on creating fear. It is a powerful tool and it is in fact often the primary reason for obeying an autocrat or dictator, or at the very least, not wanting to challenge their rule. Fear is a common, instinctual response to a perceived threat and can be crippling to a nonviolent movement, something many oppressive rulers rely on. Though you may not be able to overcome fear completely, with careful strategy and planning you will be able to manage the harmful effects of fear.

Authoritarian leaders use oppression to physically disrupt any challenge to their power, but these measures are also intended to inspire fear and promote self censorship in those who would oppose them. This method is unique to authoritarian regimes, but that does not necessarily refer to a political dictatorship. It can be present in a chieftain of a barbaric tribe, corrupt

TIP:
PLANNING AND PREPARING ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS ACTING!

organization official, or even the leader of a wolf pack. The authoritarian is whoever gains or retains their position by threatening others. A pride of lions usually has a dominant/alpha male as the leader of the group. This lion's physical strength and aggression are the determining factors of his dominance over the group. However, the alpha male's leadership is always under threat. Other lions may challenge his strength and he will respond violently, often with a fight to the death. Just as a political dictator maintains power by maintaining control over society and forcefully repressing any challenges to their power, the head lion maintains his power through similar oppression.



Fear is like the rain; you may not be able to stop it, but you can do things to prevent its effects. Just as you might check the weather reports and decide to bring an umbrella when you go out if there may be rain, there are actions you can take to prevent becoming drenched in fear in the case of oppression. It is important to analyze the effects of fear on your movement and develop your own specific strategies and tactics to combat it. The less you allow oppression to catch you by surprise, unprepared, the greater chance you have at overcoming fear and ultimately forcing the oppression to backfire.

THE LESS YOU ALLOW OPPRESSION TO CATCH YOU BY SURPRISE, UNPREPARED, THE GREATER CHANCE YOU HAVE OF OVERCOMING FEAR AND ULTIMATELY FORCING THE OPPRESSION TO BACKFIRE.

The single biggest source of fear is the unknown. Like a child afraid of the dark, people are often afraid of things they do not understand and uncertain situations. The simple remedy to this problem is information. Most of the time, when more people know what is going to happen to them, the more confident they will be and their fear will melt away. Oppression is significantly less frightening once its veil is lifted and its tactics and methods are laid bare for all to see. Planning and preparing for a campaign is as much about the action steps that must be car-



ried out to bring about a certain goal – such as managing time, as well as human and material resources - as it is about prepping people psychologically and emotionally. Managing fear is important, but often it can be a good indicator of the preparedness of activists for a certain action. It is detrimental, to both activists and the movement as a whole, to be placed into situations that the individual participants are not prepared for; being prepared, strategically as well as psychologically or emotionally is crucial. Without paying due diligence to the emotional aspects of people involved in the movement, a movement can easily fall apart. Very often the psychological barriers that fear creates are based sensitized and culturally specific factors such as religion, family values or gender roles. Disregarding the effects of these sensitized factors after the event of repression can lead to an ineffective action and may lead to activists being reluctant to participate in the future.

Activist handles blows from police brutality in Tehran, Iran



B ACCEPT OPPRESSION AS PART OF THE JOB

If you were going to work at a construction site, you would put on a helmet. When you get in a car, you put on a seatbelt. In many aspects of our lives, we understand that there are certain inherent risks and we prepare for them. In the work of challenging autocratic power by various tactics of civil resistance, you must understand that oppression is a part of the job. Just like other risks though, you must be prepared for it.

Just like as an activist one of your main goals is to disrupt the activities of an oppressive power, one of their goals will be to prevent such disruptions. They will be prepared to try to counter you- you must be prepared for that. By automatically assuming that you will face oppression, you cannot be caught unprepared and you will be in the best position to counter it or even use it to your advantage. The oppression you face may be minimal or very severe, but in any case, there are steps you can take to be ready. Even in the case of a tremendous power imbalance, oppression can work in your favor.





C LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ABOUT THE OPPRESSION

The very first step to making oppression backfire is to learn as much as you can about oppression and gather as much information as possible that may be useful in countering it. Knowledge is the key weapon here and can be the decisive weapon in overcoming an extreme power imbalance. A disciplined, organized and informed movement has the potential to combat a strong, well-funded regime. Information is key to being able to develop an effective plan ahead of time to counter oppression. Learning from previous oppression is the best strategy for preparing against future struggles.

Your best source of information about future oppression is people who have already experienced it. They are going to be your best resource for obtaining details about the exact procedures taken by your opponent and what tactics they are most likely going to use. They will be able to provide you with a clear picture of what happens behind closed doors, and this face to face contact, and subsequent understanding about what occurs on both a tactical and personal level can be particularly helpful in overcoming fear of the unknown.

Oppression will seem much less intimidating and therefore less effective once you have heard exactly what it is like to experience it. For instance, almost everyone is familiar with the "good cop, bad cop" technique when in an interrogation one officer is harsh and intimidating while another is lenient and understanding.



IT IS USEFUL TO TALK TO SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DETAINED SHORTLY AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, WHEN THE DETAILS ABOUT IT ARE STILL IN RECENT MEMORY.

This contrast of personalities produces a sense of fear of the bad cop and a sense of trust with the good cop and the person being interrogated is thus more likely to reveal the information to the "good" cop. Most people know this tactic from movies and television. If they were to experience it in real life, they would recognize it immediately, and in all likelihood it would not work because they understand how they are being manipulated. Once people understand the dynamics of oppressive tactics, this information eliminates the mystery, and it is much easier to prepare for oppression.

It is critical to gain information that will be useful for future oppression from anyone who has already been through the procedures, especially in regards to police custody. People coming out of those situations will need to be de-briefed, which will allow them to process what has happened as well as allow you to extract as much useful information as possible. It is essential to do this within 2-3 days after the experience, so that the person still has the strongest impression.



It is helpful to ask for details of the process that they went through, as well as the behavior of the authorities. If they were questioned, it is helpful to know what they were asked, as well as how they responded and what response their answers provoked among interrogators. Some important information to find out would be,

- **WHAT IS THE AVERAGE TIME OF DETENTION?**
- **ARE POLICE BRUTAL OR DO THEY BEHAVE IN A CIVILIZED MANNER?**
- **ARE THOSE ARRESTED REGULARLY BEATEN OR TORTURED?**
- **WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THE POLICE PROCEDURE IN THE EXACT ORDER OF STEPS ARRESTEES GO THROUGH?**
- **WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS THEY WERE ASKED?**

You want to provide your activists with safe answers, those that will save them from the potential of torture, but at the same time would be worthless in terms of intelligence to the authorities. It is usually best not to make false statements to the authorities though. The ideal response is information that somewhat answers the question, is true, and is already available publicly.

CASE STUDY

FOR LEARNING AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ABOUT THE OPPRESSION :

كيف تثور بجدارة

معلومات وتكتيكات هامة

نرجو نشرها عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني والطباعة (والتصوير) فقط.
(Twitter و Facebook) مراليان. حذاري وقوع هذه المعلومات في أيدي الشرطة أو أمن الدولة.
مصر.

IN 2011, APRIL 6 YOUTH MOVEMENT DISTRIBUTED THIS LEAFLET WITH QUICK POINTS ON THE BACK SAYING WHAT ACTIVISTS SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T DO, INCLUDING WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ARRESTED, HOW TO GET IN CONTACT WITH PEOPLE AND TACTICS TO KEEP UNDER THE RADAR FROM THE POLICE .

OTPOR! IN SERBIA:

The OTPOR movement in Serbia had a very specific system to debrief people coming from police custody and it helped give them a strategic advantage. Activists were interviewed in detail about their detention time and about what questions the police were most interested in. The three questions that were asked most often were,

- **WHO FINANCES THE MOVEMENT?**
- **HOW IS OTPOR ORGANIZED?**
- **WHO IS THE LEADER?**

By caring about these three questions, OTPOR was not only able to provide every potentially arrested activist with prepared answers, but in fact, an entire set of instructions for the question and answer process. They created a user friendly, simple leaflet containing those three questions and sample answers such as,

- **OTPOR IS FINANCED BY THE DIASPORA.**
- **OTPOR IS ORGANIZED BY EACH NEIGHBORHOOD.**
- **OTPOR IS ORGANIZED HORIZONTALY AND ANYBODY CAN BE A LEADER.**

This made interrogations and the information that police got from arrested activists utterly useless, and after printing 100,000 copies of leaflets, it was even annoying to the police officers.



D DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY TO WIN OVER OPPRESSION!

Once you have gathered your information about what oppression is like, it is time to develop a strategy to deal with it. The ultimate goal of this strategy is to manipulate any forms of oppression that you experience into something positive for your movement and something negative for your oppressor. Countering oppression in this way will force them to change their tactics and respond to you. Your strategy for dealing with oppression will have many divisions, such as media and outreach, legal, and jail support. Each division should have a specific plan in place that can be quickly implemented once oppression occurs. Being able to answer police officers in a manner that is both honest and subversive delegitimizes the police officers control as well as builds confidence in the movement's participants.

