

Revolution in the Arab World: **The Long View**

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مركز الدراسات العربية المعاصرة



INTRODUCTION

In January and February 2011, populist uprisings toppled the authoritarian governments of Tunisia and Egypt, and similar revolts began to emerge in other Arab states, including Bahrain, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen. An article in the 18 March 2011 issue of the *Chronicle Review* by Ursula Lindsey, “The Suddenly New Study of Egypt,” addressed how these events had turned the study of persistent authoritarianism in the Arab world on its head. No longer, for example, could scholars point to how Egyptians and other Arabs tend to engage in one of two extremes: political apathy or political violence. Lindsey also suggested that scholars shift their focus away from the power of elites to the strength of ordinary people and grass-roots movements, or retool their scholarship to allow for, in the case of Egypt, more emphasis on groups other than the Muslim Brotherhood as significant sources of opposition.

Indeed, it has become abundantly clear that scholars need to re-think the study of Tunisia, Egypt, and other Arab states. In the spring of 2011, academics were naturally only beginning to consider the changes taking place and what they might mean for the Arab world and beyond. As New York University Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and History Dr. Zachary Lockman told the *Chronicle*, “There’s a time lag before scholars of whatever can make sense of [a revolution] and what it means to their work. That process has just begun.”

In order to create a space in which to set this process in motion, the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University organized a spring lecture series entitled “Revolution in the Arab World: The Long View.” The series proposed a variety of interdisciplinary and long-term perspectives on the repercussions of the revolutions. By addressing the question of “authoritarianism” both as a thematic and regional issue, the series sought to interrogate two aspects of the complex events. The first concerns the fluid situations in Tunisia and Egypt, where state elites, the military, and emergent non-state actors are struggling to define a new balance of power. The second pertains to the wider implications of the Tunisian and Egyptian events, specifically to their challenges to the patterns and operations of Arab authoritarian governments. Among the thematic questions the series examined and addressed are: the prospects for Tunisian and Egyptian reformers to institutionalize the achievements of their revolutions; the potential for the Tunisian and Egyptian examples to be repeated in other Arab countries; the comparative vulnerability of Arab authoritarian states to similar popular uprisings, and the various counter-strategies they may employ to resist, contain, or co-opt the momentum of the populist protests.

The four edited transcripts presented in this compendium provide a sampling from the series and address many of these issues. The first, “Too Early to Tell: When is a Revolution a Revolution?” given by **Dr. Laleh Khalili** of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, provides much-needed context on revolutions by comparing

the revolutions of the Arab Spring to other revolutions of the twentieth century, particularly that of Iran, and examines some of their repercussions. Though Khalili speaks of how difficult it is to ascertain the effects of revolutions—even decades later—she ends her presentation by asserting the importance of the newfound loss of fear against repressive governments in the Arab world. This change “is at once ephemeral and difficult to grasp,” she says, “but also profoundly transformative over generations.”

Dr. Jillian Schwedler of the University of Massachusetts Amherst also addresses the revolutions from a big-picture perspective in her talk, “The Geography of Political Protests.” Schwedler, like Khalili, advocates stepping back in time in order to gain a clearer view of the revolutions today—not, she argues, to see how we could have anticipated the present, but “to help us understand what might happen in the present.” To accomplish this task, she looks systematically at protests in Jordan over several decades with a focus on law, urban space, and spectacle. Through these tropes, Schwedler maintains that large-scale protests in Jordan may be possible, despite barriers to them in the form of restrictive laws and urban planning. However, she stresses that we should focus not on their possibility, but on “how and when they might unfold, and why they often do not.”

Dr. William Zartman of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and **Mr. Gamal Eid**, Founder and Executive Director of Cairo’s Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, speak more specifically about the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, respectively. Zartman examines the history of uprisings in Tunisia, arguing that such revolts are not new but a “Tunisian way of doing things.” He then focuses on Tunisia’s current power vacuum, providing commentary on the different groups vying for leadership.

Mr. Eid’s concern with the Egyptian revolution centers around the country’s youth and its use of the Internet over the last six years to bring about protests calling for democracy, culminating in the uprising in Tahrir Square. He shows how Facebook, Twitter, and other media have assisted activists in rallying support and organizing protests, bringing about successful mobilization. He ends by noting that in Syria, despite—or because of—Internet blockages by the regime, people are going into the streets to express their anger. “In Syria the protests are increasing,” he says. “The people are not going to remain at home.”

As the Arab Spring has turned into the Arab Fall, we have witnessed Qaddafi’s demise while al-Assad clings to power. With time, the fate of the remaining authoritarian rulers in the region will become clear. But the full dimensions of the revolutions of 2011 will remain unknown for some time. “We don’t know how [the process of rethinking Arab authoritarianism] will end,” Lockman told the *Chronicle*. But “some kind of chapter seems to have opened.” These four papers allow us to begin the process of writing that chapter, of making sense of these momentous changes.

Mimi Kirk, Editor

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TOO EARLY TO TELL: WHEN IS A REVOLUTION A REVOLUTION?

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The title of my paper, “Too Early to Tell: When is a Revolution a Revolution?” comes from an apocryphal story in which the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai responded to the question, “What do you think the impact of the French Revolution has been?” by saying, “It is still too early to tell.” Of course, this was in 1960. There is a certain sublime verisimilitude to this statement. History may be viewed as the momentary punctuation of an event that can result in tectonic shifts in class configurations, discourses, and conceptions of political possibilities that are felt centuries later.

In this essay, I hope to cast a brief glance at the uprisings of the Arab Spring and, by comparing them to the revolutions of the twentieth century, particularly the Iranian revolution, examine some of their resulting transformations and address how ephemeral or lasting these transformations may be, particularly for Tunisia and Egypt. This comparison begins by looking first at the particular ways in which a revolution is made, then examines what changes a revolutionary transformation entails, and finally offers some reflections on meaningful ways of looking at revolutions and revolutionary movements.

So, how are revolutions “made”? One of the foremost theoreticians and practitioners of revolutionary arts in the twentieth century was Lenin. He identified three potential prerequisites for the emergence of a revolution: mass insurrection; a well-mobilized class (rather than a party or conspiracy) acting as the leaders of the movement; and divisions and “vacillations” in the ranks of the enemy.

