

PEOPLE'S POWER

Tunisian Revolution

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FROM DAY ONE IT WAS clear this was a revolution that was not about bread only, it was also against dictatorship and corruption. The revolution was supported by all segments of society. Poor, middle class, and even upper middle class. Especially the middle class showed its claws in the last days in Tunis. Many friends of this writer who live there and who are university students or employed in good positions were in the street, also taking tear gas and bullets. The youth played an important role in all this and cell phones combined with Facebook connected through proxy services was the media of the revolution. The trade union (UGTT) played the role of the momentum regulator and political indicator. It was clear that as long as the trade union kept on declaring strikes the battle was on, and that was the signal to the people to stick to the streets. Yet one cannot say that the trade union led the revolution; it rather synchronized with it, especially the last crucial two days.

On the political level there was no single party or current who played a major role. The traditional opposition that is mainly in exile tried to coordinate and even thought of a government in exile. But the momentum of the revolution was too fast for such plans to materialize. The people had no leader but itself. This however posed a problem for the revolution as to how to organize transition of power: who will take over. There were only three options: exile government (but that would be only in the long run); military coup; or some figure from the regime institution will take over. Now it seems that the two last options are still open. Ghanoushi, the prime minister is from within the establishment, but it is very likely that he will be in power for few days only, some believe few hours. Rumors about General Ammar taking over and appointing the speaker of the house El Mbazzaa as caretaker till elections are organized in 60 days are now circulating within the ranks of the Army and the political scene.

As for possible attempts of the regime to regenerate itself, this can be done through creating mayhem and chaos in the streets. Reports of violence, looting, and arson are widely spread at this moment. But that is very unlikely to lead to a counter-revolutionary sentiment, because people realize that these are the downsides of any revolution, there is no birth without pain....

As for the repercussions on the Arab world and beyond.They are paramount. All Arab dictators are now shaking on their thrones. Especially in the Maghreb countries, but also Mubarak will have a sleepless night. The Arab peoples now saw and know for sure what ordinary people can do. They saw another Arab people bring down the harshest of dictators in less than a month. All that was needed was unity and determination to go all the way. This will certainly lead to the revival of revolutionary dreams among the Arab oppressed classes (middle class and masses) and will start the dawn of democracy. The Americans and the Zionists—and also France—are nervous today : their best friend in the area was kicked out.And the people are heading to govern themselves in Tunisia with their own agenda with all the anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist elements of that. A free democratic Tunisia will not

only be a model for democracy for all Arabs, it will also be a safe haven for revolutionary forces and a place of support for the resistance against Israel and the US. The international alliance against empire hegemony will have another member.

Now finally, Tunisia is a beautiful country that has a very highly educated people, very critical and very vocal. Tunisians are both Maghreb and Mashrek, they look like all Arabs and they talk like all Arabs, they can form the core of the Arab people for liberation. Tunisia can play the role that Egypt is no longer willing or able to play. In the age of democracy and freedom, Tunisia must spread its revolutionary message, but, before all, Tunisia must consolidate it and bring it to its happy end by building a system based upon freedom, equality, diversity, and citizenship. A real State of law and a model to follow. □□□