MEDIA

Once oppression occurs, your goal will be for the whole world to know about it. Therefore, ahead of time, it is important to create databases of journalists, reporters, bloggers, members, and organizations that need to know what has happened. It is important to note that you should have a list comprised of both domestic and international media contacts before oppression occurs. You can split these lists among many activists, so rather than one activist being responsible for contacting 100 people, 10 activists can be responsible for contacting 10 people. It is important to have the phone numbers and email

TIP:

PRIOR TO THE GIVEN EVENT, ASSIGN TEN PEOPLE WITH RECORDING DEVICES AS 'NEUTRAL' TO RECORD YOUR ACTIONS AND ANY POSSIBLE OPPRESSION.

TIP:

PRE-WRITE A PRESS RELEASE BEFORE OPPRESSION HAPPENS.

addresses of supportive reporters who will want to come to report on your actions. It can be helpful to have a press release prepared ahead of time, so that once oppression happens, you only need to fill in details, such as how many people were present or arrested, before sending it out to your databases. It is absolutely vital to record every single occurrence in the movement. If you do not have official media representatives, make sure that there are a number of people who will have video cameras or cell phones. This can be in any form, either have multiple people, such as five or more, standing by with video cameras or cell phones, ready to record possible oppression. Later, these records can be sent out to various media sources and/or placed on the internet through blogs, social media and YouTube. The idea is to make the file viral and to make it public knowledge.



CASE STUDY

FOR DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY TO WIN OVER OPPRESSION!

MEDIA: SYRIAN OBSERVATORY

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights located in the United Kingdom is an example of taking raw information from oppression and making it public knowledge. Two Syrian immigrants operate their organization out of a small house in England. They have contacts in Syria, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon all involved in the conflict in various ways. They have taken these recorded instances of oppression including deaths, disappearances, arrests and political news and made a database of all things surrounding Syria. Their tactic was to take a lot of information from a disoriented nation and create a simple, user friendly website for foreign observers. They have been successful enough to become a top credible news about the syrian civil war. You can access their website in either English or Arabic at this URL:

[HTTP://SYRIAHR.COM/](http://SYRIAHR.COM/) .



HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANCE

DOMESTIC

There is a possibility that your activists will face arrest, it is important to arrange for legal assistance. Ahead of time, you can contact lawyers who are supportive and arrange for them to represent any arrested activists. In many countries, there are professional organizations for lawyers, whose sole purpose is to provide legal help for activists. These organizations are probably the best place to start if you are searching for lawyers to help. Many times, these organizations can also provide people that serve as legal observers or offer training for activists to become legal observers. Legal observers serve as neutral parties during a demonstration and record the details of any legal situations that occur, such as the names and badge numbers of any police officers that use excessive force.

People facing possible arrest can often fill out forms in advance with critical information that their lawyer might need or sign agreements before hand for a certain lawyer to represent them, if needed. It is also good to consider establishing a bailout fund in advance to pay the legal fees of those arrested and to strategize how to continue to raise these funds once people are actually detained. The internet can be a great tool for preparing bail funds. Websites such as WePay allow people from anywhere in the world to contribute any amount of funds. Blogs made by activists who are first hand witnesses to the movement's actions with PayPal or donation widgets are also a good resource. Having these things done in advance can dramatically speed up the release of imprisoned activists.





Sign up for ONE-ACTIVIST at AMNESTYSEGUIDETOLIBERTY.COM
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

JAIL SUPPORT

While your comrades are sitting in jail, there are actions you can prepare to take from the outside that will support them and quicken their release. It is important to know ahead of time where the local police stations are that activists will likely be taken to and how to get there. Your physical presence at the police station will be a great support to those inside. For those who cannot actually be present at the station, calling can also be effective. Gather beforehand the phone numbers of the police stations where activists may be detained and contact information of your supporters at home. Even your grandma and her friends can support nonviolent struggle, by sitting at home and ringing the police.

Your plans will be of no use to you if you are not prepared to act on them. If you cannot act on your preparations you have failed to train your troops properly. Preparing for arrests takes a great deal of organization and preparation to pull off effectively. Therefore, it is crucial to delegate and thereby divide and conquer the tasks involved. Not only will a division of labor make the whole process easier on everyone, but also in the case that something goes wrong, the burden of responsibility is not left for a few key people. For example, if the only person who has the list of journalists is accidentally arrested, how will you get your message out? However, if many people have copies of the list of journalists, they can easily ensure that they are all contacted in different circumstances.



E TRAIN YOUR TROOPS TO FACE OPPRESSION

In general, training your activists is one of the wisest and most worthwhile investments that you can make. In a military conflict, soldiers are trained to face life-threatening combat situations, while still maintaining calm. Similarly, in a nonviolent struggle, with proper training oppression should be hardly an obstacle for activists. Well-trained nonviolent “troops” will be confident and effective during actions, and if they encounter oppression, they will know precisely what to do and how to counter it. Successful nonviolent movements develop training programs that allow them to benefit from this kind of “troop upgrade”.





"The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."

Martin Luther King Jr.

Training activists to handle oppression is one of the most vital things you can do to help them mentally and tactically prepare for the actual event. Training and the knowledge gained in that preparation will give participants the confidence and relative peace of mind heading into what may be an uncomfortable or harmful situation. Simply knowing what is going to happen often itself has a palliative effect on people preparing to stand up to violent conditions in a non-violent manner. Therefore, it is good to share as many details as possible about what can be expected during the real-time event. Even knowing minor details like what the interrogators are wearing, their tone of voice, or what kind of room they take people to during detention can be good information for movement organizers as well as a psychological comfort to the activists facing arrest. The more you know about the situation, the more you can control it. Through careful preparation and training, the closer you will be to making oppression backfire.

As we mentioned in the previous section, fear can paralyze a movement. Learning how fear is effecting your own movement and what measures need to be taken to prevent or overcome it is an invaluable part of the planning process.

If you are expecting your activists to be taken into police custody, they should know exactly what the process will be like. Police officers will put you in handcuffs and it will be painfully tight. After that you will be put into a police wagon, which will be totally dark and on the ride to the station people will swerve around. With nothing to hold on to, people in the back will fall. Once at the station you will be separated by gender, searched and have your belongings taken away. If you are a woman, you will have your hairtie taken away, so your hair will be in your face uncomfortably. If you are a man, you will have



your belt taken away and your pants may start to fall down. Everyone will have their shoelaces taken, as well as the strings from their sweat-shirts. You will be put in cells with other prisoners so women will probably be in the company of prostitutes and men with drunken inmates. All of this is done on purpose in an attempt to intimidate you and your fellow activists. Jail will be cold and dirty and you will probably not have anything to eat or drink for a long time.

Knowing the situations listed above will allow activists to prepare for or learn strategies to deal with the conditions above. Knowing that the handcuffs will be put on tight, activists can learn techniques, such as spreading their fingers or clenching their fists, which will create a bit of extra space for their wrists. People can prepare what they will wear, such as extra layers to keep warm, including extra socks in case your shoes are taken. Learning songs can be a good way to prepare to pass the time in jail. Singing keeps the morale of activists up, while passing the time and building solidarity with one another.

TIP:

OVERCOMING THE FEAR
OF AUTHORITY WILL
AID IN UNITING YOUR
MOVEMENT!



CASE STUDY

FOR LEARNING TO
TRAIN YOUR TROOPS
TO FACE
OPPRESSION

LUNCH COUNTER PROTESTS IN THE USA

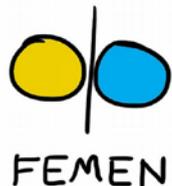
A great example of this method is the lunch counter protests in the American South during the 1960's era of segregation. At that time, lunch counters at most department stores were restricted to white customers only. Beginning around 1960, civil rights activists targeted these establishments in deep southern cities, such as Greensboro, North Carolina, Jackson, Mississippi, and Lynchburg, Virginia, by simply walking in, sitting down, and asking to be served. The activists knew that they would not be served. They were well trained in what to do next. After being refused service, the activists simply remained at the counter, often enduring harassment from the counter's managers and other customers. Their calm demeanor and determination emphasized that they were simply asking for the privilege of eating lunch in peace, like anyone else. With a high deal of coordination, after the police arrived and removed the sitting protesters, another wave of protesters would enter and begin the same process. Martin Luther King Jr. later wrote of the sit-ins in his autobiography, "Spontaneously born, but guided by the theory of nonviolent resistance, the lunch counter sit-ins accomplished integration in hundreds of communities at the swiftest rate of change in the civil rights movement up to that time."



