

Social Justice: Concept and Policies after the Arab Revolutions

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Researchers listed according to the order of their papers

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Social Justice

Concept and Policies after the Arab Revolutions

**Conference Papers
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**Arab Forum for Alternative Studies
Rosa Luxembourg Foundation**

Researchers Introduced according to the order of their Papers

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Introduction

When the Arab revolutions erupted in early 2011, social justice was one of the core direct demands, as well as an indirect demand through the use of slogans such as "dignity" and "freedom". These two demands are basically associated with social justice in one way or the other. Thus, we cannot underestimate the role of the economic conditions that lack social justice in the outbreak of these revolutions. If we look at Tunisia and Egypt, we find that there are many similarities on this level. The two countries have adopted open market policies and integration into the global economy. The economic policies of the two countries were always praised by international institutions, but growth in Tunisia and Egypt was coupled with complex and unbalanced development. This means that the dividends were not distributed equitably among the different groups of the society, especially among the masses of producers and among the different regions.¹

We cannot overlook that the first spark of these revolutions was the incident of Mohammed Bouazizi,² an incident in which the economic conditions of poverty and unemployment became associated with the concept of rights: dignity and freedom, and an incident which shows how the concept of social justice is not an issue merely linked to quantitative economics - which is based on numbers and equations - but rather a concept, essentially linked with the conditions of people and communities. As said by Thomas

¹ Wael Jamal, Intifadat al-Yasamin al-Tunisia, al-Khaliq al-Natiq Hunak.. al-Natiq al-Khaliq Hunak, (The Tunisian Jasmine Revolution "Allah the Creator, the Speaking"), al-Shorouq, January 18, 2011 <http://is.gd/yoWu1c>

² Mohammed Bouazizi is a 26-year-old young Tunisian, who used to sell vegetables and fruits in the Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid, which has become one of the most famous Arab cities. When the police confiscated his primitive warescart, on the grounds that he did not have a vendor license, he set himself on fire. His death sparked the Arab Spring that has toppled President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's regime who was followed by the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who stepped down from power.

Piketty in his book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* "democracy will never be supplanted by a republic of experts."

This book tries to tackle the concept of social justice from this logic using background papers on the complexities of this concept, the relationship between this concept and the changes that took, and are still taking, place in our Arab region and the role of foreign factors, as represented by EU policies. It then presents three case studies, which tackle previous studies in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen. It also contains a number of parallel articles to these studies in an attempt to provide different perspectives on issues and countries covered by these studies.

First: Background Papers

Social Justice and the Arab Revolutions

The Complexities of the Concept and Policies

Wael Gamal

"Bread, freedom and social justice" were the main slogans of the Arab revolutions. Although social justice and social and economic demands were raised, they were pushed aside in the political arena, and more attention was given to issues such as the transfer of power arrangements, the constitution first, the elections first, democratic transformation and the religious-secular conflict. However, there is still one important result: these revolutions have brought back the concept of social justice to the world of politics in the Arab world and they have provided the Arab region with a new orientation and opened an international debate on the grounds of the intellectual and political weakness of the neo-liberal project.³

Now, the issue of social justice has regained its importance. It is imposing itself again and again on the agenda of the post January 2011 rulers in every big labour strike, social protest movement or campaigns concerning issues of income and wealth distribution. However, ambiguity, openness to different interpretations, and projects with contradictory interests still dominate. Thus, this requires attempts to explore and understand the dilemmas that are related to the definition of social justice as a necessary prelude for any attempt to frame it.

1. Complexities of the Definition

The definition of social justice is like the issue itself - surrounded with lots of disagreements. Some believe that the pursuit of social justice is a trap and an illusion. They believe that other values

³ For more on this idea see how the Arab revolutions were continuity rather than discontinuity with a global context, which escalated with the global financial crisis in 2007 - 2008: Wael Jamal, "The Arab Spring and the concepts of development and economic and social rights," published in the "Arab Dignity: Post-liberal visions" book, Cairo, the Arab Forum for Alternatives 2013.

should lead us such as individual freedom.⁴ However, those who accept it as a goal do not have a clear understanding of its meaning. In some cases, it seems nothing more than a meaningless term used to add a spark on a certain policy or a suggestion that a speaker wants us to support. People may be committed to social justice in the abstract, but in spite of this, many bitterly disagree about what can be done regarding a concrete social problem such as unemployment.⁵ This actual reality makes any definition or theory on justice a normative criterion.

In his book, *The Idea of Justice*,⁶ Amartya Sen, an Indian thinker, who belongs to the Egalitarian Liberals School, gives the example of three children and a flute to say that there is more than one logic for justice that makes possible multiple reasons and paths for it. "They all claim neutrality, however they differ or compete with each other." In the story three children —Anne, Bob, and Carla— quarrel over a flute. Anne says it's hers because she's the only one who knows how to play it (the other two children do not deny this). Bob counters that he's the poorest and has no toys, so the flute would at least give him something to play with (the other two children acknowledge this). In the third scenario, Carla reminds Anne and Bob that she built the darn thing, and no sooner did she finish it than the other two started trying to take it away (this too is acknowledged by the other two children).

If one listens to the three children and if he knows their different ways of thinking, one would be confused about whom to give the flute. Theorists who believe in utilitarianism, those who call for equal social and economic rights, or those who are outspoken about individual freedom would say that there is a direct and just solution in front of us here and no difficulty in finding it. However, it is almost certain that each of them will see the very different solutions as completely correct.⁷ Things become more difficult if we assume a condition where individuals confront the society and assess its orientation based on their position in the society and

⁴ David Miller, *Principles of Social Justice*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, Harvard University Press, 1999.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, translated by Mazen Jandali, Beirut, al-Dar al-Arabiya lil Uloum, publishers 2010.

⁷ Ibid.

their relations with other groups: that is from their own conflicting class and social interests.⁸

This reality makes the identification and definition of social justice as a stable concept a complex issue. However, despite that, many researchers and thinkers do not see that this is impossible.

In his book, *Principles of Social Justice*, David Miller says that although he acknowledges this dilemma, he believes that this idea could be given a certain meaning. Miller draws a link between a stable theory and definition of social justice and "broad popular convictions about it." He builds his theory on the principles of social justice with empirical research on its meaning regarding the movement of people and within the existing political debate. However, he acknowledges that this has its disadvantages and these may appear in contradictions and problems in information. Thus, Miller builds his definition of social justice on the principles of justice which people actually believe in. Thus, the multiple components of the definition necessarily change and become important as long as they are connected to their context on the ground. In this context, *the definition of social justice is based on the way social groups, who struggle for it, look at it.* Its determinants in the Egyptian case for example, which are subject to change with time and context, are the minimum and maximum wage, reclaiming state-owned companies sold through corrupt methods, the right to self-management of the means of production, provision of efficient and cheap health services to everybody and so on. Miller considers that justice is related to the distribution of the good (benefits) and the bad (burdens) across the society and the method by which resources are allocated to people through the society's institutions.

In contrast with this pluralist view, there is the egalitarian liberal school, led by John Rawls, the founder of this school that imposed itself and its presence during the last thirty years. Egalitarian liberals believe that it is even possible to reach a comprehensive and unified theory regarding social justice. Similar to Miller, egalitarian liberals are primarily concerned about distributive justice, that is, how social cooperation benefits and burdens can be distributed. However, they base it on fixed values as the name of the school, Freedom and Equality, suggests. In this, Rawls puts the weight on the development of the social contract theory: how major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the distribution of the

⁸ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical*.

benefits of social cooperation. Rawls applies his theory, which he calls Justice as Fairness to the "basic structure," or social, economic, and political institutions of the society. The theory provides a normative ideal by which we are to judge the political constitution of society and the principal economic and social arrangements."⁹

Rawls builds social justice based on two key principles: 1. Each person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties. 2. Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: (a) They are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of equal opportunity; and (b), they are to be to the greatest benefit to the least advantaged members of society, which he calls the "difference principle".

Amartya Sen, one of the students of Rawls, takes the definition from an example of how institutions should be and how people should adjust their behaviour to go with it - which is the main criticism against the theory of Rawls - to reality and people's lives. From here, Sen says that the theory of justice should not only start from the focus on a just society, and the shape of the required institutions, but primarily from comparisons based on realities to monitor progress and decline in justice and on top of these indicators unfair inequalities.

2. Inequality and Lifting Injustice: Policies

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Amartya Sen confirms that the starting point of social justice lies in the diagnosis of injustice and analysing it in preparation for lifting it. " *The realization of grievances that cannot be lifted lead us to think not only about justice and injustice, but it is also the core of the justice theory,*" as he says in his book ,The Idea of Justice. Sen adds that "*a theory of justice that can serve as the basis of practical reasoning must include ways of judging how to reduce injustice and advance justice, rather than aiming only at the characterization of perfectly just societies.*"

It is interesting to note that the rise of egalitarian liberals³⁰ years ago, was directly associated with the dominance of neo-liberalism

⁹ Colin Farrelly, Contemporary Political Theory, A Reader, London, Sage Publications, 2004.

in the global economy, and what it brought with it over these years of increased economic and social inequalities even in developed societies and economies.

An Oxfam report, issued in January 2013, under the title, *The Cost of Inequality: How Wealth and Income Extremes Hurt us All* monitors the rapidly growing inequality in opportunities available to people on the planet and their fortunes in terms of income and wealth. The report mentions the tough reality that the "net income in 2012 of the richest 100 billionaires would be enough to end extreme poverty four times over in the world." It calls on the leaders of the world to deal with the crisis in a way to reverse the rapid increase in inequality seen in the majority of countries in the last twenty years, taking inequality back to 1990 levels. The report states that "globally the incomes of the top 1% have increased 60% in twenty years" and that the "the financial crisis has deepened and accelerated this situation."¹⁰ This inequality has reflected itself in tens of other forms, including the ability to access essential public services and adequate jobs.

This unfair impact of the global financial crisis, which erupted in 2007 – 2008, and became a global economic crisis, led many analysts to draw similarities between it and the great recession of the 1930's. This moved it into the ranks of a political crisis related to democracy, when the majority carried the burdens of the crisis twice; once to save big companies and once by the restoration of austerity policies when public budgets endured the burden with taxpayers' money while the rich and the managers of financial institutions, who caused the crisis, accelerated the pace of their accumulation of wealth. David Harvey, the British economic and geographic thinker, considers the neo-liberal project as essentially a political project; the liberalization of the markets, privatization, the withdrawal of the state from economic activity and the emphasis on foreign and domestic private investment are a political process that will rearrange power and authority in society. This falls within the objectives of the project and is not just a display of economic policies in the technical sense.¹¹

In this context, the Arab uprisings and revolts broke out. The issue of social justice was put aside and pushed to the back of the list of

¹⁰ *The cost of inequality: how wealth and income extremes hurt us all*, Oxfam, 18 January 2013.

¹¹ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, London, Oxford University Press, 2007.

priorities in the post revolution phase on the grounds that many interpretations of these revolutions were based on pure political freedoms, the generation gap, the impact of technological development as a means of social communication, or simply as an Arab specificity which takes it out of the global context, ignoring the impact of economic, social, political and protest of the accelerated Arab attempt to join the global neo-liberal project, as reflected in its clearest form in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and even Syria. In contrast, the impact of the Arab revolutions inspired movements of social, political and economic nature, one of which was the "Occupy" movement as well as others. It is as if the masses made the link between economy and politics, which most of the international press and academic analysts refused to recognize by seeing in the Arab revolutions an inspired extension of the escalating protests against the grievances of the neo-liberal policies over the past decades globally and on the Arab level.

For this reason, revision and review, which were imposed by the global financial crisis even on global financial institutions, remained weak and marginal. Globally, reviews revealed themselves in their clearest pictures in the reviews of the IMF and the World Bank and were reflected in the adoption of the principle of inclusive growth. It is a concept based on the provision of equal opportunities for players and participants in the economic process during the process of economic growth in the GDP, in that the two institutions say that increases the opportunities for permanent and continued growth itself, and not only the equitable distribution of dividends. Many other responses appeared in addition to those of the international institutions and the egalitarian liberals, among them are the Neo-Keynesians, who defend the idea of the full withdrawal of the state from the economic process.

In the Arab world, academic revisions, or at the level of government policies, on social injustice and inequality were the weakest. These revisions emerged timidly in the presidential candidates' programs in the first round of Egypt's presidential elections in 2012. The irony was that the two candidates who advanced to the final competition expressed less ambitious programs of reconsidering the neo-liberal policies in pursuit of social justice.

It should also be noted that a stream with a weak voice, which does not enjoy a majority, has emerged and this stream builds its perceptions on the need to make revisions in order to learn the lessons of the Arab revolutions and to ensure political stability in the

future. This stream is based on the understanding of the huge disparity in favour of a few businessmen, and it attempts to address this issue by reforms related to the tax system, increases in salaries and a certain level of redistribution of wealth. This stream has sometimes emerged from within the business society as is the case of Egypt,¹² and in other times from among intellectuals associated with the ruling regime, as in the case of Saudi Arabia.¹³

But social movements and protest, and perhaps some new parties, which have been formed by members of protest movements, were those who mainly carried the duty of social justice in the last three years. Labour strikes and professionals in Egypt have played the role of suggesting alternative policies in multiple instances (although they haven't been successful in many cases, in imposing them on the ground) as has happened in the case of the doctors' strikes, the longest and biggest in the history of Egypt. Doctors have presented specific demands to change government policies not only with respect to their wages and fees but also with regard to the service and its regional distribution, the protection of hospitals, the health budget, the health insurance law and so on. On the other hand, workers' self-management experiences were vital in suggesting alternative policies to the imposed neo-liberal ones by the dominant coalitions of interests and monopolies. The state took it upon itself to fight these alternatives and to reject any retreat even if it came as a result of judicial rulings. Hisham Kandil, the Prime Minister during Mohamed Morsi's era, is still in prison because he refused to implement a court ruling to renationalize some companies. However, those who followed him continued to implement the same policies of refusing to renationalize companies or giving them to workers to manage.

Facing demands for social justice, the issue of the weakness of wealth and production is raised as one of the justifications for the continuation of the current situation. Budget deficits, weak production, productivity problems and declining economic growth are always presented as barriers to social justice, which according

¹² See the articles of Hassan Heikal in al-Masry al- Youm
<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/editor/details/677>

¹³ Jamal Khashoggi, Your Highness, give us some of Abu Dhar socialism, al-Hayat Newspaper, April 12, 2014.
Richard G. Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better, London, Penguin Books, 2010

to this perspective, means deepening the problem by the distribution of poverty ;the cake must first become bigger before it can be equally distributed. However, this idea became questionable when the global crisis gave it a direct blow on two levels: first, the increase in the size of the cake did not lead to the reduction of inequality. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett in their important book,"The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone, have proven that the more inequality in a society, no matter how rich it is, the more mental illness, child mortality, lower life expectancy, obesity, deterioration of the educational performance of children, suicide, prisoners and higher percentages of these prisoners compared to population as well as decline in social mobility and even in the ability of people to trust each other. The two authors support these results with a tremendous amount of statistics based on reliable sources, such as the United Nations.

Organizations, such as the United Nations Trade and Development Program have started to move to the contrary position. Increasing the minimum wage, as a social justice measure, could be the only and most efficient solution to increase the efficiency of production, its sustainability and its fairness.

Although the quest to reduce disparities and to confront inequalities is an inherent component of any path to social justice, equality is not everything, as we saw in Rawls' theory, which finds in some of the inequalities that favour the weak and the poor, equity and justice. Slogans such as "equal opportunities" and "individual responsibility" were sometimes used to reduce the chances of achieving social justice as can be seen in in the enormous inequality in the contemporary society. ¹⁴Thus, social justice is something more than this.

In this context comes the issue of overlap between what is political and what is economic in the issue of social justice. The link between the political and economic nature of social justice is not limited to radicals in their view of capitalism as David Harvey, but it also extends to the egalitarian liberals, such as Amartya Sen, who gave one of his books the title, Development as Freedom. Moreover, many American reformers have expressed concerns regarding the impact of the decline in justice on the continuation of the democratic system, which has become, according to some of

¹⁴ Matthew Robinson, What is Social Justice?

<http://qjs.appstate.edu/social-justice-and-human-rights/what-social-justice>

them, a democracy for the 1%. The issue of democratic reform in the Arab world seems unsolvable without social justice which gives the majority more of the political balance of power. The opposite is also true: the politically powerful social forces do not seem ready to make concessions with regard to social justice without pressure that shakes their political control.

3. Social Justice: To Bake our Cake and Eat it

The Normative Criterion and Practical Steps: Reform or Revolution?

To what extent can social justice be achieved in the context of reform? Does reform require a radical revolution to break completely with the dominant economic and social system?

As shown in the way Amartya Sen dealt with the criticisms against Rawls - he presents ideal institutions in contrast to the reality and behaviour of individuals who should change in the direction of these ideal institutions - there is always a normative and practical contradiction related to social justice. The egalitarian liberals have made a significant contribution in providing a theory of social justice that attempts to deal with this dilemma through concepts such as equality in accessing opportunities, or equality in capacity and the responsibility of institutions to develop a reality that refuses a lack of justice. This has strongly contributed philosophically and theoretically to confronting ideas that suggest inequality is a product and that it is the individual's responsibility to care for their future, and thus this justifies socially unjust structures. However, there are fundamental criticisms directed against egalitarian liberals because individual freedom, in the liberal economic sense, is the theoretical basis of their ideas, and therefore this creates a continuous contradiction between the difficulty of reform under continued capitalism with its mechanisms and instruments, while the theory normatively is against capitalism as a system.¹⁵

Braiehaus and Wright, supporters of liberal egalitarianism, admit that the theory is against capitalism from the normative criterion, however, they do not see in this a contradiction in its practical acceptance of reform under capitalism: many believe the full realization of the egalitarianism principles is incompatible with capitalism, and thus they are against capitalism in normative

¹⁵ Alex Callinicos, *Equality Themes for the 21st Century Series*, London, Polity, 2001.

terms, but at the same time they believe that capitalism is the most viable moral order.¹⁶

In contrast, Alex Callinicos, who considers that social justice will not be achieved unless with a radical revolution of the capitalist system itself, which caused, in its evolution, the current situation. He believes that there is nothing which prevents the achievement of consistency between what is normative, standard and value-based and what is practical, especially with the increasing every day difficulty in achieving reform. Callinicos says: I do not see why we cannot get the two. I think that one can get the cake and eat it, at least in this case.¹⁷

¹⁶ Brighouse, Harry, and Erik Olin Wright, "Review of Equality by Alex Callinicos", *Historical Materialism* 2002.

¹⁷ Alex Callinicos, *Having Our Cake and Eating It*, *Historical Materialism*, Volume 9, 2001

Social Justice in the Era of Revolutions

Intervention by Maha Yahya

How was the Concept of Social Justice Dealt with after the Arab Revolutions?

The eruption of Arab revolutions has led to the wide circulation of the concept of social justice in the Arab world. The revolutions have sparked dynamics, inspired many initiatives and supported the work of civil society in the Arab Spring countries. The revolutions have also produced many alliances across many classes and ideologies. They have led to an increased demand and awareness of the equitable distribution of wealth according to social and economic policies that consider the big differences between the state, its regions and its classes. The revolutions have also reconsidered the relations between the state and the citizen in concrete reality and on the level of the various constitutional documents. Perhaps the most important gain is the "power of voice" which the Arab masses have acquired during these revolutions. There is now no chance for moving backwards in the areas of the freedom of expression and in the ability of the public to protest in the street.

The Arab revolutions have revealed many challenges facing states and governments:

- Big and deep cracks (sectarian, regional, religious, political, social, economic, etc...) at the societal level.
- Intellectual, political and societal disagreement on the concept and content of the civil state.
- Disparities in the role of the military institution among Arab countries.
- The spread of violence and armed conflicts.
- Broad demographic movements in the region as a result of immigration, displacement and emigration in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen.
- The collapse of the states' capacities and their inability to perform their economic and social roles.

- The deterioration in the economic conditions in general in the region, the huge growth of the shadow economy, the absence of social guarantees, and the widening class differences and economic disparities.

Where do Arabs Stand now with regard to Social Justice after the Revolution?

Philosophical schools differ on the definition of social justice and its dimensions, but they agree on the notions of economic and social rights as the core of social justice. The idea of social justice is deep rooted among the Arab peoples because of the social contract established by post-independence regimes. However, social justice in the Arab dictionary does not only mean rights, but it also refers to other concepts such as justice and integrity. Here, it is possible to define social justice as, "building a just society and safeguarding the rights of the people, respect for differences and access to resources and opportunities fairly and equally." There should be a distinction between equality and justice. Humans are different in their abilities and their personal capacities. Thus, justice provides equal and equitable opportunities for all, without discrimination. However, what an individual achieves depends on what his capacities permit him to achieve.

Arab revolutions have led to important results related to social justice:

- The linkage between economic, political and social imbalance issues – which was missing as a result of the historical development and the nature of the authoritarian social contract which prevailed before the revolutions.
- Social justice must be more than the mere distribution of wealth.
- Focus on power relations.
- Focus on transitional justice and its importance in achieving social justice.

Means to achieve and implement social justice are multiple, including:

- Taxation.
- Social benefits.
- The redistribution of wealth.

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Arab countries face significant challenges in their quest for social justice:

- Achieving a real link between economic and social policies on the ground and in the constitutional documents and laws.
- Building confidence and "social capital" among the new elite produced by the revolutions and the masses.
- Finding settlement mechanisms between the various internal parties according to the "no winners, no losers" formula.
- The impact of the regional and external conditions on the development of the internal situation.
- Focusing on development policies instead of rentier policies.
- The dismantling of corruption and nepotism entities and the building of mutual security networks.
- The role of civil society and the need to engage it in the achievement of social justice.
- The importance and the role of good governance for agreeing on the main guiding lines.

In conclusion, there are still important questions that the Arabs need to agree on. They need to define equitable economic growth, identify its pillars, create a mechanism to measure the achievement of social justice in the Arab world accurately, and measure the extent to which economic and social policies comply with social justice. Moreover, specialists should pay attention to how to integrate the idea of social justice effectively in public policies, how this can be applied publicly and to follow-up and ensure the principles stipulated in the constitutions are implemented on the ground.

Social Movements and the Concept of Social Justice in the Revolutions of the Arab Countries

Salameh Keileh

The revolutions in the Arab countries have raised the issue of social justice, and imposed the search for ways that achieve a better life for the people, precisely because revolutions have revealed cases of extreme poverty, high unemployment and the collapse in the areas of education, health and infrastructure. Thus, they have revealed disturbing conditions of impoverishment and marginalization. However, it should be first noted that the concept of social justice is somehow general. It is a changing concept and it is subject to ideological and class perspectives, in that liberal streams may use it as well as leftist streams and each perceives it according to its own "class project." Experiences such as the Nassrite and the pan-Arabism, in general, have expressed a form of social justice. The Keynesians too have given a specific formula to the shape of social justice and there are other formulas that are being circulated today based on the encouragement of small projects.¹⁸ Therefore, how can we address this idea of social justice in the context of the revolutions in Arab countries? How was this issue presented in these revolutions? What helps achieve social justice? And what kind of social justice is being sought?

We will start from a simplified concept of "decent living" despite that this expression is somehow flawed, but it is the expression of the existing living conditions. Thus, we will start with the demands of the popular classes, which are mainly concerned with the issue of social justice, and will explore the possible ways of achieving it, and what economic and social structure it could be achieved within. Here we should unveil both the temporary and the sustainable nature of the concept, that is, how can we achieve stable and long-lasting social justice and not a short-lived one? And in doing so avoiding quick fixes that disappear over time only

¹⁸ Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice*, translated by Mazen Jandali, Beirut, al-Dar al-Arabiya lil Uloum, publishers 2010.

for social (class) disparities to appear again – with the need for social justice re-appearing.¹⁹

The introduction of the social justice demand is based on an economic situation resulting in "poor distribution of wealth," which has led to the existence of wide class disparities between those who own the wealth and those who work, or those who get marginalized because of the inability of the economic structures to accommodate a developing labour market. Thus, one class in society becomes the owner of the biggest percentage of the national income, while the popular majority owns a very small portion that does not provide a living. This situation has produced the revolutions in the Arab countries. There is no doubt that the economic pattern has had a huge impact on this disparity and this is why the question, "could this pattern be reformed in order to achieve social justice?", should be asked and, "is there a need to overpass it and build an economic pattern which includes this aim?"

This issue was at the core of the revolutions that have erupted in the Arab countries. A new economic pattern has been formed during the seventies, eighties, nineties and in the beginning of this century, which has created a huge gap in the society between those who own the wealth and the popular classes. This economic pattern was based on a rentier economy after the marginalization of industry and agriculture as productive forces grew the number of unemployed people and put the society into a big deficit because of the need to import.

Under this situation, the unemployment rate became very high (estimated at 30% of the workforce),²⁰ as well as the rate of extreme and relative poverty. We also find that wages have

¹⁹ This is what had been achieved by the liberation movements systems, specially the Nasserite and the Baath systems in their first stages. Agrarian reform, 8 hours working day, full social security and free education have been achieved, but these achievements were only temporary ones. Groups who governed these countries looted the society and they became the dominant class in the classic form of the peripheral capitalism.

²⁰ On unemployment, see Riyad bin Jalili (Editor) "Approaches to solving the problem of unemployment in the Arab countries, Egypt and Syria as study cases," the Arab Planning Institute in Kuwait 2010. There is no doubt that the economic reports issued by the International Monetary Fund, ESCWA, and many research centers have covered these topics.

collapsed vis-à-vis the increase in prices and many economic sectors have collapsed, such as agriculture and industry, leaving behind poverty and unemployment for a large proportion of the people. All this has made the popular classes reach levels of poverty that have become unliveable. This poverty factor led to the explosion of revolutions because this poverty was experienced by so many.

The issue is related to regaining the balance of society, so the next question to ask is: could this be achievable under the existing economic pattern? Is there a need to go beyond it in order to achieve "social justice"?

Revolutions have raised slogans about freedom, democracy and the civil state's ability to confront dictatorial regimes, but they also raised "economic" demands that could be summarized by finding solutions to the following: unemployment, low pay, the collapse of education and health and their commodification, the collapse of infrastructure and the marginalization of women. These are the demands of large groups of people from a range of statistics dealing with poverty, unemployment and marginalization.²¹ There is no doubt that the achievement of social justice, in its broad sense, requires first and foremost the achievement of these demands. This is because justice here is put against the inequality which has been formed over the past decades and which has resulted in poverty, unemployment and marginalization, and this has led to the explosion of recent revolutions.

Since the Tunisian revolution, issues of employment and remuneration have been voiced and these issues have been repeated in Egypt. It is clear that the popular classes can no longer tolerate their living conditions. They were impoverished and marginalized until they felt that they were on the brink of starvation. For this reason, the social justice demand became wide spread and it became a key slogan in revolutions.²² This presupposes the search in the meaning of the demands of these classes. Does this mean the fulfilling of these demands only? Does it require the redistribution of wealth in society? Does it

²¹ See, Gilbert Ashkar. "The people want: A radical search in the Arab uprisings," al-Saqi Publishing House, first edition 2013, especially chapters I and II (p 17-100).

²² See, <http://is.qd/XdG3FV>, and see: Lubna al-Ameen, "Bread, Freedom, Justice" <http://is.qd/gNv0ZW>

require something beyond these two, i.e., a change in the economic pattern that created this situation?

