

# Iraqi Unions vs. Big Oil

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NABIL AL-JURANI/AP PHOTOS

Oil refinery west of Basra.

**O**n February 26, 2007, the Iraqi cabinet passed and recommended for parliamentary approval a new law governing the country's immense and largely untapped supplies of oil and natural gas. Grasping at straws for any sign of success in Iraq, the law's international sponsors hailed a major accomplishment for Iraq's fledgling government. White House spokesman Tony Snow celebrated the oil law's passage toward Parliament, one of four "benchmarks" the Bush administration has set for the Iraqi government, as a "key linchpin" in Iraq's recovery. Three months later, the oil law is still awaiting parliamentary debate, its ultimate fate in doubt. The bill faces opposition not just from politicians representing communal and regional interests, but also from Iraqis—key among them the major trade union federations—concerned that the law puts the country's patrimony on the auction block.

### **"Behind Closed Doors"**

In the months preceding the cabinet vote, disagreements among cabinet members and lower-level officials centered on revenue sharing—how Iraq would divide the profits from lucrative oil sales among governorates—and the role of the regions, versus that of the central state, in determining and signing contracts with international oil companies. The Iraqi government had pledged to the International Monetary Fund, overseeing a massive debt relief and economic reform regime for Iraq, that it would develop an oil law by the end of 2006, but the disputes caused the government to miss the initial deadline by two months.<sup>1</sup>

Cabinet approval did not originally appear forthcoming. For months, tension among Iraq's major ethnic and sectarian-based ruling parties kept the oil law bogged down in debates that mirrored the country's overall crisis. Kurdish parties representing the Kurdistan Regional Government fought for the right to negotiate and sign contracts—and to benefit from oil profits—with the utmost autonomy. Shi'i partisan politicians likewise argued for autonomy for the heavily Shi'i Arab south. Sunni Arab politicians worried openly that most of Iraq's oil reserves are in Kurdish- and Shi'i Arab-dominated governorates of Iraq and that such autonomy schemes would leave Sunni Arabs (disproportionately living in the oil-poor center) at a disadvantage. In the end, the draft that emerged from the cabinet represented a compromise among these political tendencies. For the autonomy-anxious, regional governments will be allowed under the law to negotiate directly with foreign oil companies, but for those worried about equitable distribution among the regions, the law creates a centralized Federal Oil and Gas Council, which will have final say over all contracts. Revenue is to be distributed to governorates on a per capita basis.

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Behind the scenes, several key stakeholders in the Iraqi oil industry saw more than just the ethno-sectarian balance of power at stake in the shape of this new law. From the start of the war, US government and oil company experts were advising Iraqi technocrats and politicians on oil law and policy. In 2003 and 2004, the US awarded two contracts to an American company, Bearing Point, to "provide economic rehabilitation and reform for Iraq to stimulate the country's international trade engagement, employment and broad-based prosperity," which included an expert consultant to Iraq on its oil industry. A State Department spokesman told *The American Lawyer* in April that "our guys are helping the Iraqis write their law and pass their law."<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of 2006, when information about the content of the draft law became public, few people outside a small circle of Iraqi politicians and foreign advisers had seen the drafts. To be sure, in Iraq, where public institutions are still developing and the government itself struggles to survive, few policy issues are debated openly or receive public input. But certain other key stakeholders had no problem gaining access to discussions of the future of what experts call the second-largest oilfields in the world. Nine multinational oil companies had a chance to review and comment on the draft oil law as early as July 2006.<sup>3</sup>

The Iraqi government, increasingly under fire domestically and reliant on its overseas supporters, is under enormous and mounting pressure to see the oil law through Parliament. During his April stopover in Baghdad, Defense Secretary Robert Gates pressed Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to make progress as soon as possible—telling him "the clock is ticking" and tying this benchmark to US willingness to keep soldiers in Iraq. In May, Vice President Dick Cheney, furious at reports of Iraqi lawmakers, intention to take their summer vacations before debating the oil law, also turned the screws on Maliki. The Democrats, too, included "passage of an oil revenue sharing law" in their emergency war supplemental bill as a requirement for continuing US military engagement. The 2006 Iraq Study Group report included extensive recommendations for the Iraqi and US governments aimed at passing an oil law and establishing conditions that would encourage investment in Iraq's oil sector by the international community and international energy companies. Underscoring Big Oil's interest, Iraq's minister of oil, Hussein al-Shahristani, claimed in March 2007 "already" to have memorandums of understanding with "almost all the major oil companies," which for their part have made it clear that passage of the oil law, along with improved security, are the only obstacles in the way of their heavy investment in the oil sector.<sup>4</sup> One could be forgiven for thinking there is a broad consensus that this law or something like it needs to be passed and soon, for the sake of Iraq and all Iraqis.

