

The People Want the Fall of the Regime

Haraket A'ssyann

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1. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF TUNISIA'S RECENT POLITICAL HISTORY:

The Constitutional Democratic Rally was the ruling party in Tunisia dating from the country's independence from France in 1956, all the way until the insurrection in January 2011, when it was overthrown and dissolved. Habib Bourguiba (1903–2000) was Tunisia's first President, in power from 1956 until 1987, when he was then overthrown in a bloodless coup by former general Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (1936-). The party had various names during this time—Neo Destour from 1934–1964; Socialist Destourian Party from 1964–1988; and Constitutional Democratic Rally from 1988–2011—but since 1956 Tunisia was controlled by two men, Bourguiba and Ben Ali.

In December 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi (1984–2011) self-immolated in Sidi Bouzid. After this act led to weeks of demonstrations, occupations, and strikes, President Ben Ali finally fled to Saudi Arabia in January 2011. These events were a catalyst for what would become known as the Arab Spring.

Following the flight of Ben Ali, his Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi (1941-) announced himself as interim President, and formed the Higher Political Reform Commission, naming Yadh Ben Achour (1945-) as its President. In March of 2011 it merged with the Committee for the Protection of the Revolution to form the High Authority for the Achievement of the Objectives of the Revolution, Political Reform and Democratic Transition, still with Ben Achour as its President.

In October 2011, the Ennahda Movement, an Islamist party that was repressed while Ben Ali was in power, won the majority of the popular vote in Tunisia's Constituent Assembly election. They won 89 of the 217 assembly seats, and its General Secretary Hamadi Jebali (1949-) was appointed Prime Minister. This was the first (and, to date, only) election since former President Ben Ali fled the country.

The Popular Front was formed in October 2012, consisting of the Workers' Party, Democratic Patriots' Movement, and other opposition parties to Ennahda. Its spokesman is Hama Hamami (1952-), General Secretary of the Workers' Party (formerly known as the Communist Workers' Party).

In February 2013, the General Secretary of the secular leftist Democratic Patriots' Movement, Chokri Belaid (1964–2013), was assassinated outside his house in Tunis. Massive protests followed, the largest since the revolution, and Ennahda's Hamadi Jebali resigned as Prime Minister.

2. AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT:

There are both significant and slight differences between the Constitutional Democratic Rally—the ruling party for the last 50 years, under different names and with various leaders from Bourguiba up to Ben Ali—and the current ruling Ennahda party.

During its 50 years of rule, the Constitutional Democratic Rally gained political and repressive experience, gained control over the most influential elite of the Tunisian economy, and, by forming political and criminal militias in all sectors of society that are still somewhat active under legal-frameworks.

The new ruling Ennahda party, since taking office under an alleged “democratic” atmosphere supported by all reactionaries and Leftists, succeeded in sweeping the political landscape. They initiated attempts to control the will of the people and their revolutionary movements under

the name of “securing the revolution,” and, in providing the appropriate political and economic atmosphere, secured the arrival of both foreign and local investors (all, of course, according to their speeches, to further the triumph of the revolution, benefit the national economy, and spread social justice across the whole country.)

To apply these ideas and policies, Ennahda started a coalition, to work in the same way as the Constitutional Democratic Rally, but with nice and pretty justifications in the media to cover the facts on the ground. Ennahda also started, with the support and participation of all Salafist and radical Islamist groups, the formation of committees to “protect the revolution” (like the Iranian Revolutionary Guards), to control the revolutionary movement.

The protests in Tunisia since the revolution in 2011, including those that we see today (and tomorrow for sure), are mainly social protests. These successive uprisings came about after savage policies by the system of Bourguiba, and then by the domination of the external market and the big companies (Tunisian and foreign) on the resources of production and export, under the supervision of the World Bank and the IMF. This was the era of Ben Ali and his gang family, who played a role in causing the economic crisis, where bribery dominated, and the export profits returned to a small number of people at the expense of the working class and unemployed poor people. All of this coincided with the European economic crisis, and the Tunisian people found themselves in a direct link with austerity policies that marginalized the people.

I think that the death of the martyr Chokri Belaid¹ has exposed a different reality for the Tunisian people and their future. It’s different from the death of Mohammad Bouazizi, in its goal and in the form it took.

Mohammad Bouazizi committed suicide because of the crisis facing the majority of Tunisian youth, that’s why his death pushed the oppressed people to revolt against poverty and tyranny. But on Chokri Belaid’s death, he was probably assassinated by Islamicists, and thus the protests that followed his death were directly anti-fascist and anti-terrorist, against those who are hostile to freedom of thought and expression. In terms of the Chokri Belaid assassination’s effect on the political balance, we can say that Ennahda is the first beneficiary, while the Popular Front, led by its official representative Hamma Hammami, waived all popular and revolutionary demands (demands which were possible to be defended and represented by the Popular Front especially after the support and solidarity that came as a result of Chokri’s assassination). These were demands to eradicate fascism and fighting terrorists across the country and to punish them in a popular directly way. But the Front has chosen the invitation of a national rescue conference, where left and right parties gathered, believing that this was the best solution to calm the situation and to enter power through official doors, but this attitude led to a failure and the return of the same balance of power.