"Rebellion is the only thing that keeps you alive!"
Marianne Faithful



ALWAYS	NEVER
UNDERSTAND HOW FEAR MAY AFFECT YOUR ACTIVISTS AND HAVE A PLAN FOR DEALING WITH IT.	RELY ON MAKING DECISIONS IN THE MOMENT. FEAR, ADRENALINE, AND THE PRESSURE OF THE SITUATION DO NOT MAKE FOR THE BEST DECISIONS.
DO YOUR HOMEWORK! KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FOR EVERY SITUATION YOU MAY ENCOUNTER.	ASSUME PEOPLE KNOW WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF OPPRESSION. MAKE SURE EVERYONE HAS BEEN TRAINED AND KNOWS THE STRATEGY.
HAVE A CLEAR PLAN IN PLACE FOR WHEN OPPRESSION HAPPENS. THIS INCLUDES: LEGAL SUPPORT, MEDIA, AND SUPPORTING YOUR ACTIVISTS INDIVIDUALLY.	FAIL TO PLAN FOR OPPRESSION BECAUSE AN EVENT MAY BE LOW-RISK. THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY OF OPPRESSION.



FEMEN is a feminist activist group based out of Kiev, Ukraine. They have regularly been repressed by Ukrainian police and military during demonstrations and out of their main headquarters. Their training for their activists prepares them for oppression and unifies the group in a positive way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ABOUT FACING FEAR AND OPPRESSION

- Why is a nonviolent approach to facing oppression better than a violent one?
- What do you fear about facing oppression?
- What are things we know about what will happen when we face an oppressor and what do we not know?
- How can we face oppression calmly? What is the exact procedure?
- What are the ways we can overcome fear?
- What support do activists have access to prior and post oppression?

Before activists in your movement face oppression it is useful to get into groups and lead a discussion with these questions. This includes participating in the following activities and role playing exercises. It will help everyone to openly acknowledge that they are not alone in being fearful about facing oppression, in addition it will better equip your activists emotionally and physically for in field oppressive acts by the authorities.

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

WHY IS A NONVIOLENT APPROACH TO FACING OPPRESSION BETTER THAN A VIOLENT ONE?

Tell activists to think of one nonviolent action and one violent action that has occurred in a movement, either in their own experience in the field or in another movement. Ask them to write down different reactions to it – by traditional medias, by the individuals/ by the families affected, by new media sources and by what individuals have heard by word-of mouth communication. What do you discover? What are the differences in reactions between violent and nonviolent actions? Use these examples as a way to open up the discussion.



DISCUSSION TOPIC:

WHAT DO YOU FEAR ABOUT FACING OPPRESSION? WHAT KINDS OF OPPRESSION DO PEOPLE FEAR MOST? WHY? HOW CAN WE STOP THIS OPPRESSION WITH CAREFUL PLANNING?

Using new examples or the ones from the previous discussion, tell people to write down 3-5 oppressive actions they have read about or experienced first hand; either from within your movement or from other people who have heard about it and the reason this would scare them. Have people share what they are individually afraid of and why they have this fear. It is ok for people to relate these fears to future endeavors in a movement and how it may affect other activists, friends or family members.

Next, tell people to imagine the scenario that they fear and try to come up with A) what they can do to prevent this from happening and B) how they would feel if it did happen.

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

WHAT ARE THINGS WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN WE FACE AN OPPRESSOR? WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHAT DO WE NOT KNOW?

Using the same actions as in the previous discussions think about the oppressors. First, tell people to close their eyes and imagine the individual who enacted oppression. Then tell people to write down some facts about them – what do they look like? What is their profession? Why do you think they enacted oppression? Was there a way that the people who were oppressed may have acted towards their oppressors differently so as to have a different outcome? It is ok

DISCUSSION TOPIC:

for people to say no if that is a valid answer. Tell people to write down three facts about the oppressor, and everyone shares this info in the group.

Next tell people to think of the place where oppression occurred. What part of the country/city was it? What was the weather like? How did the physical space potentially affect the oppression? Was there a way the activists could have worked better with the space to mitigate the effects of oppression?

HOW CAN WE FACE OPPRESSION CALMLY? WHAT ARE THE EXACT OBSTACLES WE WILL BE FACING BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY?

ROLE PLAYING ACTIVITY

Tell people to think of an action or campaign your movement is planning for. (or if your movement is still in the initial stages and you don't have an action ready, you may substitute using one of the above examples).

Divide activists up into pairs using the numbers 1,2,1,2,1,2 and tell people that all the "1" are going to play the role of the activist in a certain oppressive scenario, and all the "2" will play the oppressor. Tell people to act in a way that they think the oppressor/activist would act given the situation. If you are planning a campaign that involves technology or props such as signs or banners, this is the time to bring them out so that people can feel what it is like to use them. After enacting a few different scenes, tell people to switch roles.

After people have switched, bring everyone together and ask people - what did they observe or feel while pretending to be an activist? What about when they were the oppressor? What can they learn from this?

**DISCUSSION
TOPIC:**

**WHAT ARE THE WAYS WE CAN OVERCOME
FEAR?**

Based on some of the emotions people have claimed they may feel when facing oppression, ask people if there's anything they can think of that makes them feel more secure - and if they think there are any particular physical items or mental images they may think of in a certain moment that can help them to feel less afraid. Share and Discuss

**DISCUSSION
TOPIC:**

**WHAT SUPPORT DO ACTIVISTS HAVE ACCESS
TO PRIOR AND POST OPPRESSION? WHO
DO YOU THINK WAS MOST PERSONALLY
EFFECTED BY THE OPPRESSIVE ACTION,
AND WHAT CAN YOU AS A FELLOW ACTIVIST
PERSONALLY DO TO MAKE SURE THEY KNOW
YOU SUPPORT THEM?**

PHASE II:

Face the Oppression



THERE ARE MEASURES THAT MUST BE TAKEN WHEN FACING OPPRESSION DIRECTLY. IF YOU UTILIZE CERTAIN METHODS IT WILL ALLOW FOR THE OPPRESSION TO BACKFIRE RATHER THAN INJURE YOUR MOVEMENT. THE KEYS TO FACING OPPRESSION ARE:

-
- (A.) UNDERSTAND THAT SPEED IS YOUR BEST PROTECTION**
 - (B.) MAKE IT PUBLIC!**
 - (C.) SIEGE THE POLICE STATION**
 - (D.) OCCUPY THE JAIL**
 - (E.) SUPPORT YOUR ACTIVISTS DURING THE TRIAL PHASE**
-



A UNDERSTAND THAT SPEED IS YOUR BEST PROTECTION

IN ORDER TO RESPOND QUICKLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE SET UP A QUICK WAY TO CONTACT PEOPLE BEFORE HAND!

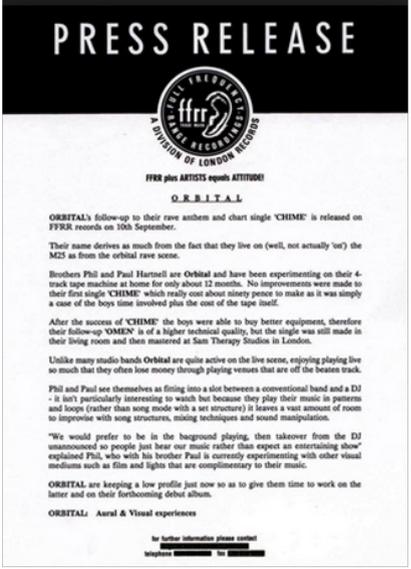
Once you encounter oppression, speed is your best protection. Your strategy to handle the situation must be deployed immediately for it to be of maximum effectiveness. Especially when the situation includes activists being placed into custody, a quick response is necessary. The sooner you can put your plans to pressure the police into action, the sooner your comrades will be released. A short stay with the police is not only best for their own morale, but it appears as a tactical victory for your group. The public perception of the entire situation is largely dependent on who gets the word out to the media first and can control how the story is told.

The key to a speedy response is to be prepared and able to activate your plan as soon as the oppression occurs. This means that you must have a fast way to tell many people exactly what is happening. You cannot rely on only one person to do all the work of debriefing your activists about the situation. If something does not go according to plan, or that person is themselves incapacitated or detained, you will be left without a way to get your message out. It is best to have a list of about 10 people who should be notified about the occurrence; therefore at least one person is nearly guaranteed to get the message.

There are simple and foolproof ways that you can plan to get in contact during oppression. For example, you can have activists program a list of several people who need to be notified if arrests occur into their cell phones. That way, as soon as they are arrested they can quickly call those people using their speed-dial or send a



After an arrest occurs, it is not the time to be slow!



B MAKE IT PUBLIC!

The single most important action you can take in the face of oppression is to make it public. Public perception is powerful and to broadcast the measures the authorities take to try to disrupt activism is to gain control of how the public views your struggle. For many regimes, image is everything and they will do all they can to promote an image of calm and respect. However, it is the activist's job to disrupt this image and expose the true face of the regime. And today in an age where anyone who has a smartphone can upload videos or pictures online in a manner of seconds, it is all the more difficult for authoritarian forces to hide repressive actions.

Learning about current repression will also make people sympathetic to your cause and those who were previously on the fence may be compelled to join your movement.

TIP:
PREPARATION FOR OP-
PRESSION WILL MAKE
HANDLING OPPRESSION
EASIER, INCLUDING
PREPARING A PRESS
RELEASE BEFORE AN
EVENT.