At a December 2006 meeting in Amman, Jordan, organized to discuss oil policy and its impact on labor, the Iraqi

labor movement offered an entirely different analysis.<sup>5</sup> The labor leaders' harsh criticism of the draft oil law, issued at the meeting's conclusion, had nothing to do with the sectarian and regional power struggles making the headlines. Rather, the joint statement of three union federations, the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq, the General Federation of Iraqi Workers and the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions, reflected the view that Iraq is for all Iraqis and that major public institutions of the oil industry should be impervious to parochial political interests.

The unions demanded that this important new bill, only fragments of which had been viewed outside the Green Zone, be exposed to public scrutiny: "And whereas oil and gas are greatly important for the Iraqi economy, and whereas the building of the state and its institutions are dependent on it, as the main source of the national income, it is therefore the right of the Iraqi people to read the draft oil law under consideration. The Iraqi people refuse that the destiny of their oil be decided behind closed doors."<sup>6</sup>

## Iraqi Unions Rebel

The Iraqi trade union movement has its origins in the late 1920s, when nationalist sentiment against the British was on the rise. During the 1930s, unions emerged in British-controlled state-run sectors, such as electricity and power, ports and, eventually, oil, where estimates of union density ranged from 30 to 60 percent. These secular and diverse institutions used strikes and job actions to fight for legal recognition, better wages and independence for all Iraqis. The Iraqi labor movement would eventually make up the working-class base of the struggle against the British. In 1948, some 3,000 workers marched on Baghdad, carrying signs and shouting, "We the oil workers have come to claim our violated rights."<sup>7</sup> But the increasingly authoritarian governments that controlled Iraq in the post-colonial period slowly squeezed the trade unions, undermining their independence and exiling and imprisoning their leaders. By the time Saddam Hussein's regime banned almost all workers from joining even the official Baath Party-run General Federation of Trade Unions in 1987, the labor movement had already been crushed.

Iraqi trade unionists in exile kept the memory of the movement alive through such organizations as the Workers' Democratic Trade Union Movement, which, through contacts inside Iraq, brought stories of repression of trade unionists inside Iraq to labor-friendly audiences throughout Europe. Other loose-knit groups of activists inside Iraq, including some affiliated with the underground Workers' Communist Party, spoke cautiously and surreptitiously about trade union and worker rights, often at great peril.

When the Iraqi government disintegrated with the US-led invasion, Iraqi workers began to organize again. For the first time in decades, unions free from government

control emerged across the country. Prominent trade unionists returned to Iraq from exile to join a new federation, headquartered in Baghdad, called the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions. Mid-level officials from the old Baathist-run federation held union elections and regrouped under new leadership. The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq built a network of union affiliates from the north to the south. In Basra and Umm Qasr, workers started to organize unaffiliated unions in the oil and port sectors as they confronted British and American employers for the first time. Trade union federations in Kurdistan had already been developing free from Iraqi central government control in the semi-independent period of the 1990s, and other independently incorporated unions organized by economic sector were forming as recently as April 2007. Together, these unions represent hundreds of thousands of Iraqi workers.

Iraqi unions support a diverse range of political parties and their leaders and rank-and-file members come from all of Iraq's ethnic and religious communities. Yet at a time when most of Iraq seems to have fallen into communal civil war, Iraq's trade unions have not divided along these lines (with the exception of disagreements over the proper extent of Kurdish autonomy). With remarkable unity, they continue to defend core rights such as the right to form and join unions. They promote the need for a new labor law that protects Iraqi workers from exploitation, and also for a new oil law that treats the Iraqi whole as greater than the interests of its parts.