At the grassroots level, we will discover that things remained confined to the achievement of demands such as: work, pay and the return of land to the peasants (particularly in Egypt), and perhaps a hope for free education and health, and the improvement of the infrastructure. This is to say that the demands were confined to the improvement of the immediate situation of these classes in order for them to be able to live without concern for the deeper issues because they do not have the cognitive tools which allow them to analyze realities and specify policies that could lead to changes that meets their broader demands. This makes them defend the demands without going a step forward to specify how this can be achieved. Three years have passed and the demands are still the same and without the conclusion that things require a full change of power, not the change of one person in power by another. Until now, no conclusion has been reached that relates the issue to class interests, this means the authorities defend the existing economic pattern and refuse to change it while postponing things in order not to meet the demands of the people. There is no doubt that the revolution experience created active classes, who understand that more is needed than a change of persons and thus an alternative should be sought.

Thus, we will notice that popular classes consider the meaning of social justice is the fulfilment of their above-mentioned demands. They have not yet linked them to a necessary political and economic formula change in order to be achieved. This is an impasse that is still infiltrating the popular movement, and it has become the centre of discussion and is felt important by active sectors. However, one formula to achieve social justice has not materialised and whether this is linked with the existing economic pattern of progressive taxation on capital, and the achievement of a Keynesian form of economy, or even a Nasserite form, or whether the whole existing economic pattern should be removed and an alternative one, which offers a real solution for societal problems, should be established to achieve these demands?

At another level, some parties have adopted social justice demands, especially the left parties. However, the concept of social justice for those parties was a confused one, and mostly consisted of the amendment of the existing economic reality through the imposition

of a progressive tax²³; generalized statements on the opportunities of equitable distribution of wealth and guarantee for the right to work and for proper pay; free education and healthcare; and the provision of services to the people, all without touching on the economic pattern itself. It should be noted that the parties that have raised these issues were weak and few in number, while the Islamic and liberal parties were focusing on a free economy and the continuation of the liberalization process, without or with weak reference to addressing the conditions of the poor. What is more dangerous is the transformation of the conflict into one between advocates of a religious state and advocates for a civil state as a mean to escape addressing this issue and to conceal the core demands posed by the popular classes. This has led to the marginalization and suspension of any research and debate on the issue of social justice, or coming up with solutions to demands related to work, appropriate wage, free education and health insurance. This is normal because political Islam (especially the Muslim Brotherhood) raises the liberal solution under a "jurisprudential principle" which says that "nine-tenths of the source of earnings is in trade and commerce", and it relies on a social base of merchants. And also because liberal parties rely a priori on free market economy and the generalization of liberalization and in our countries they are unable to achieve a Keynesian solution. This is because its links with international capital has made it a rentier capitalism active in services, tourism, real estate, importation and banks. This configuration is what originally led to the marginalization of the biggest part of the people, and created problems of unemployment, poverty and the collapse of education, health and infrastructure.

This shows that a clear understanding of social justice did not materialize after the popular movement. It shows that some of parties that "belonged" to the revolution are not interested in these demands because their economic orientations contradict with any form of justice. It shows that some of them deal with the subject in a confused manner because they pose it in the context of the existing economic pattern, and with hesitation. Almost all the parties are still focusing on the form of the state and the nature of power without seriously touching the economic pattern. There is no doubt that the "wave of democracy" that has swept the

²³ On this topic, there was a discussion in Egypt about the relationship between a progressive tax and social justice, see: <http://is.gd/KAESyY> And also <http://is.gd/BqyUz8>

world with globalization after the collapse of the socialist system has had a big impact on all parties' activities, including the Left parties, and made them exclusively focus on the issue of democracy, freedoms and human rights. These issues have become dominant in the political discourse of parties during the two decades preceding the revolutions. In reality, the demands of the popular classes, through revolutions, were behind the social justice demand and raised discussion on this issue, however, without making the "bigger" parties commit to it. It became a demand for some of the Left parties, but under different interpretations that did not break with the existing economic pattern. That is to say, these parties believe that there is a possibility of solving problems of unemployment and low pay by setting minimum and maximum wage, or through the imposition of a progressive tax on capital.

This requires the issue of social justice to be addressed in its economic dimension, and then its class dimension. That is to say: is there any possibility of a partial or total reform of the existing economic pattern to achieve social justice? Thus, is the dominant capitalist class (or its sectors which seek to become dominant) concerned about making this reform?

We can study this issue in light of determining that "social justice" can be achieved through the realization of the direct demands of work and pay. This is the initial shape that ensures peoples' ability to live. However, it could be broader than this through the achievement of full social guarantees, free education and the right to work.

Theoretically, these demands can be realized in order to achieve social justice in its simplest formula within the existing capitalist economic pattern. This has already been achieved in capitalist countries and in the experience of nationalist system. The issue is related to a quick solution which responds to these demands within the existing economic pattern, that is through the employment of the unemployed, the increase in wages as a policy which aims at enlarging the market, or perhaps bigger than that, through the imposition of the right to work, full social security and comprehensive free education (as stipulated by the Keynesian theory). This is the first formula.

However, there is a second formula related to a radical solution which begins with the following question: how could inequality in the distribution of income be avoided and how could a stable level of living be maintained? Here the issue becomes more than an

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issue of social justice as discussed in all theories on this concept. This issue will necessarily require the overcoming of the capitalist pattern. This means that we need then to talk about socialism.

Here comes the question about the possible solution?

That is: How can jobs be created? And how can wages be increased in order to achieve decent standards of living?

Who is going to build the education and health systems to serve the society?

Of course, this requires the use of capital in sectors to allow the absorption of unemployed labour entering the job market every year, and allow the provision of financial surplus that in turn allows a serious increase in wages and provides the potential to seriously build education, health, and infrastructure systems.

It is a question that relates to the economic pattern that achieves these results. This means that it is necessary to move from a rentier economy to a productive economy. This alone would allow the achievement of a serious solution to the problem of unemployment and low pay, and the building of education, health, and also infrastructure systems. Problems of impoverishment, unemployment, the erosion of free education and health and the collapse of infrastructure systems have been associated with the liberal transformation which started in the 1970s and which led to the dismantling of "the public sector", the commodification of education and health, and to the control of a very small class over the overall economy, while transforming it from an economy which had agricultural production forces and to a certain extent, industrial forces, to a rentier economy based on services, real estate, tourism, imports, banks, and speculation in the financial markets. In this context, the social security system, the right to work, free education and health have all collapsed. This economic pattern is dominant now, and as we pointed out, it is the pattern that has led to the eruption of the revolutions and to the demands reiterated by the popular classes. The dominant capitalist class has become a follower in the framework of the global capitalist pattern and subjugated to the financial junta in its interests and policies. This is why we have seen how this class refuses to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment and insists on the prevailing economic pattern without thinking of reforming it or changing some of its bases (among these are the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, a traditional mafia similar to the commercial capitalists). The continuation of the revolutionary wave

in the revolution countries who got rid of their presidents and became open to "democracy" is an indication of this "insistence" which characterizes this class. For this reason, the demands of the popular classes remained as they were under the "old regime", and these are: the right to work and proper pay and free education and healthcare.

Thus, the class-related question becomes: who can do that? Can private capital be directed to productive economy while it is the one, through its link with international capital junta, which had established the mafia-type rentier economy? Is it capable of building huge industrial and agricultural projects that are necessary to solve all these problems and open the way for modern evolution?

Unfortunately, the bourgeoisie class, since its emergence, was intertwined with the imperialist capital as a result of the inequality, which was established by capitalism itself, and the gap it had created between those at the centre and those at the periphery. This made any competition in the open market work for bourgeoisie interests because it became the owner of the huge capital, high experience and big markets. These factors, in addition to the state power that it controls, have allowed it to impose a global rhythm which does not permit the emergence of new productive capitalism (especially industrial). Every successful attempt after capitalism began to be global pattern from the beginning of the twentieth century was contrary to this. Competition in an open market kills not only new projects but any thinking of building productive forces. This has made capital become active in the "margins", i.e., in intermediary projects, mainly trade (import and export). When the financial junta became dominant, we witnessed the emergence of the current capitalist formation, the rentier economy, which is based on services, tourism, real estate, imports, banks and speculation in the stock market.

Here there is no solution to the issue of social justice under the existing economic pattern. This is precisely because it is a rentier-type economy that does not allow such a solution. On the contrary, and as we explained earlier, it is the pattern which has established the "absence of justice." If we look from a broader capitalistic perspective, we will find that the capitalist class cannot go beyond this rentier-type of the global formation of capital. It has formed itself in it as a rentier class. Thus, the concept of social justice, in its "simplest" meaning contradicts with the continuation of the domination of this economic pattern and this capitalist class.

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Thus, achieving social justice becomes linked with the struggle against capitalism and with providing an alternative which is capable of going beyond it.

The social movement should reach this conclusion during its conflict with the authority, it is necessary to "make" popular classes "have the awareness" to be able to specify their alternative as we move from "reaction" and from spontaneous activity and direct demands to the crystallization of a vision which allows the provision of "practical steps" and necessary tactics to achieve these demands. This raises the issue of the "ideological" options capable of providing an understanding of this matter, and which allow for defining a strategy to be able to achieve it.

Given that capitalism is not concerned with the creation of production forces, as we indicated earlier, it is imperative to specify the possible alternative which should do so. There is no doubt that this issue is again linked with the economic role of the state, as long as private capital is active in the rentier economy because of its interconnection with the global capital. This role used to create a solution to the issue of social justice according to the first formula, as we have seen in the Nasserite and Baath experiences (what used to be known as national liberation movements), where the state played an important role in investing in the productive forces, education, health, adequate remuneration, employment, and social security within a capitalist economic system. This was the main reason for transferring wealth from the state to "individuals", who are seen as the group holding power and reproducing inequality and the economic pattern which we have spoken about. For this reason, the class-related question is important in this context. If the answer is: capitalism is incapable of developing the economy in a way capable of solving problems, then it is imperative to search for alternatives. The rural middle class had tried to find a solution establishing a temporary social justice under the name of socialism. Can some sectors of the middle class play this role now?

Perhaps a study of all parties that rely on the middle class could be important to answer this question? However, what is floating on the surface, as we pointed out, is that the liberal orientation dominates almost all the parties, with the exception of small groups outside this perspective. Moreover, the central idea that has become dominant during the last three decades suggests there is no option other than capitalism and that efforts should be focused on making the state become democratic. This perspective is necessarily distant from the issue of achieving social justice

because it repeats the existing pattern which had been established on injustice. This means that the elites that are now capable of reaching power do not have a solution to this issue because they are repeating the economic pattern that had produced the problem. Thus, we notice that the way in which they speak about social justice is obscured or even absent. As we have noted, as long as the issue is connected with the change of the economic pattern, necessity requires bypassing capitalism in order to achieve an economic pattern that contains social justice.

Returning back to the concept of social justice, it is imperative to clarify that this concept is usually posed as an expression of the existence of solutions to the impoverished classes under the capitalist pattern itself. Capitalism was able at some of its phases to achieve social justice (Keynesianism and the welfare state), but that was achievable under a developed economic formation and a capitalist domination of the world that allowed the middle class to grow and to make wages linked to prices in order to expand the domestic market. The looting of the world was allowing this to happen. Thus, certain circumstances allowed this to happen. However, we will see that this has changed with the escalation of the capitalism crisis.

Social justice was put forward as a "socialist" formula by national liberation movements (including Arab nationalist systems), but its basis was to achieve a "fair distribution" of wealth under the dominance of private property (and its sanctity), and the right to capitalization. This made the equality achieved in the first phase turn into horrible inequality by the dismantling of and looting of the public sector, the concentration of wealth again in the hands of a minority which dominates because the middle class which reached power tended to "solve its own problems" by first of all accumulating wealth through "unofficial" means.

Thus it can be concluded that the concept of social justice was a smoothing formula of capitalist exploitation, and a temporary formula which quickly collapsed when it was confronted with the interests of the dominant capitalist class. This perhaps is the issue that raises the question of change in a more radical form to achieve the demands of popular classes in a modern economic formation.

Three years have passed since the start of revolutions and there have been transformations in a number of countries. The questions presented are: were the demands of popular classes, or some of them, met? We will notice that the protests of labourers are still

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going on, even in countries like Tunisia and Egypt. Is there something that hasn't been achieved? Have there been any changes in the way these labourers understand their demands and how they can achieve them and thus they have reached a specific understanding of the concept of social justice? Here we refer to the demands. Did they stay as they were, or did they change? We also refer to the awareness about them by labourers themselves. Did they develop their vision, or did they continue to put forward these demands in the framework of their previous understanding? This applies to the poor farmers and all middle classes that have put forward specific demands. It is imperative to see the difference between the and post pre-revolution, phase . In contrast, did the debate on the concept of social justice develop? If so, what are the formulas reached? Where do the Leftist parties stand, especially with regard to this concept after the revolutions?

Finally, we note that the issue relates to the economic system that fosters vast differences between classes and poor living conditions among a large segment of society. This is the system that has created a marginalized, poor majority. Thus, how do these impoverished people speak about their ability to live? Do they have an understanding of the meaning of social justice? Do they have a formula that can achieve a decent living for them? Until this point becomes clear there should be specific ideas by sectors that have a societal project containing means to achieve this. This poses the complexity of how a clear project, which reflects the needs of these impoverished people, could crystalize and specify how it could be achieved?

Intellectuals speak about what they feel but the elites need to crystallize how to achieve, on the ground, a dignified life for these people through their revolution and their effectiveness. Therefore, the main question remains: how can awareness of social justice be raised among them and how can they achieve it?

Social Movements and Social Justice

Intervention by Gilbert al-Ashkar

With its take off, and during the first months of 2011, the Arab uprising underwent an ideological containment process, which was widely promoted by the international media. The revolutionary explosion was reflected as if the Arab region had joined, but at a late stage, the "end of history" - the naïve capitalist dream, which saw the collapse of the Soviet system, and the beginning of the end of social evolution at the limits of spreading market economy and liberal democracy. Because the first condition among the two was prevailing in the Arab region, while the second was not, there was an illusion that the Arab uprising would bring results similar to those which came after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in East Europe.

The ideological containment started with a broad "Arab Spring" title given to the revolutions and furthered by terms such as "the Revolution of the Youth," "the Facebook Revolution," and "a Revolution without a Leader," to intentionally reflect the uprising as that of youth movements who belong to a "post-ideological era," (in its post modernization image) as well as terms such as "new social movements," to indicate that they are different than the old ones in that they are not based on economic demands, i.e., they have no class dimensions or "ideological basis," that is, they are liberated from leftist orientation which dominated the youth movements in the 1960s and 1970s all over the world, including the Arab region.

This reflection, which is in fact purely ideological, has overlooked a central fact in regards to the reason for the start of the Tunisian uprising in December 2010, and its spread to Egypt before any other Arab countries? What distinguishes the two countries from others in the first place, is it that the two have witnessed increased class struggles during the pre-revolution years?

Tunisia has known a number of local uprisings; the most important is the Gafsa uprising in 2008. These paved the way for the uprising of Sidi Bouzid, which made people overburdened and started to spread in all other parts of the country until it reached its capital city. The labour movement has played a major role in leading the Tunisian uprising through the middle structures of the General Union of Tunisian Workers and its popular base and have framed the uprising. The leftists in those structures organised a strike in

all areas of the country and to the capital on January 14, the day when the deposed president escaped the country.

Egypt also since the middle of the last decade, had seen the biggest rise in workers' struggles in its history, a rise which was reflected by a wave of massive struggles which reached their peak in 2008, but remained with high density until the "25 January Revolution." It then blended with the revolution and formed one of its major tributaries. This is not to mention that the most famous Egyptian youth movement among those participating in the making of January 25 revolution is the 6 of April Youth Movement, which was created in solidarity with the labour struggle and on the occasion of the call for the general strike on April 6, 2008.

The socio-economic nature of the Arab uprisings is also reflected in their slogans, especially in Egypt and Tunisia. Slogans and chants were not limited to freedom and democracy, but demands of employment, wages and living conditions have had their significant presence too; these are demands that are closely related to social justice and they are class slogans par excellence. If we consider the reason for the high numbers of youth joining the revolutions, and if we look at what distinguishes these youth from others in the global south areas, we will find that their percentage is not what distinguishes them, contrary to what has been said based on obsolete information, however, the salient feature among them is the high percentage of unemployment. The Arab region has had the highest rates of unemployment for many decades. In this high unemployment rate lies the main motive for the regional uprising and created its social dimension and which cannot be overlooked except by those who do not want to see it. And it is this that has made me describe it as a "long-term revolutionary process," and not just a "spring."

However, in order for the Arab uprising to lead to a progressive and radical change corresponding to the aspirations of those who launch it, it needs an organized force as an "anti-dominance force" that relies on the mass of its fundamental demands of freedom, democracy and social justice, and which works to create a "historic bloc" of labour, youth and women's movements armed with a program which is based on these demands. On the ground, the forces that could play this role are stronger in Tunisia and Egypt than in any other country of the region. These forces in Tunisia are presented in the General Union of Tunisian Workers and the Popular Front (an alliance of left parties) which occupied the centre

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of gravity within the Union, and in Egypt they are represented by societal forces around Hamdeen Sabahi's presidential campaign.

But the centre of gravity in each of the axes has not been able so far to find an independent approach to confront the two reactionary poles: the old regime and reactionary religion. From allying itself with the latter, it changed to ally itself with the former and this has weakened its ability to form a third alternative pole. In reality, the major cause for this inability is its failure to put social justice at the forefront, and to start from understanding the deep roots of the Arab uprising, which is a revolution against the results of decades of neo-liberal policies that have led, within the framework of the Arab system, to the prevailing socially disastrous results. While the police issue, with its democratic dimension, allows changing alliances from one pole to the other, the social issue dictates that these alliances should be kept within very narrow borders and overshadowed by differences because the two reactionary poles adopt the same neo-liberal economic and social policies, which makes them both class enemies of the historic bloc, the carrier of progressive change aspirations.

The bottom line is that the future of the long-term Arab revolutionary process depends primarily on the ability of the third pole, the carrier of the social justice program, to pave an independent road which puts it at the same distance from the two reactionary poles.

EU policies and Social Justice in the Arab Countries

What Lessons did the EU Learn from the Arab Revolutions? A Critical Opinion

Heba Khalil

April 11, 2014

On the Relations between the Arab States and the European Union (EU)

The EU is considered the most important partner for the countries of the Arab region, politically, economically, and even socially, because of the geographical proximity and the historic relations that brought together European countries during the era of colonialism era in African countries, particularly North African countries and the Middle East as colonies or states "under protection."

Thus, the revolutionary movements in the Arab world, calling for freedom and social justice, came to formulate legitimate questions for the ruling regimes, not only in the Arab world, but also in the European Neighbourhood. The EU had always supported the Arab regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya and in other countries. Moreover, there have always been friendships and economic relations between the decision-makers in Europe and those in the southern Mediterranean. The friendship and business relations between Alliot-Marie, the former French Foreign Minister and Aziz Milad, the Tunisian businessman who is close to the Tunisian regime and with the former president Ben Ali and his family is no secret. This made her resign from her position in the French Foreign Ministry after the departure of Ben Ali.²⁴ There are many similar other relationships that brought together politicians from the different European countries with Arab regimes, especially the Mubarak regime in Egypt, Ben Ali in Tunisia, and Qaddafi in Libya. These relations became threatened because of the Arab revolutions, and the emergence of the possibility of change as an alternative chosen by the Arab street.

²⁴ BBC. "French Foreign Minister Alliot- Marie Quits Over Tunisia ". BBC. 27 February 2011. <http://is.gd/jczgwj>

The reaction of the EU to the Arab revolutions has been disappointing. Its only response was to talk about democracy and human rights, while it continued to emphasise its support for the political and economic processes pursued by these countries since the outbreak of revolution. Hence, the EU policy towards the Arab region continued with its conditions and its economic interventions which favour one economic system above others; and with the same coherence of European policies related to European interests and human rights and development of the southern Mediterranean countries. Although the EU, like other independent political entities, will naturally look for the interests of European countries first, and its economic interests, however, the interventions discussed in this paper are interventions and policies posed by the EU as frameworks for the development and promotion of respect for human rights. It formulates them as policies for the benefit of the neighbouring countries, whether eastern neighbours or southern neighbours, the Arabs. Thus, when we analyse the European policies and interventions, we analyse them in terms of their stated aims and their impact on the countries of the southern Mediterranean, and in particular, their impact on social justice, which has been for long absent from the southern Mediterranean.

The International Context: The Deauville Partnership

Despite the demands of the people in the Arab region calling for the reconsideration of economic policies, which would promote democracy, development and social justice, major economies of the world have decided to block the road of the Arab Spring countries, in order to ensure that the transitional governments in these countries will follow the same economic choices promoted by the major powers. Hence, in this context, it is important to talk about the Deauville Partnership, which represents the ideal framework for these countries to cooperate with the Arab countries and the transitional governments, in order to emphasize the adoption of certain economic policies, without paying attention to the choices of the Arab peoples. The Deauville Partnership with Arab countries passing through a transitional political phase is an international effort launched by the countries of the G8, at a meeting of the leaders of those countries in Deauville, France, in 2011. It is the meeting that has made its priority the support of the G8 to Arab countries during the transitional phase in order to build "free and democratic societies."

It is worth mentioning that the Deauville Partnership is not the initiative of the G8 alone. There are other important dominant

partners involved, major among them is the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and international financial institutions such as the African Development Bank, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, and the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Islamic Development Bank, the OPEC Fund for Development, the World Bank, and others. They are the key players in achieving the objectives of the partnership. The Deauville Partnership describes economic packages which follow free-market policies, open markets, trade liberalization, and the attraction of foreign direct investment, privatization and austerity in public expenditure as targets that should be met in order to achieve economic reform.²⁵ These are the same policies that have been pursued by the Arab states in the past, but they only increased the rates of poverty and unemployment and added new dimensions to social injustice and marginalization. So, the importance of the Deauville Partnership and other frameworks, whether international or European, lies in restricting the space of choice and the ability of states to take the appropriate decision and to make public policies away from pressures and conditions. Thus, these frameworks are defying change attempts which the Arab people are trying to push forward since the ignition of the Tunisian revolution's spark in late 2010.

The European Framework: The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

The ENP is considered of the most important framework that defines the scope of relations between the EU and neighbouring countries, totalling to 16 countries, be they east neighbouring countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus, or neighbouring countries in the southern Mediterranean, namely Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Palestine, Morocco, Lebanon, and Israel. The objectives of the ENP, as announced by the EU, is to achieve the strongest possible political relationship, the greatest possible economic integration, and building these two goals on common interests of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and social solidarity.²⁶

²⁵ US Department of State. "Deauville Partnership with Arab Countries in Transition". Economic Summits: G8 Summit 2012. <http://is.gd/dKqjjR>

²⁶ EEAS. European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Overview. European External Action Services. <http://is.gd/Sh2X9Z>

Neighbouring countries agree with the EU on the annual work plans, based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, human rights and respect for market economy. These two principals were the points of disagreement because market economy policies in their entirety, lead to the violation of peoples' economic and social rights, increase the rates of poverty and expand the gap between income levels and living costs.

In view of the most important principles of the ENP, we will see many of the things that were expected to change after the outbreak of the Arab revolutions, but they have remained the same, expressing the continuation of the policies of the EU, which are based on achieving European interests through neighbouring countries and keeping the discourse of respect for human rights and social justice in the Arab region as slogans which contradict with the interests of European economic entity. The following are the most important flaws of the European policies and interventions, particularly those that affect the achievement of social justice and respect for human rights in the Arab region.

Inconsistency of European Policies: between the European Good and the Choices of the Arab Peoples

The EU, in a plan for the implementation of the neighbourhood policy with the southern Mediterranean countries for 2013, specifies three basic types of the EU's relationship with neighbouring countries: bilateral relations, multilateral relations, and cooperation on security and counter-terrorism. Perhaps the first type of relationship is the most important one because it entails bilateral relations linking the EU with each of the neighbouring countries separately. Here, the EU applies the differentiation principle between countries. Under this principle, the EU deals with each country according its own circumstances, needs and its response to the application of what comes in the ENP Action Plan. For example, the EU bilateral relations with Syria, in the framework of the neighborhood policy, were suspended because of the continuing conflict in the country. Moreover, the EU bilateral relations with Libya focused on security and political administration of the state. However, Morocco is considered as the closest to the EU. It has completed three rounds of deep and comprehensive free trade agreements and it signed the "migration and mobility partnership" agreement, to be the first Arab country to enter into that agreement, which regulates the movement of

people between the EU and neighbouring countries.²⁷ As for the multilateral relations, these are frameworks, which gather the EU with a group of southern Mediterranean countries, most notably the "Union for the Mediterranean" which stood still for several years to come back in 2013, to retry many attempts launched by the European Union to create an institutional framework for the relationship between countries of south of the Mediterranean and the EU. On the other hand, it is an example of the many layers that make the EU relationship with countries south of the Mediterranean, be it bilateral, multilateral, or be it through the Neighbourhood Policy, which began in 2004, the Union for the Mediterranean, or the Association of the Western Mediterranean (the Arab Maghreb).

It is worth mentioning that the road map for the EU relationship with the southern Mediterranean countries is reflected in a number of points: first, democracy, the promotion of good governance and respect for human rights and strengthening partnership with the society, particularly through the creation of dialogue channels with civil society organizations. Second, economic development comes as one of the most important objectives of the ENP, and here lies the major problems of the ENP, which relate to social justice. The definition of the ENP of Arab countries' economic problems is nothing but a reflection of the EU's economic biases, which it offers to southern Mediterranean countries as recommendations. The EU's economic analysis regarding southern Mediterranean countries is based on analysing the growth rates, and the total deficit in the general budget of the states. Moreover, the EU considers that the solution to the problems of southern Mediterranean countries lies in the ability of those countries to attract foreign investment and international financial institutions to lend to those countries.²⁸ This reflects the right-wing economic policy, which relies on growth alone, and which analyses the economy through indicators that do not include information about citizens' enjoyment of the fruits of this growth, or about equality and justice in the distribution of wealth. For example, we find that

²⁷ European Commission. "Neighborhood at The Crossroads: Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy in 2013". Joint Staff Working Document. Implementation of the ENP in 2013 Regional Report: A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean Partners. 27 March, 2014. <http://is.gd/IOPh6c>

²⁸ Ibid. .P. 11

the EU analysis of the economic policy in Egypt in 2007 is nothing but a support to neo-liberal economic policies, mainly the encouragement of privatization, benefiting from the proceeds of the sale of state assets, adjusting tax and investment laws, and restructuring of subsidies to eliminate budget deficit.²⁹ Similarly, we find that the analysis of the European Union of the problems of Egypt's economic development in 2013 was not different. More importantly, the recommendations are still the same as if the revolution did not shake Egypt, declaring the failure of the Egyptian economic system and calling for a new economic pattern capable of achieving development and equitable distribution.

Despite the fact that the European policy is based on the differentiation principle, i.e., different policies for different countries, but the actual application of the EU interventions show that the differentiation principle claimed by the EU is nothing but variations in the ranking of policies, timing and duration of their application, while the way the EU deals with the Arab states is governed by one framework, which is one economic analysis and the same economic interests: the interests of the EU. Thus, the EU recommendation, through its ENP to Egypt and Tunisia, is the signing of loan agreements with the International Monetary Fund. It also advised Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt to liberalize services trade, especially by entering into deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU.

In addition, the EU believes that the interventions of the European banks, led by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank, are the best interventions for dealing with the economic crises in the Arab region, despite the many flaws that mar the transactions of these banks, specially their ability to contribute to development. If we look at the European Investment Bank, for example, we find that it is the biggest multilateral lender in the Middle East. In the period extending from 2002 – 2011, it lent about 13 billion euros to the region. The main recipient of the loans of the European Investment Bank was the state of Tunisia, which received about 13% of the total investments of the bank in the region and this was the country that had sparked the Arab revolutions.³⁰

²⁹ EEAS. Egypt Country Strategy Paper: 2007-2013.4 January 2007. Pp. 9-10. <http://is.gd/4AcuTU>

³⁰ European Investment Bank. <http://is.gd/HDLYWS>

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There is no clear consensus among the EU institutions on whether the European Investment Bank is a developmental bank or an investment bank, especially when financing projects outside the borders of Europe. Although the European Commission and the Lisbon Treaty emphasize the responsibility of the bank and other European financial institutions for achieving development and respect for human rights, even in transactions outside the borders of the EU, however, the bank staff have always emphasized that the European Investment Bank is an investment bank and not a development bank, evading the bank's responsibility for any projects which brought a negative impact to the development, or harmed the rights of, Arab citizens.