This question comes at the correct place and time, and requires a lot of ability to analyze the reality and see it from multiple angles. These analyses differ from citizens who are independent from organizations (the situation of most people in the protest movement) and militants who are active within revolutionary movements on the other side.

One important part of people sees it as a cultural dilemma, hence Tunisia is embracing a new cultural moment: a culture of assassination, killing, terrorism and intellectual fascism! Another

¹ Since we conducted this interview, Mohamed Brahmi (1955–2013), General Secretary of the People’s Movement, was assassinated outside his home in Tunis on July 25th, 2013. Brahmi’s People’s Movement joined the Popular Front following Belaid’s assassination last February.

part still believes in political parties and democratic parliaments and elections. There are people who trust in the political parties, parliamentary democracy, and electoral solutions as the modern way to do things. But still, the crisis is seen by some people as a fated aspect in their lives, and they are only demanding the minimum of living resources and materials, relying mainly on government giveaways, not caring who is in charge, and the mistakes or even crimes they are committing.

But I am positive that there is an active and conscious group that are keen on placing the responsibility for the crisis on the Tunisian imperialistic circles, which are represented on the national level in big companies and the owners of major factories, and at the international level in the World Bank and the IMF.

But we, as anarchists, believe that power and capitalism in all their forms, and the thoughts they bring along, are the biggest and only enemy to a person's freedom and life. We have confirmed these facts by going through several real-life-experiences!

The Disobedience Movement formed in early 2012. From its Declaration of Principles (November 2012): "Disobedience Movement is a libertarian and anti-authoritarian movement. It struggles against capitalism and its authoritarian structures. It aims for self-organization, and the generalization of direct self-management, of life and the wealth it produces. The Disobedience Movement is a component of the revolutionary movement. It has no power or authority over the popular classes that lead the movement. The Disobedience Movement moves within the revolutionary movement, struggling in its shadow. It tries to make available theoretical tools for understanding and practical action. It will dissolve once the self-organization of the exploited masses takes shape."

3. Last month, following Brahmi's assassination, the Disobedience Movement released a statement, "THE DISADVANTAGED SHALL LIVE! THE DISADVANTAGED SHALL RULE!":

The Tunisian people and the youth of revolution have been living, since the disbandment of the sit-in at the Kasbah, under the rhythm of the domination of a political class. With hematophagous politicians feeding on the blood of the poor and the marginalized, exploiting the wealth in the regions while ignoring their inhabitants, people continue to suffer deteriorating living standards, falling into unemployment and poverty.

This coincides with a new fascist trend in the system, following the murder of two political activists, Chokri Belaid and Mohammed Brahmi. The list of possible targets of assassination is now more open than ever.

The dictatorial regime of capitalism—which first caught its breath with the establishment of Ben Achour's Higher Political Reform Commission, through the October elections, and until with inauguration of the Constituent Assembly and all the institutions and powers springing from it—is responsible for the deterioration of the economic and social situation, as well as the degradation of security with continued terrorism and assassinations.

The massive movements all over the country in the last couple days are of dramatic importance as they resulted in the seizure of local administrative power in the interior regions. This

revolutionary step, although symbolic, requires that these areas assert their right to self-manage their daily business and resources, and defend against all attempts to divert and recuperate any component of the landscape of their civil and political power.

The initiative of the revolting masses should be to put local and regional councils into action and affirm their priority and right to manage public affairs by:

- forming local ruling councils to self-manage the resources and wealth at the level of districts, towns, villages, rural regions, factories, and farms, all entitled to assemblies and decision-making
- forming councils at the level of provinces to manage the affairs of the region and coordinate decision-making
- forming a general national council of mandated delegates from the local and regional councils to design a program of development and general principles based on the everyday lives of Tunisians, with supervising committees to ensure the realization of the decisions taken by the council.

These are the proposals we present to militant forces, based on the principle of the fall of the regime, and to ensure the sovereignty over their own destiny, to break, once and for all, with poverty, austerity, regional disparities, violence and terrorism, and with the right to defend against any attempts to divert, which are being schemed in meetings within the walls of the headquarters of political parties, as well as embassies of foreign countries, under the pretexts of relief, national unity, or democratic transition, which are really only compromises for the robbery of both the country's revolution and wealth.