Making your movement public is a step where your hard work in the preparation phase will all come together. Hopefully you will have already compiled a media list of helpful reporters, journalists, supporters, and organizations to which you can send the news, and have people prepared to take videos and pictures on their phones for documentation. Optimally, you will have a pre-prepared press release ready to go. As soon as the expected oppression occurs, you can finalize the press release with the exact details of what happened and blast it out to your entire media list. In addition to the press release, it is often helpful to send any pictures and videos of the events to media sources, including 'eye witness reports' that may be submitted online. These may be particularly attention grabbing and a powerful step in branding your movement for potential activists.



SIEGE THE POLICE STATION

Once a nonviolent action has encountered oppression you must be prepared to shift into a new phase and type of nonviolent action. If you have activists who will be arrested the most useful tactics will be to organize a siege of the police station. There are several reasons for making the police station a new target of your nonviolent action, including putting public pressure on one of the states key pillars of support, showing solidarity with those who are in custody, building a sympathetic image, and ensuring the fastest possible release of activists. Organizing around the police station allows for one central location for your next plans for making oppression backfire. By utilizing oppression, the authorities brought their fight to you and now it is your chance to win the fight on their turf. This demonstration of nonviolent action should be a true siege by overwhelming the police from every possible angle. The first component of the siege is to direct an arrested activist from the first nonviolent action to the police station from where there comrades have been taken. They may or may not be permitted into the station itself, but if not, they should occupy the closest public space, such as the sidewalk out front. These activists should conduct themselves as though in a carnival-like atmosphere by singing songs and chanting, particularly if this invokes the mood of the original moment a certain individual activist or group of activists were arrested (such as a protest) Involving the media is another part of the siege, as they will begin contacting police officials for their statements and explanations, as well as often times showing up to the station as well to get footage of the protest there. Lawyers

TIP:

'CELEBRATION' WHEN YOU SIEGE THE POLICE STATION DOES TWO THINGS: MAKES YOUR ACTIVISTS AT EASE, FRUSTRATES THE POLICE.



Protesters in California stand against an arrest made by the police and police brutality.

who were arranged ahead of time should have already been notified as soon as activists were taken into custody and they will begin their own process of dealing with the police and state attorneys to have activists released. For young activists, this legal defense will also include their parents, who should also be notified and will be key members of the siege at the station. Lastly, do not forget to get in contact with the supporters who will be helping from home, such as the grandmothers and other people. All they need is a phone and the number of the station. They can cause quite a bit of interference, just by inquiring about their darling friends who were taken.

CASE STUDY

FOR FACING THE OPPRESSION

NASHVILLE, UNITED STATES OCCUPY THE JAIL

A favorable tactic of making oppression backfire in the face of it is through a movement's occupying of the jail. The tactic's aim is to fill up the maximum occupancy of the jail to the point of overflow- that way the authorities are both unable to house anymore arrested political activists or legitimate civil criminals. The tactic takes planning, organization and communication to be as effective as possible. Your movement's target goal is to allow for your disciplined nonviolent activists to be compared to thugs and serious criminals- allowing for the authorities to appear ridiculous for your minor infraction of free speech. If enough activists are arrested for banal or inconsequential acts like gathering in a public space, waving banners or chanting movement slogans, it has a certain demonstrative effect of showing how the system - that police serve as agents to - is itself absurd. When your movement has successfully occupied the jail it will also allow for a protest or event to happen without arrests occurring because the jail has already met its limit.



Research is the primary step. The movement needs to take into account two things, which jail the activists will be taken to and the maximum occupancy number of inmates allotted in this particular jail. After this information is discovered a plan must be devised. When the protest or event happens and oppression acts are involved activists may be either arrested or fined. The goal is to be arrested for a minor offense during the event. If the movement can arrange for more than the maximum occupancy number of the jail of activists to be arrested- the jail will be occupied.





CASE STUDY

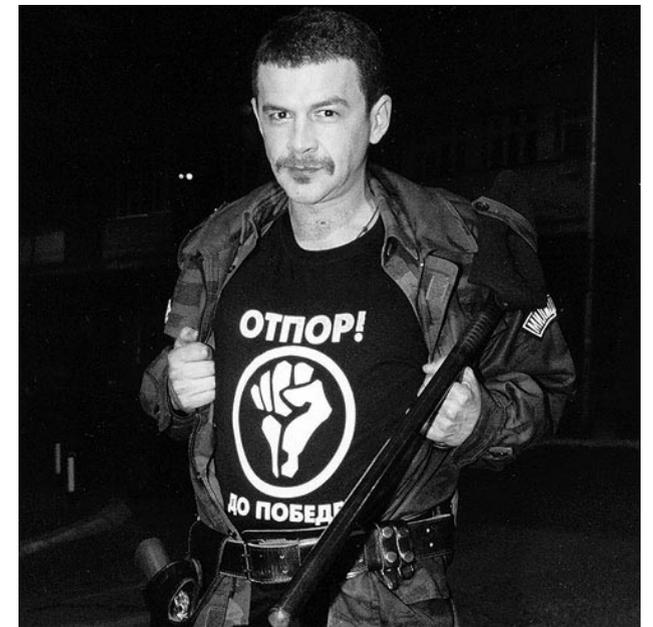
FOR FACING THE OPPRESSION

ОТПОР! IN SERBIA:

During the height of the Otpor movement, movement organizers were incredibly effective in making their movement popular. Not only was the fear of being detained minimized, but people actually wanted to be arrested. Being arrested became a certain badge of pride and movement organizers saw this dynamic and capitalized on it when they created three different colors of T-shirts that communicated how many times a certain individual had been arrested. After the movement gained momentum, the T-shirts that signified that a person had been to jail hundreds of times became commodity items. They were being stolen and traded - a testament to the movement's popularity and payoff for the movement organizers' months of hard work and planning.

It also has the effect of building unity among participants. When people are in jail together for a similar cause, there is sense of camaraderie with strangers who are rallied around the movement's common cause. Even if a movement's detained participants were not acquainted before meeting in jail, if enough people are present and can share similar stories and experiences, people within your movement may take on a certain shared identity. The jails are then reappropriated not as a negative space where fear is the dominating emotion but instead as a positive place. The idea is to make people want to go to jail, not because they are reckless or brave but because you as a movement planner have made it so that the factors for going to jail outweigh the factors against it.

When executed correctly this tactic can be incredibly effective. However jail filling is as much an indicator and marker of your movement's success as it is a tactic for undermining oppressive authorities. It is good to think of jail filling as a goal for late in the campaign after larger numbers of people have joined a movement and there is already broad based support.





E SUPPORT YOUR ACTIVISTS DURING THE TRIAL PHASE



IN 2009-2011 DOZENS OF GREEN REVOLUTION ACTIVISTS WERE PROSECUTED FOR TYRANNY AND DISRUPTING THE PEACE. THEIR FELLOW ACTIVISTS ATTENDED EVERY COURT SESSION, WERE ABLE TO PAY THEIR LEGAL FEES AND GATHERED OUTSIDE OF THE COURTHOUSE BY THE MASSES IN SUPPORT OF THEIR FREEDOM AND INNOCENCE. IN TEHRAN, IRAN

If the activists who were arrested are to have a trial from those charges, then as a part of making the oppression backfire, you must repeat the process that you went through when they were initially arrested. This includes the same three components that you utilized before: media, legal, and direct support. Using the same media lists that you compiled before, you should keep the public updated on what is happening with the case, including when the trial will be and what the charges are. The legal aspect will probably already be taken care of and the lawyers who you contacted initially will be working with their clients to organize a defense or make a deal with the state's prosecutors. Rather than jail support, at this phase your fellow activists will need your support at their trials or court hearings. You can plan for supporters to attend these court proceedings, though they will not likely be permitted to bring signs or verbally show support. Another option is to organize a larger public demonstration in front of the courthouse or building where the proceedings will be taking place.



ALWAYS	NEVER
<p>MAKE SURE PEOPLE WHO HAVE FACED OPPRESSION FEEL SUPPORTED. THEY NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE SUPPORTED.</p> <p>HAVE YOUR PLAN IN PLACE AND READY TO GO. SPEED IS YOUR BEST PROTECTION!</p> <p>DE-BRIEF ACTIVISTS COMING OUT OF POLICE CUSTODY. KNOW WHAT WAS ASKED AND WHAT THEY SAID.</p>	<p>KEEP IT TO YOURSELF. MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS THAT OPPRESSION OCCURRED; INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF YOUR COUNTRY!</p> <p>FORGET ABOUT ACTIVIST'S' LEGAL SITUATION ONCE THEY ARE OUT OF JAIL. THEY MAY BE IN FOR A LONG TRIAL PHASE AND STILL NEED YOUR SUPPORT.</p> <p>LOSE ENERGY. ONCE OPPRESSION HAS HAPPENED, THE PROTEST IS NOT OVER; IT THEN NEEDS TO SHIFT TARGETS.</p>



ACTIVIST TRAUMA SUPPORT

ACTIVISM TRAUMA SUPPORT IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT HAS A WEBSITE WITH USEFUL DOCUMENTS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR ACTIVISTS FACING OPPRESSION AND THE TRAUMA AND EFFECTS THAT ARE CAUSED BY IT. WHEN YOU PULL UP THE WEBSITE THERE ARE DOCUMENTS ABOUT FACING POLICE AND HOW TO HANDLE BRUTALITY, PERSONAL ACCOUNTS FROM INDIVIDUAL PROTESTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND HOW THEY HANDLED THEIR TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES AS WELL AS MENTAL HEALTH TIPS TO HELP PEOPLE DEBRIEF THEIR ACCOUNTS AND WAYS TO COME TOGETHER AND TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEMS YOU ARE DEALING WITH AFTER BEING OPPRESSED.