In addition, the transactions of European banks have been marred by many problems. The financing of European banks focused on partnership projects between the private and public sectors. The two banks, which were previously mentioned, do not deal with the government or the public sector. They deal with the private sector, which clearly pushes the wheel of global and regional controversial privatization, which is considered one of the priorities of the European Investment Bank in the region. The privatization of public services, for example, has led to the increase in the prices of services and has increased the burdens of citizens, especially with regard to accessing basic services such as education, healthcare, transportation, water, sanitation, electricity, etc... In addition, there are many questions about the sectors that interest the European banks. Most of the investments of these banks are concentrated on transport, energy and financial markets, and this raises the question to which extent are the projects of these banks associated with developmental objectives related to an increase in production and employment, among others.

In Egypt, for example, a big part of the Investment Bank lending claims that it aims to achieve economic and social recovery, while it goes to the credit line of the National Bank of Egypt. This loan is promoted as "a tool which contributes to the financing of small and medium-size enterprises in the productive sectors" in Egypt. However, the development impact of these loans are elusive, especially with the absence of transparency, and the lack of regulations that would emphasize that the credit line supported by the loan will benefit the most needy citizens, and will not just be a new project for the Bank, serving those who deal with the bank from among the higher classes.

Moreover, the European financial institutions, led by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank, suffer from the absence of transparency. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development received 25% on the support and assistance transparency index, which means that the European Bank is among the "poorest" institutions in providing transparency and information.³¹ This is an indication that there is corruption in aid and it means that these banks are continuing the path of donor institutions, which lend without accountability and make the people, especially the Arab people, pay back the debts.

Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements

On the economic front, the European Union, particularly through its recommendations to the Arab countries with regard to regulating the economy, does not respect the choices of the people who are looking for a fairer economic model. Thus, the EU, in its recommendations and economic interventions, contributes to the continuity of the existing economic policies.

The free trade agreements are the most important link between the EU and countries south of the Mediterranean. The EU has concluded different free trade and investment agreements with the countries of the south Mediterranean: Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Algeria several years ago. It is worth mentioning that the free trade agreements are still a widely debated issue in all countries, especially with regard to their impact on developing countries and fragile economies, because these agreements abolish the borders between at least two states, one of them could be unable to compete and the economically weak state ends up losing its local industry and becomes completely dependent on the economy of the strong partner state.

Thus, free trade agreements bringing together EU countries with countries of the southern Mediterranean raise many question marks, especially about the ability of the southern Mediterranean countries to compete with the European economy, in light of the strength of the European economy, and the enjoyment of many privileges by manufacturers, farmers and service providers in Europe. In spite of the growth in trade rates in some southern Mediterranean countries over the past years, this trade growth was not accompanied by economic growth, or an improvement in the

³¹ Aid Transparency index. European bank for Reconstruction and Development. *Publish What You Fund*

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living standards of individuals, but on the contrary, poverty rates increased, the gap widened between high and low incomes, and the rates of inequality became greater. Moreover, there has been a sharp decline in the shares of the industrial and agricultural sectors of production in most countries of the southern Mediterranean. One of the reasons for this is the early opening of Arab markets to European agricultural and industrial products. The local industry and agriculture were not able to compete with European markets, and thus many industries have disappeared and the agricultural activity was destroyed, especially in the absence of an economic plan in southern Mediterranean countries.

This provides evidence of the failure of the adopted economic models in the region in launching the developmental process, the creation of employment opportunities, and utilizing the availability of labour. Instead, policy-makers in Arab countries were contented by the deepening of the partnership with European countries, hoping that they will help them overcome the economic crises of the Arab region. The EU took advantage of the opportunity to open new markets for European products, which was the real goal that drove the EU before and after the Arab revolutions, even if it claims that it works for the benefit of southern Mediterranean countries.

Perhaps the best example of this is that the first EU reaction, economically, on the outbreak of the Arab uprisings, was to promote deep and comprehensive free trade agreements, which are new types of free agreements that control investment laws, industry, taxes and other topics in southern Mediterranean countries. These agreements have been promoted as a tool for economic growth and attracting investments for development, without a single attempt to study the impact of previous agreements and without analysing the feasibility of deepening these agreements with developing economies in the south Mediterranean. In 2013, three rounds of negotiations on deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with Morocco were concluded and now there are preparations for similar agreements with Tunisia and Jordan, and at a later stage with Egypt.

Through these agreements and others, the EU strengthens policies which depend on further liberalization of goods, services, finance trading, and which encourage privatization and attract direct foreign investment by increasing the role of financial institutions under the cover of the Deauville Partnership, and through interventions to modify the structure of the economy by amending

investment laws, controlling subsidies, industrialization policies, and by requiring non-differentiation between foreign and national investors, foreign and national labour, big and small investors and small farmers and those businessmen who dominate the commercial farming sector (agri-business). It has been clear that such policies have had a negative impact on the needed development in the Arab region and they restricted Arab countries' abilities through multilateral frameworks such as the Deauville Partnership and deep and comprehensive free trade agreements. By this, they have limited the space for the Arab countries to choose an adequate economic system, especially after the outbreak of the Arab revolutions, which at the core of them was the Arab peoples' demand for social justice.

Aid Conditionality: Between the Carrot and the Stick

The aid provided by the EU to south Mediterranean countries for "development" is considered the most important determinant of the EU's relationship with Arab countries. It is worth mentioning that the aid could be coming from European countries, each by itself, such as aid from Sweden or Germany, for example, or from the EU itself. This aid is marred with many problems, perhaps most importantly is its effectiveness in serving the purposes of development, avoiding corruption at the government level, and the extent of aid conditionality. The policy of the EU has followed a political conditionality in the past years, while it did not necessarily serve national priorities at the level of the Arab countries.

For example, in Egypt, although the EU did not reach the level of suspending the aid program after the change of the 30 June 2013 regime, which overthrew the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but on a bilateral level, some European countries such as Denmark announced the suspension of aid to Egypt in protest of the political events and the extent of their democracy. This makes us wonder about the extent of the EU's success in getting rid of conditionality. Perhaps one of the most important achievements of the EU in order to get rid of conditionality and linking aid with it is the principle of "more for more", which was celebrated by the EU as an indication on the amendment of its policy after the Arab Spring, where the goal of the new policy is the elimination of conditionality of economic aid, and replacing it by the carrot. This means the increase in European aid with the increase in reforms by the Arab states, especially those related to democracy and institution-building. Despite this, the path of the EU did not change. First of all, conditionality did not change, neither at the

level of European countries, nor at the level of the EU. The "more for more" principle, is just the other face of the "less for the least" principle and that is conditionality. Thus, what is the difference then? If countries make reforms, they are rewarded with economic aid and agreements which connect them with the EU, and if they don't, they are penalized by stopping aid. So what has changed in the European policy other than names when the actual implementation of the European interventions did not abandon conditionality?

The second and more important point relates to the content of conditionality: Despite the fact that the principle of "more for more" and before it, the conditionality of the EU to link aid with democracy and institution-building in the countries of the South, however, the actual application of the conditionality policy has shown that the EU did not reward countries other than those who made progress in the application of neoliberal policies and the liberalization of the economy and other policies that are consistent with the recommendations of international financial institutions.³² Tunisia, for example, was one of the first countries in the Arab region to sign a partnership agreement with the EU and it was one of the first groups of countries to have agreed with the EU on the ENP plan. The reason for Tunisia's position as one of the most important friends of the EU is its progress in the liberalization of the economy, privatization policies, austerity and market liberalization. Thus, the EU considered that Tunisia is progressing continuously and for this reason it has been given priority to receive European aid. This is despite the fact that since late 1990s, Ben Ali's regime had been putting lots of restrictions on political freedoms in a repressive manner and at an increasingly and exaggerated way compared to other countries. Moreover, Tunisia was one of the countries least criticized on issues of human rights.³³

Thus, there are two complexities related to conditionality: first, the link between aid and the conditions specified by the EU, and second, the priorities of the EU which it puts as conditions for the provision of support or aid or even on negotiations on free trade agreements and partnership agreements. The EU claims that these priorities are linked to democracy, building institutions, as well as the respect for human rights, while the conditions are

³² R. Balfour. IEMED, EUROMESCO. EU Conditionality after the Arab Spring. June 2012. <http://is.gd/RkKKzT>

³³ Ibid

usually associated with economic choices, and the economic system. These policies haven't changed with the Arab revolutions, but they have become more focused on the Arab Spring countries, in an attempt to attract new transitional regimes to adopt the same economic pattern which the EU promotes, while the Arab people are in the midst of their search for a new system which achieves social justice. However, they find themselves constrained by limited choices, posed, and required by the EU and others such as the international financial institutions.

It is worth mentioning that corruption has characterized aid provided by the European Union to Arab countries in past years. This has led to the leakage of money to Arab regimes without accountability, and without any proof that this money has been disbursed for the reasons intended. For example, the European Court of Auditors, which is responsible for auditing support and aid accounts, submitted a report on the aid received by Egypt over the past seven years. The report confirmed that the aid had not been spent on developmental projects, did not promote human rights or help in the achievement of developmental goals and it did not even contribute to the development of the governance system.³⁴ Moreover, the Court noted that the European Union did not follow-up on how 60% of the European aid given to Egypt was spent and this has contributed to the loss of EU public money.³⁵ In spite of this, the EU did not take any action in order to emphasize that its support and assistance are not just a gift to the ruling regime, but rather it is development aid, which must be purely spent on development and the achievement of social justice.

Finally, the Cohesion of European Policies and Interventions

In view of the institutional relationship which links the EU with Arab countries, and by examining the shape of this relationship after the Arab Spring, it becomes clear that the interventions of the EU did not only suffer from conflicted goals (development or the interests of the EU), but they also favoured European interests in all circumstances, be it with the support of international financial institutions, or because of weak governance and accountability in south Mediterranean countries. Thus, the ENP started to implement the recommendations of the European institutions and other financial institutions, while put them in development and human

³⁴ J. Chaffin."EU Audit finds 1 bn Euro Aid had little effect on Egypt". Financial Times. 17 June 2013.<http://is.gd/waUaFt>

³⁵ Ibid.

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rights frameworks to suggest they serve the interests of the Arab countries. Hence, the EU recommended countries south of the Mediterranean in the ENP to lift subsidies (Egypt and Tunisia, 2013), enter into negotiations for deep and comprehensive free trade agreements, (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan), enter into the WTO Agreement (Lebanon 2013), follow free market economic policies through the liberalization of the economy and the privatization of state-owned enterprises, and involve the private sector in all development projects. It is worth noting that the EU is closely linked to the International Monetary Fund, and it cares about the inclusion of the IMF's recommendations in the recommendations of the yearly NEP policies for Arab countries. This raises many legitimate questions about the independence of the ENP, which links the EU with southern Mediterranean countries, and the extent of its commitment to its declared objectives, especially concerning human rights, social inclusion, and social responsibility of the EU according to the Lisbon Treaty. Perhaps the only development that has occurred on the European policy level is the EU's attempts to involve civil society in the decision-making, with regard to the ENP. In spite of the growing number frameworks and consultations involving civil society organizations in the EMP, the impact of local civil organizations is still limited, especially in the ability to solve the complex interests of the Arab countries and those of the EU. Although it is possible to find fairer ways for cooperation between the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries, the weakness of Arab governments, the lack of experience in negotiations, lack of democracy and transparency, and lack of accountability lead to the success of the EU and the European institutions in the negotiation of agreements that serve European interests, without studying their impact on the Arab countries.

Deauville Partnership and the Search for Social Justice

Intervention by Leila Riahi

The state of rage witnessed by the region following the flight of the former president in the January 14, 2011, did not hide the resentment of some international powers because they have not been able to anticipate events and read the reality of the situation beforehand.

Reactions came a bit late, but they were systematic and effective. Tunisia was invited to participate in the G8 summit held on May 26 and 27, 2011 in the city of Deauville, France, headed by Francois Sarkozy. The technocratic government at that time accepted the invitation to lay the foundation stone of the so-called "Deauville Partnership."

These partnerships include, in addition to the eight countries, the European Union, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Kuwait, the UAE and a significant number of global financial institutions, including Bank of Africa, the Arab Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Development, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. As for the countries concerned with the partnership, these are: Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan. Libya was added in September 2011. A number of sources, most importantly the World Bank and IMF, contribute to the US \$ 80 billion pool this partnership is allocated and responsible for. The list of participants and the amounts allocated are clear indicators of the size and comprehensiveness of this initiative, which primarily aims at tightening the economic control by concerned countries and taking advantage of the "Arab Spring" to apply what is known as the "crisis strategy" to liberalize the economy.

For Tunisia, this partnership came with the so-called "Jasmine Plan" (in reference to the Marshall Plan that was developed after World War II) which runs for five years and contains many structural reforms which the Tunisian state undertook to implement, including the improvement of the investment climate, the lifting of subsidies on raw materials and fuel, strengthening partnerships between the private and public sector, restructuring the tax system, creating a more flexible labour market, the

liberalization of the Tunisian financial market and reconsidering the retirement system, etc...

These reforms, which are mainly dictated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have several economic, social and political repercussions for Tunisia. In addition to the fact that they strip the state's sovereignty and enhance its dependency on financial institutions, the reforms also destroy the purchasing power of citizens and harm the national economy by weakening the industrial fabric and agricultural yields and by hindering state mechanisms which could achieve social justice through the redistribution of wealth and the steering of the economy.

In this context, we will discuss two reform initiatives under the Deauville Partnership because they are exemplary of the methods, objectives and consequences adopted. These examples are the "improvement of the investment climate" and "the lifting of the subsidy systems."

1. The New Investment Law

In 1993, the first Tunisian investment law was drafted with the support of the World Bank and with a declared aim of promoting investments in Tunisia and attracting foreign investors by granting them many privileges and tax exemptions. This has led to the creation of huge regional disparities, an industrial structure with no added value, a severe unemployment crisis, several loopholes to evade taxation, and the aversion of capital. This law, , as is well known, led to a popular revolution which toppled the dictator with the hope of creating a new development pattern, one which would achieve more justice between members of the Tunisian society.

The answer of parties in conjunction with the Deauville Partnership was to propose a new investment law. They did not only propose it, but they also funded, formulated, and supported the law after filling it with economic "mines" that have serious repercussions on the Tunisian economy. They also kept the same grants, privileges and exemptions even though they were proved not feasible. Among our main remarks on this law are the following:

- It was formed and funded by foreign investors (World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and private consulting firms). This indicates a blatant conflict of interest. Moreover, it is not based on any pattern of development and it does not have a clear strategy to achieve the demands for social justice of the revolution.

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- It relies on a clear ideology based on the liberalization of the market and the reduction of the role of the state, without relying on any popular legitimacy.
- It opens the way for the selling of public and agricultural land to individuals and foreigners (this is problematic because of the difficulties encountered by the young nation in the retrieving of land).
- It is dependent on the same ineffective mechanisms adopted by the first law, especially the system of privileges offered to foreign capital investors.
- It favours foreigners rather than Tunisians in investments and in employment.

The law is strongly opposed by the full spectrum of the Tunisian society such as investors, farmers, workers, civil society organizations and politicians. The first draft was presented to the French House of Representatives before being presented to the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, this was considered a violation of national sovereignty and received public outcry.

2. The Subsidy Systems:

The Tunisian state subsidizes fuel and raw materials such as oil, sugar, milk, etc..., in order to strengthen the purchasing power of citizens and to compensate them for their low salaries.

Since the creation of the Deauville Partnership, we have noticed that financial institutions started to launch a systematic and violent campaign against these subsidies at a time when Tunisian citizens were in desperate need of support. It is very difficult to speak accurately about this subject because it has been obscured and fallacies have been told by foreign institutions as well as the Tunisian government.

The first fallacy: The mixing between fuel subsidies and raw materials subsidies. Although the two systems are technically separated from each other, they are introduced as one system with the aim of seizing an opportunity to inflate fuel subsidies in a attempt to increase raw material subsidies at the same time.

The second fallacy: Two years after the revolution Tunisia witnessed a fuel crisis that led to an inflated subsidy in a way which is most probably circumstantial. However, instead of searching for the real reasons, the subsidy system was blamed while reasons for the imbalance were kept obscure.

The third fallacy: The need to rationalize subsidies because the bulk of it is reaching those who do not need it; this subsidy serves the middle class and without this subsidy this class will suffer.

The fourth fallacy: The justification of reducing state expenditures, and therefore the need to lift subsidies, avoids the issue of the state's greatest expenditure: debt service

In conclusion, under the guise of aid and support, technical assistance, loans and increased democracy for Tunisia, various world powers are interfering in the economic and political affairs of the Arab Spring countries. These countries are dictating their economic policies through the renewal of laws, structural reforms and imposing the liberalization of markets to serve their own interests; these actions are without care for what will happen to the people after the implementation of these unfair austerity programs.

Second: Case Studies

Social Justice: The Road to Complete the Revolution in Egypt

(A Case Study on the Demands of the Masses and the Resistance of the Authorities)

Ayman Abdel Moati

April-July 2014

Introduction

Regardless of the effectiveness of political slogans throughout history and regardless of some politicians' skill in manipulating and using them for their own purposes, slogans are an inspiring call to action to recover a life in which human beings have equal rights and duties, a life robbed through a series of historical take-overs of power and wealth. Slogans such as liberty, fraternity and equality, that accompanied the French Revolution itself, were an expression of the need of poor classes to avoid being crushed.

So we can see the various slogans of the Arab revolutions "Bread, Freedom, Social justice, Human dignity" also as a clear expression of the situation and aspirations of the poor, middle-class Arab citizen, who is so because of governance, the economy and a society imposed upon him by ruling classes over decades. These slogans were at the beginning an expression of a fresh dream, after so many years of foreign occupation, then of oppression, exploitation and unprecedented impoverishment due to the domination of financial groups allied with a military dictatorship which led to a "deep" state bureaucracy.

The right to a living (whatever living signifies: a loaf of bread, or the right to life; both are one) is linked to the achievement of freedom and the ending of eras of repression. The bread, which is dripped in humiliation and oppression, is not up to strong bodies. Bread and freedom are two rights that are unthinkable without a balanced society in which the majority is entitled to enjoy the riches it produces. Therefore, the re-distribution of wealth and the restoring of what has been looted are the way to achieve social justice. But can the re-distribution of wealth take place without creating a democratic society where the majority makes decisions

affairs of life? Only then we can talk about human dignity. Reducing the differences between social classes and reshaping the society's class map must be accompanied by a purge and restructuring of state institutions and the community, especially the police who uses its influence and authority in favor of the rulers who monopolize wealth.

In the present situation, however, social justice is closer to a vague slogan than to a clear concept. So, much is needed to shed light on the meaning of social justice, and its relationship to a number of other economic, social and political demands. Social justice negates injustice, exploitation, oppression and deprivation of wealth and power, with no poverty, marginalization or social exclusion, and with no socially unacceptable differences between individuals, groups and regions within the state; all citizens enjoy equal economic, social, political and environmental rights, and equal freedoms. It is where there is a generalized sense of fairness, solidarity and social participation, which allows all members of the community to have equal opportunities to develop their abilities and talents, to fully realize their potentials and best employ these capabilities and capacities so as to provide them with opportunities for social mobility, and that helps the community to thrive and make sustainable progress. It is also the case where the community is not exposed to economic exploitation and enjoys independence and control over national economic, social and political decisions.³⁶

Economic Growth is not a Criterion (1952- 2011)

Although the demand for social justice in Egypt is ages old, we confine ourselves here to presenting a short introduction to a recent period of Egypt's modern history, starting with the taking-over of power by the military following the evacuation of the British occupation; a prelude that simplifies the linkage with the period of Mubarak's rule and the outbreak of the Revolution, and ending with our current situation three years after the Revolution.

The regime of the July 23, 1952 Officers Movement was since inception aware of the demands of the masses, which had long and loudly called for social justice, after eras of slave-like labour by workers and peasants, who were paid very low wages and lived a miserable life. This led the Movement to introduce a series of

³⁶ Ibrahim al-Issawi, "Social Justice: from a Vague Slogan to a Defined Concept ", Al-Shouruq, (Cairo) October 1, 2012 (in Arabic) <http://is.gd/VQbN1z>

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procedures and to enact a package of laws, jointly called by some "socialism". Intended to build an independent developmental state, the July Government and Abdel Nasser sought to raise the rates of growth and industrialization. These policies began when army officers reached power and when they introduced a series of agricultural reform laws to attract investments in agricultural and industrial industries, nationalized the Suez Canal and a number of companies to secure enough funds for the state treasury. This enabled the state to execute major projects, and introduce five-year plans for advancing the economy. This policy did not materialize but through providing some concessions to the labour force, and the expansion of education and employment development created a certain degree of stability. Of course, this took place amid a wave of severe repression to get rid of all the political forces opposed to the new rule on the right and left alike.

Upon the arrival to power of Sadat following the death of Abdel Nasser, who had handpicked him as his deputy, and on the backdrop of an economic and political crisis which began to seize the Egyptian consciousness due to a failed development plan and the setback of June 5, 1967, Sadat believed the earlier approach to stability must be changed: policy turned from the Soviets to the United States, and from war with Israel to a peace agreement sponsored by American imperialism. The independent development economy shifted to a parasitic economy so as to widely open the door for foreign investment, ultimately leading to the spread of corruption, nepotism and the beginning of the collapse of the national industry and the agricultural sector; this led to the popular uprising of January 1977 and demands to end the tampering with the lives of the Egyptians, to undo the decision to raise prices, and put an end to the deterioration of living standards at a time when the interests of a minority of traders, smugglers and brokers thrived at the expense of people's daily livelihoods.

With the arrival of Mubarak, the second heir of power, things got even worse. The industries got into a process of collapse due to encouraging the private sector and private investment at the expense of plans to replace and renovate public sector companies, which the State had decided to get rid of for privatization. Ultimately this resulted in the ousting tens of thousands of workers through early retirement and selling their companies at the cheapest prices, this came in response to the structural adjustment program imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in exchange for aid and loans to be

repaid by the poor. Appointments in the civil service were suspended and the state became no longer responsible for its citizens and workers. It became a party only responsible for securing facilities for investors and for suppressing anyone who even thought of confronting the regime and its plans. This eventually led to the control by businessmen of the reins of power under the Ahmed Nazif Government, which operated with full capacity to implement even more neo-liberal policies up until the Egyptian economy was ranked 81st in world economic competitiveness, according to the World Economic Forum in 2009, whereas it ranked 77 in 2008, 71 in 2006, and 53 in 2005.³⁷

Successive regimes have boasted, ever since July 23, 1952 until January 25, 2011, about the achievement of high economic growth rates. The World Bank announced in its report no. 870 that Egypt was able to achieve an average annual growth rate of 6% in GDP and of 3% in the period 1967- 1973, at fixed prices.³⁸ Later on, the rate of growth in GDP increased as a result of higher oil revenues and transfers from the Egyptians working abroad. Under the rule of Mubarak, the average growth rate reached 6.99% during the period 1980 – 1984 and declined to 2.92 % during the period 1985 – 1989, whereas it started rising again in the fiscal year 2006-2007 until 2008-2009 at rates ranging around 7.1%. A slight recovery in the economy took place as a result of the proceeds from the privatization of companies. Moreover, a large surplus was achieved in net international reserves, which amounted to a peak of about 36 billion dollars in December 2010.³⁹ In fact, these growth rates are virtual, not real; they do not take into account any change in prices and their impact on the incomes of citizens.

But the ultimate goal of any economy is to get the vast majority of the population to lead a dignified and safe life, and this means: 1) that at least the majority are provided with all basic requirements of life, which is what might be called " sufficiency "; 2) that differences in the levels of living among the population are not

³⁷"From the Economic Boom in the Era of Muhammad Ali and Gamal Abdel Nasser to the Deterioration of the Economy because of Corrupt Regimes", 'Alam al-Taqniya wal-"Amal <http://is.gd/DsJoYv>

³⁸ World Bank: Egypt, The Economic Report, <http://is.gd/FwJccQ>

³⁹ Muhammad Hasan Yousef, Factional Demands in Egypt after January Revolution, The Problem and Solutions, al-Jazeera Studies Center, 6 May, 2013, <http://is.gd/xpG62j>

exaggerated to a non-humanitarian extent, which is what might be called "justice"; 3) that security of human beings is achieved, that is, they are not threatened by any loss of income or by the deterioration of their living standards, which is what might be called "security."⁴⁰ Therefore, achieving growth is not an end in itself, from the perspective of the majority, if not reflected in the improvement of their standard of living and in ensuring a stable and safe life.

What proves that the economic growth has not reflected well on the lives of the Egyptians and employment policies is the unemployment rate index. In 1960 the unemployment rate was 2.5% of the total size of the workforce, and in 1976 statistics the figure jumped to 7.7%, then to 14.7% in 1986, and fell to 8.8% in 1996, and rose again in 2002 until reaching 9.1%. These official figures relate only to blatant unemployment; they do not include seasonal unemployment, or those who work in crafts and marginal, unorganized sectors. Meanwhile, scientific studies estimate the size and rate of real unemployment in Egypt, according to figures and data declared by the Supreme Committee for Employment of the Council of Ministers, is about twice that of the official record. The worst features of the domination of capital over power were evident during the Mubarak era, when 2% of the population earned 40% of the total national income and 8% of the population received two-thirds of the national income, whereas 68% of the population received no more than a quarter of the national income.⁴¹

Revolutionary Egypt Facing the Injustice of Mubarak

Such social injustice has not passed peacefully. Although Mubarak had learned the lesson of the January 1977 Uprising, he was insistent on pursuing social and economic policies unjust to the vast majority of the people. So, the protest movement against those policies continued. The protest movement in Egypt during the rule of Mubarak passed through three phases. The first began with the wave of protests of Mahalla workers in 1984 and ended with the famous sit-in of the iron and steel workers in August 1989. These were followed by lean years of activism in the 1990s, which saw but two sparks of workers uprising: in Kafr Al-Dawar in 1994, and the peasant uprising in 1997 against the expulsion from agricultural land; in addition to this an almost unnoticed general

⁴⁰ Tamer Wajeih, unpublished paper entitled: "The Social Justice" , 2013.

⁴¹ The program of the Arab Dignity Party, <http://is.gd/7BywzD>

strike was held by the miners and quarries in 1994. The protest movement again revived early in the new millennium with the wide solidarity movement with the Palestinian intifada (2000-2002), followed by the movement against the imperialist war on Iraq (2002-2003). Then emerged the Movement for Democratic Change (2004-2006), which was followed by a rising movement of Mahalla workers and the employees from the Real Estate Tax Authority and a number of the employees of companies suspended or privatized (2006-2008). The movement continued rising and was represented by the National Assembly for Change (2009-2010); the rejection of martial trials and police methods of repression, and the moving of workers' protests to sidewalks of trade-union premises, however, the Revolution sparked in January 25, 2011, in protest against the overall policies of impoverishment and injustice due to the high rate of unemployment, the lack of human housing and health, the poor living conditions, the high commodity prices, the poor basic services, and the wide-spread of corruption, as well as restrictions on political freedoms, the continued imposition of the state of emergency, suppression and brutality of the police, the lack of freedom of expression, and last but not least, the election fraud.