## A Raw Deal

While politicians in the ruling parties engaged in horse trading over sectarian and regional interests, even as they maintained support for the draft's basic architecture and fundamental economic terms, trade unions saw a much more nefarious threat to their nation's most important source of income. Oil accounts for 70 percent of the Iraqi gross domestic product and 95 percent of government revenues. For Iraqi unionists, watching as poverty and unemployment skyrocket and violence, war and exile decimate the middle and working classes who would make up their rank and file, Iraq's national oil wealth represents the hope of starting over. Unions saw this hope dwindling because of a law they were shocked to see give Iraq a raw deal. According to the joint union statement of December 2006: "Iraqi public opinion strictly opposes the handing of authority and control over the oil to foreign companies that aim to make big profits at the expense of the people and to rob Iraq's national wealth by virtue of unfair, long-term oil contracts that undermine the sovereignty of the state and the dignity of the Iraqi people."

Iraqi unions believe the Iraqi government is weak in comparison to savvy and powerfully connected international oil companies. At a time when the country's basic sovereignty

is compromised by the presence of an occupying military, the unions see in the oil law reminders of an earlier colonialism.

Iraq's oil has been central to its struggle for independence and national identity throughout its modern history. As early as 1912, when Iraq was still part of the Ottoman Empire, the British-, Dutch- and German-owned Turkish Petroleum Company began prospecting for oil in central Iraq. It continued operations throughout the British Mandate and colonial period (later under the name Iraqi Petroleum Company). By the late 1920s, the British-installed King Faysal signed Iraq's first concession agreement with a foreign firm. The agreement turned over oil rights to the Iraqi Petroleum Company, by then British-dominated, on fixed terms that assigned minimal royalties to the Iraqi state. Through concession agreements all over the country, the company gained control of Iraq's oil from exploration to development to export. With the rise of Iraqi nationalism in the succeeding decades, the Iraqi government fought for an increased share of oil wealth beyond the royalties allowed by the concession contracts. The foreign company resisted, until, in 1972, the Iraqi government nationalized it. Since then, all decisions about Iraqi oil have remained in the hands of the Iraqi state. Iraq's major oil-producing neighbors, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iran, maintain state oil companies that oversee all aspects of their countries' energy resources, while smaller countries such as Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have only partially privatized aspects of their oil operations. Ultimately, control in all cases remains in the hands of the state, with foreign oil companies brought in for technical expertise, under service contracts and other arrangements.

The version of the oil law made public at the end of 2006 deviated sharply from this model. The draft law presented different commercial frameworks for contracts negotiated between Iraq and foreign oil companies that could allow those companies far more say in determining the future of Iraqi oil than at any time since the British Mandate. Among these frameworks were controversial "production sharing agreements" (PSAs). As investment terms, PSAs are preferred in the industry, and since the fall of 2004, oil majors have openly advocated them as the model for investment in Iraq.<sup>8</sup> But though state-owned oil and gas companies in Qatar, Jordan and Algeria have signed PSAs in recent years, so far they are not the norm in the oil-rich Middle East. PSAs allow oil companies to recoup their costs during exploration and lock in favorable contract terms for decades to ensure potential for long-term profits. Industry analysts and critics of PSAs, including Iraqi oil unions, claim that the agreements cede too much control to foreign companies. In possible scenarios, they say, PSAs signed as 20- to 25-year contracts could drain Iraq of tens of billions of dollars in net revenue over the life of contracts, compared to keeping oil production in the state's hands.<sup>9</sup>

The version of the oil law that the Iraqi cabinet eventually approved in February 2007 dropped the term PSAs in favor

of the ill-defined "exploration risk contract" and "development and production contract," terms not commonly used in the industry.<sup>10</sup> A January 2007 Dow Jones report claimed that the neologisms were used to avoid "media fuss." Oil Minister al-Shahristani has said that specific "model contracts" will not appear in the appendices of the oil law before the Iraqi parliament. Instead, the Federal Oil and Gas Council will decide on model contracts later, leaving the precise nature of these two contract types unknown and most possible contract terms conceivably on the table.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not PSAs are eventually allowed, Iraq's oil law goes further than any other in the region in allowing contract terms that open the door to foreign control of Iraqi oil. Under the draft law, the Iraqi National Oil Company (INOC) will become an independent holding company with affiliated regional operating companies, but it will not maintain a monopoly on the industry. INOC will control dozens of currently producing oilfields. But the vast expanse of Iraq's oil reserves fall into the category of "yet to be discovered or exploited," and INOC will be just one of three entities, along with the Ministry of Oil and the regions, allowed to negotiate contracts with foreign companies to develop those fields. The exact number of fields open to each of the three entities is still a subject of debate.<sup>12</sup>

While Article III of Iraq's constitution maintains that natural resources belong to the people of Iraq, Iraqi unions and other critics of the oil law consider such generous contract options to be privatization in all but name.