In both Tunisia and Egypt, the uprisings’ most notable characteristic was its broad-based nature. As in Iran of 1978 and 1979, the movements crossed class boundaries as well as religious and urban/rural divides. In all three cases, clearly organized working class movements were crucial to the formation of those face-to-face, hard fought, and longstanding relationships that often underline mass mobilization and that make or break revolutionary movements. In Tunisia and Egypt, union mobilization—which began a long time before the uprisings—was crucial, as was student activism. Here I am not referring to generalized youth, but students specifically. In Iran, as in Egypt, the mosques were a means of mobilization and dissemination of revolutionary directives and speeches. However, the mosques in Egypt were a starting point for demonstrations, rather than the organizational nodes they had been in Iran.

The extent to which internal divisions within regimes cause their vulnerability to uprisings depends greatly upon the complexion of power. This is where I differ in my analysis from Lenin. Such divisions were not present in a meaningful way in the monarchical regime of Iran in 1978 or 1979. Nevertheless, the revolution proceeded until it produced a horizontal split in the military that allowed revolutionary forces to take over military bases and arsenals throughout the cities. What was notable in Iran was not fissures in the ruling class, but precisely what Lenin considers a necessary precondition: vacillation. The Shah's regime could not decide between a wholly violent suppression of the revolt and a gradual opening of political space. In fact, its alternation between coercion and a safety-valve style of appeasement opened up a space of mobilization where fear dissipated and the sense of possibility grew.

Vertical fissures, on the other hand, have occurred almost daily in the case of Libya. For example, officials began defecting from the regime as soon as the uprisings started. Yet, because of the concentration of power and political institutions in the hands of the Qaddafi family, these vacillations and divisions did not quickly alter the stability of the regime or its use of extraordinary violence in countering the armed insurrection against it. On the other hand, in both Tunisia and Egypt such divisions and vacillations were absolutely crucial to the outcome of the uprisings. In Tunisia, the military took the side of the protestors. In Egypt, the military—which is a much more powerful force with a much larger corpus of economic and political interest than in Tunisia—protected its flanks by forcing Mubarak out of power. (Post-revolution, however, it has left the structures of authority untouched, which does not bode well for the post-revolutionary regime.) These divisions will also determine what is to come in Yemen, but in petrol monarchies they may not matter, as the families monopolize the levers of power and the institutions of the state, decreasing the likelihood of divisions in general.

What Lenin does not mention is the role of outside intervention in precipitating revolution. However, given the Russian Revolution's timing during the First and Second World Wars, he focuses on the effects of international war on revolutionary mobilization. And, in a very interesting text called "War and Revolution," he reflects on the French Revolution. Lenin writes,

When the French revolutionary townspeople and revolutionary peasants overthrew the monarchy at the close of the eighteenth century by revolutionary means, that policy of the revolutionary class was bound to shake all the rest of autocratic, czarist, imperial, and semi-feudal Europe to its foundations. And the inevitable continuation of this policy of the victorious revolutionary class in France was the wars in which all the monarchist nations of Europe, forming their famous coalition, lined up against revolutionary France in counter-revolutionary war.¹

¹ V.I. Lenin, "War and Revolution," 1917, available at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/may/14.htm> (accessed 7 September 2011).

Lenin viewed this counter-revolutionary war as not necessarily a detrimental occasion, but one in which a new form of warfare is invented, where *levy en masse* underwrites the legitimacy of the new state, and where Napoleon invents entire new strategies of warfare which, in fact, are still reflected in the ways European powers fight.

Further along in the twentieth century, perhaps no moment is as striking as the war waged between Iran and Iraq. Taking place only a year after the revolution had overthrown the Shah, it had an immediate effect that was very much in line with Lenin's analysis. Power was consolidated in the hands of Iran's regime rather than the reverse, which is what Saddam Hussein and his Western allies had hoped. In the case of the Arab Spring, we have not seen outright war, but rather brutal suppression using foreign troops. This was the case in Bahrain, where Saudi Arabia deployed some 4,000 troops under the Peninsula Shield to an island whose population only numbers one million. Foreign interventions in most of the rest of the ongoing Arab revolutions have been less coercive and more willing to be hegemonic in the Gramscian sense. This means that the attempt from the outside to co-opt revolutionary movements has been far more pronounced than outright warfare. For example, U.S. and European powers have already attempted to affect the outcome of Tunisian elections via their "democracy promotion" programs, which entail injections of millions of dollars and euros to "assist" democratic forces into power.²

In Egypt, the form of co-optation has been more directly economic. The moderate elite who are in power right now are in mediations to allow for the IMF, the World Bank, and the U.S. government to "invest" in the country, or to ensure that the kinds of economic transformations that could take place fall within the narrow remit of a new liberal capitalism that we have come to recognize as Washington consensus.

In Yemen such interventions are more difficult to trace. There are certainly covert movements we are not privy to that likely take the shape of military-to-military cooperation between the United States, its allies, and the Yemeni army. But what is striking in the case of Yemen, Bahrain, and, I also argue, Syria and Libya, is the extent to which Saudi Arabia—as the most significant U.S. client in the region, along with Israel—has its own desperate agenda of survival, and has attempted to prevent the kind of transformation that it was helpless to forestall in Tunisia and Egypt. In Yemen, Libya, and Syria, Saudi Arabia has been very quick to cultivate and support its own acceptable oppositional candidates. These are figures from within the establishment with varying volumes of blood on their hands who would not rock the proverbial security boat in the region. It is important to remember that Saudi Arabia has long struggled to impose its own profoundly conservative—in all meanings of that word—vision of what social, socioeconomic, and political relations should be in the region, especially upon those countries unfortunate enough to be in its immediate periphery. This imposition involves not only

² Please note that this lecture was given before the NATO intervention in Libya.

the channeling of vast sums of money unaccounted for and opaquely transmitted to political subcontractors in the region but also, as we have seen especially with Bahrain and Libya, ensuring that its international patron—the United States—follows the contours of its own policy.