Thus, the Revolution was not the result of a single moment of anger, but of the accumulation and explosion of a history of political and social struggle against the policies of plundering, corruption, repression and impoverishment.

We can trace the rise and retreat of the movement by viewing the overall protests that accompanied Mubarak's rule during the last ten years in power. The number of protests reached in 2000 was 135, and fell to 115 in 2001, and continued to decline in 2002 and 2003 to reach 96 and 86 protests respectively, but in 2004 they rose to 266 protests and then fell again in 2005 to 202, then escalated slightly in 2006 to 222, but then they started to increase in 2007 to reach 614 protests, followed by 609 in 2008, 700 in 2009, and dropping to 530 protests in 2010."⁴²

Figures in themselves are not significant – despite their analytical importance. They alone are not sufficient to understand the development and processes of the Movement. But perhaps the direct significance of the increasing number of protests, the diverse methods, and the participation of many sectors are

⁴² Joel Benin, Struggle for the rights of Egypt's workers, A report prepared by the Center for International Labor Solidarity, 2010, p. 17-18, <http://is.gd/0nLcKs>

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indications on the escalation of the Movement and its ability to develop its voice and demands through momentum and to get used to the ongoing repetition of struggle.

Mubarak's overall policies during the third/last decade of his rule were strongly rejected. Following that, it became clear for all to see that what he'd done during the first and second decades in power would bring nothing more than misery because of his policies of impoverishment and brutal repression, that came about after his battle against Islamist militants in the 1990s. So it was easy for the demonstrators in the Tahrir Square on 20 and 21 March, 2003 to be fully aware of the real stance of Mubarak and his regime, after being brutally suppressed for opposing the war and besiege on Iraq, where children were dying while searching for a tin of milk. The siege on Iraq is the same as the siege on Egypt, Mubarak helps to kill the Iraqis and Egyptians who show solidarity with them. The scenes downing and burning of Mubarak's picture, which was repeated in the Mahalla strike events of April 6, 2008, was the start of the end of a regime which heavily perched on the chests of Egyptians through repression and the forging of their will in the ballot box.

Indeed, committees and campaigns were organized to fight the battle for change. Preventing the intended extension of Mubarak rule or the inheriting of power to his son was the endeavor of the Kefaya (Enough) Movement, whose mobility had receded in mid-2006, following the presidential and parliamentary elections which had long been strongly forged maintaining the image of the old-aged dictator and his regime. But unexpectedly, the end of 2006 witnessed a wide workers strike at the Mahalla Spinning and Weaving Company, it lasted for three consecutive days and demanded two months of profits. The strike was resumed in the year 2007, which also witnessed the uprising of the unemployed, demanding the right for every citizen to work and the Thirst Uprising in a number of villages and cities in Egypt. Since then the squares and sidewalks of Egypt have become places of demonstration for all the unjustly treated people: workers from all sectors without wages for months or demobilized from their work, employees, teachers, unemployed, disabled, and residents of poor localities etc. As for the major slap to the state, it was through the disobedience of its employees whom it had been taming for many years as part of its bureaucratic control. This disobedience was manifested in the heroic, historical sit-in of the estate taxes employees, which resulted – in addition to realizing their demands

– in forming their first independent trade union for fifty years. Egypt's workers did not subside despite a relative retreat of their visibility; the Democratic Change Movement came back to lead the scene again. In March 2010 the Egyptian working class got a ruling from the administrative judiciary to ensure presidents, ministers and the National Council for Wages set a minimum wage of 1200 pounds which is compatible with the cost of living and which ensures a decent life for workers. The regime tried to circumvent the ruling and to empty it of its contents. It issued a decision that the minimum total wage is to be set at 400 pounds per month, and that it applies to private sector workers only, excluding the workers of the public and government sectors,⁴³ but this decision was strongly rejected by the workers. Thus confrontations between the masses and the Mubarak regime continued, until 2010 which witnessed a state of severe anger directed at the police, the repressive arm of the Regime, which spread havoc and oppression in society so extreme that the cases of torture and murder at the hands of the Interior Ministry's agents became gut-wrenching. The result was the formation of several youth groups that took to streets denouncing the practices of police oppression. This culminated in the call to demonstrate against police repression on January 25, 2011 corresponding with the Police Anniversary. Thus Egypt witnessed a popular revolution that nobody expected to occur with such speed and power.

Social Justice in the Programs of Political Forces

Despite the social nature of the protest movement in Egypt, the political movement has, unfortunately, played a role which confines the conflict. In spite of calls for measures that would put an end to corruption and economic problems such as unemployment and development, the political elites were satisfied that their struggle against the person of Mubarak and the symbols of the Regime was enough, without directing the battle towards the heart of the governing system itself. These elites merely sought to change the political form of government without compromising its content, which gave birth to corruption, dictatorship and exploitation and consequently to the impoverishment and marginalization of the majority of citizens. Thus, the Kefaya (Enough) movement, followed by the National Association for Change, focused on the issues of democratic change. Such elites continued to act, even after the

⁴³ Workers and Revolution (a Legal View), the Egyptian Center and Awlad al-Ardh Monitoring the Harbingers of the Revolution and its Impact on Workers, 16 February 2011 <http://ecesr.org/?p=2967>

revolution, represented by the political parties and various political forces, for power transition and political change, while being drowned in the whirlpool of parliamentary and presidential elections, the drafting of the constitution, and dragged behind the agenda of the transitional stage, away from the immediate popular demands for better living conditions and ensuring the right to live safely through the provision of housing, food, free treatment and education, employment and living in dignity

Nevertheless, programs of almost all parties, from extreme Right to extreme Left, were not void of talk about issues related to social justice, offering visions and programs to address dilemmas such as poverty, unemployment and the housing problem, and to create plans for development and economic reform, and health promotion and education, etc.

The program of **the New Wafd Party**, the most famous liberal background in the history of Egyptian political parties, emphasizes the need to "ensure social justice in the distribution of income and development returns among all citizens; we will not accept that the minority gets the largest proportion of the national income, while the majority of the people of Egypt live under the poverty line." The Party even called for a minimum wage to be considered every 3 years, and the adoption of a system of unemployment insurance.⁴⁴ Whereas the **Free Egyptians Party** believes in "the market economy as an engine for comprehensive economic and social development," it views as necessary the "phasing of subsidies for petroleum products, gas and electricity obtained by both public sector and private companies which sell their products in accordance with market economics," in addition to "launching a national project to eliminate poverty in Egypt" – within a twenty-year period – with the participation of all the state civil institutions, the armed forces, the business sector, civil society institutions and international donor organizations.⁴⁵ In the opinion of **the Dostur Party**, "the primary goal of economic development is to provide for the needs of citizens and society, to improve the living conditions of all, and to provide a framework that allows for the progress and prosperity of society, away from want and need and secures freedom from exploitation. Hence the need for the State to formulate and get the economic life back on track, through its inherent role in the development of policies and legislation, and in

⁴⁴ program of the New Wafd Party <http://is.gd/iKS16p>

⁴⁵ Program of the Free Egyptians Party <http://is.gd/xzMh46>

leading the economic development process so that the market mechanisms are oriented in the direction desired by the community as a whole, and achieving both social justice and economic progress". It states that we "cannot talk seriously about a project for economic development without the provision of basic needs for the Egyptian citizen such as food, clothing, housing, health care and education. Thus, social justice, based on equal opportunities and the provision of a decent life for all Egyptians, is essential for just and comprehensive development of our country.⁴⁶ The aim of **Egypt Freedom Party** "is to build a society of social justice by ensuring a better distribution of income, a commitment to a minimum wage based upon objective criteria, and to build integrated networks of health care, social security, pensions, unemployment benefits, disability and others." The Party maintains that the level of the minimum wage should be based "on its linkage with the level of productivity, the cost of living and the food requirements in accordance with international norms and standards. Also, the minimum wage should be flexible, not fixed, depending on changes in economic conditions, and responding to price inflation, unemployment and the cost of living in different regions of Egypt."⁴⁷

As for the leftist parties, the **National Progressive Unionist Party** (al Tagammu'), stresses the need to preserve the acquired rights of workers and the economic, social and trade union rights, to ensure a minimum wage which is sufficient for basic needs of human living, achieving a balance between prices and wages in order to prevent the deterioration of the living standards of workers, the application of a comprehensive tax reform that aims at achieving Social justice in favour of low-income groups, the reconsidering of the new tax law which is biased to the big capitalists and wealthy, through liquidating the indirect taxes and fees invented by the government and shouldered by the poor and middle income groups, reducing the sales tax, increasing the taxes on industrial and commercial profits, and tightening the sanctions on evaders of taxes.⁴⁸ The **Egyptian Social Democratic Party**, maintains that "the concept of citizenship in the social democratic thought stresses the protection of economic and social rights of citizens, which ensures that all citizens have the right to enjoy an economically decent and dignified life, secure from want, with the

⁴⁶ Program of the Constitution Party <http://is.gd/xNzcRJ>

⁴⁷ Program of Egypt Freedom Party <http://is.gd/GnVNCy>

⁴⁸ program of the Tajamu' Party <http://is.gd/7bGnc5>

right to get suitable work, justice in the distribution of income and equal opportunities. Such concepts entail the intervention of the State as a guarantor of these rights in case the market forces are unable to meet them, along with the state's political role in regulating the economy, preventing monopolistic practices and adjusting the rhythm of the market. The Party believes that the optimal economic system is that which achieves economic efficiency and social justice at the same time."⁴⁹ The **Socialist Popular Alliance Party** believes "building an alternative model of development based on investment in human beings, the development of their creative capabilities and ensuring social justice through effective measures for the distribution of wealth and income in favor of the real producers. The party works on the development of the national economy, in which the state formulates a comprehensive development plan which specifies investment in vital sectors, strategy and liquidation of monopolies and activates antitrust laws in various fields."⁵⁰ The **Arab Dignity Party** seeks to "build the comprehensive social security society, to meet the basic rights and needs of the human being, and to secure the rights of education, employment and medical treatment, housing, insurance, and pension and a clean environment for every citizen as being natural, constitutional and binding rights. Such rights – together with equitable distribution of wealth – are essential elements of human development, which are the symbol of the nation's modernity and progress."⁵¹

As for the Islamic parties, the **Freedom and Justice Party** believes that "the achieving of social justice and ensuring the distribution of revenues from economic activity in a way to achieve justice, equality and equal opportunities are of the most important duties of the State. Building on such responsibility, the objective of our program is to face rising prices, to eliminate poverty and unemployment, to provide basic public services such as facilities, education, health care and transportation, to improve the living conditions of workers and peasants, to find practical solutions to social problems such as elderly people living alone, street children and people with special needs, to raise the living standards of families with dependent members, and to increase the incomes of

⁴⁹ Program of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party <http://is.gd/QheTt2>

⁵⁰ Program of the Popular Socialist Alliance Party <http://is.gd/UVhaxg>

⁵¹ Program of the Arab Dignity Party <http://is.gd/7BywzD>

pensioners."⁵² In the meantime, the program of the **Strong Egypt Party** believes that "social justice, and achieving a high level of sufficiency for citizens, without discrimination, is one of the main pillars of our program, and is the overarching goal in our vision for the economy, and even national security. We believe that social responsibility is a right of the people vis-a-vis the State, which materializes through the introduction of programs of action and decision making devoted to the human being, who is the goal of its actions, and the end for its effort, (the state) protects his dignity, and treats him well."⁵³ The **Nour Party** believes that the achieving of social justice "in the distribution of income and wealth among the sons of the Egyptian society will achieve social solidarity, and spread the spirit of love, harmony, cooperation, stability and confidence and reflects positively on the renaissance of the society and its economic growth."⁵⁴

As for the most prominent youth movements, the **April 6 Youth Movement** stresses the necessity of introducing "a minimum wage for all categories of jobs and wages, and linking wages with prices as is the case in all countries which suffer from price rises, together with substantial measures aiming at freezing the prices, prevention of monopoly and prevention of the clutter of the market."⁵⁵ The **Youth Movement for Justice and Freedom** believes in the need to struggle for freedom and democracy, alongside the need to engage in a movement demanding social justice, and to support the toiling classes that demand a decent human life. And that change will only be realized if the masses act to gain their rights, and that their role is to try to link the social and political demands and to resist the general tendency to separate them.⁵⁶ The **Coalition of Revolution Youth** emphasizes the need for "the adoption of minimum and maximum wages (by 1:15), while linking them to real rates of inflation and to increase in prices, annulling the Labour Law # 12 of the year 2003, which permitted the dismissal and displacement of workers, and making them like slaves to the employer, acting to provide work for all the unemployed, enacting a law granting an unemployment benefit

⁵² Program Freedom and Justice Party <http://is.gd/Kp63Ph>

⁵³ Program of Strong Egypt Party <http://is.gd/U9y9ql>

⁵⁴ Program of the al-Nour Party <http://is.gd/YWLtxI>

⁵⁵ Statement of the April 6 Youth Movement on June 20, 2008

⁵⁶ Launching of the "Youth for Justice and Freedom" movement, at The Journalists Union headquarters, Masress, July 18, 2010 <http://is.gd/dAFYjr>

equal to half the minimum wage until work is found for each job seeker, stopping all projected privatization of health institutions and making medical treatment a right of every citizen, cancelling all debts of the peasants due to the Development and Agricultural Credit Bank and abolishing all court rulings that sentenced them to imprisonment for not affording to pay such debts, restarting all companies closed in order to create new jobs, and stopping the corrupt privatization program, investigating all corrupt deals throughout the sales of the public sector, holding responsible those corrupt people involved, the recovery and operation of such companies, and employing workers therein.⁵⁷

So, most of the above-mentioned parties and movements believe that the following objectives are the ones they seek to realize: placing a priority for public spending in health and education sectors; a minimum wage; preventing monopoly and the delivery of subsidies to those who deserve them, the introduction of a progressive tax system, the development of slums and providing them with services and facilities and building suitable housing, and the right of citizens to employment and human treatment. Then what is the difference between these parties and movements? Why are they separated, as their programs are aiming – with different wordings – at the same goals: developing the economy, sustainable development and improving the standard of living of the citizens? The answer is not to be found in programs, but rather in the political practices and social biases in reality. We find businessmen associated with such parties evading the payment of taxes, or dismissing workers in their companies under any pretext, or deliberately abstaining from and hindering the implementation of the minimum wage, or when in charge of ministerial portfolios they make decisions that endanger the lives of citizens, as was the case coal was substituted for gas in operating plants, or abandoning the issues of workers and acting in accordance with state plans and business interests, even though they had always been at the forefront of the protesters. The political practices of such parties show us these programs are mere rhetoric, not demands to struggle for. Unfortunately, it is now evident that these parties have become royalists more than the king himself; the moment they were first tested they chose to monopolise power, not share it. The experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in the era of Morsi and of some civil parties in the transitional

⁵⁷ Statement entitled: "Social Demands for the "Coalition of the Revolution Youth," dated February 27, 2011.

government of July 3, 2013 is an example which illustrates that policies are one thing and practice is something else entirely different.

The Adverse Role of Foreign Powers in Development

Egypt was immersed in external and local debt; its external debts amounted to more than 47 billion dollars by September 2013. This fact perhaps could serve as an introduction to illustrate the tragic consequences we are facing due to borrowing from abroad. Ever since its "national independence," Egypt has depended on foreign aid in the form of non-refundable grants and loans with interests on repayments. Following the rejection by the United States to finance the High Dam project, the regime led, then by Nasir, turned towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Later on when Sadat assumed power, he decided to expel the Russians and turned towards America and the West, thus responding to the new phase of economic openness and liberalization of the market. In the wake of the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Agreement in 1979, the US President Jimmy Carter announced the decision to provide an annual economic and military aid to both Egypt and Israel. As of 1982, the aid turned into a non-refundable grant of three billion dollars to Israel, and \$2.1 billion for Egypt, of which \$ 815 million is economic aid, and \$1.3 billion is military aid. US aid to Egypt amounts to 57% of the total national inflow from international donors and grants coming from the European Union, Japan and other countries. At the same time, the amount of US aid does not exceed 2% of the total national income of Egypt. Egypt committed itself to the conditions of aid which led to the purchase of military equipment from the United States. America has provided Egypt with about \$ 7.3 billion during the period 1999-2005 in the framework of the program for foreign military funding aid, while Egypt has spent during the same period almost half of the aid (\$3.8 billion) on purchases of American heavy military equipment.⁵⁸

This impacted the Egyptian economy with the size of US direct investments in Egypt reaching \$3 billion, including \$ 2.3 billion in the oil sector and \$700 million in the production and services sectors. Thus the American investments in Egypt amounted to 33% of the total American investment in the Middle East and to 5.2% of foreign investments in Egypt. 45.3% of Egyptian exports

⁵⁸ Wikipedia <http://is.gd/mZzce8>

head to the US markets, whereas Egypt's imports from the US reach 21.2% of its total imports.⁵⁹

The economic aid, totalling 24.3 billion US dollars during the last quarter of a century (1975-2000), has been distributed according to various sectors or items as follows: 6.7 billion dollars for goods imports (27.6% of the total); 5.9 billion dollars for infrastructure projects, including water irrigation, sanitation, public health, electric power, communications and transportation (24.3% of the total); 4.5 billion dollars for basic services such as health, family planning, education, agriculture and the environment (18.5% of the total); 3.9 billion dollars for food aid during the period 1975-1990 (16% of the total); and \$ 3.3 billion in cash transfers and technical assistance in the field of policy reforms and structural adjustment such as training and the providing of investment and so on (13.5% of the total).⁶⁰

After the fall of Mubarak, the IMF began negotiations with the Egyptian authorities – then, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces – to start a new arrangement for loans, the last similar loan of which was terminated in the 1990s. In June 2011, the Fund allocated a loan of US \$3 billion to Egypt. Following the ascendance of President Morsi to power in June 2012, the loan was raised to \$ 4.8 billion, but has not been received by Egypt so far, despite the harsh conditions imposed by the Fund which are historically known as policy reform, and economic restructuring, the costs of which are paid by the poor only. The traditional structural adjustment programs imply deep economic and social changes, and have a variety of objectives: "to increase production levels, despite the fact that in the early stages, the initial wages are low; the elimination of waste and inefficiency during the "rationalization" of the economy according to signals dictated by market expansion; achieve a higher degree of openness to foreign competition and integration into the global economy through liberalization of trade and financial liberalization; modifying the economic and social relations and the shift in the distribution of resources, rights and privileges toward social groups benefiting from the market; responding to the needs and interests of international capital of powerful global and local influence,

⁵⁹ Abdel-Wahab Khader, " Again, about the U.S. Aid to Egypt!", Modern Discussion, August 3, 2010 <http://is.gd/IsVUV7>

⁶⁰ Samiha Abdul Halim, "The American Aid and the Policy of Carrot and Stick", Akhbar Misr, October 20, 2013 <http://is.gd/2vZ6DC>

including large financial institutions, trans-national corporations and international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.⁶¹

The visits by the first Prime Minister Issam Sharaf, after the revolution to a number of Arab countries resulted in promises of US \$25 billion, but until mid-January 2012 Egypt did not get even one billion dollars out of this sum for grants and aids, including half a billion dollars from Saudi Arabia in the form of commodity, gas and petroleum products, and half a billion dollars in cash from Qatar.⁶²

The Gulf aid is conditional on the nature of the ruling regime. In the days of Morsi, Qatar provided an initial package of financial aid to Egypt, worth 2.5 billion dollars, of which \$ 0.5 billion was a grant and \$ 2 billion a deposit and of which one of the deposits is to be transferred into an additional grant so that the grants totalled \$ 1 billion and the deposits doubled, to around \$ 4 billion.⁶³ But Qatar soon asked Egypt to return the \$2 billion deposit after the fall of Morsi. At this time, three Gulf countries announced aid of up to 15.9 billion dollars: five billion dollars from Saudi Arabia, 6.9 billion dollars from the United Arab Emirates and four billion dollars from Kuwait.⁶⁴ The role of such assistance was limited so far to petroleum products and pumping amounts of money in the Central Bank, thus raising the foreign exchange reserves from 14.9 billion dollars at the end June 2013 to 17.1 billion dollars at the end January 2014.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Mahinur al-Badrawi, and Habiba Ramadan, "International Funding Organizations in Egypt", a report to be published, the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights.

For more on the role of the European Investment Bank in financing projects in Egypt, please read the following reports which describe the pattern of the country's borrowing from the European Investment Bank (1979-2011), according to the 2012 report on the operations of the Bank in Egypt <http://is.gd/UKuGYu>

⁶² Dr. Salah Judah, Blogs direct, August 2, 2012 <http://is.gd/koJ6Ko>

⁶³ Five billion dollars aid from Qatar to Egypt, Al Jazeera.Net, January 8, 2013 <http://is.gd/SqlKIT>

⁶⁴ Muheet Network, Egypt receives 15.9 billion dollars Gulf aid since the beginning of July, October 30, 2013 <http://is.gd/vQ2RiH>

⁶⁵ Asma' al-Kholi, " The Role of the Gulf aid in supporting the Egyptian Economy since the Revolution in January 2011 and its

Since the start of lending in Egypt in 1979, the European Investment Bank signed 70 loans and 50 capital risk operations in both the public and private sectors with a total value of about 5.1 billion euros, and benefiting from the total investment an amount of almost 20 billion euros. According to Gamal Bayoumi, Secretary-General of the Union of Arab Investors, the Bank decided to extend to Egypt 900 million euros annually in the form of loans.⁶⁶

As for the operations of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Egypt, the Bank had a specific plan that was announced to the civil society organizations working in Egypt. The Bank also stated that it would work in the framework of the political and economic plan submitted by the Egyptian regime, about which we know nothing, as it has not been declared in any form neither to the civil society organizations nor to the Parliament or the public.⁶⁷

Without going into the maze of projects and the distribution of loans between them, lenders themselves choose their own type of projects in which to inject loans, these could be energy projects or the development of transport networks. This means that lenders benefit from the proceeds of these projects in the form of new investments, or they benefit directly from them by directing those services to serve the interests of foreign investors who belong to the countries of those lenders, without paying attention to any revenues that would develop the standards of living of citizens in the borrowing country.⁶⁸ An example of these is the Deauville Partnership, an initiative of the G8 countries and important partners, led by the International Monetary Fund and international financial institutions like the African Development Bank, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Islamic Development Bank, the OPEC Fund for Development, and the World Bank, and others. They are key players in achieving the objectives of the Partnership.

Impact on Foreign Exchange Reserves", Middle East Online, March 29, 2014 <http://is.gd/H6Lp4h>

⁶⁶ Mahinur al-Badrawi, and Habiba Ramadan, International Funding Organizations in Egypt, op. cit.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ We have not detailed the European aid to Egypt in the form of grants or loans, as this issue was covered in the paper presented by Heba Khalil (in this book).

The Deauville Partnership prescribes economic packages that follow free-market policies, open markets and trade liberalization, value is placed on attracting foreign direct investment, privatization, and public expenditure cuts are seen as important for the sake of economic reform. These same policies have been long pursued by the Arab states, only to the effect of increased rates of poverty and unemployment, and added social injustice and marginalization of new dimensions. So, the significance of Deauville and other frameworks, whether international or European, lies in reducing the area of choice and the ability of states to take the appropriate decision and to set public policy away from pressures and conditions. Thus such frameworks are defying attempts at change made by the Arab peoples since the ignition of the spark of Tunisia Revolution in late 2010.⁶⁹

Demands of the Masses and the Resistance of the Authorities

Nothing has improved in the lives of Egyptians after the Revolution – such statements are repeatedly uttered by people on a daily basis; it is entirely correct. Wages have declined relative to their purchasing power, and there is no justice in the wages distribution scale, where disparity between workers is mostly due to what is known as "changing wage items" such as allowances, bonuses and profits that would normally be approved in accordance with special laws and procedures, which ultimately turned the wages scale to a delusive scale, quite different from reality as 80% of the amount allocated to wages accrue to 30% of the workers while the remaining 20% accrue to 70% of workers.⁷⁰ In addition the inflation rate increased to 9.82% in 2013; also the rate of unemployment among the youth reached 54.1% in 2013, the highest in the Arab region.⁷¹ In general, its average reached 13.4% in January 2014, compared to 12.4% in January 2012, while it was 9.4% in 2010 a year before the Revolution. Poverty rates in Egypt rose to 26.3% in 2012-2013, compared to 25.2% in

⁶⁹ Heba Khalil, EU Policies and Social Justice in the Arab States: What has the European Union learned from the Arab Revolutions? (A Critical View), included in this book.

⁷⁰ Hussein Abdel Razek, " The Future of Social Justice in Egypt", Al-Ahali, 12 February 2013 <http://is.gd/3bB6B1>

⁷¹ Human Development Report 2013, the UNDP in the Arab States, March 14, 2013, <http://is.gd/LAvfKt>

2010- 2011, and 16.7% in 1999-2000.⁷² A report by the Center for Information and Decision-Making Support of the Egyptian Cabinet, referring to the wide social effects of poverty, states that the total number of slum areas in Egypt is 1171 inhabited by about 14.8 million people. It is estimated that 86.2% of the total households in Egypt live in inappropriate housing, accompanied by the lack of facilities and basic services of water, sanitation, electricity and health services.⁷³ Consumer prices of food and beverages increased by 16.3% between January 2010 and September 2013. The number of vulnerable households who say that their income does not cover increases in monthly expenses rose from 78.9% in September 2011 to 88.9% in March 2013 (The Egyptian Food Observatory, 2013).⁷⁴

Despite the worsening situation, the post-Revolution governments have pressured citizens not to protest against their policies by narrowing their opportunities of improving their living standards, and by working to restrict their movement and further activism. Only three days after Mubarak stepped down, the ruling Military Council issued a statement condemning what it described as the continued "factional movements" and called for confronting them.⁷⁵ On April 12, 2011, the Council issued a decree by law criminalizing sit-ins, strikes and "factional" protests,⁷⁶ while punishing those who instigate, call for or participate with imprisonment and excessive fines. Prior to the convening of the first elected parliament after the Revolution, the Council issued a law allowing reconciliation with the symbols of corruption in investment crimes.⁷⁷ The Hazem Beblawi Government issued a

⁷² In Figures: Poverty in Egypt in One Year (Info graph) <http://is.gd/AgwyNH>

⁷³ Hussein Abdel Razek, The Future of Social Justice in Egypt, op. cit.

⁷⁴ The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Statistics of Parallel Report... about the Hearing on Accountability of Egypt before the United Nations Committee, <http://ecesr.org/?p=767168>

⁷⁵ The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, Statement No. 5, February 14, 2011, <http://is.gd/Wbm58h>

⁷⁶ Decree by Law No. 34 for the year 2011 on criminalizing the assault on the freedom of action and sabotage of installations <http://is.gd/IDzCWn>

⁷⁷ Decree by Law No. 4 of 2012 on authorizing of reconciliation with investors regarding investment crimes <http://is.gd/3Otjf9>

new law that prohibits demonstrations and gives the police the right to break up the protests by force.⁷⁸ To protect corruption and not to make it subject to any supervision or accountability, the Interim President Adli Mansour approved a law preventing any third party to challenge contracts concluded with investors, thus making corruption protected by force of law. Although Hisham Qandil, the Prime Minister of the Morsi Government, was tried on charges of refraining from implementing judicial rulings that cancelled the sale contracts of a number of public sector companies, the Beblawi Government prepared a bill that prevents the trial of the person in charge if the implementation of such rulings was not permissible, "due to radical changes introduced by the buyer to the Company."⁷⁹

But such conditions and policies did not impair the continued escalation of protests, particularly the social ones. There are no documented figures on the 2011 Revolution protests, but the number of protests in 2012 reached 3817 events throughout the year,⁸⁰ the year when power was shared by both the Military Council and Morsi. Meanwhile, the number of protests in 2013 reached 5232, including 2239 workers' protests,⁸¹ which was the year when power was shared by both the dismissed President Mohamed Morsi, and the July 3 transitional regime.