## High Stakes for Labor

At the December 2006 meeting in Amman, the oil unions made it clear that their concerns about the oil law stemmed from more than nationalistic pride. Oil workers, and Iraqi workers in general, have a lot riding on the oil industry. At 95 percent of government revenue, oil industry revenue could fund the national pension plan and national health insurance scheme envisioned in the constitution, and provide the capital for true reconstruction of dilapidated hospitals and schools. Every dollar that leaves the country by virtue of a generous contract with a foreign company is a dollar that could have been invested in Iraq.

At the meeting, Iraqi trade unionists discussed their concerns that a foreign, privately owned and publicly traded company with a controlling interest in an oilfield would of necessity be more loyal and responsive to its shareholders than to the Iraqi government or people. A state institution, on the other hand, would be committed first to the state and its people. Unions and other critics of the law worry that its dispute resolution provisions provide another example of how far it goes in relinquishing Iraqi authority over the oil sector. If any intractable dispute were to arise between a foreign company and the Iraqi government during the life of a contract, Article 39 of the draft oil law makes the

dispute subject to international arbitration, not adjudication in Iraqi courts.

Iraqi labor's skepticism about relinquishing control of the oil industry to foreign companies comes from recent experience as much as from colonial history. As early as August 2003, Iraqi oil unions were confronting companies that undermined oil workers' wage and work standards. Kellogg Brown and Root, a division of Halliburton, had been awarded a contract to repair and assess oil facilities to the south of Basra. The Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions staged a strike that ultimately kept KBR from replacing Iraqi workers with imported labor and secured raises for union members.<sup>13</sup>

Wary of global economic trends toward outsourcing and temporary contracts, Iraqi unions worry about working in a privatized industry where labor is seen as a cost to be minimized. Their joint statement warned against the introduction of measures to replace full-time employment: "We demand that this law include an explicit reference emphasizing the role of all workers in matters of oil wealth and investment, to protect them and build their technical capacity, both inside and outside Iraq." At a time when unemployment and underemployment are near 60 percent, the draft oil law does not specify that contracts should include minimum Iraqi employment levels or criteria for training Iraqi staff.<sup>14</sup> Nor does it explicitly protect Iraqi workers' right to unionize in the oil sector.

Underscoring all of these concerns is the harsh reality that Iraqi unions are trying to organize and represent workers in an extremely hostile, even violent, political and regulatory environment. Technically, all of Iraq's oil sector unions today are illegal. The Iraqi government has yet to replace labor laws from the Saddam Hussein era that allow employers to quash union activity. Among these laws is the notorious Law 150, passed in 1987, that bars union organizing in Iraq's public sector. Under the draft oil law, Iraqi unions could find themselves bargaining with corporations. Right now, there is nothing to stop these companies from using the 1987 law as a pretext for declaring the unions illegal and refusing to negotiate with them. (A new labor law that would codify core collective bargaining rights has been drafted, but remains in limbo at the Ministry of Labor.)

In the meantime, Iraqi unions have more to worry about than legacy laws. Since the 2003 establishment of the Iraqi Governing Council, successive Iraqi governments, both before and after the "handover of sovereignty," have issued decrees that have severely restricted unions' room to maneuver. The most egregious was Decree 8750, issued in August 2005, which gives the government the right "to take control of all monies belonging to trade unions and prevent them from dispensing any such monies"—a clear violation of International Labor Organization conventions.<sup>15</sup> Unions have reported that, pursuant to this edict, they have lost access to bank accounts and been prohibited from opening

new ones in the union's name. One such incident occurred in August 2006, on the eve of a major conference organized by the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions to oppose government oil policy. The government seized the federation's bank account.

The most ominous challenge Iraqi unions face is the threat of kidnapping and murder that hangs over all Iraqis. In January 2005, attackers invaded the home of prominent labor leader Hadi Salih, torturing and killing him in front of his wife. In a November 2006 survey of five major Iraqi labor federations, unions reported that 34 leaders had been killed since April 2003. Many of these trade unionists were probably targeted for assassination.<sup>16</sup> Since that survey was conducted, three more trade unionists have been killed. The president of the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions believes he, too, will be a victim: "An attack on myself will take place, but I'm not afraid. I expect the terrorists will strike everywhere."<sup>17</sup> The nominal enforcers of law and order in Iraq have also targeted unionists. In February 2007, US and Iraqi forces raided the Baghdad headquarters of the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate and the General Federation of Iraqi Workers, ransacking offices and terrorizing union staff, without ever providing an explanation.

