

BASIL AL-ARAJ REVOLUTIONARY MOBILE LIBRARY COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

At the Basil Al-Araj Revolutionary Mobile Library, we see politics and purpose as inseparable. As librarians, we believe in our collective duty to always be learning/unlearning, reading, and reframing our worldview away from and actively against hetero-patriarchial white supremacist colonial paradigms. We hold each other to this same expectation out of care and radical love (Radical love/Agape: love that acknowledges the pain of institutionalized violence, rejects dehumanization and works toward building a world beyond settler-colonial ways of being. A love of will and action)

While we support a diversity of different tactics and thoughts, we want to make sure all librarians have some basic agreements on our critical analysis of the world. We seek to work with all who are dedicated to liberation work, both in politically educating themselves and their community and in on the ground work. Through our work as a radical library, we hope to be actualizing and pre-figuring (the act of living as if the world we want exists, normalizing a different way of being) our vision of the world post-empire/colonialism (and its associated structures of whiteness, gender, capitalism, sexuality, disability, etc). **While we will not mandate you read theory, if you want to be more involved in decision making and leadership, we do expect constant learning and reading (let us know if you need help accessing texts!).**

Core things we do NOT fuck with:

- **Zionism**- We are anti-zionist and in solidarity with the Palestinian Liberation struggle. Zionism is colonial and white supremacist violence.
- **Cops** - No cops, no one actively and proudly affiliated with military or carceral institutions is welcome and no policing.
- **Fuck Fascists, white nationalists, or apologists for either.**
- **AI generated art or literature** – We love human creativity and the planet. Do not use AI for creation (images, videos, writings, art in general). Not only do current models steal from real creators, but generative AI's extreme water and electricity use depletes local supply, disrupts local ecosystems, and further separates us from our responsibility to care for our environment.
- **Respectability politics** - You do not need to be “professional,” “polite,” or emotionally clean to be here. If you have righteous anger, this is a space to express it and be heard and respected .
- **Shaming survival** - No judgement for how people survive capitalism, colonization, or crisis (eg substance use, sex work, housing instability, etc)
- **Ableist, fatphobic, or classist assumptions** - productivity and western beauty standards are not a measure of worth. We believe everyone has infinite value to add to our collective.
- **Prisons** – The American prison system is a racist institution, replicating the white supremacist agenda behind slavery by exploiting and profiting off of the labor of those sentenced to time inside. Our library is in pursuit of transformative justice, where we work towards collective care and away from dehumanizing punishment.
- **Homophobia/Transphobia/Cisheteronormativity** – our collective is queer, not because we are all gay (☐), but because we all are committed to rejecting the colonial myth of the sex and gender binary, the reification of heteronormative expectations, and cisgender supremacy.
Gender is a galaxy! NO TERFS!
- **Racism/Xenophobia** – It's okay if your community and experience growing up was not diverse, but be mindful of what you deem as “other” or “strange”. You can acknowledge something is different to you without passing judgment.

BASIL AL-ARAJ REVOLUTIONARY MOBILE LIBRARY COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Core things we DO fuck with:

- **Political education in all forms** (zines, memes, books, poems, art, discussions, reading groups)
- **Deep curiosity and open critique**
- **Decentering, Deconstructing, and Dismantling Whiteness and all its associated constructs of oppression** (gender, sexuality, class, etc.)
- **People showing up how they can, when they can**
- **Sharing** food, skills, care, rides, resources
- **Co-learning and creative expression**
- **Making space** for *any and all* emotions
- **Disability justice and body liberation**
- **Anti-colonial anti-oppression resistance of any kind** (Anti-Colonial: Not just for Palestine but from everywhere from West Papau to Pittsburgh.)
 - Not only must we be decolonizing our minds (how we think, react, relate) but we must also stand by anti-colonial resistance (critical support)
- **Trans joy, queer love, chosen families, collective survival**
- **Art sharing and art-making** is a human right
- **Punching your local Nazi**

Political Commitments:

- **We stand against all forms of oppression**, including (and not limited to): white supremacy, colonialism, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, ageism, fatphobia, and anti-Blackness.
- **We do not allow zionists or cops in our spaces.**
- We are committed to *Always Be Unpacking*(AUB) the beliefs, biases, and behaviors we have internalized throughout sominant systems.
- **We reject AI-generated media of any kind.**
- All members are expected to **engage in ongiong political education through reading, listening, watching, and reflecting.**