It seems that the situation is likely to escalate; especially as the social justice demands have not been fulfilled by decision-makers. For example, the transitional government decided few weeks before the presidential elections to cancel the energy subsidies and to increase the prices of gas, electricity, gasoline and diesel fuel, in an unheard of act by a transitional government. So in early July 2014 citizens suffered increases in the prices of fuel and transport, and the majority of the most needed goods. It is then very likely that the coming period will witness a new revolutionary wave which may not be confined to the yards only, but could include

⁷⁸ Law No. 107 of 2013, on the right to organize public meetings, processions and peaceful demonstrations <http://is.gd/OnzXJr>

⁷⁹The stock market publishes a draft law to protect the actions of senior officials, the stock market, November 10, 2013 <http://is.gd/onBa3a>

⁸⁰ The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Report on Workers' Protests, 2012, April 28, 2013, <http://ecesar.org/p=766854>

⁸¹ The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, Report on Workers' Protests, 2013, July 7, 2014, <http://ecesar.org/p=768677>

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various residential neighbourhoods and workplaces. This would make things more complicated for the new authority and put it to the test: either it aligns itself to the demands of the masses and realizes the goals of their revolution, primarily social justice, or it faces the same fate as its predecessors.

Finally, it is true that using the social justice slogans in every struggle does not automatically mean there is a continuation of the revolution, and thus a social and political victory. It is true that the Egyptian workers have played a central role in toppling Mubarak, and have been empowered by the battles of the revolution – which had a high degree of organization and politicization. However, the responsibility for achieving the demands of the revolution and the victory of the masses rests on the shoulders of the social and radical forces alone. In playing the role of an engine, and in demonstrating the social and class character of the movement, it has shown the masses have a genuine interest in politics that are an expression of equal social conditions.

Social Justice in Light of the Revolutionary Process in Tunisia

Fathi Al-Shamikhi

The demands for social justice played a crucial role in the struggle against the dictatorship in Tunisia, and were the main motive for, and the basic drive of, the revolutionary uprising witnessed by the country late in 2010, which succeeded in ousting its dictator.

What has the social movement gained from this victory? What is the interim outcome, on the social level, of four years of continuous revolutionary action? To what extent can the demands for social justice play an active role in building a new democratic and socially just Tunisia today?

Acute Social Crisis Leads to Revolution

Only two presidents had monopolized power in Tunisia for a period of no less than 54 years: Bourguiba (1956-1987), then Ben Ali (1987-2010). The first tried to develop the and strengthen the country and its national independence, However, a growing authoritarian rule, and the bureaucratic degeneration of his state and his party, combined with the increasing pressures of neo-liberal capitalist globalization contributed to the failure of his leadership and deepened the crisis of his regime, despite the progress and successes he had achieved in many areas.

So, the crisis of the mid-eighties put an end to the illusions of the ability of the Bourguiba national bourgeois system to achieve economic and social progress in Tunisia. The social movement in general and the labor movement in particular, were not able to do anything to reverse the situation to their benefit, although they were primarily affected by this failure. The ruling bureaucracy, in turn, was unable to find a way out of the crisis, not only because it represents one of its main causes, but also because it was devoid of the ability to manage that crisis.

Global capitalism, in turn, was undergoing a period of transition from the Fordism modification pattern, which lasted until the end of the 1970s, to a neo-liberal pattern of modification, that seeks to reorganize the prevailing labor and social relations, and to reshape international relations, in a way to allow and launch the freedom of capital in investment, trade, financial speculation and accumulation of profits unconditionally.

The superiority of the new approach in the United Kingdom and then in the United States ushered a new stage of neo-liberal capitalist globalization worldwide. The Bourguiba regime had not stood long before the pressure; the Bourguiba government accepted, during the summer of 1986, the program of the international financial institutions to address the acute crisis of the regime. But the implementation of this program required finding a solution to the dilemma of Bourguiba's successor. This was undertaken by its Prime Minister, Gen. Ben Ali, through the coup which settled the matter for the benefit of Bourguiba in November 7, 1987.

The structural adjustment program, which has been applied in Tunisia during the last quarter of century, is not just a recipe that includes a package of economic and social measures of the capitalist neo-liberal nature to address the crisis of the Bourguiba regime, but it is, in addition, a program that sought to establish a new economic and social order that maintains the profitability of capital, especially through the double exploitation of the toiling Tunisian forces, and the depletion of the country's natural capabilities. Such systems aim also, at the political level, to re-establish the dominance of global capitalist circles on Tunisia. Therefore, the November 7 coup allowed not only the transfer of power from Bourguiba to Ben Ali, but also specially enabled the initiation of a new economic and social strategy responding to the conditions of profitability of global capital, the core of which is openness to the global market, social flexibility and withdrawal of the state from the economic domain.

The new regime initiated the application of a policy of economic and social restructuring, and the policy of austerity in public expenditures, then supported, in 1995, this neo-liberal capitalist approach through two procedures: the accession of Tunisia to the World Trade Organization, and its involvement in the plan of the European Union to establish a free exchange zone in Mediterranean to be subject to its influence and to serve the interests of its capitalist powers.

The various capitalist structural reforms were enabled to re-activate the mechanisms of economic growth, but the economic and social price which Tunisia paid was extremely high, as a significant part of the annual income was leaving the country in several ways: through foreign debt, and the transfer of profits, as

well as the smuggling of capital by wealthy Tunisians, which was worth, in the reign of Ben Ali, 34 billion dollars.⁸²

The negative social repercussions of the neo-liberal capitalist system covered all sectors, notably the employment sector. Additionally, the state's adoption of this neo-liberal logic led to a sharp contraction of its social role, thus contributing to the social and economic damage which affected the living conditions of the majority of the population, especially the residents of popular neighborhoods and inland regions of the country.

Everyone agrees that the employment crisis, which deepened in particular during the last decade of the rule of Ben Ali, was the main reason for the outbreak of the revolution. This crisis was fueled by the exacerbating inability of the domestic economy and the policy of the state to respond adequately to the rising demand for employment, which led in particular to:

- Continued high levels of official unemployment, which reached 13 percent of the workforce in 2010. It especially affects young people under 35 years old, who represent 85 percent of all unemployed and the gender level, where the rate of women's unemployment was 18.9 percent compared to 10.9 percent among men. In addition to the fact that unemployment is higher in the inland provinces, where the ratio is twice the national average.
- The emergence of new unemployment among recent university graduates, where the number of unemployed in this category rose from 5.900 in 1994 to 139.000 in 2010.
- The growing phenomenon of underemployment widened its circle to include, on the eve of the revolution, 60 percent of active workers.

Income crisis

Official figures highlight the improvement in poverty indicators in Tunisia, where, according to these figures, the number of poor has declined from 823.000 in 1980 to 399.000 in 2000, so the poverty rate has decreased significantly from 32.4 percent in 2000 to 15.5 percent in 2010⁸³, according to the departments of the Ministry of

⁸² <http://is.gd/RV3PFL>

⁸³ <http://is.gd/RV3PFL>

Social Affairs, but Mohammed Al-Nasser maintains that, in the aftermath of the fall of Ben Ali, the real poverty rate was 25 percent of the total population, a rate estimation based on the data available to them about the number of beneficiaries provided by the Ministry and based on evidence such as the free treatment cards, the treatment cards of low cost, family surveys of beneficiary needy families, old-age pensions and other social programs.

But apart from the conflicting ratios on levels of poverty, and the reliability of the methods and data used in its measurement, it is certain, especially for the last decade of the rule of Ben Ali that the standard of living across Tunisian males and females has considerably declined. Such decline was enhanced by the exacerbating employment crisis, on the one hand, and the erosion of the purchasing power of wages and the growing tax burden on the toiling classes in particular, on the other hand. Also, the retreat in state intervention in the social domain, within the framework of the policy of austerity in social expenses, helped, in turn, enhance the tempo of social exclusion and widen the circle of poverty.

In contrast, families related to Ben Ali-Trabelsi and were accumulating properties and profits and extending their influence on everything and everybody.⁸⁴ They did not hesitate to exhibit such sudden and illegal wealth, thus fueling feelings of social injustice and blatant injustice among the popular classes. This was evidenced by the social protests and labor strikes, which accelerated in the last years of the rule of Ben Ali. Perhaps the most prominent of these social protests of all, was the uprising in the mining basin, south-west of the country, especially the city of Al-Radeef, where the protest movement stood in the face of fierce repression, for a full six months.

There is no doubt, four years after the fall of Ben Ali, that the social situation has witnessed further aggravation. There has been no treatment for the acute employment crisis, alleviation of poverty or ending of isolation of marginalized regions. The worst thing was the increase in the rates of unemployment in an unprecedented way, the erosion of the purchasing power of all wage earners and toiling masses, and the expansion of the scope of this social regression to include social strata that have been enjoying, before January 14, 2011, relatively comfortable standards of living. What awaits in the coming weeks and months,

⁸⁴ <http://is.gd/gwF73P>

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is more austerity measures and structural adjustments which entail more social damage.

The number of unemployed increased from 492.000 in 2010 to 610.000 in 2013, an increase of 24%. At the same time, the unemployment rate rose two points from 13.3 percent to 15.3 percent. However, the most affected are university graduates with the number of unemployed in their ranks rising from 139.000 in 2010 to 250.000 in 2013, an increase of 80%. It is also unexpected to have a significant improvement in the level of employment in the coming months, as the government has decided, in the state budget for the year 2014, to freeze appointments in the civil service.

As for the development of wages, their erosion is certain as a result of continued inflation. It should be noted here that the government states that the annual inflation rate is at 5.3 percent, while the "Organization for the Defense of consumer" stresses on its part that this rate ranges between 10 and 15 percent, which is confirmed by the General Union of Tunisian Workers, which has been asking for a long time for a review of the way inflation is calculated. What emphasizes the fact that the estimated decline in the purchasing power of all wage earners, who represent 72 percent of the total workforce is the lack of any increase in wages over the last two years (2013 and 2014), except the expected increase in minimum industrial wage, ..

The purchasing power of wage earners and all the popular classes will continue to decline, as the draft government budget for 2014, shows increased taxation on wages by 12 percent, the upgrading of the VAT by 7.2 percent, and the increase in taxing on consumption by 6.5%. The government is also preparing to reduce the subsidies budget by 22 percent in 2014, a measure that fits within the performance of successive governments after January 14th and is represented in the reduction of "social transfers" or "indirect remuneration." Finally, it is worth recalling that the monetary policy applied through raising interest rates increases pressure on the wage-earners and in turn weakens their purchasing power.

We conclude from this intensive review of the social situation in Tunisia, before and after the revolutionary uprising, that:

- The living conditions of all Tunisian males and females have experienced significant deterioration, especially during the last years of the rule of Ben Ali. Meanwhile, a minority of ruling

families was accumulating a vast wealth, in full view of everyone. This led to a sense of unfairness and social injustice among all, and fed their feelings of dissatisfaction and resentment as to the existing regime, and led them to demand social justice.

- So, the social crisis paved the way for the uprising of the popular classes against: unemployment, economic and social marginalization and poverty. This was in an attempt to realize an alternative social system that guarantees their rights, on the basis of their free and conscious contribution in the production of wealth and in the equitable sharing of its fruits.
- However, the interim outcome of the revolution is still far below the desired one, and is even disappointing, as the living conditions of the toiling people have worsened. This is confirmed by the retreat in the international rank of Tunisia on the "Human Development Index" of the United Nations Development Program. Tunisia declined from rank 78 globally in 1993 to rank 81 in 2010 and then ranked 94 in 2012.⁸⁵

How do political parties and forces deal with the demands of social justice advocated by the popular classes in the context of their revolution? What role do they play in advancing or hindering the revolutionary process?

Demand for Social Justice from the Perspective of Various Local and External forces

Social justice demands, three and a half years after the fall of the dictatorship, still represent the primary issue for popular protests, and the stumbling stone in the way of all attempts made by the existing regime to rehabilitate the political conditions for the economy without answering social justice demands. Moreover, complications of the revolution still weigh on all walks of life, as the local regime fluctuates according to the activities and pressures of the mass movement, and attempts to resolve issues by foreign and domestic forces of counter-revolution at other times.

While the demands for social justice still impose themselves not only on the existing regime, but also on all the political parties, a large part of the political spectrum suffices to float these demands under the general slogan "achieving the goals of the revolution", similar to what has been long raised by the ruling party under the dictatorial regime, as it used to connect the achievement of social demands with what it called "the achievement of overall development."

⁸⁵ <http://is.gd/xNpwpf>

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The political scene in Tunisia prior to January 14, 2014 had been characterized by an almost absolute dominance of Ben Ali's party, "RCD". The opposition, mostly outlawed and repressed, had been particularly represented by the progressive democratic movement that contributed to the struggle against the dictatorship, and played an important role in creating the conditions for throwing it down. So was the Salafist Movement, especially Ennahda Movement party, its most prominent political arm.

This scene changed after the revolutionary uprising. The most notable transformation was dissolving the party that ruled the country with an iron fist for more than half a century. Several political parties, radical left-wing and Salafist parties had a public and legal presence for the first time in the political arena. Also, the democratic movement in general witnessed profound transformations that led to its disintegration and to the reformation thereof of the central trade union, the General Union of Tunisian Workers, the UTICA, the Federation of Industry and Commerce as active agents in the political arena. Their role has continued to be evident in the absence of a political force able to fill the political vacuum left by the dissolved "RCD" party.

These various forces play a crucial role in all matters related to social demands, and the achievement of social justice, claimed by the toiling classes. This role varies between those who advocate these demands and those who reject them, according to the social nature of each of these forces.

While the democratic movement had been traditionally supportive of the economic and social rights of all male and female Tunisians, the significant changes that took place after the revolution, however, changes its social attitudes drastically. Whereas the movement was united through the struggle against political despotism and the violation of basic democratic and social rights, the post-Ben Ali reality increased internal polarization, between a reformist wing upholding the interests of local and global big bourgeoisie, and another wing maintaining its social progressive nature (although some of its components remained under the influence of the bourgeois reform ideology), comprising mainly the Popular Front, as well as the General Union of Tunisian Workers, which has been and continues to be a focal point of the democratic progressive movement in Tunisia, and finally a wing revolutionary, the smallest in volume, which is engaged directly in the revolutionary movement, but remains unable to organize the movement and to activate its process. The working class and the

toiling classes generally are still either isolated politically, or under the influence of the politically active forces.

The reformist wing of the democratic movement has continued, ever since the fall of Ben Ali, to play the role of the tensile strength of the revolutionary process, the restrainer of struggles and the party that gives more importance to the consensus than to the demands of the Revolution, the completion of its course, and the deepening of the rift with the existing regime. In parallel, this wing contributes to the re-formulating of a new political force to substitute the dissolved ruling party, and be able to restore stability to the existing regime. In this context, various components of this reformist wing have undergone a process of convergence and coherence with many of the leaders and the political forces who used to belong to the Ben Ali regime. Among the most prominent political formations created is the Party of Nida' Tunis (Tunis Appeal), which is, in terms of voting intentions in the upcoming elections, the main political party, after it managed to snatch the lead from the Ennahda (Renaissance) Movement party.

The Tunis Appeal and many other parties like it, both those allied with it in the "Union for Tunisia," or the group of parties descendant of the dissolved Tajamu' Party, are the most resolute enemies of the economic rights of the popular classes at this stage. An important part of this group had supervised the austerity and neo-liberal capitalism policies, and facilitated the neo-colonial re-acquisition of Tunisia. Nowadays, the Tajamu' network is undergoing a considerable recovery, and a strong return to the political arena, taking advantage of the deterioration of the general situation in the country, and the inability of the various political forces to achieve the social demands of the revolution.

Today the Tunisia Appeal Party is no longer bothered to hide its neo-liberal capitalist orientation. It supports today the Mahdi Jum'a government, which has been charged to apply the calls for austerity by the international financial institutions and the European Union, and to accelerate the pace of neo-liberal capitalist restructuring of the economy in Tunisia; a program that seeks to install a social system that people revolted against.

On the other hand, the progressive democratic movement is dominated by hesitation and alternates between active support for the demands of the revolution, and lining up behind liberal and reformist forces under the pretext of giving priority to successful "democratic transition" before going into the economic and social issues. Although the Popular Front its support, discourse and field

struggle that it embraces the demands of the revolution, it often sets aside these issues.

The Salafist movement found a fertile ground to spread its ideas easily among the masses, exhausted by exploitation and injustice, crushed by poverty, and humiliated by foreign powers and neo-colonialism. The movement confirmed its success in the October 2011 elections, which enabled it to take power and to be able to realize its program, not to mention that roughly 40 percent of the voters have placed their confidence in the Islamists and have hung high hopes on their electoral promises.

The two biggest parties currently in Tunisia agree on adopting a neo-liberal capitalist economic system. Meanwhile, the Popular Front, the third political force rejects this system, as its program calls for the need to "adopt a national pattern of development that cuts with the existing pattern." But these political forces agree on the importance of social demands advocated by the revolution. The important difference is that the Popular Front has not yet ascended to power, and therefore it is not possible to ascertain the sincerity of its intentions. On the other hand, power was practiced by the Ennahda Movement, specially Nida' Tunis Party, which consists primarily of Tajamu' and Dostur leaders who took over the rule for more than half a century. Moreover, Essebsi, the founder of Nida' Tunis and one of the leaders of the former regime, had supervised the plan of the prime minister from March to November 2011, and therefore it was possible to put their words and promises to the test of concrete experience.

The Ennahda Movement adopts the social justice theme, which was echoed many times in its election campaigning "for Tunisia of freedom, justice and dignity."⁸⁶ Our pattern for development is based on three basic congruent premises: the demands of the revolution; the expectations of citizens that focus is placed on employment, freedom, dignity, social justice and ending corruption; and balanced regional development.⁸⁷ As well as: "our pattern for development for the next phase is based on the principles of expansion, diversification and integration, and is translated into the following general objectives: to achieve social

⁸⁶Program of the Ennahda Movement, <http://is.gd/xrrJmY>

⁸⁷Ibid, p. 17

justice through fighting poverty and raising the standard of living of the citizen.⁸⁸"

Then, the Ennahda Movement promised the Tunisians, in the event of victory in the elections with a vast number of measures and initiatives included in the items of its campaign of which there are 365, mostly related to living conditions of the Tunisian people, "so that no one Tunisian remains poor."⁸⁹ One of these measures, in particular, is to be mentioned: "the application of an economic and social plan aimed at providing jobs for male and female Tunisians, and facilities for a decent life and at achieving regional development,⁹⁰ and "addressing the issue of employment as a national issue...and ensuring regional balance through the development of infrastructure and communal facilities in underprivileged areas... and taking measures to achieve food security..."

Regarding the position of Nida' Tunis Party on demands for social justice, it is hard to find such a position due to the lack of any published program of the party. It would suffice to mention some general statements that we find on the party's website the chapter titled "Our Program "⁹¹ where we read: "The Nida' Tunis Party would introduce a road map that takes the shape of an urgent plan to address the current deteriorating situation. It would also present an integrated draft program for the next five years, and a plan for funding it, so as to provide solutions for the aspirations of young people and regions and to support development programs." As well as "Our movement emphasizes the need for a historic compromise between the country's active forces and the forces of production leading to a new social contract to be drafted through dialogue between active politicians, trade unionists and professionals." Such a new social contract would allow the establishment of social dialogue and the principle of decent work on the ground. It would also secure the professional processes and the right to continuous training throughout one's professional life with the adoption of social protection systems between the state, trade unions and the UTICA. In parallel, it would secure all the means to improve the competitiveness of the economic system which represents the first guarantee to create wealth and jobs. The social contract would also allow launching an income policy that secures the purchasing power

⁸⁸Ibid, p. 17

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid, p.37

⁹¹ Program of the Ennahda Movement; <http://is.gd/xrrJmY>

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of the middle and popular classes. Then, "we emphasize in parallel the pivotal role of private institutions and investment in overcoming the current crisis and creating new jobs. But the difficulty of the current economic situation makes it the duty of the state to pledge a National employment program to include a package of extraordinary measures in order to address the acute unemployment among young people on an urgent basis within two years, a period necessary for the return of economic growth to an ascending pattern."

While the experience of the long rule tests the sincerity of the social intentions of the Nida' Tunis Party, and its willingness to achieve the aspirations of young people and the regions, in fact the party itself answers to this issue, albeit indirectly, as it maintains that the achievement of social justice is derived from economic growth, the market and free trade – a claim proven void by Tunisia's past experiences. Moreover, the sincerity of Nida' Tunis is revealed by its continued support for social and economic policies that have been imposed by the financial institutions on Tunisia for more than quarter of a century.

The Ennahda Movement is not in a better shape, despite its enthusiastic and generous social promises. Now, it is no longer difficult to decide on this issue after its ability to reach power and form the tripartite government coalition (Troika) with a comfortable majority in the Constituent Assembly. The Movement, along the lines of Nida' Tunis party, announced adoption of the "free economy" label, a palliative name for the dominant economic system, in spite of admitting "the inability of former economic pattern to solve problems of the Tunisian economy, specially the unemployment and regional disparities." We can also bring to memory the most prominent social promises committed by the Movement on the eve of the October 2011 elections that brought it to power; promises the Movement did not achieve, especially those on employment, as it promised to create half a million jobs, which they then reduced to 300,000 jobs. The Troika government, led by the Ennahda, ended up declaring a freeze on recruitment in civil service during 2014, a decision that the governments of Ben-Ali did not dare to take. It also broke its promise to increase the minimum industrial and the agricultural wage increase during 2013, contrary to what has been the practice since the end of the eighties of the last century. The government also promised the creation of a fund for unemployment but it was not established, despite demands made in this regard by the General Union of

Tunisian Workers, and many of the unemployed organizations, specially the Union of Unemployed holders of university degrees.

In the final analysis, the liberal capitalist parties pay lip service to the social justice theme, but in fact they implement the policies of austerity and restructuring that exacerbate social inequalities and fuel social crisis, and the only treatment they offer victims is promises of a better future, while keeping an eye on the fruits of economic growth and the growing profits of capitalist projects, especially those foreign, or on charity projects that the wealthy are asked to guarantee by donations .

After two years of rule, the Ennahda government was forced to resign on January 9, against the backdrop of large protests that swept the country, condemning the government's decision to impose new royalties on the transport sector. These were preceded by a wave of large protests and demonstrations, during the summer of 2013, which involved hundreds of thousands of male and female citizens, demanding dissolution of the institutions that have emerged as a result of October 2011 elections. They were spurred by increasing unemployment, the deterioration in purchasing power, the exacerbated crisis in interior regions, the decline in economic activity and the lack of security, especially because of the spread of the jihadist terrorist groups, suspicions of financial corruption, such as "Sheraton Gate", and because the former foreign minister was a relative-by-marriage of its president.

On the other hand, the Popular Front represents the only force coalition at the moment to adopt social justice in its discourse, and seeks through its programs to propose change in the economic and social logic prevalent in Tunisia, and to rearrange local priorities to make them compatible with the principles and objectives of social justice.

The innovation of alternatives and the formulation of programs are no less important than social justice, including the persuading of those concerned, to participate in the formulation of these alternatives and programs and in the continuous struggle for those who are most in need of practical and immediate answers to their urgent demands is necessary to create a balance of social power, that alone can reverse the prevailing political direction, and to initiate the construction of a new Tunisia, based on social justice, freedom and national sovereignty.

In the general preface of the program of the Popular Front we find one of the main goals of the Front, "to achieve social justice." The

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Front maintains that its achievement depends on strengthening the vital role of the state in economy, being a producer and consumer at the same time. This could be achieved particularly through: "activating the role of national and democratic participatory planning of the economy at all levels: local, regional and central. This would also be done through strengthening the role of the state, and protecting the emerging sectors from foreign competition; dealing seriously with national capital in the current transition phase, and making it a party contributing to building the national economy and a supporter of the state effort"; as well as "supporting the social and cooperative economy through legislating a basic law that defines the principles on which the economy is to be based, particularly the principle of the human being over capital; establishing production and services cooperatives and developmental associations as a framework for this sector; setting the necessary mechanisms for its funding and development; and finally, setting the rules for a transparent democratic governance within its components." Finally, by "ensuring economic, social, cultural and environmental rights achieve dignity, and activate national development. There is no dignity for the female and male citizens without guaranteeing such rights, which are the basic obligations and commitments of the state. Additionally, ensuring such rights for all citizens is a prerequisite for their effective participation in the achievement of national development objectives."

Finally, it seems that Tunisia is going to move further away from the goals of social justice, especially following the formation of the Government of "competencies", headed by Mehdi Jum'a, since the end of last January. Jum'a announced, immediately after getting the confidence of the Constituent Assembly, that he agreed to the IMF program through a written commitment accepting and extending the period of the program for structural reforms from June 2015 to March 2016. Such an announcement signals a plain commitment to accept the terms of the agreement that the Ennahda government concluded with the IMF in April 2013 at Washington.

Can the Jum'a Government be, at the same time, faithful to the goals of revolution, and obedient to the instructions of foreign capitalist circles? As the Ennahda Movement spared no effort in applying the same policy, the Jum'a government will continue along the same path, but without fear from the ballot boxes that hinders its operation.

Jum'a Government faces a very delicate situation which is characterized by the economic, social, and security fears besieging

all Tunisian women and men. In addition to the continued economic and social policies followed before the revolution, the successive governments agreed with colonial financial and political circles, especially the IMF, the World Bank and the EU upon several programs all aiming to accelerate new capitalist liberal adjustments and expand their scope as well as continuing the austerity policy.

It is clear today, beyond any doubt, that the Mehdi Jum'a Government has not quit the application of this policy which is hostile to the interests of laboring and toiling classes in general. It is charged with implementing an austerity budget prepared by the government of the Troika and ratified by the Constituent Assembly. The budget commits the state, and the private sector, to freeze wages in parallel with the increase in direct and indirect taxation, and the reduction of subsidies for basic items and energy sources, resulting in further, unprecedented erosion of the purchasing power of the wage earners and the popular and middle classes. The current budget also commits the state to stop recruitment and refrain from initiating projects. At the same time, the ruling class decided to reduce the corporate income tax from 30 to 25 percent. The measures taken by the current government represent activation of the conditions in the agreement signed in April 2013 in Washington between the Troika government and the International Monetary Fund, and the recent agreement signed with the European Union in Luxembourg on 20 April 2014.

Such policies, hostile to all wage earners and toiling masses, are continued with cruelty at a time of increasing unemployment and the marginalization of hundreds of thousands of workers, including unemployed university degree holders. Moreover, the natural wealth of the country and its financial resources are still being depleted and looted through the continued corrupt system of debts and the smuggling of capital abroad.

Foreign powers represent the main obstacle in the way of social justice and national liberation in Tunisia. These powers have tightened their political and economic grip on Tunisia during the last quarter century, against the backdrop of the failure of the "national democratic transition" which sought to disengage with colonialism and to restore political and economic sovereignty. The failure to ensure development of productive capacities and continued improvement of the living conditions for the majority of people demonstrates inability to support its people.

EU countries, headed by France, rushed immediately after Ben Ali stepped down as leader, to provide political and financial support for

his government, which continued after him, before the revolutionary movement forced it, to leave on Feb, 25. They have continued such support for all successive governments, including the "Troika" government, and especially the current" technocrat government."

"Foreign investment", represents the cornerstone of this capitalist system, and has become the influential party and its main beneficiary. It is also the central player in the system of the neo-liberal capitalist globalization. It falls within a specific historical context that cannot be overlooked when addressing this subject. Accordingly, it cannot be considered, in any way, as a neutral party to the ongoing social struggle in Tunisia.