[HTTPS://WWW.ACTIVIST-TRAUMA.NET](https://www.activist-trauma.net)



RESPONSIBILITY/ TASK (what has to be done?)	TEAM IN CHARGE (who is in charge of this?)
Research about previous oppression (Phase I)	Team #1 - "Research Team" You may Name your teams however you want – (i.e by number) but the actual breakdown of work and job assignments for each team easily understandable.
Train Activists about procedure for being arrested Debrief activists who have been arrested (Phase I)	Team #1- "Research Team"
Press Release, write it and send it to appropriate media sources/ contacts (Phase I, II)	Team #2- "Media Tools Team"
Human Rights Abuses from events, write the incident and report to appropriate Human Rights Organizations/contacts (Phase I)	Team #2- "Media Tools Team"
Establish and Manage bail out fund and hospital funds for activists who are arrested and injured Include family contacts for individuals (Phase I, III)	Team #3- "Solidarity and Follow up Team"

Develop list of activists and manage contact with them for post oppression for accountability of who has been arrested hurt or who is missing (Phase III)	Team #3- "Solidarity and Follow up Team"
Develop and Manage list of contacts regarding Human Rights Organizations, Lawyers, Hospitals, jails (Phase I, II, III)	Team #2- "Media Tools Team"
Manage website/blog/facebook/ twitter for movement regarding oppression and events where it occurs, make it public (Phase II, III)	Team #2- "Media Tools Team"
Assign activists who rill record events with pictures and videos Manage them with press release, Human Rights Organizations, Website/Blog/Facebook/Twitter (Phase II)	Team #2- "Media Tools Team"
Debrief activists on mistakes and successes from event for future events (Phase III)	Team #1- "Research Team"
Lead discussion and/or roleplaying groups before and after facing oppression (Phase I, III)	Team #1- "Research Team"

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

{Name of Movement}{Name of Movement}



(logo of movement)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Info for Movement

Broad, Don't Give Out Full Names.

Name: John

Telephone: (movements' number, not specific persons)

Email: (movement email strictly for press releases, nothing else)

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE ABOUT OPPRESSIVE ACTION (IN ALL UPPER CASE LETTERS)

Subtitle: Date, Location (In upper and lower case letters)

First Paragraph: For all press releases, keep this paragraph and then you will be able to copy and paste into a new document for every press release for the future. Briefly describe your movement, including mission statement and message (see CANVAS text 50 Crucial Points chapter 5 & 6) Include a broad overview of participants (youth, students, workers). Include the fact that it is a nonviolent and peaceful struggle.

Second Paragraph: Describe the event in which oppression occurred in detail. Where did it occur? Who was oppressed? When did it occur (time, date)? Specific members that were arrested/harmed including their name and age, what happened to them, and what injuries or physical harm they sustained. Include the name of the hospital or police station they are currently in and any updates about their wellbeing since oppression occurred.

Third Paragraph: Details about oppressors. Remember **NAME AND SHAME** those who inflicted oppression. Include the specific names of police officers, military personnel or those who inflicted oppression. Cite reliable facts as proof that can be accounted for by multiple people- recordings on phones, pictures, videos and any other evidence you have of oppression may be appropriate to cite. Tell media sources that additional documentation of oppression is available on your website/blog/facebook page.

Include a footnote: For more information or for an interview contact movementname@email.com

For photographs, videos please visit our blog/website/facebook page at movement/facebook.com

PHASE III:

Capitalize the Oppression



AFTER OPPRESSION HAS OCCURRED, YOUR MOVEMENT'S MAIN OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO TURN THE OPPORTUNITY INTO YOUR ADVANTAGE. THIS IS THE FOLLOW THROUGH PROCEDURE FOR MAKING SURE OPPRESSION BACKFIRES AND CONTINUES TO DO SO LONG AFTER SINGLE ACTS HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED. WHEN CAPITALIZING OPPRESSION ONE MUST

(A.) LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND

(B.) CAPTURE YOUR MESSAGE

(C.) KEEP EVERYONE AWARE

(D.) MAKING MARTYRS

(E.) NAME AND SHAME



A LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

When facing oppression there are two things that are guaranteed: you cannot control what your opposition will do and there will be casualties. How you as a movement handle these casualties however, you can control. It is important to the integrity of the movement to take responsible and practical measures when these things happen. Things like, unplanned arrests, injuries and disappearances require human attention. It is important to remember that despite the size of your movement, each member is an individual, with a family and responsibilities. Each deserves individual consideration because you are all in this movement together, fighting for the same vision of tomorrow and with that no man can be left behind.

TIP:
PERSONAL LETTERS OR EMAILS TO THE FAMILY OF THE DETAINED INDIVIDUALS ARE ONE WAY TO BUILD SOLIDARITY.

When campaigns or protests are oppressed and a bit of chaos breaks out things go wrong. In all reality, things can go very wrong. People get hurt and need medical attention, activists may be arrested and some may go missing. There are measures that can be taken to assure unity in the wake of these events. The primary concern is to assure that everyone is accounted for. Making a list of each activist along with their individual contact information and emergency contacts is a great way to keep track of who will be involved in a particular campaign that may result in harsh oppression. Activists can take to social media for accountability. 'Liking' a Facebook post or 'Retweeting' a Tweet on Twitter is a simple and quick way to say "I'm safe." Those who aren't accounted for as 'safe' need to be found. Spread the burden to everyone in the movement to find your missing people. Call and go to hospitals,



Activists in Bahrain attend to one of their hurt fellow activists after a protest in Manama

TIP:
USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS ACCOUNTED FOR IS QUICK, EASY AND CAN BE DONE FROM ANYWHERE!

call police stations until everyone is accounted for then record it. Record the injuries, arrests and missing persons profiles for a press release. This is a method that will bring media attention to your movement, put a shaming title to the oppressor and if need be an advertisement for a missing person that might have disappeared thanks to the oppressor.

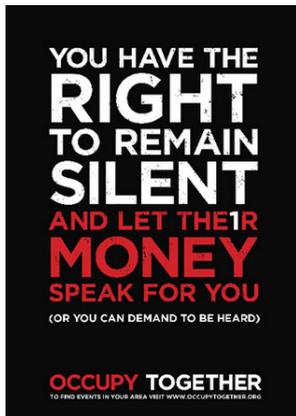
Support is the next step. After you have found those who have been arrested or injured assuring that they are still apart of the movement and have the support of their peers for their contribution and sacrifice for the cause is important for unity and integrity. If someone is injured and in hospital they may need medical support or help to make sure their families are okay. If a fellow activist is arrested and receives a lengthy jail sentence it's wise to not only support the individual but their family as well. Making sure the movement can come together and make sure they are fed and well taken care of.

Taking responsibility for the casualties in your movement is vital to its survival from an internal perspective. If you and your fellow activists can come together in face of a crisis and handle it willingly and responsibly, your movement will be stronger and harder to break down for your enemy.



B CAPTURE YOUR MESSAGE

Going forward, following oppression of any scale, you must be conscious of what message you are sending about what happened. It would be a strategic victory for your opponent if you were to allow your movement to appear significantly harmed because of the oppression. Your message moving forward should be a positive one, which emphasizes your strength and determination. Communication with the public should make clear that what you have experienced is merely a bump in the road and no amount of oppression will cause your movement to end. Marketing this consistently positive messaging is precisely what makes it appear that the oppression has backfired.



Occupy Wall Street in different parts of the world developed posters portraying their message as clearly as possible, this aided in developing a large gathering and appealing to the masses.

CASE STUDY FOR CAPTURE YOUR MESSAGE

PUSSY RIOT IN RUSSIA

The feminist punk-rock band from Russia, Pussy Riot, is a solid example about capturing a message. In 2012 the band performed on the steps of Moscow's most noted orthodox church. Their website is a main base for their activism. They record all of their protests or performances and upload them onto the website with a message and captivating title in which they set their aim straight. It's a tactic that has worked both for and against their favor. Luckily for them, it has received international attention from celebrities and mainstream media sources. However, this attention did not go unnoticed by their beloved president Vladimir Putin. Three of the members were sentenced to lengthy prison sentences for 'hooliganism' and 'disruption of the peace.'