## Organizing Against the Law

Despite these overwhelming obstacles, unions are not backing down. Throughout early 2007, weeks after the December meeting in Amman, Iraqi unions began to mobilize across the country, working to educate Iraqi citizens and parliamentarians about the law, as they forged ties with international organizations to mount a strong challenge to its key provisions. On January 17, a delegation from the General Federation of Iraqi Workers met with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, a known architect of the draft law, to express the grievances recorded in the joint union statement. They followed up with a February 8 letter to President Jalal Talabani.

Other unions are speaking out to the media about the law, sometimes at considerable personal risk. Among the most active is the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq. On January 11, militia gunmen abducted eight Oil Ministry engineers, all Federation members, who were en route to a press conference the federation had organized to discuss rising fuel prices and criticize the oil law. Four of the engineers were later found dead.

The Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions established a committee to study and comment on the law and planned grassroots civil society and worker education sessions in Basra, Nasiriyya and 'Amara. Union leaders also met with Basra-based MPs, as well as representatives of various parties, to explain their concerns. In February, the oil unions held a conference on the oil law in Basra, in cooperation with Basra University's Center for Arab Gulf Studies. More than

200 people attended the conference, which received wide Western media coverage.<sup>18</sup>

There is evidence that this union activism is having an impact both inside and outside Iraq. Recently, a group of Iraqi parliamentarians who oppose the draft oil law met in Amman with other opposition figures. They urged the parliament to reject the law on the grounds that it had been negotiated in an opaque manner while Iraq is under foreign occupation and that it gives too much away to foreign oil companies. During the debate, these politicians cited Iraqi labor's opposition.<sup>19</sup> Outside Iraq, organizations like Hands Off Iraqi Oil in Great Britain and US Labor Against the War look to the Iraqi unions to help educate their respective publics about an oil law they say does not further the interests of the Iraqi people. Through technical and training assistance beyond the oil law, the global labor movement, including the International Trade Union Confederation, the Global Union Federations, the British Trade Union Congress and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, provides concrete support to help Iraq's experienced labor leaders bring up the feisty next generation.

Iraqi unions are divided on some aspects of the oil law. The Kurdistan Regional Government has already inked deals with foreign oil companies, including one after the Iraqi cabinet approved the draft oil law, frustrating other government officials. The major Kurdish trade union federations believe in the Kurds' right to determine their own economic and political future, and they are concerned that the Iraqi government would limit Kurdish autonomy if the oil law centralized decision-making in Baghdad. "We suffered so much under the Saddam regime," said one Kurdish labor leader in 2006. "We never saw any benefits from Iraq's oil, even when it came from Kurdistan. Even if we see only 25 percent of the amount that foreign oil companies see, that will be 25 times more than we ever saw before. Let us breathe a little; let us enjoy our own prosperity a little."<sup>20</sup>

But there is no division among unions in Iraq on the fundamental principles of workers' rights and the need for a new labor law that enshrines democracy in the workplace for all of Iraq's workers. Speaking with one voice in their December 2006 statement, Iraqi trade unionists demanded "that the Iraqi government delay publishing this law until such time as it has heard the opinions and proposals of the Iraqi trade unions."

One of the most compelling parts of this story is that Iraqi unions are organizing around issues of national concern and in support of Iraqi public institutions at a time when their political leaders—and judging by the level of civil strife, many other Iraqis as well—seem to have abandoned the concept of the national interest in favor of a zero-sum game of sectarian and ethnic politics. In the end, however, sectarianism, ethnic politics and debates about regionalism—and not the oil law's opponents' organizing in the national interest—could be the factors that ultimately derail the

law's passage. The Kurdistan Regional Government made clear in late April that it disagrees with a key provision of the oil law, namely, that INOC control existing fields, some of which are in the Kurdistan region where the Kurdistan Regional Government had already signed contracts.<sup>21</sup> Iraqi labor continues to promote its main message—that the law is disadvantageous for Iraq and that it could hurt Iraqi workers. These labor organizations are new and evolving. Their combined political weight does not yet rival that of the ruling coalition or the sectarian militia leaders. Yet the fact that Iraqi labor has reemerged and is coalescing around an alternative, non-sectarian political vision reminds any observer of Iraqi politics that another world is possible. ■