Having spoken about the larger forces that affect revolutions, I now focus on what sorts of transformations revolutionary movements are thought to bring. People influenced by Marxian ideas—who have been prominent in our thinking about revolutions in the twentieth century—usually see large-scale and lasting sociological transformations as those that matter. C.L.R. James, the great Caribbean historian who was an unorthodox Marxian, wrote:

In a revolution, when the ceaseless, slow accumulation of centuries burst into volcanic eruptions, the meteoric flares and flights above are a meaningless chaos and lend themselves to infinite caprice and romanticism unless the observer sees them always as projections of the subsoil from which they come.³

The subsoil James mentions is the interrelation between social classes. One has to recognize, as James does, the power struggles resulting from the end of colonialism. In a sense, the structural conditions that led to the revolts in the countries of the Middle East fit the classical models. One of these structural features is the persistent widening of socioeconomic fissures between a fast-rising capitalist class that seems intent on flaunting its newly acquired wealth, and a group that Asef Bayat, a sociologist, has called “the poor middle classes.”⁴ These classes are educated, but they are barred from paths of affluence and prosperity because of a lack of jobs for skilled and educated workers. Such structural transformations tend to occur over generations, sometimes centuries. With hindsight, we can see that the Russian and Chinese revolutions were crucial in eventually bringing about a capitalist class who could stand shoulder to shoulder with the robber barons of the nineteenth century United States. These revolutions also brought about lasting transformations in such things as gender relations and political regimes.

In the Middle East, the Iranian revolution’s structural effects are still difficult to discern some 30 years later. We can at least say that the revolution has accelerated the rise of a bourgeois class and has brought about the slow transformation of the old American capitalists of the bazaar into a hybrid class engaged in industrial production. The revolution’s effect on gender relations in Iran is, of course, mixed at best. While women of lower and middle classes have been incorporated into the economy due to urban capitalist formations that the revolution hastened, the regime has also been retrograde in its rolling back

³ C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint l’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Penguin, 2001), xix.

⁴ Asef Bayat, “A New Arab Street in Post-Islamist Times,” 26 January 2011, available at: http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/26/a_new_arab_street (accessed 7 September 2011).

of legal and political protections for women. This issue has brought about an unintended consequence: the rise of an extraordinarily vibrant women's movement that features innovative and creative coalition building across ideological divides.

This is also something that we see in the Arab world. Gender relations are very visible right now, and we are seeing transformations. What is striking is the role that women have played in all of the revolutions, particularly in Yemen, where the figure most clearly associated with organizing demonstrations is a woman rather than a man. It will likely take another generation for us to see whether these revolutionary movements have shifted class configurations.

The rise of a new political elite is another of the earliest and most visible revolutionary transformations. It is again striking to see the extent to which social, economic, and political elites are attempting to domesticate the Arab revolutionary movements by ensuring, or at least attempting to ensure, that the new guardians of the state be "moderate" economically and politically—in relation to both neighborhood and global hegemons. We saw this in the early attempts to ensure that Ghannouchi remained in power as Prime Minister of Tunisia as well as the overwhelming presence of the generals and functionaries of the former regimes in the ranks of the "opposition" in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. It is still too early to tell what sorts of changes we will see, but we will not have to wait for generations; elections and regime changes will give us some sort of an indication.

Beyond structural changes, I diverge from C.L.R James and his assessment of what he calls the "meteoric flights and flashes above," or the ephemeral nature of such revolts. What have these revolutions wrought in terms of changes in the affective or the emotional terrain? Authoritarian regimes, especially those with well-developed police states, are particularly good at imposing a sense of powerlessness and an atmosphere of paralyzing fear. In Tunisia, the Ben Ali regime had a secret policeman for every 40 people. In Egypt, where the police force, by some reckonings, numbered 1.8 million, police stations functioned with impunity as places where violence was exercised on the bodies of anyone showing any defiance whatsoever. In the Iran of my childhood, the most famous saying was, "The wall has mice and the mice have ears," which exhorted us—the children, the adults, everyone—to silence. When the Shah came to visit my primary school, when I was five or six years old, my father, a committed Marxist, sat me down and said, "You know, I want you to recognize that they are going to say he is a god, but he is not a god. He is just a man." My mother became upset and said to my father, "Don't say that! What if she repeats that? They will come and arrest you." The atmosphere of fear was so incredibly powerful that even parents felt that they could not really speak to their children about what was what.

What we have heard again and again from the people of Sfax and Tunis, of Cairo and Alexandria and Suez, of Damascus and Daraa, of Bahrain and Aden and Sana'a, of Sohar and Muscat, is that their fear has broken. In places where the revolutionary movement has succeeded in bringing about changes in the political elite, we have what Elizabeth Wood has called, in her beautifully evocative phrase, "the pleasure of agency." This, the sense that it is Spring—that revolutionary possibility can travel across borders, can take refuge

in people's hearts and homes and emotions and ideas, in city streets, plazas, cafes, and mosques, where people gather before marching; that a sense of solidarity and affection can bind people in an imagined community of revolt; that all is possible—is at once ephemeral and difficult to grasp, but also profoundly transformative over generations. Many of the youth who mobilized in Iran in 2009, who were not even born during the revolution, know something about this fear having been broken. As Aimé Césaire, one of the great Caribbean poets, wrote, “The work of man is only just beginning, and it remains to conquer all the violence entrenched in the recesses of our passion. And there is a place for all at the rendezvous of victory.” That rendezvous of victory is still to come. ❖

THE GEOGRAPHY OF POLITICAL PROTESTS

Jillian Schwedler, Associate Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst

The interactions we see between protestors and police structure the kinds of questions that we ask about protest: Do the police overreact? Who throws the first stone? Does it escalate? From where did this come? In the case of Tunisia, the answer to the latter question seems straightforward: in an act of self-immolation, a man caused the country to rise up and topple the government. On the one hand, I do not want to diminish such a moment. Seminal moments of spark are when the consensus changes into a feeling that something else is possible. Over time and around the world, there has been no shortage of people in repressed societies wanting to change their world, to demand something different. But on the other hand, the stakes are often so high, repression so reliable and severe, that people often do not demand change.

Thus moments of something breaking, of the impossible seeming to become possible, are extraordinarily important, not only in Tunisia but around the region. Only a few months ago we said, "Well, this is never going to happen in Syria." Quite frankly, I think that everything is on the table now. Though I am not in the business of prediction, a lot can happen. The vision that a different world is possible changes the spirit of what could happen.