Contrary to the claims of the prevailing official discourse, "foreign investment" is not a supporter of the Revolution, nor is it the life buoy for realizing the aspirations and ambitions of the Tunisian people. In fact, it was a major actor in enhancing, and benefiting from, the Ben Ali regime, it also was responsible for the damages accrued to the toiling masses, specially the youth, and to the country in general.

One of the most important tasks of the revolutionaries today is to stop the power of foreign investment, as hostile as it is to the interests of the Tunisian people, and to formulate transitional demands that would put the revolutionary movement and the Tunisian people on the track of liberation to create the conditions necessary for realizing a political, economic and social transition that ensures national popular sovereignty and economic and social rights for all female and male Tunisians. We have to be up to the historical responsibility to continue our struggle with the same determination and perseverance as before in order to achieve our goals.

The prevalent discourse established, the idea that " the foreign investment" was " a friend in need is a friend indeed", and that it has always been supportive of individual, communal and national aspirations, and had been at the same time enjoying the absolute freedom and financial privileges offered at the expense of the vital interests of the Tunisian people.

Therefore, this discourse goes on, before as well as after the revolution, glorifying the allegedly positive role played by "foreign investment."

Such ideas aim to weaken Tunisian's self-confidence in their ability – which was demonstrated by overthrowing the dictatorship – to self-liberate and to achieve a better future by individual action,

working in cooperation with friends and siblings, and through the sharing of common interests and objectives with peers. Such statements have been stripped of meaning by consequent regimes in Tunisia when they dropped the slogan of completing national liberation, ensuring rights and achieving prosperity and progress.

The Tunisian Revolution has turned Tunisian women and men from a subject of History into their maker.

No wonder the anti-revolution forces, which have devoted their efforts to servicing the interests of foreign domination powers, are trying today – through repeatedly advancing the idea that salvation is conditioned foreign investment – to break the high spirits of the toiling classes which have forced their will upon their victimizers. Thus, at the time when toiling classes and youth are entering the political arena in order to realize self-determination, the hired forces double their efforts to persuade them that they will have no salvation unless they surrender to the will of global capital. Some of them even send SOS cries towards foreign powers urging them to organize a "Marshal Plan" to rescue Tunisia.

The existence of foreign capital in Tunisia is based on the almost absolute freedom of investment, which it had regained gradually under the rule of Ben Ali, and whose components include a vast range of incentives, diverse tax exemptions and privileges stipulated particularly in the Law for the Encouragement of Investments (1993), the "Protection of Investment" agreements which the Ben-Ali regime has signed with more than 50 countries, and the free trade agreements, notably the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreement (1995).

The semi-absolute freedom enjoyed by foreign capital contradicts, in essence, with the values of citizenship and with democratic principles, such as justice and equality. It also violates the Tunisian constitution whose Chapter 16 states that "paying taxes and contributing to public expenditures are the duty of every person on the basis of equity". As well, it violates all international conventions and treaties signed by the Tunisian State concerning the ensuring, maintaining and developing the individual and collective rights of the population.

Foreign investment also affirms the regional structure established by direct colonialism, which divided Tunisia into a "useful" part (from the point of view of economic interests) to be integrated in world market, and an "un-useful" part to be neglected and marginalized. Therefore, foreign investment holds a vast

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responsibility today for the continued regional imbalance between provinces. This is highlighted today through the geographical distribution of foreign investments in Tunisian territory. The geographic distribution of foreign companies and their employment locations clearly indicates a high degree of concentration in only 2 regions: the east-north and the east-center. There 92% of companies have their offices and employees based, compared to only 8% in the other four regions.

The rejection by the revolting popular masses of such regional disparity, and of the resulting neglect and marginalization of entire regions was one major motive of the Tunisian Revolution. This was a rejection of the spatial structure inherited from direct colonialism, and which successive policies have failed to change since independence. Such failure is not a result, it is a continued domination of the same logic which generated the structure hostile to the interests of the majority of citizens; it is specifically the spatial structure upon which the intervention of "foreign investment" was raised, and contributed to the aggravation of its social and economic repercussions.

Today, such regional imbalance cannot be treated without radically reviewing the economic and social pattern inherited from the defunct regime, starting with getting rid of the yokes of colonial logic maintained by "foreign investment". A serious treatment of this regional imbalance is one of the real development conditions, a development which benefits all social classes. Similar to unemployment, which is considered a waste of potential national capabilities, the regional rift is yet another factor which weakens and dismantles the whole social fabric.

Social Alternatives and Demands

There can be no dignity for Tunisian citizens without the basics of a decent living, in particular; economic, social, cultural and environmental rights, which constitute one of the fundamental duties and commitments of the state. In addition, ensuring these rights for all citizens is a prerequisite for their active participation in achieving national development and the dissemination of social justice in Tunisian society. This essentially requires:

Ensuring the **right to work** through the inclusion in the Constitution of; the adoption a monthly unemployment grant assigned for every seeker of employment; reviewing the Labor Code in order to ensure the rights of workers and wage earners are being honoured; abolishing the system of 48 hours work a week; and setting a

national plan to initiate the reduction of weekly working hours from 40 to 35 hours, which could provide a significant number of jobs.

Improving the **purchasing power** of the state to curb rising prices and fight smuggling and financial monopolies; controlling the mechanisms of determining the minimum wage according to social needs; reviewing of wages so as to ensure the provision of the necessities of life for citizens; viewing the final elimination of poverty as one of the most important priorities of the national state, and providing a minimum, decent living.

It requires as well supported and developing the social service, including in particular:

Education, through setting a national plan for the development of the educational system, and at all levels to ensuring the right to public and free education, by improving its contents regarding national and democrat life, in a such a way that makes the educational process contribute to national development and enhance national sovereignty. And to ensure academic freedom and the development of structures for independent scientific research .The plan should include restructuring the system of vocational training, in addition.

Health: Rehabilitation of the health system, at a national level, so as to ensure a minimum of necessary health services to every citizen, while providing inland areas that lack basic health facilities with more support, especially in the field of specialized medicine and medical equipment.

Housing: Ensuring adequate housing for all Tunisian families; working to reduce the number of loans for social housing; the rehabilitation of public institutions concerned with housing to ensure they can play a role in this field, and not permitting the sale of state-owned land, earmarked for the construction of real estate, to foreign investors.

Transportation: Making public transport a strategic choice; renewal of transport fleets of all kinds in order to improve services; the development of transport infrastructure for roads, railways and airports, and the use of energy-efficient and non-polluting techniques and equipment.

Finally, supporting a system **of social coverage and retirement**, and maintaining the system for supported retirement as a popular asset.

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Tunisia has no other future than one built by its daughters and sons through **the continuation of the revolutionary process** for the effective realization of freedom and dignity, based on ensuring the rights of all workers and, toilers have sovereignty.

The labor and popular mass movement have stood heroically in defense of the objectives of the revolution for freedom, dignity, development and employment, despite all the attempts at home and abroad to prevent this. It is asked today to continue this role in the arena of activism and struggle in order to change the starvation caused by the Troika government; to confront attempts to shoulder the responsibility for the consequences of the crisis on workers and popular classes, and to impose immediate measures leading to the improvement of their social situation and their purchasing power, on the path of realizing the interests of the majority of Tunisian women and men related to employment, development and justice, freedom and dignity.

The Arab Spring Revolutions and the Demand for Social Justice

Fuad al-Salahi

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Introduction

It can be said that the concept of social justice, with its different connotations, form the focus of the fulcrum in the political, social and trade-unionist demands during the period prior to the Spring Revolutions. But it has not been expressed through the popular masses; rather it was the few unions and factional groups that focused their demands on the concept of justice in settling for their rights. With the Arab Spring, the concept has become a demand and a major slogan, and an important component in the stated goals in the various countries of the Arab Any political change is of the size of its revolutions or popular uprisings; social justice as a demand, and as a goal, constitutes the philosophy of such change, which can be realized through a package of institutional and legal measures. It first requires politically committed governments towards its society. Consequently, we cannot deal with the issue of social justice, without defining the nature of the economic policies expressed and embodied procedurally by governments.

When defining the concept of justice, we adopt a broad concept not related only to legal determinants (of rights) but also to economic, social and cultural determinants at the same time. Social justice is a socio-political expression of equal citizenship, as well as equal opportunities and equitable distribution of the fruits of development. It entails not only a fair distribution of wealth and the surplus of economic growth, but also the achievement of equal citizenship, which includes equal opportunities for every citizen such as education, health care, social security and the right of litigation and civil and political rights as stipulated by international conventions. Governments have a duty to support these opportunities and to develop them. The reality of our Arab society reflects class differences in size and ownership of wealth and in individual income, and in how advantage is taken of the educational, cultural, entertainment and health services. Hence, the most important way to achieve justice is through regenerating the functions of the state and the creation of societal-biased political attitudes where economic policies are the gate to justice;

economic policy that does not realize the principle of social justice is an anti-social policy.

Hence the Arab Spring Revolutions (the uprisings / protests) with all their vigor and consequent change have taken place to make social justice a philosophical demand expressed as an aspiration to achieve. Therefore, the demand for freedom, justice and bread are the essence of improving living standards justice. Here is manifested the value of revolution: changes aimed at improving the citizen's life and supporting his/her legal, social and economic needs. Revolutions are not a luxury, nor do they aim to replace one party or group by another. They rather aim at changing the policies and orientations of the whole system, or changing the whole regime while creating another that represents societal-biased elite, policies and attitudes.

Here parties vary in their concepts of social justice .This concept is a key component of the Socialist Left parties, but they are politically weak. It is a slogan for liberal parties expressed only by limited indicators. It is also the same expression of Islamist groups and parties that focus on some indicators, but do not aim to change political orientations.

The Social Justice Concept:

"Social justice" means giving everyone what he deserves, the distribution of material benefits in the society, the achievement of best possible level of equality in the distribution of economic and social riches in a democratic society, and the provision of basic needs on equal footing. The social justice concept is a comprehensive one dealing with all aspects and dimensions of the political economic, cultural, social, legal and human order. Social peace cannot be achieved without social justice, which in essence is equality, solidarity and respect for human rights and dignity (equal opportunities, and equitable distribution of income and wealth).

Hence "social justice" is related to other concepts and processes of sustainable development: democracy, the presence of a national state and community partnership that expands opportunities for individuals. Therefore, social justice cannot be treated in isolation from the general political, economic and institutional context as well. During recent years, the concept of social justice has become the concern of many writers and intellectuals, politicians and parties alike. For John Rawls, social justice is a philosophical and political idea. It is one of the four corners of the green parties of

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the world. Many international movements have been based on justice as their main objective.⁹²

It is within this context that the Arab Spring revolutions have erupted, raising the slogan of social justice as their most important. This has deepened the awareness of criticism of the systems and governments that have revolted against socially just political and economic practices, which have created imbalances in citizenship through corruption, inheritance and depriving citizens of their basic rights. Demonstrators raised this slogan in Tunisia and Egypt as well as in Yemen. It related to the criticism of governments being corrupt and who squandered the national wealth and achieved no success in the development field. It is noted that Yemen has the highest perceived levels of corruption according to internationally recognized indicators. Thus raising the banner of justice and making it a demand only demonstrates young people's awareness and their recognizing of the revolution's social content, and that it does not aim to change the persons or parties; it rather aims at changing a whole system, at rebuilding a political system, rebuilding the state in a way that makes its institutions capable of the realization of development and of economic and political goals, of which social justice is the essence.⁹³

For its part, the United Nations believes that social justice is a fundamental principle of peaceful coexistence within and among nations, which takes place under prosperity. So when the UN calls for the achievement of equality between the sexes, or promoting the rights of indigenous peoples and immigrants it would be upholding the principles of social justice. When it calls for the removal of barriers that people face because of gender, age, race or ethnicity, religion, culture or disability it is supporting of the process of promoting social justice. Accordingly, to the

⁹²The concept of social justice has a special website and of great importance to the parties of the Green in Europe and in the policies of governments and political parties in the Scandinavian countries and even in Germany itself, where economic policy is based on social dimension.

⁹³There terms of reference for the concept of social justice in international law, in the International Charter of the Universal Declaration, the two International conventions and in agreements on rights and freedoms. The Arab countries including Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia have signed and authorized these agreements and are required to incorporate them in domestic legislation.

international organization approved an annual celebration on February 20 as the World Day of Social Justice.

The Constitutional and Legal Expression of the Concept of Social Justice:

Social justice is related to a legal and constitutional framework, with its national terms of reference within each state. It is approved by the adoption of the international terms of reference that governments have ratified, starting with the Universal Declaration and the International Covenants and Conventions on rights of the child, prevention of discrimination against women and others. The legal framework is the essence of the modern state that adopts it in organizing rights and duties, in approving policies and in determining their legitimacy within specific frameworks of decision-making and budget spending. Thus the law and the constitution must define the identity of the state and its philosophy, and the system of rights and freedoms within the society. But the state must be part of the international community and approve of the international legal reference of various laws and conventions that have become of interest for civil society and global political orientation.⁹⁴

Yemen, in its revolution objectives and in its constitution, confirms compliance to the Universal Declaration and the laws and treaties of the United Nations. The governments of Yemen have signed and authenticated a lot of international conventions, not to mention that Yemen has different constitutions whose texts generally include assurances that confirm commitment to justice and equal opportunities, but the practice of governments and parties makes the demand for, and concept of justice an absent and even unattainable one. The National Dialogue Document tried to avoid such gaps. The Document confirmed (point 153, p 208) Yemen's commitment to the international agreements and conventions on human rights, and on Yemen's commitment to international standards on the independence of the judiciary (point No. 30, p 112).

⁹⁴The reality of the Arab Spring revolutions has created similar political and social slogans, including "Bread, Freedom and Social Justice". The demand for justice is unified in these countries, being an expression of the previous failed economic policies, of enhanced disparities and the weakness of the state's social role, and being revealing the reality of the lack of equal opportunities and equality. Hence such demand has been present in the Spring revolutions, and even has been a demand in other Arab countries.

Accordingly, we hope in the years following the Arab Spring that the current and the next governments show great concern in the legal and constitutional support for social justice. Here in Yemen we are passing through a process of building a new constitution that was preceded by a national dialogue about social justice. The rest of the responsibility rests on the shoulders of the political parties and civil society through direct pressure, so that the provisions of the new constitution reflect the aspirations and objectives of the revolution: development, democracy and social justice. In a previous study on the integration of women's rights in the new constitution, I dealt with a text supportive of social justice; not enough is what was stated in the previous constitution, which stipulates in Article VI that the state confirms commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the League of Arab States and the generally recognized rules of international law. There must be another text emphasizing the priority of application of the international conventions and treaties ratified by the government; the acceptance thereof in courts and litigation and drafting domestic legislation according to those conventions and treaties.⁹⁵

It is noted that the majority of the laws and constitutions of Arab countries, including the constitution and laws of Yemen, suffer a lack of texts related to the achievement of social justice. Our country does not give priority and attention to the application of the ratified international conventions, thus we find discrimination against women and multiple social groups; neglect of the countryside and social and economic issues; the absence of a social security network and the grievous lack of provision of health services to women; children and the general public. There are also shortcomings in the laws pertaining to the follow-up of cases of corruption that are the most important issues and fields affecting the achievement of justice. Corruption involves the waste of public money, especially a deduction from the social and economic budgets that would have provided services to the citizens.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Fuad Al-Salahi, " Integrating the Rights of Women in the New Yemeni Constitution", a paper submitted to the panel discussion on constitutionalizing of women rights, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Beirut, San'a, 2013.

For further reading, see: Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights, the fifth report on economic and social rights in Yemen, 2009.

⁹⁶ For further reading, see: Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights, the fifth report on economic and social rights in Yemen, 2009.

Therefore Yemen is ranked 167 among 177 countries in the Corruption Perception Index released by the Transparency International in 2013.⁹⁷

Therefore, the provisions of the new constitution must include clear and specific articles to ensure social justice as a cornerstone of the regime and of public policies. The texts on equal opportunities for all citizens and their right to education, health and employment and the right to compulsory and free basic education, without activating the legal and institutional procedures as to turn them from words into tangible rights and services recognized by ordinary citizens, remain mere theoretical texts that could not be verified in practice. Here arises the task of the government, political parties and civil society need to translate their struggles from converting theory into reality through administrative and institutional procedures that enable the citizen to attain his/her rights equally with others and without discrimination or exclusion.

Social Justice as a Key Demand for the Arab Spring Revolutions:

We see in social justice the most important demand of the Spring Revolutions, especially in our country, where the need to start the revolution was recognized by everyone, with rampant corruption, discrimination in jobs, deliberate exclusion of multiple categories and groups, and wasted national wealth in ceremonial and absurd practices that do not serve the citizens, not to mention the increasing rates of poverty and unemployment, the poor basic public services and election fraud. The rate of poverty in Yemen is the highest ever in the Middle East and North Africa – which according to the World Bank amounted to 17% in 2010, including 60% of young people. Yemen also recorded the highest rate of poverty as well, where 17% live on less than \$ 1.20 a day, while half the population lives on less than \$ 2 per day.⁹⁸

All these were factors and causes that paved the way for a revolutionary situation which culminated in the February 11 2011 Revolution, which was a surprise to the regime and to the political parties by its loud cry and by raising the ceiling of its political and

⁹⁷ "Yemen retreat in the fight against corruption for the past year", Yemeni Group for Transparency and Integrity releases Corruption Perceptions Index for 2013, the site of Amanat, December 4, 2014.

⁹⁸ "Unemployment and poverty in Yemen highest in the region", Al-Hayat, London, February 19, 2014. <http://is.gd/HMEI7K>. (Arabic).

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social demands. Therefore, getting out of the tunnel of crises that have accumulated under the former regime, and the failure of the current governments that followed the revolution requires the adoption of a decisive strategic vision regarding the issue of development, the fight against corruption, rehabilitation to the state and its institutions, and making the social services on the list of the government's priorities. The objectives of the revolution, which have focused on freedom, justice and citizenship, are all interconnected. They involve an integrated vision for realization of programs and policies that promote the political and social change of renewed economic perspectives in accordance with renewed policies in operational and management measures.

It is noted that the demand for social justice promotes the philosophy of the party and political left – that its founding ideological and political perspectives stem from making demanding justice. The reality of the situation in our country, however, shows that these parties have not risen to a level of perception and awareness that looks at the demands of the evolution as demands for political parties to support change. Although the parties that have emerged in the "Change Squares" are today in the position of political decision-making, nevertheless we do not see any real policy of the government and its parties for political and economic performance, rather they focus on job quotas that have produced inequality and reinforced exclusion, which was rejected and was formerly one the causes of revolution.⁹⁹

The civil society and political parties in Yemen – as in the countries of the Arab Spring – are facing an important battle on the drafting of a situation that includes and emphasizes the importance of social justice in the economic, social and political fields, in light of the importance of the new constitution meeting the aspirations of the people under the revolution. In this regard, we must overcome the shortcomings of the previous constitution, whose texts only spoke about equal opportunities and increasing employment and

⁹⁹ The Spring Revolutions and their political philosophy enhances the Left and uphold its role in the context of making social justice the most important among its political and ideological guidelines and the most important among issues of societal struggles. See: Fuad al-Salahi, "A Vision for a New Left in Yemen", a study presented at the first conference entitled: New Left and Social Justice, Sanaa, June 2013.

health services of the rights of the citizen, without any reference as to how this might happen.

Hence the new constitution must emphasize the importance of gender and rural development, the integration of the marginalized economically, socially and politically and the promotion of the issue of social security for the poor and unemployed. All such matters involve a battle that I do not think that the political parties, civil society organizations and trade unions are ready to fight. The status quo reflects the fragmentation and interdivision of these forces, and the lack of attention paid by such parties to social issue, so that they are not ready to develop their political program. The duty of the government, political parties, and civil society and youth organizations is to act within a coalition that mobilizes efforts for the ratification of a constitution and policies that ensure the citizen is its basic concern. Hence, we understand the insistence of youth in the "Change Squares" to make justice one of their demands and even the most important one.

Social Justice between Advocacy and the Inability of Governments:

The most important problem facing the achievement of the social justice demand in our country is not only to incorporate such a demand as a clearly defined constitutional issue relating to economic, social and political fields, but for it also to relate to the government, which came after the revolution. This government is not a revolutionary government - it came as a result of a political initiative, which aborted the revolutionary process and which adopted a political party's quota approach. This was the first pillar for denying the achievement of social justice because the political quota system in the public service - starting with cabinet seats and down - is a flagrant aggression against the principles of justice, equity and equality. All measures during the last two years proved that the government's attention was focused on enhancing the stakes and spoils of political parties, without heed to the demands of citizens, which worsened by raising the prices of oil derivatives, the monopoly on basic goods and services, poor health services, lack of jobs, unemployment, and weak institutions of social protection for the poor. A closer look at the social reality shows increasing rates of poverty, unemployment and lack of services in the rural areas, which constitute the majority of the population, in contrast to conspicuous spending by the government, and increasing corruption, and the failure to collective

corporate tax. Here we find a lack of good governance in managing the public affairs or the state budget.¹⁰⁰

Perhaps the social issue raises legitimate questions about how to achieve justice in the education, housing, employment and health levels, as well as levels of voting and running in parliamentary and local elections and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. The link between the two processes is very important because the marginalized and politically non-active citizen may not have economic and social rights and therefore be able to express himself when deprived of his rights. Therefore, we focus on the importance of the link between the democratic process and the achievement of social justice; social issue is central to the democratic and institutional construction itself. The two cannot be separated, especially under the concept of human and sustained, inclusive development that concerns the social dimension as well as the economic and political dimensions.

The justifications by the government of the continued crisis for the economy and social justice are not convincing for anyone. Such crises began looming on the social level because of continued unemployment and the inability of individual incomes to meet the needs of daily life, and the resulting spread of poverty and social vulnerability, and therefore widening the circle of protests. I think that a new wave of protest, and even of popular uprising, would be targeting the demands of social justice of which youth and activists at the Change Squares have become aware, and the higher rates of poverty and unemployment during the period following the evolution.

Here, the author calls upon the parties, the state and government to establish their principles of social justice. In other words, the spirit which establishes the intellectual terms of reference for the state and political parties is democracy, namely, the political and social process for the realization of the principle of social justice. The strategic options of the parties must focus on the interests of the citizens, especially the poor and low-income people in

¹⁰⁰According to local, regional and international reports, Yemeni current and previous governments are characterized by bad governance and are weak and fragile. Rates of corruption in Yemen rise conversely with the weakness of the government's performance and the absence of governance. Yemen ranked late in global corruption indicators at a rate of 2.8, thus being one of the most corrupt states and governments,

achieving their basic demands for education, health, employment, housing, environmental protection, and end to corruption, and the equitable distribution of wealth. Even when the government chooses a market economy approach in accordance with the World Bank and IMF, it must make the choice conditional on social responsibility in the interests of the poor and the middle classes – the majority of society. The World Bank has called on the Yemeni government to cut expenses and reform its subsidy system, especially energy subsidies.¹⁰¹ The current challenges our country faces are: the consolidation of the democratic process and building the cornerstones of a comprehensive and sustained development based on respect for individual and collective rights; the fight against the rentier economy and corruption of all forms; the rehabilitation of political action, including the citizen's confidence in the feasibility of participation in public affairs; achieving economic efficiency through policies of technical accumulation in the areas of production, allocation of financial resources to support capacity in research and development; and ensuring equitable distribution of national wealth which guarantees citizens, each according to his effort, acceptable social welfare.

Social Justice according to a New Vision of Economic Policies:

The realization of social justice is not only a matter of constitution provisions, but also of policy guidelines and state bias to achieve justice. Accordingly it is necessary to change economic policies to be effective and justice oriented. Hence, there is no benefit in adopting a market economy without controls and without social routers. It does not help for the state to simply be a guardian of economic activity, without creating balance and support for social groups that do not receive attention from profit-making enterprises and institutions. Hence it is necessary to adopt a new economic perspective that achieves development, enhances the opportunities for economic growth and activates national capital and at the same time realizes social justice; namely, it is necessary to adopt a social market economy as a new economic model that achieves compatibility between both the profit-making economy and socio-political model. Such an economic outlook would take care of human resources, sustained training, sustained

¹⁰¹World Bank Country Director in Yemen "Reforms are an integrated package, and not selective," Al-Hayat (London), May 14, 2014.<http://is.gd/bZBee1>

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economic growth, environmental protection and the rights of future generations.¹⁰²

The social market economy alone is adequate enough for the needs of Yemen – it is also better for the Arab Spring countries. Economic growth and the redistribution of development benefits can only be attained through political and constitutional support and a systematic orientation that determines the economic policies by the state, that are sympathetic to the majority of people, and ensuring the alleviation of poverty and unemployment is the government's key goal and its national, legal and moral commitment. Thus the partnership between the government, the private sector and civil society, in the framework of promoting development, raising production efficiency and enhancing employment and training benefits, becomes a realization of the principle of equity and equality.

Such an economic model combines the political issue of democracy and the economic issue for the sake of social justice. In other words, democratic choices need to be strengthened by institutional and constitutional reforms, by whatever fundamentals needed for realizing social justice and equity among individuals, and enhancing the rule of law. "This means that the democratic process is not complete without the realization of social justice. The political and moral responsibility for the political actors (government; political parties; the regime in general) must acknowledge the objectives of social justice and support its achievement through the necessary provisions and legislation.

There is a possibility of building a new Yemen through social democracy that necessitates the economy participate, and social solidarity be institutionalized, along with support for vital social budgets for services such as education, scientific research, health and housing, activation of good governance, emphasizing that the

¹⁰² The researcher offers a new vision for linking social justice and economic policies and calls for a change in the current policies that rely on the World Bank recipe of adoption of privatization, flotation of local currencies and the American pattern of neo-liberalism towards adopting a renewed perspective of connotations and dimensions that combines market economy and social dimension according to an integrated political and economic vision. See: Fuad al-Salahi, *The Social Market Economy (Concept, Issues and Policies)*, Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Sana'a, Vol. 34, No. 3-2013.

optimal investment of human resources is an introduction to an active integration to the knowledge economy and its scientific and technological applications in a way to be able to face the challenges of sustained development under a globalized economy. Such an economy is mainly based on the achievement of a new generation of economic, political, social and cultural reforms, through the adoption of the tools of democracy

In this regard, we should draw inspiration from international experiences in the field of development and justice, and benefit from the Germany, the Scandinavian countries, as well as Brazil, who have achieved significant economic growth supported by a majority of the population on the basis of social demands. Here, the challenge facing future governments and the main challenge for the revolution forces and their components is to become fully aware of the necessity of concurrent social and economic tracks. It is also to form strong political blocs to pressure the government to adopt economic and political perspectives which achieve justice as well as development. In this context, the Arab youth should be aware of the fact that their revolutionary Spring (the spring of freedom) has put an end to the tradeoff between bread and freedom and has made it clear that there is no way that they will give preference to one rather than the other demand - because the two demands together form one demand and one process.¹⁰³

The most difficult obstacle to social justice is the absence of an economic framework guiding the government, thus its decisions are subject to arbitrary concerns serving the business elite and power centers. Focusing on economic growth and mathematical indicators only undermines the social justice principle. The indicators that measure progress made towards achieving development include the poverty rate, unemployment, inequality, and neglect of public

¹⁰³The reality of the Arab Spring countries and the policies of post-Revolution governments are characterized by a confused performance and justifications unacceptable on the social and political levels in the framework of adopting the binaries they claim contradictory; including those of bread or freedom, development or democracy, security or democracy. Hence, the researcher asserts that there are no contradictions between all these binaries. Our Arab reality and demands of revolutions do not seek to swap between bread and freedom, freedom and development, development and security or democracy, as they are all constitute an integrated system of procedures, policies and issues that should draw serious attention of governments as well as of masses and the civil society.