Interpersonal & Collective Care, Conflict, & Accountability:

- **We do not enforce “professionalism” or respectability.** All emotions are welcome as long as they are not weaponized.
- **Curiosity over condemnation.** We approach conflict and mistakes with curiosity, not judgement or defensiveness. **However, it is also important take accountability for when harm happens.** It is a privilege to be held responsible when you cause harm! This means the people in your life care about you enough to believe in your capacity to do better, and value your contribution to building a better world. And we prioritize the agency and safety of those harmed while supporting growth in those who caused harm.
 - **Accountability protocol:** Depends on the situation, but most of the time we should be **having conversations with people about any conflict and giving people opportunities to grow.** This could be a 1-1 or 3-1, both can bring a trusted person for support. **If you have difficulty with confrontation, please reach out to a fellow librarian for support!** **If the situation escalates, allow a “cool off” period to prevent further harm and escalation.** **If harmful behavior continues after 1-1 conversations, then the issue can be brought to the broader group for discussion.**

BASIL AL-ARAJ REVOLUTIONARY MOBILE LIBRARY COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

- **Always assume positive intent (API):** life is hard, complicated, and confusing! Conflict is inevitable, but we want to approach hard conversations with the assumption that each of us wants the best for each other and for the library. That said, positive intent does not always result in positive impact. We will not allow each other to hide behind “positive intent” if their impact perpetuates harm in ANY way. Holding each other accountable is radical love.
- **Treat people how they want to be treated**
- **No shaming or belittling ourselves or others**
- **No bullying. No harassment. No dehumanizing behavior.**
- **We are a team and we look out for each other.**
- **We aim for collective responsibility, not individual blame.**

How we work together:

- **Horizontal structures.** There are no bosses. We all bring different skills, but no one’s voice is worth more than another’s.
- **Distribute labor + communication is key.** Roles are shared and rotated. If you feel you are doing too much, ask for support. Capacity changes and showing up looks different for everyone. Communicate your needs. Our relationships are not transactional!
- **Organizing is relationship-building.** Check in on each other. Say hi to your neighbors. Be gentle and kind. Advocate for each other.

Safer spaces & Accessibility:

- **We DO NOT stigmatize homelessness, drug use, sex work, or alternate economies and lifestyles.**
- **Distros, art spaces, poetry circles, and reading discussions/groups are a judgement free zone!!** If we are to reap the benefits of communal art-making, the space we are making art in must be safe enough for folks to feel comfortable expressing. The process of art-making is valuable in and of itself, regardless of the final product. We believe in the power of art making, sharing, and enjoying as tools of resistance.
- **Spaces shared by members for meetings must be as physically and socially accessible as possible,**
 - We will follow the lead of our neighbors who are disabled **marginalized** and trust their guidance on how to meet the needs of our community members

Notes on Harrassment:

- We work to cultivate **a culture of consent, curiosity, and correction without cruelty.**
- **Our work is rooted in resistance to the systems that make harrassment possible** —> Systems such as patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism (and much more).
- **Those with privilege (such as men, white people, cisgender folks, etc.) are expected to be models of healthy masculinity and respectful relationship building, **which includes constant unlearning and listening to marginalized communities.**** They are expected to stop misogyny, transphobia, fetishization, objectification, and any kind of inappropriate sexualization in its tracks- prompting people to be curious as to why they feel comfortable talking about their neighbors in this way.
 - Ex. “It is disrespectful to talk about people like that because...”, “I am not okay with sexualizing my fellow neighbors. Why are you comfortable speaking about them in this way?”

BASIL AL-ARAJ REVOLUTIONARY MOBILE LIBRARY COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

- **Look out for potentially uncomfortable situations:** Is someone alone at a distro? Is someone being touched or picked up? Can you join the conversation? If not, *check-in on your comrade after the fact!*
- **Those experiencing harrassment should not be responsible for holding their harrasser accountable.**
- **There is no “band-aid” solution to end harrassment. This is a continual, ongoing process of unlearning and rebuilding.**

Overall, we as librarians understand that we are stronger together, and need each other to build the better world we know is possible. Our actions are based in commitment to radical love, community care, and transformative justice. We believe that everyone deserves access to the tools to fight their oppressors and the intellectual means to revolt, and acknowledge that literature is just one avenue to do so. ♥☐