## Endnotes

1 The Iraqi government agreed to allow the IMF to monitor three oil-related matters: metering of oil production, restructuring of the few fully commercialized enterprises and drafting of a new petroleum law establishing a framework for private investment. On the last point, the Iraqi government agreed to draft a law by the end of 2006 and asked for IMF legal expertise in addition to the assistance they were receiving from the US and the World Bank. See the IMF agreement at <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2006/cr0615.pdf>.

2 Daphne Eviatar, "Our Man in Iraq," *The American Lawyer*, April 25, 2007.

3 See *Carbon Web Newsletter* 5 (August 2006), accessible online at: <http://www.carbonweb.org/showitem.asp?article=175>. Another article credited petroleum experts and US officials with interventions that began in 2003. *Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 2007.

4 Reuters, March 16, 2007.

5 The author was present at the meeting, held from December 10–14, 2006. Unless otherwise noted, information in this article about Iraqi trade unionists is drawn from her observations, notes and personal conversations with Iraqi union leaders from that occasion, or her interactions with those leaders and other activists from 2003 to the present.

6 The Erbil-based General Union of Workers Syndicates in Kurdistan and the Suleimaniya-based Iraqi Kurdistan Workers and Syndicates Union were present at the discussions, but did not endorse the statement. The original Arabic text, as well as an English translation, can be found at: <http://www.carbonweb.org/showitem.asp?article=222&parent=4>.

7 Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 626.

8 Dow Jones Newswire, March 28, 2007.

9 The argument against production sharing agreements in Iraq can be found in Munir Chalabi, "Political Comments on the Draft of the Iraq Oil Law," *Znet*, March 15, 2007. For a more comprehensive analysis, see "Crude Designs: The Ripoff of Iraq's Oil Wealth," authored by Platform and co-published in November 2005 with Global Policy Forum, War on Want, Oil Change International, New Economics Foundation and the Institute for Policy Studies.

10 The Kurdistan Regional Government posted the official English version of the oil law at [http://web.krg.org/uploads/documents/Draft%20Iraq%20Oil%20and%20Gas%20Law%20English\\_\\_2007\\_03\\_09\\_h17m2s47.pdf](http://web.krg.org/uploads/documents/Draft%20Iraq%20Oil%20and%20Gas%20Law%20English__2007_03_09_h17m2s47.pdf).

11 Reuters, April 19, 2007. The Kurdistan Regional Government has already signed PSAs with foreign oil companies, including DNO Norway along with Russian and Chinese companies, and suggested that a new service contract signed with the United Arab Emirates' Dana Gas "could become a PSA" once the oil law is approved by the Iraqi parliament. *UpstreamOnline.com*, April 20, 2007.

12 United Press International, April 27, 2007.

13 See David Bacon, "Oil for Freedom," *The Progressive* (October 2005).

14 Laws and regulations mandating employment of nationals are common in the Arab Gulf region. Article 26 of Saudi Arabia's 2005 labor law stipulates that all enterprises must make efforts to employ 75 percent Saudi Arabian staff. Labor laws governing private-sector employment in Oman and Bahrain require the employment of citizens at specified levels.

15 The Kurdistan Regional Government has not put this law into practice, according to Kurdish trade union leaders.

16 Telephone survey conducted by the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center in November 2006. These numbers do not include rank-and-file union members killed on the job or on the way to work. In the general lawlessness and chaos in Iraq, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what happened in each instance of kidnapping or murder of a trade union leader. Several reported kidnappings and murders appeared to be direct targeting of trade unionists for their union activity. Others may have been ransom projects that ended in murder, or the byproduct of civil war and other ambient violence.

17 Bacon, "Oil for Freedom."

18 See, for instance, *Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 2007, and *Time*, February 28, 2007.

19 Dow Jones Newswire, March 12, 2007. Personal communication with Raed Jarrar of the American Friends Service Committee, an observer at the March meetings, April 26, 2007.

20 Personal communication with Kurdish labor leader in December 2006.

21 United Press International, April 19, 2007.