But I think we also need to step back not only to look at the events leading up to these extraordinary times. Often, we examine precursors to revolutions in order to find in them the moments that indicated future events. Yet the point of looking back should not be to see that we could have anticipated the present, but to help us understand what might happen in the present. We might ask: What kinds of groups have had what kinds of relationships with the regime over the years? What kinds of protests have been permitted, and what kinds of protests have been repressed? How does the government use law? This way, when we arrive at seminal moments, we might be completely surprised, as many of us were by what has recently happened, but we will also have an understanding of precisely what has changed, how the previous relations and practices have shifted and why.

Along these lines, I want to look systematically at protests in Jordan over the years in regard to three particular dimensions that are seldom closely examined: law, space, and spectacle. In terms of law, protests are seemingly extra-legal moments during which law is not relevant because the situation is about the engagement between protestors and police clashing in the street or square. But understanding these encounters requires that we examine what happens before and after these protest events, and how the regime uses the law.

First, a prevalent and erroneous belief is that protests do not occur in authoritarian states. In fact, most authoritarian regimes do tend to allow some limited protests, although not all attempts at demonstrations are equally tolerated. In some cases, protesters actually negotiate the parameters of these demonstrations with government officials. Many of these events are modest in scale, and we seldom hear about them in the Western media. Nor do they often achieve what they set out to do, other than to express dissent publicly—though that alone can be a huge achievement. But most countries, even the most authoritarian, do have some sort of culture of protest that is much more widespread than commonly believed. Jordan has a long history of protest activities—and not only the large protests that we see in the media during which someone burns an Israeli flag, people march for the Right of Return, or thousands shout “U.S. out of Iraq,” but all kinds of protests. These might involve 50 people sitting in front of the Prime Ministry to protest restrictions on press freedoms, work stoppages by judges in support of a lawyer who has been arrested but not charged, and innumerable labor strikes and sit-ins. In Jordan, protests are perhaps not as widespread as they have been in Egypt the past few years, but they have been going on for decades.

In the early 1950s, Jordan’s first constitution allowed the right to political assembly, and the people often exercised this right. The constitution was suspended in 1957 and was not reinstated until after 1989. Yet, even during that 32-year period, protests occurred. The government would sometimes crack down on larger gatherings, but the bigger issue is that people were still pushing the boundaries and demanding political expression.

In 1989, a “political reopening” occurred, in some ways similar to the one that had taken place in the 1950s, with the emergence of multiple political parties, activism, widespread public debate, and a free and vibrant press. Within the next few years, the regime lifted martial law, put constitutional amendments forth for popular ratification, opened the media, and formally allowed public gatherings.

Yet, since 1989, if one wishes to organize a protest one needs to inform the Jordanian government where it will be held, what it will involve, and how many people are expected. In 2001, the government began to require not only notification, but that the organizers of demonstrations obtain a permit. It was in this year that Jordan’s parliament was suspended, and in the two years until the establishment of the new parliament approximately 250 temporary laws were passed. These laws were only supposed to engage with issues of security, but they were in fact about such things as raising the price of car insurance and curtailing public gatherings—which were obviously not immediate security concerns. When the parliament reconvened in 2003, it signed a law requiring citizens to get permission from the government to gather in public. The law decreed that organizers of protests were also personally responsible for any damage that might result from the gathering.

Even before the government introduced the permit system, it would often pressure the organizer to not have a certain kind of protest, would declare that there would be too many people for public safety, or would suggest that the event be held at an alternate loca-

tion. These negotiations were all informal, but organizers understood that they should work with the government or risk having their event entirely shut down. In particular, the government tried to dissuade marches, as it wanted protests relegated to stationary, small, and easily contained spaces. All this legislation constitutes a serious barrier, yet people file for protests all the time and from many different outlets—political parties, professional associations, and independent movements. It is seldom recognized that Jordanian protesters have engaged in such a dialogue with different parts of the government for years, even prior to 1989, but particularly since then.

In addition to examining laws with which protesters must negotiate, we need to look more systematically at what happens to protesters after they are arrested. The government, of course, aims to silence them, but it uses different parts of the law, depending on what it wants to accomplish. One would think that the public gathering law would be the primary law referenced in such cases. But every year since 2003 that I have been to Jordan to interview three dozen lawyers and activists who have been arrested, I have so far not found a single case of someone being prosecuted for violating this law—for failing to obtain a permit, for example, or for violating the agreed-upon terms of the event. Instead, protesters are more typically charged with damaging property, threatening state security, or insulting a foreign regime.

It is clear that the government uses the law to deflate, structure, channel, and encourage certain kinds of protests while keeping other kinds of protests down. An examination of these interactions between state agents and various protesters will provide us with a much richer picture from which we might better understand moments of revolution precisely because we will have a better sense of what has been possible, and what has been perceived as possible.

I came upon the topic of physical space as it relates to protests by accident. I was interviewing a protestor who was talking about how he and his colleagues choose sites for protests. We were driving around downtown Amman, and he said, “You know, we can’t even protest here anymore.” “Why?” I asked. He said, “Because there are all of these high-speed underpasses and overpasses and the cars go flying by and we can’t stop traffic anymore here. So we have to protest somewhere else.” This got me looking at the way the city has profoundly changed over the last decade—and how its altered space has affected protests.

Around six years ago, a peaceful Muslim Brotherhood-organized protest near the old Hussein Mosque basically shut down Amman’s center. At the time, this immediate downtown area was the center of town, and as few as 100 people on Zahran Street, with its series of eight traffic circles leading westward, could bring part of the city to a halt. As a result, it was a common location for protests, and the government struggled to either prevent or break them up.

As my interviewee mentioned, new overpasses and underpasses now move traffic very quickly through this area so that cars no longer have to slow down to move through the circles. As such, Zahran Street is no longer a threatening place to have protests because

very few people venture there anymore. If your protest cannot be seen or cannot disrupt normal activities, it is far less effective. This is a spatial question, and it has real impact.

Amman's center of commerce now lies in West Amman, which is quite a ways from the old city center. The area been reconstructed to facilitate spaces of global capital, and one finds large projects intended to create a cosmopolitan city. The projects aim to create a series of tall buildings along with commercial and residential spaces, which the government as well as the organizers like to describe as a "new downtown." The corner of one site covers the old public security central offices, the notorious *mukhabarat*. Thus a neoliberal project is literally being built on the foundations of a security state. Such projects are fostering public spaces that are actually private commercial spaces, which can be policed and controlled more stringently, as citizens have no right to be there. If one is not buying a four-dollar coffee in an upscale cafe, one is not really welcome to enjoy or inhabit that space. This elitism helps the government, because it keeps those who do not "belong" (those who might protest) out of West Amman. Essentially, the government wants to ensure that foreign investors can go to the sushi bars and beautiful hotels and get to their places of work.