Their anti-Putin platform has extended into disputing the corrupted and distorted relationship between the government and the Orthodox Church, the reason for their prominent 2012 performance. Despite the negative and skewed Russian media report at the time they made sure that all could see exactly what they did, which was perform in a semi-provocative manner, and their reason behind it. They have made it so they are in control of their message, rather than allowing for the media to run wild with their actions. You can scan through their regularly updated website here:

<http://freepussyriot.org/>

C **KEEP EVERYONE AWARE**

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP EVERYONE AWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED, AND ALSO TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY CONTINUE TO CARE ABOUT IT. USING LEAFLETS, PICTURES AND SOCIAL MEDIA ARE GOOD WAYS TO KEEP THE MEMORY OF OPPRESSION RELEVANT.

After the initial phase of outreach, to inform the local and national media what your movement has faced, you can focus your attention on more long-term outreach tactics. The scale and severity of the oppression you have faced will often-times determine how much follow-up outreach you will need to do. For example, if the authorities committed serious human rights abuses, it will be beneficial to contact international human rights organizations. These organizations will be grateful for first-hand testimony and cooperation from people who have experienced abuse. A condemnation or even an investigation from an international organization will compound the bad publicity for the authorities and increase your legitimacy and sympathy on the world stage.



Free Bassel Campaign in Syria, to bring home the loved and celebrated internet volunteer who has been detained in Syria since 03/15/2012

If the authorities have continued to hold members of your movement in custody or they have been sentenced to spend time in prison, it is important to include them in your outreach going forward. You can encourage members to write letters to these members on their own, or you can even organize mass events to write letters to a large number of political prisoners. These letters are not only beneficial to the people in prison. It keeps them connected to what is going on outside, and serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing oppression. On the other side, staying in contact with people in custody sends the message that you have not forgotten about them and that despite the oppression, you are still organized and determined. There are further steps you can also take to make it very costly, in terms of their image, for authorities to hold activists for a long period of time; see the next section "making martyrs"

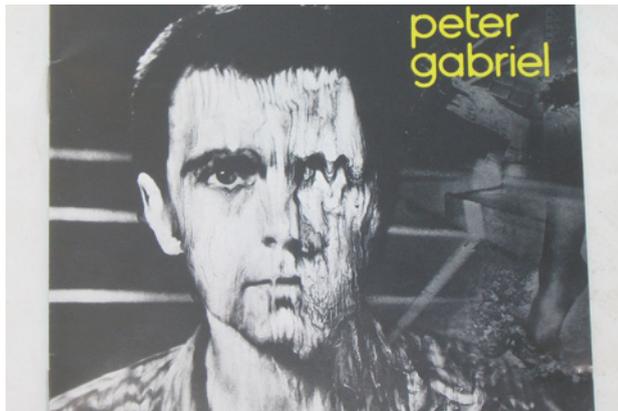
CASE STUDY FOR KEEP EVERYONE AWARE

SOUTH AFRICA

In 1980 the British rock musician Peter Gabriel released his third album with a song titled 'Biko,' which follows and carries a martyr message about a notable black South African anti-apartheid activist. He was arrested in late August in 1977, detained for a week then transferred to an interrogation prison cell in Port Elizabeth. He lasted brutal torture for several days before giving into his injuries and dying in the hands of the South African authorities. The song became very popular around the world and it carried a powerful message surrounding the oppressive tendency of the Afrikaner government and the lengths they were going to repress anti-apartheid activists. Gabriel sounded the passion of the movement while highlighting Biko as a martyr to the case singing, "You can blow out a candle, But you can't blow out a fire, once the flames begin to catch- the wind will blow it higher." This movement went from being a domestic struggle to an international one with media swarming around the truth of Biko, putting pressure on the government to give in to the demands of the movement.



"YOU CAN BLOW OUT A CANDLE, BUT YOU CAN'T BLOW OUT A FIRE, ONCE THE FLAMES BEGIN TO CATCH- THE WIND WILL BLOW IT HIGHER."



▶ D MAKING MARTYRS

In the aftermath of significant oppression by the authorities, there is often an opportunity to make members of your movement into a type of martyr, to give a personal, specific face to the oppression. Tragically, in the most extreme cases, these would be people who are severely injured or killed by the security forces, but other situations can create martyrs as well. Activists facing extreme political consequences, such as long prison sentences or periods of house arrest can also serve as martyrs. A successful "martyrization" of an activist from your movement can be a huge victory and put an enormous price tag on future oppression by your opponent. Putting an individual face on the oppression and giving it a personal story will elicit tremendous sympathy, and is another way that you may be able to attract people to your movement who were previously on the fence. The more public support for the victims of oppression, the less likely the authorities will be able to villainize them.

TIP:

DESPITE WHAT KIND OF OPPRESSION YOU FACE, TAKE THE BAD AND MAKE IT POSITIVE- IT WILL MAKE YOUR OPPRESSOR LOOK BAD TO THE PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND EMPOWER YOUR MESSAGE

The process of "martyrization" begins with broadcasting the stories of the victims and making them well known by the public. These do not need to be extensive, and in fact, it is helpful if they can be summarized into a few key bullet points. On top of a media campaign, some very effective public events can help build support for a martyr. In many cases, it can be strategic to use the funerals of activists as rallying points for the movement. Especially in places where there may be crackdowns on large public protests, gathering at a funeral puts the authorities in a dilemma situation; they would look very bad

*Honoring a fallen
activist on the streets
of Cairo in Egypt*



if they tried to break up a funeral. Another event that can be very powerful and symbolic is a candlelight vigil, which brings people together to honor and commemorate your martyrs.

The process of martyrization has been used so successfully that it only takes a few moments to think of famous figures from nonviolent struggles around the world. Well beyond the countries they were originally from, millions of people know the names of Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Scott Olsen, and Khaled Saeed for their courageous contributions to nonviolent struggle. Although the struggles they are from are very different, the process of turning them into heroes and icons is very similar.

CASE STUDY FOR MAKING MARTYRS

"WITHIN A SYSTEM WHICH DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, FEAR TENDS TO BE THE ORDER OF THE DAY. FEAR OF IMPRISONMENT, FEAR OF TORTURE, FEAR OF DEATH, FEAR OF LOSING FRIENDS, FAMILY, PROPERTY OR MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD... YET EVEN UNDER THE MOST CRUSHING STATE MACHINERY COURAGE RISES UP AGAIN AND AGAIN, FOR FEAR IS NOT THE NATURAL STATE OF CIVILIZED MAN."

AUNG SAN SUU KYI,
FREEDOM FROM FEAR

AUNG SAN SUU KYI IN BURMA

Aung San Suu Kyi, who is known as the mother of democracy in Burma, was put under house arrest in 1989. In 1990, while still in detention, her National League for Democracy (NLD) won more than 80% of the seats in parliament, though the election results were invalidated. Nevertheless, her personal struggle made plain the repressive nature of the Burmese regime and provided a rallying point for pro-democracy factions. Most impressively, Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, but was not permitted to leave the country to deliver her acceptance speech. She was freed from house arrest in 2010 after 15 years, and in 2012 was elected to Burmese parliament. In June of 2012, she made her first trip abroad in more than two decades, including a stop in Norway to finally deliver her Nobel lecture.



CASE STUDY FOR MAKING MARTYRS

ABDULHADI AL-KHAWAJA IN BAHRAIN

Abdulhadi al-Khawaja is most well known for his extended hunger strike while in detention in Bahrain following his arrest during the pro-democracy protests of the Bahraini uprising. While serving a life sentence for trying to overthrow the Bahraini government, al-Khawaja began an indefinite hunger strike until "freedom or death". His strike gained a great deal of international media attention, and highlighted on the world stage what the state of human rights in Bahrain was like. Media attention also drew the attention of international organizations and other governments, who made many public condemnations of the situation in Bahrain. The high commissioner for human rights of the United Nations even made an appeal on Mr. al-Khawaja's behalf. Bowing to the pressure, the authorities declared a mistrial of his case and announced that there would be a new trial in a few months, but this time in a civilian, not a military court. After 110 days without eating, despite enduring torture and force-feeding by the Bahraini authorities, he finally ended his strike. Though he did not obtain his release, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja and his supporters succeeded in forcing the human rights situation in Bahrain onto the world stage and gained important concessions from the government.