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services and goods rather than relying only on indicators of income and gross national product. The modern concept of development necessitates the elimination of sources of deprivation of liberty, such as poverty, lack of economic opportunities and social deprivation, neglect of public services and manifestations of political and economic repression. What is the feasibility of development if the rate of per capita income increased while indicators of poverty, unemployment and inequality remained as they are? This modern concept affirms the role of people as partners in progress, not only as categories benefiting from development programs, and in evaluating whether this development has contributed to the strengthening and expansion of freedoms. Democracy plays a double role as an objective and a means of enriching the lives of human beings and it includes the ability to avoid the kinds of deprivation such as hunger and ill health, and to enjoy all freedoms associated with knowledge, education and political participation.

The bottom line is: social justice lies at the heart of demands for change and reform in our country and the countries of the Arab Spring because of the failure to achieve development based on social justice, and the involvement of the government in the implementation of policies that reinforce poverty, marginalization, exclusion and inequality. Social justice can be achieved, and standards, targets and indicators to measure the extent to which it is fulfilled can be set, if the political will exists. Such will, which should be reflected by the government formed from revolution and change, but this is lacking, as the government is still made up of traditional parties that were not on the side of the revolution. They overtook the political process by joining the Change Squares, which adopted the approach of quotas in government seats. At this point, the youth and the rebels disappeared while and the pre-revolution forces emerged renewing their political alliances.

Five Pillars for Achieving Social Justice:

1. Equal citizenship (equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities).
2. Equitable distribution of national resources (distribution of the fruits of development).
3. Social security for the poor, the unemployed and the destitute.
4. The provision of basic services and commodities and subsidies for them.

5. Independence of the judiciary and ensuring the right to litigation is guaranteed to all citizens without discrimination.

We in Yemen – and in all the Arab Spring countries, need a new pattern of development that goes beyond the objectives of economic growth and meets the needs of people. In this regard, the social market economy is the optimal alternative to achieve sustained development with its economic, social and environmental dimensions. We need to reconsider the minimum and maximum wages and to link them to the value of monetary value goods; to give the issue of providing jobs for young people the attention it deserves; to reconsider the tax policy towards the adoption of tax policies that are more graduated in order to fund key programs such as education and social protection; to provide a well-designed social security system that ensures the expansion of the social insurance umbrella which is based on contributions and unemployment benefits, and to establish grounds for social protection of the most vulnerable people beyond just the minimum economic rights.

In this context, it should be noted that there are a range of challenges facing the achievement of the most prominent objective of Arab Spring revolution states; that is social justice, under partisan governments that do not pay enough attention to the community and continue to act through the same mechanisms and procedures as before, in addition to the absence of an economic philosophy that guides the government and to the adoption of arbitrary administrative procedures as to deciding on the economic issue without an integrated vision of its economic and social dimensions. It is noted that the government's interest in economic growth alone would not prevent repeated popular uprisings and protests, and even revolutions. In the end, the achievement of social justice is conditioned by the realization of the civil state with modern institutions and philosophy of governance, activation of the mechanisms of national integrity and adopting of an economic perspective that would attain development and equal opportunities at the same time; that would attain the right balance between economic and social processes at the same time.

Social Justice (the Case of Yemen)

In the context of the revolutionary scene in Yemen in 2011, a change in the whole regime was sought, and in response to this the political parties rushed out a political initiative, which turned the revolutionary action into play of bargaining between political parties that had never been at the side of change and revolution (the religious parties) or have been for change and revolution, but

turned toward pragmatism. Government quotas were formed between the political parties in February 2012 following the signing of the Initiative in November 2011. The Government acted in accordance with the provisions of the Initiative, targeting political, security and economic stability, especially as it was formed after the referendum on Prime Minister agreed upon in February 21, 2012, rather than working hard for the adoption of transitional justice; improvement of the lives of citizens, which had been severely damaged as a result of the security chaos and electricity cuts, which continue even today and investigating the serious violations of the rights of individuals participating in the popular demonstrations and into the file of missing persons, in whom public interest has been on the rise, and expressed in the mural paintings of most streets of the capital. It is noted that this file goes back more than thirty years, and that the number of the forcibly missing persons among revolution youth has been increasing because of security chaos.

The government moved toward activating the interests of its member parties and of the power centers at the expense of the citizen, whom the government collectively punished through a 100% increase in the price of oil derivatives. The citizens took the burden of this increase hoping that it would create economic stability and be an introduction to government consensus that entails political consensus and a comprehensive security solution. This increase negatively impacted in higher prices for all commodities (food and medical care) and increased the suffering of the poor and unemployed who are the majority of the population: 60% of the population living in poverty are unable to meet all their basic needs; the unemployment rate rose to 34% among the age groups that are of working age; medical services do not cover the whole country with only 51% benefiting from medical care; electricity is available to only 35% of the population, and there are cases of deliberate neglect of educational services, especially toward poor families who are forced to withdraw their children and daughters from school.¹⁰⁴ Hence we have been always raising our voices asking that the social justice file occupy a priority in government concern; that economic measures with a

¹⁰⁴ For statistics on the rate of poverty, unemployment and poor social services see: The Statistical Yearbook for 2012 issued by a government department. See in contrast the report of an NGO (The Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights), 2009 and 2010 on the same issues of poverty and unemployment.

social dimension are undertaken; that the interests of the majority of the population related to education and health should be the government's concern and political commitment, while all this was lacking and the government showed concern only for the interests of the political parties and power centers at the expense of the majority and of the social justice file.

It is worth mentioning that hope of the realization of social justice, which was the slogan, demand and target of the revolution, faded with the government's practices of favoring partisan interests. No attention was paid to the families of the martyrs and no care was extended to the wounded persons despite the availability of financial resources provided to Yemen by Arab friendly countries. The government also continued its anti-law and anti-justice practices by providing job opportunities in the military and civil society for partisan quotas that do not depend on equal opportunity and do not care about the poor and unemployed who participated in the revolution in order to improve their living standards, which worsened with the government quota system. The most prominent features of the lack of social justice were:

1. Neglect of the martyrs and wounded persons from the rebels ranks;
2. Discrimination in dealing with the injured, independent youth compared to injured party members;
3. Lack of concern for the file of forcibly missing persons;
4. No intensive investigations into the violations committed within the Change Squares where security officers and military and political leaders were accused;
5. Lack of concern for the file of the poor and the unemployed;
6. Adoption of economic measures that doubled the suffering of the poor and the majority of the people;
7. The continued collective punishment by cutting off electricity for three consecutive years;
8. Lack of interest in the files of education and health as key issues of social justice through people's access to their right to public services;
9. Lack of attention to the protection of citizens as a result of the security chaos and proliferation of armed groups inside and outside cities, resulting in serious violations against tens of individuals ; and

10. Loss of confidence of the citizen in government and the new regime for their lack of concern for social justice and focusing instead on a partisan quota system which constituted an aggression against the principles of equality and equal opportunities.

In this context, in accordance with previous indicators, the file for social justice was absent and it was absent through government actions; it was a slogan and declared goal of the revolution. It can be argued that governments formed through a partisan quota system pay little attention to social justice because parties and power centers focus on their own issues. Thus the revolution in Yemen became absent; cases of frustration among the youth increased; the individual and collective mood was confused; and the citizen lost confidence in the government and parties all together. The adoption by the government of arbitrary economic measures with no comprehensive vision impacted negatively on the interests of the majority of the population, while the ABCs of official government operation states that social issues be present in all policies and measures. It is also noted that the absence of the social dimension in the economic perspective currently adopted the government makes it hostile to the social justice community. A whole group of people cannot be punished by a government that came to power thanks to the blood of martyrs who had raised the slogan and the goal of social justice. The Government later on disavowed their demands and goals on the basis of illogical and unacceptable justifications related to instability and weak financial capabilities. The government paid no attention to the files of education, health and compensation of the victims, or to the wages file overtaken by the increased prices of oil derivatives. Generally speaking, the social justice file is completely absent from the attention of the Yemeni Government, thus leading the way to a new popular uprising.

Third: Intervention Papers

The Case of Social Justice in Morocco

Mohammad Saeed al-Saadi

The demand for social justice constituted a major motivation for the Arab peoples to take to streets three years ago, along with the insistence on the two mottos of freedom and democracy.

The purpose of this brief article is to introduce the development of the social justice problematic with a view to the public policies in Morocco, along with focus on the current stage characterized by the arrival of political Islam to power in Morocco following the social mobility upon the initiative of the February 20, 2011 movement, the Moroccan version of the so-called Arab Spring.

1. The Concept of Social Justice

The concept of social justice has been historically associated with equal opportunities in the distribution of income and wealth, and has fought against all forms of natural or regional disparity and disseminated the values of solidarity within the community, to the effect of realizing the economic and social rights of each citizen. However, such a general definition lacks the mechanisms that enable social justice into a reality. Doing this requires **first:** control by society of the strategic means of production and trade (roads, ports, railways, airports, energy sources and dams), and setting ceilings for the ownership of the means and instruments of production to the effect of meeting the social right. **Second:** the adoption of public policies in various fields such as production of capitalist and consumer commodities, wage and pricing policies, redistribution of income through appropriate fiscal and social policies, providing of social protection, readjustment of tax policies to the effect of reducing the gap between income and wealth, and emphasizing on commitment to educational policies that guarantee equal opportunities for citizens and promote gender equality.

2. A Historical Overview of the Evolution of the Social Justice Situation in Morocco

Following the independence of Morocco in 1956, the struggle for power between the national movement parties and the Palace resulted in King Hassan II's monopoly of power and suppression of his opponents. Such political factors have prevented the issue of social justice from occupying a leading position within the interests of the state and society. That was because the nature of the

political regime and the lack of popular control of government activity enabled a small group of privileged and powerful people to monopolize the fruits resulting from public initiatives and investments.

Indeed, the 1970s witnessed some concern for social issues, especially in the education sector, thanks to the considerable rise of the prices of phosphate in the global market and to the political liberalization that accompanied Morocco in the retrieving of the Western Sahara. Such concern, however, disappeared completely during the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the application of structural adjustment policies and the adoption of the neo-liberal model based on the trilogy of economy liberalization, privatization and austerity at the level of state finances.

The toiling classes and middle classes have paid dearly as a result of the application economic reform programs. In addition to the aggravating unemployment phenomenon, the manifestations of marginalization and poverty widened and the unorganized sector witnessed a considerable expansion; the social sectors, especially education and health, also suffered due to the pressure on public spending. The removal or reduction of subsidies for basic materials remained as the direct causes for the deterioration of the purchasing power of large numbers of citizens and for the spread of poverty and marginalization, which resulted in the outbreak of the popular social uprisings during 1980s and 1990s. The social safety nets aimed to minimize the negative impacts of structural adjustment programs were not instrumental in reducing the damages incurred by the poor. This was due to the marginal nature of such interventions, lack of the allocated financial resources, the multiplicity of programs and weak managerial capacities.

Late in the 1990s, the social justice issue received some attention following the ascendance to power of the opposition, composing the national movement parties, through the so-called "consensual rotation government ". The latter remained faithful to the neo-liberal economic terms of reference. However, it developed an integrated social strategy which included expanding access to basic social services for the benefit of the poorer segments of society, especially in the countryside (reform of the system of education and training, youth employment, literacy, improving the status of persons with disabilities and of childhood, the expansion of social coverage, and the promotion of social housing, etc.).

It is important to emphasize the importance of the project of "National Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in

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Development", which adopted a legal approach to the issue of gender equality, away from the philanthropic and "social" approach that was in place in the past. The project included four main axes concerned with the fields of education, training, the fight against illiteracy and reproductive health; enhancing the economic role of women, and the political and legal empowerment of women, especially through profound reform of the Personal Status Code.

Without denying the achievements of the rotation government in the field of children's education, the paving of roads, connection to water and electricity nets, the initiation of drafting a national system of social protection, and self-empowerment for Moroccan women, the problem of social justice has not been addressed substantially as evidenced by the rank Morocco received on the Human Development Index (Morocco dropped to rank 124 in 2004) after it had scored a temporary improvement in 2001 ranking 112 in 2001 while it ranked 15 among the 20 member countries of the Arab League.

During the first ten years of the third millennium, following the turning of the page of "the rotation government," Morocco's authorities chose to focus on economic growth as a strategic objective with the creation of a new mechanism to combat poverty under the name "National Initiative for Human Development." This initiative consists of several programs: the program for combating social exclusion in urban areas, the program for the fight against poverty in the countryside, the program for the fight against marginalization, and a horizontal program of human development that adopts a participatory approach with groups of local government, civil society and the private sector.

Despite its achievements (as several projects to fight poverty have been launched), the initiative uncovered several deficiencies, including limited financial means compared to the size of social allowances, state control of the projects, the marginalization of groups of local government and civil society institutions, lack of coordination between the sectors and people active in the Initiative, the rigidity of administrative systems, manipulation and embezzlement of public money by some associations, and exploitation of completed projects in the framework of election campaigns, the lack of the elements of financial sustainability in many of the projects, limited contribution by women to the Initiative, etc.

3. The Current Stage: Austerity at the Expense of Social Justice

The popular uprisings in the Arab region led to the overthrow a number of symbols of corruption and tyranny, and revived hopes of its peoples in dignity, freedom, democracy and social justice. As was expected, Morocco, in turn, was engaged in the Arab movement through the February 20 movement, which young Moroccans supported through wide social groups and raising social justice slogans and calling for the elimination of tyranny, corruption, and marriage between power and money.

Such social movements have resulted in Morocco's adoption of a new relatively progressive constitution compared to its predecessors, but it has led in parallel to the arrival of the Islamized current to power.

Among the consequences of such political transformation in favor of the religious right was the increase of neo-liberal options that were prevalent before. The new government has chosen to resort to the International Monetary Fund to help cope with the macro-economic imbalances, both internal and external, and the dramatic decline in hard currency reserves. So, it adopted strict austerity policies aimed at reducing the budget deficit to 3% by 2016, at the expense of investment, employment and social justice. This indicates that Morocco is entering a new phase of structural adjustment, very similar to the 1980s. The most important policies adopted by the conservative Islamist government are expressed in phasing out support for basic materials and pressure on public, especially social, spending. As well, the government adopted some positive measures such as compensation for loss of employment, the expansion of health coverage and the initiation of a Social Solidarity Fund.

The Government embarked on the gradual liberalization of energy prices as the price of gasoline, for example, has risen by more than 30% since 2012, and the HCP expects that such price increases would affect negatively the domestic demand, growth and employment, as the growth rate would drop by 0.15% in 2013 and 0.48% in 2014, and domestic consumption prices would increase by %0.37 and %1.1 for the same period. In contrast, the budget deficit rate would fall by 0.18% in 2013 and 0.58% in 2014.

It should be noted that the government reneged on its promises of targeting poorer social groups to protect their purchasing power as a result of liberalization of energy prices, as they benefit from

redirected cash transfers. In contrast, the impoverishment of the middle classes as a result of lifting support for basic materials would continue.

The so-called policy of reform, the Compensation Fund, suffers as a result of the narrow-minded economic approach focusing on macro-economic balances at the expense of social balances. The priority according to experts of the international financial institutions should focus on the recovery of investor confidence and the repayment of debt, even at the expense of the economic and social rights of citizens. The values of justice, solidarity and non-discrimination remain incomprehensible to the narrow-minded economic thought believing that only the individual is an economic actor looking to maximize the pleasures and profit within "free" competitive markets.

On the other hand, budgets allocated to social sectors have witnessed a significant decline since 2012 due to the pressure on public spending, with the worst consequences on economic growth and on large segments of Moroccan society, especially women and children. Reducing the budgets for national education and health, for example, would negatively impact on the labor productivity in the medium and long terms, and thus reduce the anticipated levels of growth. Also, this policy of austerity makes elusive the achieving of some Millennium Development Goals, such as reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters by the year 2015 and reducing the illiteracy rate to %20. The fact is that the economic and social situation of women in Morocco is miserable, as evidenced by the report of the World Economic Forum on Bridging the Gap between Sexes, Morocco is ranked 129 among 135 countries.

In order to minimize such negative repercussions, the government raised the allocations of the National Initiative for Human Development, doubled the resources allocated to the Social Solidarity Fund, which was created in 2012 to accelerate the process of generalizing the Medical Assistance Scheme (Ramid), as well as to consolidate and broaden the base of beneficiaries of the "facilitation" program of conditional direct financial assistance, and the process of "million purses" for the benefit of needy children.

No doubt, the launch of the process of generalizing "Ramid" is one of the most important initiatives taken by the "Justice and Development Party" Government where it theoretically provides medical coverage for 6.4 million beneficiaries, or 77% of the target

groups. However, deep imbalances limit the effectiveness of this initiative, especially with regard to the lack of human and financial resources available to health institutions and the difficulty of ensuring sustainable financial resources for the "Ramid" system, due to the inability of the beneficiaries and local government groups to contribute financially to the financing of the project, in addition to the manipulations which affected the process of targeting and registration of beneficiaries.

On the other hand, the government began to provide compensation for the loss of jobs starting January 2014, albeit limited, and it covers a period not exceeding six months.

The employment file remains one of the black dots in the balance of the conservative Islamic government, which had promised to reduce the unemployment rate from 9.2% to 8%. In fact, the recent statistics indicate an increase in this ratio to 10.2%. Such failure is due to several factors, the most prominent of which is the considerable decline in public investment as a result of the pressure on public spending, the limited programs applied to revitalize the labor market and the loss by the manufacturing industry of tens of thousands of jobs due to the effects of free trade agreements.

In conclusion, our analysis shows that the issue of social justice was not taken seriously by successive governments since the independence of Morocco, which is due mainly to economic choices and old and new liberal policies adopted by them. Despite the winds of the Arab Spring, these policies are still intact, even some manifestations of exclusion have been exacerbated, including unemployment, class inequalities and the drop in rating of Morocco on the Human Development Index, to rank 130.

Rent Distribution Policies and the Continued Social Protests in Algeria

Fadila Akkash

This intervention tackles the contradiction between the financial well-being of the Algerian state and the high levels of public spending on the one hand, and the escalation of social protests, often resulting from the deterioration of the living conditions of several social groups, on the other.

Indeed, the value of Algerian exports has increased from 19 billion dollars in 2001 to 65 billion dollars by the end 2013, 97% of which were hydrocarbons. The increase of exports in 2013 contributed in achieving a surplus in the trade balance of 9.3 billion dollars, and a surplus in the balance of payments of 0.13 billion dollars, thus the exchange reserves reached 194 billion dollars by the end 2013, compared to 190 billion dollars by the end 2012. These revenues allowed a rise in the levels of public expenditure through various programs of economic recovery and sustaining growth, which exceeded \$ 200 billion dollars in the period between 2004 and 2009, compared to 286 billion dollars for the period of 2010-2014, a great part of which was directed to modernize the basic structures and the value of social transfers increased by more than 156 billion dollars between 1999 and 2012, and wages were repeatedly raised for the benefit of public employees, in addition to support provided to the social security funds through rentier revenues.

On the other hand, the official statistics recorded 10,000 to 12,000 popular protests annually between 2010 and 2012. Most of the demands of protesters focused on two key issues: the first related to the bureaucratic management of citizens' everyday problems and the lack of fairness and transparency; while the second issue related to the lack of development and to the minimum means of decent living, such as lack of drinking water, the erosion of roads isolating villages from the rest of the world, the deficiency in, or lack of, gas pipelines, electricity cuts, rampant unemployment and lack of investments. Such issues reflect the inability of the rent distribution policies to achieve social justice and social stability.

This intervention attempts to explain the reasons for such failure by presenting some of the policies of social distribution and the reasons for the social protests by focusing on the distributive particularities of the rentier state in Algeria, represented mainly in:

1. Enhancing the influence of the ruling state bureaucracy, which derives its legitimacy and stability from its monopoly on the distribution of rents and the continued dominant rent-seeking nature of the state and economy.
2. Monopoly on the distribution of rents through closing channels of expression, restricting public freedoms, the quest for absencing and weakening various political, social and economic forces which can pose alternatives to the ruling party, and the lack of fields open before them to participate in making public policies, which are not compatible with good governance that allows a rational distribution of resources.
3. The continued dominant rent-seeking nature of the state and economy: by seeking to curtail the formation of a wealth-generating economy according to market mechanisms that might allow the formation of a productive national bourgeoisie class that works for enhancing its economic influence and then demanding political rights.
4. Irrational social distribution in favor of certain wage-earners and petty bourgeoisie categories, that is: "benefiting" the middle classes.
5. Directing the rent towards parasitic sectors based on the import of goods and services and the curb of national investments in wealth-generating sectors out of the fuel sector.
6. Preventing several social groups from taking advantage of rents (the unemployed, the private sector employees, the temporary employees, etc.).

Social Justice in Lebanon: the Grim Reality

Rasha Abu Zaki

There is no standard definition of social justice. Some consider this term as implying an equitable distribution of national wealth. Others understand it as being exclusively linked to tax justice. Some relate it to people obtaining fair pay and jobs, while some analysts describe social justice as being the right to access social services.

Also, international reports describe social justice as short term for all that has to do with equality in societies and economic systems; ranging from gender equality, through the capability to learn and health, ending with non-concentration of wealth in the hands of a minority of citizens.

However defined, social justice in Lebanon is far from the reality of its citizens. Social disparities among the Lebanese create a wide gap between a minority of financiers, mostly followers of the leaders of religious sects, and a vast base of citizens who support the party leaders and would literally sacrifice their own blood for them, while giving up all their citizenship, human, social and economic rights.

Nature of the Economic System

The Lebanese citizen is raised, from birth until death, on the sanctification of leaders who provide him with living services, directly or through affiliated institutions, which are in fact financed by the Lebanese state budget. Such sanctification makes citizens distance themselves from objections unless the person who is hostile to their rights is an enemy of the leader; otherwise everything can be domesticated.

As to the prevailing economic system, it maximizes the fortunes of the few at the expense of the majority.

The Lebanese economic pattern is dominated by the holy trinity of: banking, real estate and imports.

Banks finance about 80% of the state's public debt of around 66 billion dollars, in return for very high interest rates, which in the 1990s began at 25% and today still record figures ranging between 7% and 8%. The banking sector is also suffering from a

monopoly, 12 out of 72 banks control more than 95% of the sector's assets. Furthermore, three banks control 50% of the assets, and makes profit up to about half a billion dollars annually. Note that a large number of politicians and leaders benefit from this sector, either through managing banks, or holding shares or benefiting from banking secrecy, still valid in Lebanon. Such policy results in the creation of an economic pole, able to impose decisions on the power centers, in accordance with interests that only serve the wealthy.

As to the real estate sector, it is fully liberated, and is operated by the banking sector through deposits, and by expatriates and Arab investors through their money. Real estate speculation is not subject to actual taxes and duties, and the majority of real estate companies are managed by affluent figures affiliated with the party leaders, as well as the banks' owners. This results in a real estate sector disconnected from Lebanese society; prices of apartments and real estate have increased since 2006 at rates in excess of 200%, bringing the average price of a small apartment outside Beirut to 160,000 dollars, while the minimum wage in Lebanon does not exceed 450 dollars.

As the import sector is essential in a country based on consumption, it is however subject to harsh monopolies, through the Exclusive Agency Law which limits import to a few individuals, and prevents it from others by law. In contrast, markets are characterized by harsh monopoly, whereas monopolies control more than 66% of the market, according to a study conducted by the Lebanese economic expert Tawfiq Kasbar for the Basil Flaihan Statistical Institute. Monopolies, especially exclusive agencies, are distributed according to sectarian quotas. And, of course, these monopolies lead to a severe inflation not associated with inflation in commodity prices in the countries of origin; that is, in Europe and America and other places. Inflation is not linked to domestic demand, but to prices imposed by the monopolistic parties.

Arachnid Concentration in Favor of the Wealthy

Thus, the concentration of wealth in Lebanon is not an exception to the economic pattern of this country. The Lebanese economic cycle operates according to a strongly interrelated and consistent pattern so that no economic sector can find a way out of the authority of sects which control the joints of political life in Lebanon.

Social Justice: Concept and Policies after the Arab Revolutions

Following the arrival of civil war militia into the Lebanese public sector, and after the war leaders became leaders of Lebanese politics postwar, economic features became drawn on purely utilitarian lines.

Leaders of sects and creeds have distributed public sector institutions to quotas that create benefits for the leaders, according to a "mafio-cratic" system (to use the terminology of Dr. Fawaz Traboulsi in his study "Social Classes in Lebanon Proving their Presence"). The basis of such a system is a rentier economy that maximizes profits of the few rapidly leaving the general economic future mysterious.

Such an economic pattern precludes any productive work that would create jobs, as the rent revenues are accrued by investors exclusively; this leads to the widening of unemployment and immigration. Also, this system concentrates privileges amongst leaders and their entourage, thus creating monopolies that raise inflation rates and deeply impact society, especially in terms of higher rates of poverty and destitution, and erosion of the purchasing power of citizens.

In addition, this system is based on creating an ongoing dependence, so the process of bank lending to the state becomes essential in connecting the GDP with a handful of capitalists that maximize profits from the vast benefits imposed on Treasury bonds, in exchange for securing the survival of the Lebanese economy, which on the brink of collapse. And, of course, attached to this system are laws and legislation that exempts rent, and the beneficiaries thereof, from tax needed to secure justice in the distribution of national wealth, such as real estate rents and vast bank deposits. In such a delicate economic cycle, average wages decrease relative to inflation and the state's social spending allocations decline, so that taxpayers become a mere funding machine that ensures the perpetuation of a system that goes against the interests and rights of the people.

An Abyss

This economic formation led to a deep social chasm. 1,232,000 Lebanese poor live on 1.611 billion dollars a year, which is close to the wealth of one member of the two richest families in Lebanon. The size of the wealth of two Lebanese families only, the Hariri and Miqati families amounts to 16.8 billion dollars.

If wages in Lebanon were compared to the wealth of these two families, it would appear that some 62% of Lebanese are paid

annually, roughly, the combined wealth of both families who are considered economic policy makers in Lebanon. Rafiq Hariri was the Prime Minister of Lebanon for 12 years, and his son Saad served as Prime Minister for a three year period, whereas Najib Miqati was Prime Minister for five years.

The Miqati family wealth (former Prime Minister Najib Miqati and his brother) is 6.1 billion dollars; while the wealth of the Hariri family (the heirs of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri) amounts to 10.7 billion dollars.

The former Lebanese Minister of Labour, Charbel Nahhas, also says that only 1% of bank accounts now hold more than 60 billion dollars, while 70% of the bank's depositors have less than three billion dollars combined in total deposits in the domestic banking sector!

Also, a study conducted by the United Nations and the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, confirms that 20% of the top income earners in Lebanon account for more than half of the bill for consumption, whereas 50% of the Lebanese people do not exceed 20% of that bill.

The number of residents in Lebanon is some 4.4 million Lebanese, of which more than 2,728,000 Lebanese earn 22 billion dollars per year in total salaries.

In contrast, the average wage in Lebanon is about \$ 700, while the minimum wage reaches \$ 450. The number of the poor, within the upper poverty line, spends 4.4 dollars a day, reaches some 880,000 Lebanese, and the number of poor people who spend 2.4 dollars a day, is about 325,000 Lebanese. The total number of people spending 2.4 to 4.4 dollars is 1,232,000 Lebanese, according to a study by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Such imbalance in the social structure was documented last year in The World Wealth Book of 2013, issued by the Swiss bank, Credit Suisse. It was showed that 8900 Lebanese Millionaires, i.e. only 0.3% of the total population of Lebanese adults, control 48% of the private wealth in the country, while the vast majority (99.7%) of the population control about 52% of the country's wealth, or the equivalent of 91 billion dollars.