I want to emphasize that I do not believe that any of these urban building projects are intended to block protests; I have not found any evidence that would indicate such a plan. However, shutting down protests has been a side effect of these projects, and protestors are increasingly frustrated. Carrying out successful gatherings has become more and more difficult, as many public spaces are either out of town, very carefully policed, or undesirable because of heavy traffic. While it is still true that if critical mass occurs in a high traffic area people can shut down the city, it is also true that 200 people can do far less than they could even a few years ago.

Protestors obviously want to operate in places that will make the most impact, and heavily populated and affluent neighborhoods such as those in West Amman have become an ideal space to disrupt. Various government-employed policing agencies prevent protests there and in other prominent commercial districts by shutting down roads, preventing protestors from coming in—particularly those traveling in buses sponsored by protest organizers. When protestors succeed in getting through, the police attempt to clear the space as quickly as possible by transporting them in minivans to different places around the city, where they are detained for hours. The protestors are usually not charged, but the space has been effectively emptied of potential disruption, the protestors made invisible. In contrast, the police manage protests in places like university campuses and refugee camps by circling the protests so that they do not spill over, effectively hiding them from the more general public. Though groups in these spaces can protest all day, no one sees and no one cares.

Tahrir Square in Cairo was famously inspired by Haussmann's Paris, with its large open squares and wide avenues that form spokes and feature bridges. The irony is that Napoleon III hired Haussman to prevent large-scale movement of people in Paris—so that tanks could get in and out easily and so there would be clear lines of sight for shooting.

There is a lovely irony that a square in Cairo, inspired by such spatial ideology, became the site of a revolution. It is probably the most easily policeable space in Cairo, but that is where the revolution took place. Indeed, the case of Tahrir Square—not the only site of the Egyptian revolution, of course—tells us that even though it may seem nearly impossible to overcome authoritarian control of urban space, it is in fact possible. Thus the physical changes to Amman that have altered the protest geography of Jordan should not be assumed to have eliminated the potential for highly disruptive demonstrations. The question is not whether they are possible, but how and when they might unfold, and why they often do not.

Spectacle is about protesting for a specific audience and gaining visibility. The presence of such elements as the media, YouTube, and cell phones has changed everything, though I do not think we fully understand how it has done so. Many say that because of these devices, the state no longer controls the narrative. Television and radio stations were crucial for state security in the past, and thus were Army outposts, because they were essential for controlling the narrative of what was happening. But what is different is that now everyone has a video camera on their cell phone, and they can immediately upload videos to YouTube. The widespread means of conveying images and events has ended state control of narratives, and has therefore changed forever what is possible. Images of spectacles—protests, demonstrations, confrontations with security agencies—can easily be conveyed; the challenge now is only to find the right audience, domestically as well as internationally.

I want to end with an example of a protest that may aid in understanding protests to come. In Jordan, Queen Rania has become the model of a good protestor, organizing and leading marches to support humanitarian events and also showing up at more controversial gatherings. When she participates in charged events, one knows that the government is panicking a little and attempting to flip the narrative. In 2002, when Israel invaded Jenin and Nablus and a number of other towns in Palestine, Amman was effectively shut down by large-scale protests for about six weeks. Late into the protests, the Jordan River Foundation invited Queen Rania to join a march in support of the Palestinian people. She led the march, and an image of her at the protest was released—but it was not intended for Jordanian audiences. Clad in jeans and a cardigan sweater, the photo was meant to say to Westerners, “Don’t be afraid of Muslims on the street. It is not scary, we are already like you. We can already be in dialogue.”

What I found most interesting in regard to these protests, aside from this image of the Queen, is that the planned marches went from places like the Professional Association Complex to the Prime Ministry—or to Parliament or to the Israeli Embassy or to the U.S. Embassy. Hence they arrived at places identified as symbolically complicit in the invasions. Queen Rania’s march went from the Fifth Circle on Zahran Street, which is the site of two very prominent hotels, to a UN office involved in Palestinian relief only two blocks away. Symbolically, her march said, “The royal family and government is for the Palestinian people. We are not protecting Israel or our government or U.S. policy; we are with the people.”

The narrative of the protests was thus partially manipulated through the use of space. Attending to such aspects of protest can help us understand the nature of future protests by unpacking and revealing the players, their objectives, and the long history of interactions between protesters and various government agencies. This does not mean that we can know when a country will explode in revolution, but grasping these dimensions can help us know when a protest is more of the same and when it is truly something different. ❖

THE JASMINE REVOLUTION: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS AND THE PRESENT POWER VACUUM

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The most striking thing about the Tunisian revolution was its spontaneity. It came out of nowhere. That is to say, it came out of the Tunisian people. Everyone said that we didn't expect it to happen in Tunisia. Yet, if one looks back at history, uprisings have happened before in Tunisia. They are a Tunisian way of doing things.

In at least two prior instances, Tunisians took to the streets in protest and battled with security forces. In 1978, President Habib Bourgiba clamped down on the liberal wing of his Socialist Destourian Party (PSD) and the Tunisian General Union of Labor (UGTT) and some 200 people were killed. The security forces held on, and the regime survived. The regime soon afterward held elections, which it won, though the elections were contested. These elections marked a step—forward or not, it is hard to tell—but at least a step in Tunisian politics.