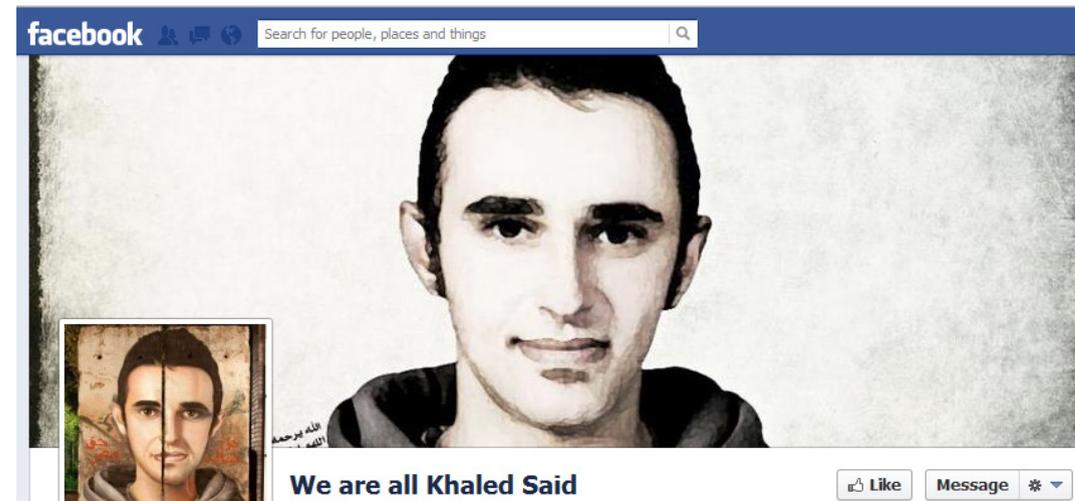
ABDULHADI AL KAWAJA, THE FORMER LEADER OF THE BAHRAIN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS MADE A SPEECH THAT CALLED FOR PEACEFUL CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AGAINST THE ABUSES OF OPPRESSIVE POWERS ON CIVILIANS



CASE STUDY FOR MAKING MARTYRS

KHALED SAEED IN EGYPT

Khaled Saeed was a young Egyptian man from Alexandria, who died in June 2010 while in police custody. After his death, pictures were circulated that appeared to show his body with severe trauma, indicating that the police had beaten him to death. The pictures went viral and Human Rights Watch even issued a condemnation of the police forces. One of those who saw the picture was Wael Ghonim, a Google marketing executive, who set up a Facebook page called "We Are All Khaled Said". Hundreds of thousands of people joined the page and his story was spread around the world. Khaled's death resonated deeply in Egypt, where many people felt the lack of dignity from their government that was shown to Khaled. Just as the death of Mohamed Bouazizi is believed to have triggered the protests in Tunisia that toppled their dictator, Khaled Saeed's death is believed to have begun the 2011 protests that brought down Mubarak.





E NAME AND SHAME

PUBLICLY “SHAMING” INDIVIDUALS MAKES PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS – THE MORE SPECIFIC, THE BETTER SO THAT OPPRESSORS WILL HAVE TO OWN UP NOT TO A GENERAL CRITICISM, BUT SOMETHING CONCRETE. FURTHERMORE, THIS TACTIC SETS A PRECEDENT FOR HOW JUSTICE SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT FOR THE FUTURE; IT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THAT INDIVIDUAL TO REPEAT THE OPPRESSIVE ACTION IF THEY ARE PROPERLY SHAMED BY IT.

Another important component of a follow-up strategy is to name those who were responsible for the oppression publicly and shame them for their behavior. It is more powerful to name specific individuals then to blame an entire entity such as the state, a certain ministry, or the police force as a whole. Targeting those responsible individuals makes the guilt and responsibility personal, by assigning it a name and a face. It also shows those people and any who may be involved in oppression in the future that they cannot hide behind their organizations and that the specific decisions that they make have consequences for them personally. This method of naming and shaming can help to channel public outrage into a specific campaign and have real consequences for the authorities.

The name and shame strategy should be another very public campaign. Your goal should be for everyone who knows about the authorities’ actions to also know who specifically is responsible. Since, in most cases, the people responsible are in positions where they are supposed to serve the public, you can encourage the public to contact them with their thoughts on what they did. Large-scale public outrage will force the authorities to respond by at minimum investigating the events that occurred, and at best firing those responsible and changing their policies towards oppression in the future. This would be one of the greatest successes in a strategy to make oppression backfire, if in fact you are able to create institutional change regarding how opposition will be handled in the future.

During the height of the US Occupy movement, there was a large protest encampment in Oakland, California. On October 24, 2011, the Mayor of Oakland, Jean Quan, instructed the police to clear out and arrest all of the peaceful protesters. The police moved in and used great brutality, including tear gas, flash-bang grenades, and metal coated bullets to disperse those who were near the encampment. Dozens of people were arrested and many were injured, including a US Veteran, Scott Olsen, who had his skull fractured when he was shot with a tear gas canister. Images of the arrests and injuries were circulated nationwide and there was outrage that the Mayor would order such an operation. Due to heavy public pressure, within a month the Mayor was forced to fire several of her top legal advisors.



CASE STUDY FOR MAKING MARTYRS

MALDIVES

In 2005 the Maldivian human rights activist Jennifer Latheef was arrested on the grounds of 'terrorism' for joining a protest against the deaths in prison and political repression. She was released in 2006 and sentenced to house arrest. During the time of her house arrest her movement devised a 'Name and Shame' campaign in which the Gayoom regime was boycotted and opposed for their brutality and oppression. They connected themselves with the travel guide company 'Lonely Planet' and linked all of the major resorts in the Maldives that funded the government or individual officials. They allowed for tourists to choose to participate in boycotting the government by choosing 'clean' resorts to spend their money in. Letheef was awarded a presidential pardon, however in honor of her movement and her convictions she denied the pardon.

TIP:

ALLOW FOR EVERYONE TO KNOW ABOUT WHO IS SPECIFICALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OPPRESSION WHEN NAMING AND SHAMING.



ALWAYS	NEVER
SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE. YOU MUST WIN THE PROPAGANDA BATTLE AFTER THE OPPRESSION.	KEEP IT TO YOURSELF. MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS THAT OPPRESSION OCCURRED; INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF YOUR COUNTRY!
LEARN LESSONS FOR NEXT TIME. KNOW HOW YOU COULD HAVE BEEN MORE PREPARED OR RESPONDED BETTER.	FORGET ABOUT ACTIVISTS' LEGAL SITUATION ONCE THEY ARE OUT OF JAIL. THEY MAY BE IN FOR A LONG TRIAL PHASE AND STILL NEED YOUR SUPPORT.
KEEP UP THE PRESSURE. FIND OUT WHO IS RESPONSIBLE AND HOLD THEM PUBLICLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.	LOSE ENERGY. ONCE OPPRESSION HAS HAPPENED, THE PROTEST IS NOT OVER; IT THEN NEEDS TO SHIFT TARGETS.





EXAMPLE WEEK 7 DAYS TOTAL

4 DAYS BEFORE EVENT DAY

- Develop news media and contacts
- Develop accountability procedure for specific event

3 DAYS BEFORE EVENT DAY

- Ensure that people know website/email to send in videos/reports

2 DAYS BEFORE EVENT DAY

- Develop basic press release
- Double check contacts list
- Make sure you have number and address for police station and jail people will be sent to

1 DAY BEFORE EVENT DAY

- Discussion Group about fears and facing oppression
- Discuss procedure for arrest, injury

EVENT DAY!

- Record Event! Upload to Internet
- Collect others' evidence of event
- Activists should collect names, badge numbers and car license plates
- Account for ALL activists, who has been arrested? Who is injured? Who is missing?
- Send press release!
- Send human rights abuses to appropriate contacts!

FIRST DAY AFTER EVENT DAY

- Follow up on press release
- Follow up on Human Rights
- Follow up on arrested, injured and missing

SECOND DAY AFTER EVENT DAY

- Debrief released activists from arrests
- Discuss mistakes and success for future events

BEFORE FACING OPPRESSION

(5 DAYS- 48 HOURS PRIOR)

- Discussion group about fear, the nature of oppression and facing it
- Discuss what to do in case of arrest or injury
- Assign Roles
- Prepare Basic Press Release

WHILE FACING THE OPPRESSION

- Record Events
- Get Names of Oppressors (police officers, military personnel)

AFTER FACING THE OPPRESSION

(IMMEDIATELY- 7 DAYS AFTER)

- Check for Arrests, Injured- Make Sure everyone is accounted for
- Upload Recordings to website/blog/internet
- Send press release to Media
- Report oppression to Human Rights Organizations

CONCLUSION

Learning how to successfully deal with oppression is one of the foundational skills for any non-violent movement that is serious about enacting significant changes in their society. Although manifested differently and to differing degrees across different areas, there are common principles useful for fighting oppression. Expectation and preparation are truly the difference-makers when it comes to successfully countering governmental oppression. Just as in any other asymmetric conflict, training, knowledge, and preparation are vital to defeating a larger and better-equipped enemy. Similarly, the manipulation of oppression can even allow a nonviolent movement to force up the price of repression and ultimately get the upper hand on their opponent.

Nonviolent conflict has noble goals: human rights, democracy and social, economic equality. But, oppression has latched itself onto people power. They can beat, torture, arrest, convict and kill but you can fight securely and swiftly with capitalization tactics. Uniting people against the oppressor for the better has been done before. Despite what happens to individuals, your movement can become a lethal enemy to the oppressor because they can kill a revolutionary, but they cannot kill a revolution. The knowledge on how to make oppression backfire is the best weapon for facing oppression because you cannot control what your enemy does, but you can control what to do with the aftermath your enemy leaves behind.