4. In March of 2013, the Disobedience Movement put out a call boycotting and opposing the 13th World Social Forum, occurring that March 26th-30th in Tunis:

Revolutionaries of the world,

On the occasion of the World Social Forum which will be held in Tunisia during March 2013, we believe that the liberal reformist approach opted for by the organizing bureaucracy of the Forum will in no way lead to a revolutionary project for the people of the world. Even though the event is presented as an opportunity for the revolutionaries coming from all corners of the globe to meet, we deem that the ultimate objective, namely the collapse of the capitalist system, will not be taken into consideration.

This Forum will take place in a highly critical time in the history of the world; social movements and uprisings are sweeping capitalism off its feet. Rage against the system does not recognize frontiers and geographical taxonomy of East and West. The so-called democratic states are as threatened by these risings as the worst dictatorships; the question to be examined is what are the driving forces of these revolts from Spain to Egypt and from Greece to Tunisia which are jeopardizing the capitalist states?

The economic crisis is not a conclusion made by "experts" and professional critics of the field, even politicians in power and their oppositions admit that they are incapable of putting an end

to the outrageous rates of unemployment, impoverishment, undernourishment, diseases and pollutions. The repetitive discourses delivered through mass-media are only encouraging people to adjust to the situation and await resolutions that will never come. This proves that the system has resorted to the time-old strategies of encroachment and propaganda in order to survive one of its many major crises along history. Wherever and whenever implemented, these strategies only brought about ravages and precariousness.

Despite the recurrent scenario of democratic succession to power and elections as a means of power distribution between “left” and “right”, “liberals” and “conservatives” and despite the huge budgets spent to organize media campaigns to promote the illusion of “democratic transition” and “political liberties” or “freedom of expression”, only disillusionment is installed.

The World Social Forum, which is held and financed by capitalists and their affiliates, is nothing but an attempt to convince the victims of the capitalist system that the inherent reason behind the economic crisis are the so-called “Neo-Liberalism”, “extreme globalization”, “financial speculations” and worsening debt which they suggest calls for the one and only alternative and that is the reformation of a system which is the actual source of these ailments.

Libertarians of the world,

The wretched of the earth are rejecting their everyday reality through raising and revolting; now they know that union and determination are the keys to their own liberation and to the liberation of future generations from the grip of capitalism.

As the wretched and revolutionaries of the world we have to continue the insurrection in order to liberate our existence from the deadly claws of capitalism. There is absolutely nothing more powerful than our union and determination to fight till the last gasp against the oppressive system.

We boycott and oppose to this Forum not only because we refuse to have anything to do with the bureaucratic syndicalist associations organizing the event, and because the mere participation in the Forum is equivalent to being part in the project of promoting for and installing colonialist collaboration and social submission which are cherished by bourgeoisie, its media and political mediocrity, but also because we primarily boycott every reform movement whether it came from the right or the left.

We are the allies of social revolution.

As the crisis is intensifying and is more felt by the masses we can see disobedience movements being born all over the world along with incessantly growing uprisings. These different crises have resulted into revolutionary movements in different countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Bahrain as well as social uprisings in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Iceland, and even in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Libertarians of the world,

This call is ours. It is that of the marginalized, the unemployed graduates and non-graduates, the farmers without lands, women without voices, the exploited miners, all those that bureaucrats of the WSF pretend to represent after excluding them from the organizations of debates. Our call is that of disobedient, revolutionaries and of other social movements opposed to the capitalist system and authoritarian governments.

Politicians, media and ideologies,

Sellers of illusion and fear disguised under their reformist customs who are pretending to be against the capitalist system are only a part of this very system. We only have to examine the components of this Forum, its bureaucratic organization and statements to realize that it does

not attack the essence of capitalism and that it is nothing but another attempt to diminish the rage of the billions of individuals revolting against hunger, impoverishment and precariousness chanting but one unique slogan:

“The people want to fall of the regime”

This was the cry the echo of which resonated from Tahrir Square to Wall Street, from Athens to Tunis and from Barcelona to Bahrain. This cry carried one simple slogan that frightens the retrograde forces which call for an accurate articulation of the exact words of the slogan:

“The people want the fall of capitalism”

Capitalism is the system; a particular president, a political party, or a king, are no more than the temporary guardians of the system and not the system. They are the docile executioners of its mechanisms regardless of the form of the government it adopts.

Libertarians of the world,

Mass-media owned by world capitalism spends billions to circulate the illusion of democratic transitions. It distorts any experience or attempt of self-organization by workers to manage their own resources because it threatens capitalist’s best interest.

In order for us to emancipate ourselves today we need to form revolutionary fronts, coordinate our actions and effectively fight against the world capitalist regime. We want to trigger real transformation in our societies which must be based on self-management of resources.

We call upon all the revolutionary forces of the world, movements and organizations of resistance capitalism to unite our work internationally against the pseudo-democratic states or dictatorships whether they were secular or religious, liberal or conservative.

Capitalism is the crisis; the fall of the system is the fall of capitalism.

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