More striking were the events of 1984, which I believe have parallels with the revolution. A man walked into the bakery in Douz in southern Tunisia and found himself confronted with a substantial increase in the price of bread. He ran out of the shop, yelling, “I can't feed my family the way I am used to!” Though the man was not going to starve, he saw that his standard of living was falling. Unrest spread throughout Tunisia, and protestors burned fancy cars and, in Tunis, destroyed rich houses and other ostentatious signs of wealth.¹

The 1978 and 1984 protests both led to serious changes in politics, though neither in the party nor the type of government, because Bourgiba survived both revolts and each time fired his prime minister, blaming him and other colleagues for the situation. In the 2011 revolution, however, the leader—in this case, President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali—did not survive. As before, people rose up and took to the streets, but something headier took place: a massive uprising or popular intifada in which mobile phones and Facebook played a large part. (I do not think this a revolution per se because an upheaval of the social pyramid has not occurred, but the Tunisians call it one). There are many explana-

¹ Showy wealth is not part of Tunisian culture. North African homes traditionally have a very anonymous façade; whatever their riches, they are found inside. To exhibit them on the exterior is not socially appropriate.

tions as to why the people exploded, and a favorite of governments and journalists is the economic situation. Yet, unlike the poor man in Douz, what happened in Sidi Bouzid, what happened in Kasserine, and then what spread to Tunis was not primarily a question of economics (although economics were getting tougher). Rather, it went deeper, stemming principally from the arrogance and disinterestedness of the Tunisian government, what Algerians call *al-hoghra*.

Tunisians were fed up with a government that didn't care about them. Mohamed Bouazizi did not set himself on fire because he was underemployed, but because he was publicly humiliated when the state inspector confiscated his wares. It is interesting to note that the uprising began among people who were outside the center of Tunisian politics—those living in places like Sidi Bouzid and Kasserine, areas Moroccans would call *bled as-siba*, the land of dissidence, or those living in Tunis who came from the countryside. It came from the popular side, the rural side, the poorer side, this disdained side of the people, and it spread across the social divide into the Tunisian middle classes.

The revolution has resulted in an organizational vacuum, and structure is needed. There are many candidates, and it is useful to examine them, their parties, and their positions. In many situations of this kind—for example, in Algeria in 1988, when riots finally caused President Chadli Bendjedid to open up the political system—the Islamists come roaring in and offer to provide order. As for Islamist forces in Tunisia, there is the long-standing yet banned Islamist party, al-Nahda. Al-Nahda's previous name, MTI, is poorly translated as the Movement for the Islamic Tendency. (A better translation is the Movement for the Islamic Way.) Though MTI was weak to begin with—it was never a deep-seated Tunisian movement—Ben Ali wrongly acted as if it was a large threat to him. Whatever was left of MTI, Ben Ali destroyed in the early 1990s with great vigor and violence. Under its new name, the Nahda party is not likely to provide a strong appeal to Tunisians, many of whom ask, "I am Muslim, but are you more Muslim than I? Why do I need a Muslim party?" Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, is another Islamist force. It has conducted terrorist attacks in Algeria and has also been in evidence in southern Tunisia, but it is a foreign movement that is not popular among the Tunisian protestors.

However, the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD)—Ben Ali's party—is still a force, even though most Tunisians currently advocate the removal of the RCD from politics, just as the Ba'athists were removed from the Iraqi government. The RCD, like the Ba'ath Party, has many pasts. Its previous form, the PSD, was seen as the villain in 1987, when Ben Ali staged his coup. It was so negatively viewed that its leaders refused to poll the public to see what their standing was. But, renamed the RCD, it went on to win elections, and Ben Ali, who was striving to stand above all parties in the early years after his take-over, found himself won over by the old/new party, which he then proceeded to reshape in his own image.

Like the Iraqi Ba'athists, the RCD is formed of different groups: the corrupt officials at the top; the members in the middle who stood to gain by joining the party and helping admin-

ister the state but who are not implicated in the corruption; and those at the bottom who felt it wise to join the party because the party was in power. Despite the many who would now have it banished, RCD members are at present a pervasive group within Tunisian politics. As such, they are the most likely to provide some kind of administrative and electoral skills for Tunisia. Furthermore, the party represented many important sectors of Tunisian society, notably the Sahel and Tunis bourgeoisie and rural farmers and leaders. Of course, the party will do what it did before: It will rename itself, it will scramble for a while, it will get some new leaders, and it will then be on the scene. It will not necessarily take over, but it is a force in Tunisian politics, and its hour may come if the current vacuum persists and other forces do not provide the order and progress that the uprisers demanded.

The UGTT is currently the most organized Tunisian political organization. Though it is not a singular force—it is split into divisions of leadership and policy—it is still one of the strongest forces that might provide leadership. It does not want to become a party, but its members are involved in the Tunisian Labor Party. The current strongest secular party is Najib Chebbi's Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), which kept its head above water in opposition during the Ben Ali period and now stands as a moderate contender in the elections for the constituent assembly in October. Another party is Tajdid, the former Communist Party, which enjoys some resonance with Tunisians but generally lacks legitimacy because it did not follow the UGTT's example of leaving the government.

The government, for its part, is weak and divided, and it is not quite sure where it stands or who is in charge, but it is the most necessary element. Its challenge is to establish a government that can represent the people and provide order so that elections can take place and government policies can get moving, especially in order to overcome the economic slump that has followed the uprising. Tourism and industry remain slack, and the government under old guard politician Beji Caid Essebsi has no legitimacy to set policy.

The army has proven to be a crucial organization in the Middle East uprisings, in which the decision to fire or not on the citizens is a turning point in the course of the *infittadas*. In Tunisia, the army supported the protestors, but sided non-political. It is at the service of the civilian authorities, which now consists of the people. The army is unlikely to take over, though if indecision continues and becomes anarchy, individuals within the army may attempt to do so.

The police represent another force of order. The army is 35,000 strong, while the police are 150,000 strong and are divided. At times, they attempted to bring order by siding with the protestors, while at other times they were harsh with the protestors. In fact, the army sometimes pushed the police back as they tried to quash demonstrations. Though it is unclear where the police are headed, it is clear that they represent an organized and sizeable body of people that is needed to help fill the power vacuum. Though the police do not usually take over in circumstances such as these, it is not inconceivable, as the police represent a structured force, and politics look for structured forces.

Another organizational element in the Tunisian uprising that is rarely mentioned is its grassroots order, namely neighborhood organizations. These groups ensured their own order through neighborhood watches that prevented people from breaking into houses on a given block. These neighborhood groups are not often found in villages, but are in large urban centers, such as Tunis. Thus, they do not constitute a national force, and they are unlikely to reach a higher political level than they did during the uprising, but it is of interest to note their existence.