RECOMMENDED WEBSITES AND READING



WWW.CANVASOPEDIA.ORG

CANVAS has an established and widely praised and innovative training curriculum that sets it apart from other organizations working to promote democracy around the world. At its core, the CANVAS training methodology is all about sharing the accumulated knowledge that its diverse team of trainers has learned over the years through experiences in many different parts of the world. It stresses unity, discipline and planning, basic concepts that nevertheless are often overlooked or handled poorly by democratic forces operating in autocratic or transitional countries. During workshops, expert trainers walk participants through a series of exercises designed to highlight effective nonviolent strategies and tactics. Trainers also lead workshops to help participants think through what it means to apply nonviolence in different contexts. Drawing from a wide array of experiences and examples, the methodology additionally focuses on the effective use of nonviolence as a strategic imperative for any movement operating within a government or system that is not afraid to use military might to enforce its rule. Doing so has become a proven tool capable of challenging a variety of regimes, most recently those in the Middle East and North Africa, but additionally in South America, Southern Africa and Southeast Europe as well. The use of nonviolence also makes the efforts of any democracy movement more accessible to a wider swath of people, most notably the critical middle class of any society, who often do not support a repressive government yet do not want to join a violent alternative.

FACEBOOK NAME: CANVAS People Power
TWITTER: @CANVASNVS



WWW.AVAAZ.ORG

This website is a great resource for activists to get their movement known and gain momentum. Established in 2007, their mission is to “organize citizens of all nations to close the gap between the world we have and the world most people everywhere want” and they pride themselves on being “completely member funded” without any corporate sponsors. It is available in nine different languages. They have a great “Create a Petition” campaign that is useful in raising awareness.

FACEBOOK: Avaaz
TWITTER: @Avaaz

WWW.EVERYDAYREBELLION.ORG

FACEBOOK NAME: Everyday Rebellion
TWITTER: @EverydayRebell

HTTP://DEMOCRACYLAB.FOREIGNPOLICY.COM/

Democracy Lab is a news portal and online resource covering the political and economic challenges facing countries trying to make transition from authoritarian governments.

WWW.BEAUTIFULTROUBLE.ORG

This website documents and tracks different tactics for creative nonviolent resistance tactics

FACEBOOK NAME: Beautiful Trouble T
TWITTER: @BTroublemakers



WWW.AEINSTEIN.ORG

Free downloads by authors and scholars of nonviolent struggle Gene Sharp and Robert Helvey. An incredibly useful activist tools

FACEBOOK NAME: The Albert Einstein Institution

TWITTER: @GeneSharpaei

WWW.NONVIOLENT-CONFLICT.ORG

This is the website for the Washington DC based NGO International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. They have a useful "Resource Library" and links to relevant causes

FACEBOOK NAME: International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC)

TWITTER: @NVconflict

WWW.AMNESTYINTERNATIONAL.ORG

Amnesty International is a highly regarded NGO and institution that helps raise awareness of human rights issues. They're website has lots of resources for activists

WWW.MOVEMENTS.ORG

A website whose mission is to "harness others to identify with their causes" very useful in helping to raise awareness and has interesting case studies and resources

FACEBOOK NAME: Movements.org

TWITTER: @aym

WWW.ACCESSNOW.ORG

Accessnow.org provides information to activists about how to circumvent internet firewalls and get around censorships. They're mission statement is to protect "the digital rights of users at risk around the world. By combining innovative policy, user engagement and direct technical support, we fight for open and secure communications for all"

WWW.CRISISMAPPERS.NET

The idea with this group is to inform local viewers of where a crisis is occurring quickly and with a rapid response. They are a self claimed "international community of experts, practitioners, policymakers, technologists, researchers, journalists, scholars, hackers and skilled volunteers engaged at the intersection between humanitarian crises, technology, crowd-sourcing, and crisis mapping."

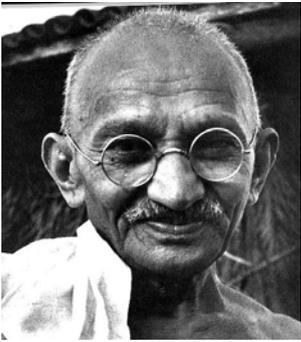
I'M GETTING ARRESTED Application for iphone and android allows you to tell family, friends and your legal team where you are, what has happened and where you are going. By pressing the bulls-eye on the app will alert your contacts via a customizable text message.

LEGAL OBSERVER Application for iphone and android is an app that can be used to record and report interactions with the police at protests, demonstrations and other events. Legal observer acts as a witness to hold police accountable for their actions. There is an input form for key data about the overall incident and profile creation for police officers and other involved persons.



PHOTO CREDITS

Pg. 10: live photojournalists Russian Riots; pg. 12: Andrew Sullivan, "Why We Protest" Photo Series, Iran; pg 15: Nicholas Jackson Photography "Student Movements Chile"; pg 20: Syrian Observatory For Human Rights; pg 26: Robin Bruel Photography; pg. 30: FEMEN.org; pg 40: occupy.org; pg 43: Igor Jeremic; pg 44: Credit: Andrew Sullivan, "Why We Protest" Photo Series, Iran; pg 51: Robert Fisk Photography; pg 53: НАСТЯ; pg 55: Kennisland on Flickr; pg 58: Mahmoud Assim; pg 63: Wardat Elbrahim; pg 64: Lonely Planet; Pg 65 and 74: Wardat Al-Brahim



SRĐA POPOVIĆ is an experienced political party and nonviolent movement leader. As a founding member of the Otpor resistance movement credited with the downfall of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. Since 2003, Popovic has served as the Executive Director of the Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), an international network of trainers and consultants from Serbia, Georgia, South Africa, Ukraine, Lebanon and the Philippines engaged in the transfer of knowledge about nonviolent democratic change around the world. Popovic has organized and presented CANVAS's innovative curriculum on nonviolence at more than 25 workshops, 15 conferences and 10 prominent academic institutions around the world. Popovic is also the co-author of two books published all over the globe, "Nonviolent Struggle: 50 Crucial Points" (2006) and "CANVAS Core Curriculum: A Comprehensive Guide for Nonviolent Struggle" (2007), downloadable in several languages at: www.canvasopedia.org. Additionally, he has written numerous articles related to nonviolent struggle. He has been featured in numerous prominent media including the New York Times, The Washington Post, NPR, Foreign Policy Magazine and Wired as a leading expert and trainer in nonviolent transitions to democracy. In 2013 he was named as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.



TORI PORELL is an activist, student, and rabble-rouser from the U.S., working on a variety of social justice issues in contexts around the world. Originally from Arizona, she now lives in Boston where she studies at Northeastern University, while rabble-rousing every chance she gets. Her main activities right now revolve around Palestine solidarity. Tori lived in Belgrade and worked at CANVAS where she worked on a variety of projects. Driven by her involvement in the Occupy movement and subsequent series of arrests, Tori drafted Making Oppression Backfire and hopes that it will be a useful tool to activists and revolutionaries everywhere.



ISABELLA CUOMO is a political human rights activist, travel addict and lover of all things Italian and Middle Eastern. She was born and raised in the vineyards of Tuscany, in the mountains of Colorado and in the forests of Zimbabwe. Her favorite things in life include skiing, tobacco, caffeine, good wine and hummus. She is a student at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts studying International Affairs concentrated in the Middle East and Arabic. She is also policy officer with the United States governmental organization 'The American Islamic Congress' focusing on Arab and American relations. She has worked with The Red Cross in South America, aiding post civil war El Salvador and sex traffic victims in Costa Rica. Currently, she is working at CANVAS in Belgrade, Serbia on projects like Making Oppression Backfire hoping to inspire activists and movements around the world. Her calling is to do everything she can to make the world a little bit of a fairer, safer and more lovely place to live.



MARCELLA ALVAREZ is a Puerto Rican American who currently works at the Center for applied Nonviolent Actions and Strategies. She loves to read tragic Russian literature and write short fiction. She was raised on a diet of nonviolent doctrine by her father whose bedtime stories involved Gandhi and Martin Luther King. She has worked in immigration law in New Mexico and as a victim advocate for domestic violence victims and offenders in the El Paso County court district. She graduated from Colorado College in 2012 where she studied Comparative Literature and Russian language but (more importantly) where she was first introduced to theories of strategic nonviolent resistance by professors and faculty there. Her duties at CANVAS include managing social media, brand development, organizing academic programs and coordinating nonviolent resistance trainings. She was raised on a farm in Albuquerque, New Mexico where her father showed her how to properly plant a tomato and her mother yelled at her father for never being on time anywhere. She is a caffeine addict who speaks Spanish and Russian.



ANA DJORDJEVIC-PETROVIC is Belgrade based graphic designer and activist, with master in Interior design. During 15 years of working as a freelancer she has worked on many, both personal and professional, design concept projects, for most diverse clients. Her work includes: book layouts, packaging design, visual identity, promotional material and video art. For the past 8 years, she has been in charge of CANVAS' visual identity. Recently, she has expanded her field of action and initiated several projects to improve Belgrade's public spaces.



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