In Tunisia after the uprising, spontaneity and disorder vie with pockets of order—potential, presumptive order that provides a semblance of structure until the elections occur. Unless these various forces begin to battle each other or unless the absence of some kind of authority becomes too prolonged, anarchy is not likely. Essentially, a broad-based caretaker government is in place to bring about elections. It has now been more than six months since Ben Ali fled, and elections have not taken place. Parties, organized and organizing, are hotly debating the country's future after a quarter century's absence. But the young uprisers are getting impatient with the discussion and the indecisiveness of the weak government. There are fewer, not more, jobs than before and gangs take matters into their own hands from time to time. Early elections are needed, but the parties are not ready for them. When they occur, they will be for a constituent assembly, which is needed to enter into more debates over the shape of the new order but is not qualified to make substantive policy.

At the time of Tunisia's *intifada*, two groups of people in the Arab world watched the events closely: the people and the rulers. The people knew that they had many of the same grievances that Tunisians did. They asked themselves, "What are the risks that I take by going out in the streets?" Egyptians, Yemenis, Bahrainis, Libyans, Syrians, and others took—and are taking—that risk. The governments, for the most part, say that the unrest is due to economics and is organized by hoodlums and zealots, and that they are still in control. But the reason for the revolutions is not economics, and the people in the streets, now at mortal risk, are not hoodlums and religious fanatics. Rather, these uprisings are spontaneous revolts led by the youth and followed by the rest of society against arrogant, insulting, and repressive governments. ❖

THE DEMOCRATIC SNOWBALL AND THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE ARAB WORLD

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Translated by Nehad Khader

INTRODUCTION

The true beginning of the democratic movements in Tunisia, Egypt, and beyond was in 2005. This was the year that Egypt witnessed the first presidential elections (albeit rigged), the movement for an independent judiciary, and the appearance of the Kefaya movement. Egyptian bloggers started to use their blogs to mobilize people. When protestors slept in the streets of the judicial district to support the movement for an independent judiciary, the calls to gather happened entirely on the Internet. The use of the Internet as a tool of protest continued, until it exploded with the Arab Spring in early 2011. New media thus played an important role in the uprisings—but it must be noted that the Internet does not create revolutions, but supports them.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNET IN THE ARAB WORLD

The Arab world has a collective population of 330 million people. From 2004 to 2006 the number of Internet users in the region increased from 12 million to 26 million. In December 2009, this number reached 58 million, and it increased to 74 million a year later. Sixty percent of these users are located in three countries: Egypt, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia, which, according to a February 2011 report, have 24 million, 10 million, and 10 million users, respectively. From 2005-2010, 65 percent of those arrested in the Arab world because of their writings—individuals also known as “prisoners of opinion”—were detained as a result of expressing themselves on the Internet, either on websites, forums, blogs, or, more recently, Facebook and Twitter. For instance, 44 letters and an image created a state security case in Bahrain against the activist and head of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights Nabeel Rajab, who in April 2011 published a photo on Twitter of a victim of torture who had died in Bahrain with the help of the Saudi government.

Despite political cleavages between regimes such as Saudi Arabia and Libya or Morocco and Algeria, Arab governments have banded together in their quest to control the use of the Internet. From 1993 through 2010, Arab interior ministers met annually without fail in Tunisia. The meetings were often described as consisting of the “Arab Police Union,” and they specifically focused on the Internet after 2001. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria, and pre-revolution Tunisia are the most stringent countries in terms of blocking websites. In

2005, Tunisian youth, especially those living abroad, created a website called binalifik, or “Ben Ali Wake Up.” The site was blocked within 18 hours. In April 2010, Egyptian youth residing in the United States created a website to support Mohamed ElBaradei, and Saudi Arabia blocked the site 15 hours after it was launched.

The number of Facebook users in the Arab world has grown considerably—from two million in 2008 to 18 million in December 2010. The April 6 Youth Movement in Egypt had much to do with this increase. On 6 April 2008 young Egyptian activists used Facebook to organize a labor strike in the large industrial city of Mahalla. The strike was successful, turning into something resembling an uprising, thus showing the usefulness of Facebook to support protests. The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information estimates that Facebook’s influence in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions has caused the number of users to surpass 25 million people. As for Twitter, the Arab country that exemplifies the best use of it is Tunisia, which was inspired by the Iranian experience in 2009.

Facebook has attracted the attention of governments, such as Gamal Mubarak, the son of the former Egyptian dictator. After the April 6 Youth Movement, Gamal also tried to promote himself via Facebook. However, because the people who were posting items were his employees, their activities lacked spirit. For example, I might read an academic article that is very well written but lacks spirit, and I can read another article that is full of spelling mistakes and lacks logic, but exudes spirit. This phenomenon is what made the youth more successful with Facebook than Gamal and his group.

But before Facebook and Twitter came forums and blogs. Forums appeared at the end of the 1990s, and blogs appeared after 2005—at which time we saw Arab youth using them to defend democracy. Of course, blogging—with the advent of RSS—allowed those who were writing about the same issues to be in touch with each other. In Gulf countries such as Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, as well as in Algeria, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs are all available, but forums continue to be the greatest means for dialogue among youth. YouTube is another platform that appeared years ago and continues to be utilized in the Arab world, particularly among Kuwaiti youth. Initially, most users looked to YouTube for entertainment or pornography, but with the advent of the Arab revolutions, its use has changed. Syrians have become the most ardent users of YouTube, uploading material they film with their cell phones. Though Bashar al-Assad’s regime often blocks the Internet, Syrian youth still upload their videos to YouTube when they have the opportunity.

A TOOL FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE FACE OF OPPRESSION

Why did the Internet become a tool for supporting democracy? All Arab dictatorships have governments that control traditional newspaper journalism and censor content. Television and radio are also under the control of such governments. The two most important satellites in the Arab world are Nilesat and Arabsat, which are primarily controlled by Egypt and Saudi Arabia; as a result, it has been difficult for alternative satellite channels to appear. The Internet, however, is harder to control.

Egypt, conscious of its image abroad, implemented the Free Internet Initiative in 2003 and allowed the Internet to run unblocked. The Initiative allowed free connection, and the government also permitted the purchase of cheap computer parts to be paid for in installments. But the Egyptian government envisioned a specific type of Internet use: marketing or entertainment. And it punished those who used it for other purposes. For example, one could write critical statements regarding a minister or a police officer on one's blog or Facebook page, and the authorities would let the matter go without blocking the site. However, they might kidnap or detain the writer through the emergency law, subject him or her to torture, or fabricate a court case. Imprisonment could last for two months due to a "pending investigation" that would never result in an actual case. But the youth continued to use the Internet to support their democratic aspirations.

On 26 June 2006 Egyptian youth organized the first protest calling for democracy in front of the Ministry of the Interior and the State Security Investigation Services (SSI) using Internet mobilization. Afterward, traditional media outlets such as Al Jazeera started to pay attention to these youths, particularly during the first day of Eid al-Fitr of 2007, when mass sexual harassment occurred in Egypt. Groups of young men surrounded women, touching them and trying to strip them of their clothing. Activists used their cell phone cameras to document these events, and they published them on their blogs. Though the government continued to deny the events, the existence of the videos—which appeared via several satellite channels—forced it to confront the assaults. (But the government also focused on the blogger activists. Every time the name of one of them was revealed, the government brought people in to snitch against him or her.)

Cell phone videos made by those in power themselves can also work to activists' advantage. At the end of 2007 an Egyptian police officer began to arrest a bus driver, who responded confidently with the statement, "You have no right to arrest me—show me the warrant." The police officer ordered his colleagues to strip the bus driver of his clothes and then sexually assaulted him, all the while filming him with a cell phone. The officer permitted the circulation of this three-minute video in the neighborhood with the goal of humiliating the bus driver. The video fell into the hands of a blogger named Mohamed Khaled, who sent it to Wael Abbas, another Egyptian blogger known for posting videos of police brutality and government corruption, who published it on his blog. Journalists and lawmakers who visited Abbas' blog placed a request for the names of the officer and driver in *Al Fajr* newspaper—and they received many responses.

The case went to court, and the officer was eventually sentenced to three years in prison for torture. The court case took place not because the Egyptian government respects the law, but due to the involvement of the international media, which was responding to the documentation of the event via the video. (Indeed, the government under Mubarak was concerned enough about its image in the United States that it had a section at the Egyptian embassy devoted to monitoring how Egypt was being portrayed in the American press.) The three-year sentence was an important step in that it became easier for people to believe human rights organizations when they stated that torture is systemic in Egypt.

Outside of Egypt, the most important case of exposing corruption through the cell phone camera was in Morocco, where a young man would stand in public places, on corners and in the streets, and film traffic police as they took bribes from would-be ticketed drivers. He filmed 14 videos and uploaded them on YouTube and to his blog, which were viewed 12 million times. Though such corruption is widespread, the government does not acknowledge it—and does not wish to have it advertised. He eventually became the most wanted person by the Moroccan police.

Tunisian youth have also used the Internet skillfully in their fight against corruption. Ben Ali's regime was similar to the regimes of Bashar al-Assad, Saddam Hussein, and Moammar Qaddafi in that the opposition took place predominately outside the nation's borders. For example, Sami Ben Gharbia, a Tunisian blogger based in the Netherlands, used Google Earth to create a map of political prisons in Tunisia and the possible location of specific prisoners. Ben Gharbia and other youths were also able to track the use of the presidential airplane through Google Earth. They discovered that the plane was not always being used to transport Ben Ali, but was transferring funds or Ben Ali's cronies—thus demonstrating the depth of the regime's corruption.

The Internet can also assist in other forms of participation, unlike traditional media. For instance, if one is afraid of attending a protest one can use the Internet to simply forward information about the event through websites and SMS messages. One can also create a group on Facebook, and if one works as a graphic designer one can create a graphic or a banner. Thus the Internet gives anyone the ability to participate according to his or her own capacity.

Also, in countries where websites are regularly blocked, youth have implemented other, creative methods of dialogue and resistance. In Saudi Arabia, where the government blocks approximately 15 percent of websites—such as blogs, news websites, and human rights websites—because of “Islamic principles,” youth use the site of the Saudi television channel Al Arabiya, which the Saudi government is not likely to block. Because the website enables comments, the youth use the comments section to start a public conversation, deep into the list. Hence one might find users discussing the dismissal of a Saudi official at the point at which 2,000 comments have already been posted. One might also find that comment #112 is in response to #15 and that comment #600 is criticizing #30, and so on.

THE REVOLUTION

The Tunisian revolution pushed the Egyptians. But the call for a protest in Egypt on 25 January 2011—Police Day—was only for a protest against the police on their holiday, not a revolution. The primary groups that called for the protest were the youth who were incensed at the murder of Khaled Said, who was beaten to death by police officers in June of 2010, and the April 6 Youth. No one knew the creator of the Khaled Said group on Facebook—Wael Ghonim of Google—until after 25 January. But the Tunisian revolution gave all Arabs, including the Egyptians, the hope that they, too, could take action. In Egypt, many had supported the Tunisian activists, and this was evident through Twitter. In fact,

most of the tweets about the protests—with the hashtag #sidibouزيد, named for the city where 26-year-old unemployed college graduate Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire—came from Egypt.

Tunisian youth living abroad tweeted advice to Tunisians taking part in the protests, such as telling them to bring an onion or vinegar and a wet cloth to help offset the effects of tear gas. Egyptians benefited from these teachings. Ben Ali fell on 14 January, and the Egyptian revolution began on 25 January. Tunisians then started to present their experiences on Twitter. Though posts were evident on Facebook, the true backing of the Egyptian revolution from Tunisians was through Twitter.

The Internet's helpful role in the revolutions may be illustrated by the following example. The majority of the slogans that many saw on Al Jazeera during the protests came from Egyptian and other Arab Twitter feeds. We read them and brought the ideas into the streets. The most famous slogan, "The people want to topple the regime" (*"Ash-sha'b yurid isqat an-nizam"*) came from Tunisia. But there were also slogans regarding Mubarak, such as "We will not leave until he leaves" (*"Huwwa yimshi, mish ha-nimshi"*). Imagine four million people in Tahrir Square, two million in Alexandria, and approximately a million in the Suez repeating the slogan, "Leave means depart, you are not that smart" (*"Irhal ya'ni imshi yalli ma-btifhamshi"*).

When the Arab dictatorships permit the use of the Internet, the people use it to gather, to publicize the presence of the police, and to give advice on how to protest and protect oneself. And when the governments turn off the Internet, people go into the streets in even larger numbers to see what is happening and to express their anger. This happened in Tunisia and Egypt, and it is now happening in Syria. In fact, the Syrian protests are increasing. The people are not going to remain at home. ❖

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