It was also revealed that Lebanon is ranked fourth in the world, after Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan for inequality in the distribution of wealth among the population. Thus, social justice is absent from the lives of the Lebanese, and the demand for it is wasted in the throats of those affected by the existing economic and social policies.

On the Issue of "Social Justice" in Syria

Victorious Bayan Shamsh

The Arab revolutions have posed, ever since their inception in Tunisia, the problem of inequality and lack of social justice as a fundamental problem in our Arab world, with varying intensity from one country to another, and varying dealings depending on the nature of the political regime. So, it seemed obvious that the revolutions were the result of an imbalance in the distribution of wealth, resulting originally from the policies of plunder and corruption that characterized these regimes, and led to a sharp class disparity, that was to result in a popular explosion like the one that started in Tunisia. Such a result was natural due to the prolonged impoverishment, starvation, and stultification policies,, and because of the accumulation of wealth under global changes, the dominance of giant transnational corporations, and emergence of major economic blocs such as the EU and the implications of partnerships with them. A report issued by "Arab Institute for Planning " in 2010, a few months before the initiation of the "Arab Spring" revolutions, points that the average public spending in Arab States from 2003 - 2009, has shown the greatest spending was in the field of social services, which amounted to 6.5% of the GDP, while the security and defense expending ranked second, amounting to 5.7% of the GDP.

Curiously, according to the same source, the unemployment rate in the Arab world for the 1980s reached 10.6% of the workforce size, whereas it reached 14.5% in the 1990s, and amounted to 15.5% in the first decade of the third millennium.

As to Syria, it is necessary to distinguish between three stages of development, economic and social policies, starting with the stage of rule of Hafez al-Assad from 1970, until the arrival of Bashar al-Assad to power in 2000, and the resulting societal conditions in general and at different levels following the initiation of the Revolution in March 2011 to day.

The regime adopted the principle of five-year plans for the management and organization of the country's resources. The period of the rule of Hafez al-Assad has been characterized by the domination of the public sector, through the so-called "oriented economy" which ensured the Syrian society with guarantees of subsidies for many essential goods and items such as bread, medicine, fuel, electricity, and transportation, in addition to

education, free health care, and monthly food rations – which contributed greatly to provide a minimum level of equality, and the reduction in, or to be more precise, the hiding of class differences among members of the same society. However, the illiteracy rate, which was nearly 50% in 1960, had been reduced under the Regime by only 24% by the year 2000, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. This, of course, excludes the Kurds of the Syrian people, who were subject to the worst forms of discrimination, and were stripped of their citizenship in 1962, so the absolute majority of them did not get any mentionable rights.

It is noteworthy here that Syria's oil production is about 300,000 barrels a day, and that the Al-Furat Petroleum Company (AFPC), founded by Hafez al-Assad in 1985, to be run by his relative Mohammad Makhlof, is the exclusive and sole authority to distribute the Syrian oil, which had never been used in the fields of development and social services, and where whose proceeds has not been exactly known.

In the year 2000, following the arrival of Bashar al-Assad to power, economic policies were changed, but under the same slogans launched by the "Arab Socialist Baath Party" since its inception in 1963. Whereas it raised the issue of "socialism" as one of its objectives, the party headed towards market liberalization and by opening to foreign capital investors, in line with "neo-liberal" policies initially manifested by the withdrawal of privileges and gains obtained by the Syrian people during the reign of his father. Among these was the removal of subsidies on many basic materials such as oil derivatives, the reduction of monthly food rations, as well as a move towards privatization of education system. 22 private universities have been licensed, of which 11 became operational, and are mostly owned by businessmen close to the political decision-makers. This was the case for countless private schools in addition to private hospitals in light of the deteriorating performance of their counterparts in the public sector. In 2004, the regime signed 52 agreements with the Turkish government in different areas of trade, industry, tourism, and agriculture, thus the volume of trade between the two countries reached more than a billion dollars, compared to less than 300 million dollars in the year before. The results of these agreements were catastrophic, benefiting a number of new businessmen, whereas the lower social groups and strata were negatively affected following the destruction of many crafts and small industries that could not withstand the competition of Turkish goods.

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As to agriculture, the disaster was even greater because of corruption and mismanagement of this essential sector. In 2004, more than half a million people emigrated from the eastern and the north east regions; nothing like this has happened since 1920, after signing "Sykes – Picot" agreement, due to the desertification of large tracts of land because of bad irrigation policies adopted by the Government (flood irrigation), which led to saltiness of the soil. Additionally, illegal wells were drilled through bribery, which the regime was responsible for it, thus the volume of groundwater dropped in those regions. Furthermore, some strategic crops have been taken hold by diseases like "wheat rust", which the government failed to fight, thus meaning these areas are no longer good for cultivation. Syria turned from a source of food to an importer as a result.

So, corruption and bad policies have led to unprecedented class disparities, resulting according to the "Arab Institute for Planning", in the fact that 20% in the lower classes of Syrian society consume 7% of the volume of public spending, in comparison with 20% of the wealthy of this country that consume 45% of that spending.

These and other policies deepened the class gap rather than shrinking it, leading to a significant class disparity. The former Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister of "consumer protection" Qadri Jamil had announced a few months before the outbreak of the revolution that "so that the citizen can lead a free and dignified life, the minimum wage should range between 30,00 and 40,000 pounds", which is equivalent to US\$ 600-800. Yet, a legislative decree under the number 38 was issued on June 22, 2013, determining the minimum wage at 6070 SP that was equivalent to \$121 due to inflation, which reached unprecedented levels during the crisis; it amounted to more than 117% at the same year, while the rise in consumer goods prices reached about 491%.

It is worth mentioning that UNESCO announced in January 16, 2014 that 60% of Syrian children in Jordan alone did not attend schools. This foretells another disaster in the absence of plans and policies to cope with this situation by all parties, internal (the Regime and the Opposition), as well as external ones like relevant organizations and sisterly countries.

In conclusion: The increasing waste, and proliferation of corrupt policies within Syria, has meant social justice and equality have been gagged. After the destruction of the society and the government's impeding of social justice progress, a popular

revolution exploded, that seemed as if it needed just a spark to ignite. This is what happened after the initiation of the revolution in Tunisia to the rest of the Arab Spring countries. The regimes did not manage to comprehend the level of social unrest, and to adjust their social policies accordingly; because of their inability to pursue reform policies that were based on the experiences of their neighboring countries, and to try to delay a revolution against them, albeit for a while.

Final Chapter

Mohamed Elagati¹⁰⁵

Nearly four years have passed since the start of the movements in the Arab region, but it seems that there were not so many achievements made with regard to social justice, although it was a key element in the explosion of revolutions. This happened despite the fact that the slogans of the Arab revolutions were calling for "bread, freedom and social justice". The slogans of the revolutions stressed the importance of social justice and the need to achieve it for broad sectors of the Arab people. Since the moment slogans of social justice were raised, discussions and disagreements on the concept of social justice began to raise huge complexities in the transitional phases in post-revolution countries. These differences in view points and the discussions on the topic, have enriched the political arena - such as the opening of the doors for civil society work, increases in demand and awareness of the importance of fair distribution of wealth in accordance to clear economic and social policies, in addition to drawing connections between economic, political and social imbalances, which were missing as a result of historic development and the nature of the prevailing, pre-revolution, authoritarian social contract. They also raised the issue that the idea of social justice must be more than a mere redistribution of wealth and that focus should be on power relationships and transitional justice and their importance when it comes to achieving social justice.

Moreover the Arab experience in achieving social justice has proven that there are some challenges and problems which have been already referred to. At the same time, it raised questions about the formal frameworks of social justice and the level to which economic and social policy match social justice, and how to integrate the idea of social justice effectively in public policies and apply it in practical terms; and how they can be applied to implement the principles stipulated in the Constitutions on the ground.

We can see here that the theme of social justice has been reflected in the agendas of all political parties in the Arab region as a key theme after the revolutions. However, we will examine one model in this regard, the Egyptian model, where all the programmes of the different political parties, the new and the old, contain the

¹⁰⁵ Research Assistant, Shorouk al-Hariri.

concept of social justice, although the dimensions of this concept differ from one stream to the other as can be seen in the following examples:

The Islamic parties, such as the Freedom and Justice Party, the al-Nour Party, the Strong Egypt Party, the Wasat Party and Construction and Development Party, adopt the market concept when they deal with the idea of social justice and they do not rely on policies and legislation to guarantee it. However they depend mainly on integration and not the redistribution of wealth and this has been reflected in the 2012 Constitution. They believe that health care is the most important priority for states and that health insurance should be provided to all citizens. There is also the issue of the minimum wage and the improvement in the educational level of public school graduates.

In general, there are two teams in the Islamic stream in connection with rights related to social justice. These are the Salafist parties (Al-Nour and the Construction and Development party) and (Strong Egypt and Al-Wasat) parties. Regarding the Freedom and Justice Party, its programme classifies it within the second team while its stances and policies, when it got into power and the alliances it made prior to getting into power, make it more a part of the first team. Here, it seems that the programmes of the Salafist parties aim at appealing to public opinion rather than having an integrated vision. For this reason, they speak about certain rights, but they ignore other rights and they adopt concepts which contradict with the economic approach adopted by the parties. This is unlike the Wasat and the Strong Egypt parties, which have come up with a more integrated and mature form of these rights. For example, the Wasat party raises the issue of the importance of raising growth rates, which should be accompanied by a tangible improvement in the living standards and it says that this is because of the nature of Egypt.

Moreover, the **nationalist parties**, such as the Nasserite Arab Democratic Party and the Dignity Party, adopt slogans on social justice all the time. Despite this, in their programmes, they tackle this issue from the liberal parties' perspective. They speak about the provision of fully supported health care to all citizens, strengthening the reform of the educational system, providing teachers with best working conditions, human rights in the work place, minimum wages linked to consumer prices, equal pay for equal work, the right to education, health and decent housing,

pension and social security for unemployed, sick and disabled people, and a just distribution of national income.

In general, we find that these nationalist parties do not support the redistribution of income. This is evident in the statements of some of their leaders, in addition to the absence of a consistent position and vision on the subject of progressive taxation and the issue of minimum and maximum wage although they agree with the reforms of state institution.

The economic programmes of the **liberal parties**, such as the al-Wafd Party, the Democratic Front Party, the Free Egyptians Party, the Party of Egypt Freedom, and the Constitution Party, have determined the way they perceive social justice. These parties believe that the free market and the economy are capable of achieving social justice by increasing national wealth rather than redistributing it, attracting investment, building a modern, institutional state and a modern legislative structure characterized by stability and continuity, the respect of law and the establishment of controls to achieve social justice in order to ensure higher standards of living for the Egyptian citizen and the progress of the Egyptian economy. We note here that the parties of this stream have focused more on principles rather than work programmes and this has led to internal conflicts, especially within the new parties, which have hindered their movement, especially regarding the different reform issues. Moreover, the mentality of authoritarian regimes has affected the political culture of these parties. Most of them still consider themselves advisors to the authority who should have a bigger role and not as alternative forces within programmes that aim to reach power and replace the ruling forces in order to implement them.

The leftist parties, such as the National Progressive Unionist Party, the Egyptian Social Democratic Party and the Party of Popular Socialist Alliance, focus on the concept of social justice and economic and social rights, and it can be said that they have a clearer vision about them compared to other parties. The focus of attention and mechanisms differ from one party to the other. While some focus on trade union and labour rights, such as the al-Tagamu, there are others which focus on raising the minimum wage, pensions, putting limits on a maximum wage and the implementation of a comprehensive tax reform system, which aims to achieve social justice for low-income groups, in addition to the restructuring of the tax system, the abolition of additional, indirect taxes, the introduction of the progressive income tax system, the

introduction of progressive taxation on luxury consumption, the tightening of penalties on tax evaders and the reform of the appointments structure in public and private institutions in such a way which ensures permanent jobs for temporary workers and the cancellation of temporary work in businesses of a permanent nature, the adoption of comprehensive social insurance for impoverished families lacking breadwinners and for temporary workers when they lose their jobs, the adoption of the unemployment benefit together with a system for the distribution of labour as well as guidance to vacant jobs in the private and public sectors not less than the benefit of the poverty line, maintaining subsidies for the poor, while ensuring that they reach those who deserve them, by proposing a set of policies based on studying the successful experiences of developing countries in this field, such as the Alliance Party. However, we find that the three parties are based on unsteady alliances that cannot be built upon and references that could not be defined, and this threatens this alliance. This was shown by the mass resignations after each political crisis, which requires a stance from the party.¹⁰⁶

First: Social justice as one concept with multiple entry points

In this context, we see multiple entry points for the concept of social justice. The first is the entry point largely raised by the people: the service-related one which is closer to the concept of the welfare state. This concept is based on the idea that social justice is the provision of basic services such as health, education and housing with the standards of various rights based on quality, availability, accessibility and, finally, public satisfaction about services. This entry point stresses equal opportunities as the basis for achieving social justice and equality. And equality here does not mean that all people get equal opportunities. Rather it means that the more marginalized sectors get support to access these services.

With the emergence of this entry point, some of the capitalist system's institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund, started to advocate the importance of achieving equality between the different classes of the society in order to maintain development and progress. Two kinds of inequality and discrimination in society have been identified: firstly, income inequality with direct impact on growth rates because the more the rich get, the lower the possibility of achieving high growth rates. The second is inequality of opportunity, and this is

¹⁰⁶ Mohamed Elagati, "The state and the political system in Egypt after the revolution: Parties and issues of reform," Cairo, AFA, 2013.

the most dangerous one because it directly affects development and growth.¹⁰⁷

The second entry point is the one linked to Leftist thought or which stems from it. It says that social justice cannot be achieved without the fair distribution of the country's wealth. This entry point focuses on the restructuring of the wage and tax system, setting minimum wages that enable citizens to live a decent life and a maximum wage which reduces class differences and ensures more just distribution of national income, which enables the financing of the minimum wage without putting new burdens on the state budget. This should be accompanied by a tax system, where the rich, through progressive taxation, bear the biggest burden for financing of basic services for the benefit of the general public. In the way envisioned by those who adopt it, this entry point is strongly associated with the pattern or the development model adopted. For example, in the Egyptian case, the minimum and maximum wage should be specified, state-owned companies sold through corruption should be regained, the right to self-management of the means of production should be given and efficient and cheap health services should be provided to all people. Social justice is linked to the distribution of "advantages" and "burdens" within society and the method by which resources are allocated to people through society's institutions.

The achievement of social justice depends on two principles: firstly, that every person has the right to demand basic liberties equally and secondly, a social system based on this right. There are two conditions for the absence of social and economic inequalities: the first is linked to giving everybody equal opportunities and the second is about reliance on the difference principle.¹⁰⁸ This entry point also sees that the achievement of social justice comes through the lifting of injustice done to individuals. This is achieved by the way we look at the society, its problems, our analysis and our solutions for them.¹⁰⁹

We can describe the third entry point as the "rational capitalist" model, which believes that there is no need to change the free-

¹⁰⁷ Salma Hussein, "A predatory elite and a hostage state,"

<http://is.gd/dNMz9s>

¹⁰⁸ The difference principle permits inequalities in the distribution of goods only if those inequalities benefit the worst-off members of society.

¹⁰⁹ Wael Gamal, "Social Justice and the Arab revolutions: The complexities of the concept and policies," one of the papers of this book.

market style but there is a need to establish broad social security networks which guarantee the needed opportunities for poorer classes of society. It tries to take a positive stance regarding social security and the provision of social protection systems for the poor in order not to become a source of danger for the regime and to protect the regime itself rather than the rights of the individuals.

A careful reading of these entry points confirms the impossibility of separating out the concept. One entry point can be given priority but it is not possible to completely separate them. The financing of the first and third models cannot achieve social justice without the means of financing stipulated in the second model, otherwise it will turn into yet more of a burden on the poorest and most marginalized classes. Moreover, the second model largely seeks to achieve the objectives of the first entry point of provision of basic services. However, the main obstacle that can be identified here is still the applied mode of production or development and whether social justice can be achieved with open market policies.

Second, patterns of social justice and development

If we observe the economic pattern which had prevailed in the region before the Arab revolutions, we can see clear differences in the rates of development, despite the adoption of the same developmental pattern with different historical dimensions. Some date back more than one decade, such as in Egypt and Tunisia.

One was in the phase of transformation into a market economy, as in the case of Syria. In this pattern, it is clear that there are three common negative elements. The first is related to the nature of the rentier economy, which has led to deterioration of living standards, inequality in the distribution of income, increased poverty and unemployment, the erosion of free education and health, the dismantling of the public sector and the control of one small class (monopoly), the reliance on agriculture only as a source of income and development and the collapse of industry and trade which is required to turn the rentier economy into a productive economy, which provides a real solution to unemployment and low wages and which imposes the building of education and health systems as well as the infrastructure to achieve high rates of growth and development. Second, those who adopt this pattern are those who adopt the neo-liberal approach.

The third element is the dependence on close relationships in crony capitalism. This economic system led to a poor distribution of wealth and the presence of class discrimination between those who

work and those who own. This economic system has also created a bourgeois class which owns the largest percentage of income and this led to the emergence of a class associated with the ruling class. The problem became the attempts of this class to defend the ruling class which serves its interests and the market interests so the demands of the people were not achieved. Things have reached a level where it is not enough to change rulers but rather a whole social system. Some found the solution in the imposition of a progressive taxation system.¹¹⁰

If the market economy is disputable, there is no doubt that it was accompanied by these three elements, which became clear in the case studies in this book. An economy, which is biased against the vast majority of society, cannot produce. It becomes an economy which serves the few and poses a threat to poor and marginalized groups as well as depletes the states' future resources. Its rentier nature does not allow it to create a base for the future. Neo-liberalism does not give the state the authority to provide a real support to the rights of marginalized groups. Moreover, close relatives and friends turn wealth into a financial circle controlled by corruption, which produces no revenues for other parties. This explains why countries like Egypt and Tunisia, where public services provided to the people collapsed,¹¹¹ have managed in the last few years before the revolutions to achieve growth rates reaching sometimes up to 7 percent.¹¹²

The Arab reality, in the pre-revolution period, reflected a state of absence of social justice in all Arab societies, marked by a clear disparity between classes in the size and ownership of wealth, wages of individuals and in differences in educational, health and cultural services, and even entertainment. All this made lack of social justice one of the main reasons for revolution and popular protest.

¹¹⁰ Salameh Keileh, "Social Movements and the Concept of Social Justice in the Revolutions of Arab countries," one of the papers of this book

¹¹¹ For more information, see the study cases of this book.

¹¹² According to the World Bank, the growth rates in Egypt and Tunisia before the outbreak of the revolutions were as follows: Egypt's growth rate was about 4.7 in 2009 and it reached 5.1 in 2010 to drop in 2011 to 2.2, making the growth rate a down sliding line. Regarding Tunisia, the World Bank report indicates that in 2009 growth rates were 3.6 and they continued as they are in 2010, but in 2011 there was a significant decline of up to -0.2.

The general context in the society, before the revolutions, was characterized by widespread corruption, discrimination in employment opportunities, deliberate exclusion of a number of sectors and groups, waste of national wealth in absurd ways which do not serve the citizens, not to mention the growing poverty, unemployment, poor basic public services and election fraud. In Yemen, the poverty rate increased to become the highest in the Middle East and North Africa, according to World Bank's 2010 figures. For this reason, some of the basic and common demands of the Arab revolutions have been pointing at social justice, among them are: the right to work, improved purchasing power, the right to housing and the right to education. All of these conditions and more controlled the social and political landscape in the Arab world, prompting the eruption of revolutions calling for social justice in the society and for equality between citizens.

This situation was accompanied with the absence of an institutional form which can deal with the impact of all this. The nationalization of unions has emptied cooperative movements of their real content and turned them into a tool to impose the hegemony of the state. With the decline in their role, the interest networks controlled the systems and it was natural that the roles of cooperatives ended in some countries and they became empty structures.

Throughout modern history, trade unions were the main factor for the outbreak of strikes and protests. The working class represents more than 50 percent of the population and thus it has been an important indicator on the state of general satisfaction since the beginning of protest history in 1899; they have remained so until now. The trade union movement derives its nature and advantages from the nature of class formation of the labourers. What makes the working class distinctive from other classes in the society is the fact that it is a united class where there are no social divisions or economic sectors and no competition and conflicts whatsoever among its members. There are common interests that gather labourers and unite them. They are all suffering from capitalist exploitation which is consuming them. In any country, there are two trends within the labour movement. Some believe that the labour trade movement should only engage in trade union issues without interfering in the political sphere in order not to face problems. Others believe that the struggle of the working class, led by the trade unions, requires engagement in politics. The social conditions lived by the labour movements heavily affect the approach used. In some cases, unions adopt the first approach and

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at certain times they adopt the second. This is to a large extent related to the circumstances surrounding this class.

The trade union movement cannot live in isolation from the political life of a society. Egyptian and Tunisian history is a witness to the acts of the trade union movements against colonialism in an attempt to reach stability. These were the torch of the protests. Then came the Arab Spring accompanied by other protests. Trade union demands have lately been characterized by profession-related demands without any attention to political demands. In addition to this, frequent protests and strikes have become a powerful weapon in influencing decision-makers and the authorities.

This situation has severely impacted on policies related to social justice. With the end of the national liberation movement systems, an economy was formed based on mechanisms in favour of dominant networks, which does not give other parties a tool to confront this trend.

This has led to what is known as savage capitalism, resulting in protest movements with a social nature. The Arab region saw a significant increase in the number of protest movements in recent times due to the increase in public awareness as well as for other reasons, including the weakness of political parties. The emergence of protest movements was imperative as a solution for getting out of social problems and trying to put them in the political arena. With the development of the technological revolution and the spread of social media, the importance of protest movements increased and they became more widespread. Protest movements were among the important factors in the outbreak of Arab revolutions. For example, in Egypt, the "We are all Khaled Said" Movement, Kifaya and the April 6 movement played a major role in the eruption of the revolution and in the 18 days from the departure of Hosni Mubarak until the Muslim Brotherhood controlled the yards and the scene in Egypt. The capacities of protest movements to induce change is represented in two directions: first, the transformation into political movements with social bases introducing new faces to public life beyond the traditional ones who are leading opposition parties and the government so as to become the nucleus for changing the shape of political elites in government as well as in the opposition.

The second is the impact on the decision-makers in the ruling elites in a way which is closer to lobbying groups to make those elites review some of their economic policies and orientations, or

lead to changes in the prevailing balance of power within ruling elites.¹¹³

We find that, after the revolutions there appears to be no structural change in this economic system. Discussions about politics are still dominant while the dimension of social justice is still neglected. The revolutions have raised "economic" demands, most importantly the elimination of unemployment and low pay, improvements in collapsing education and health services which have become commoditized, improvements in collapsing infrastructure and improving the status of women and ending their marginalization. With the achievement of these demands, social justice will be realized as well as economic growth.

In Egypt and Tunisia, work and pay issues were raised, and it was clear that the popular classes could no longer tolerate marginalization, poverty and ignorance. However, with the end of the first and second revolutionary waves, it was surprising to see that nothing has been achieved. Demands have become factional in nature rather than social and questions raised on the importance of changing the economic pattern and transformation to another. Society was required to address the issue of social justice on the economic side and the issue of society's partial or full economic transformation to implement desired economic reforms by revolution.¹¹⁴

Third, social justice between what is political and what is economic

The Arab revolutions have proved that it is a necessity to embrace social justice. However, the developments that have followed hampered this path. Thus, the impact was not in one direction but rather had a reciprocal impact. As much as the pitfalls of democratic transformation on the political track has had a negative impact on social justice, the absence of these policies on social justice did not enable the post revolution systems to dismantle interests networks, which were able, because of the delay in these policies, to get out of the state of denial they have experienced after the revolutions and regain the initiative in the economic field,

¹¹³ For more details about the protest movements, see: Amr Shobaki, *Protest Movements in the Arab World, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Bahrain, Algeria, Syria, and Jordan, Beirut, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2nd edition, 2014.*

¹¹⁴ Fuad al-Salahi, "The Arab Spring Revolutions and Social Justice Demands," one of the papers of this book.

in some cases, and in the political field, in other cases. In doing so, they used their monopoly capabilities and the media under their control to consolidate their dominance again and to confront anything that would lead to them being held accountable for pre-revolution corruption, which is related to the foundations of democracy such as transparency and accountability, those which would affect their wealth, such as fair tax legislation, or policies that would redistribute wealth in the Arab revolution countries in a fair way. Moreover, the explosions in some of the revolution states and their transformation into civil war zones, as is the case in Libya and Syria, or into instability, as is the case in Yemen and Egypt, have had a negative impact on the adoption of economic policies which might impose development that serves the majority and not one which only serves the interests of a certain class. In this regard, an important issue is raised and is related to the nature of the economic decision and the insistence on separating it from the political decision, as if the two are separate processes, and as if the economic decision is only a technical one and this is one of the legends of the capitalist economy that needs to be reviewed.

Perhaps this has become clear from the marketing of many of the economic policies that have done damage to the status of social justice in Egypt since the 1970's, the economic reform programs followed in several Arab countries by many technicians because they are important technical choices which cannot be delayed. People then discover the failure of these policies and accuse regimes of seeking the help of trusted persons rather than those with the right experience. And this is what experts start to quickly repeat although there are not necessarily technical solutions to such problems. The experiences of many countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia have proved the failure of technical solutions to varying degrees and this is because strong technical solutions work as sedatives in the long run, while the weakest cannot withstand crises and disadvantages of the economic system and they may cause serious crises in many cases, because those absent from these policies are the masses, their representatives and their control. This is because in reality there are no simple school recipes for solving social problems. What is more, any economic policy is supported or objected to by those whose interests are served or not served, and this is due to the fact that there are no neutral or objective technical recipes and they are not supposed to be.¹¹⁵ What

¹¹⁵ Yasser Alawi, "From a prince to an expert: Is there a technical solution to a political crisis?", under publication.

have been described as technical mistakes arising from mismanagement or the application of economic policies, is in fact a clear social and political choice which serves certain social groups that are usually associated with the ruling regime in certain alliances.

It is obvious to any observer of the scene that the issue of the nature of the state, specifically the identity, was the most visible on the surface during the previous period. This issue has even become a source for polarization adopted by religious parties, which considered it a source of their strength, and other parties and streams were dragged to adopt it when they did not find visions and serious programs to offer response to the desired change after the Arab revolutions. Such a polarization is a convenient cover for their work because it allows them to hide behind their weak capacities to adopt social policies for the benefit of the masses of people who took to the streets during the revolutions. These civil and religious parties have preferred to drag these masses into topics they master instead of focusing their work on policies demanded by the people. Unfortunately, the left wing too, in several countries was dragged into this battle and instead of holding a compass for the masses it has drifted behind modern leftist thought, which does have a dimension of intellectual enlightenment.

This situation was not the result of internal developments in the countries of the Arab region only, but external factors too have played a key role. Since the collapse of the socialist system, there have been continuous attempts to impose a certain developmental pattern by the capitalist system, either through bilateral relations between Western Europe and the United States on the one hand, and the Third World countries on the other, including Arab countries, or through international financial institutions. In this context, these institutions have played a prominent role through what has been known as restructuring in sometimes, structural adjustment, or economic reform policies in others, to impose the capitalist pattern and to integrate the economies of the Third World in the globalization process, restricting their capacities and opening their markets for western companies in an unfair manner through agreements such as the Free Trade Agreement (GATT). In fact, these policies have only led to the increase in international monopolies and in the gap between rich and poor countries and to high rates of poverty in the Third World.

According to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Report, about one out of five people live below the poverty line in

developing areas on around \$1.25 per day. At the same time, the global Gallup Organization released a report on poverty in the world in which it said that more than one in five residents (22 percent) live on \$1.25 per day or less, which is defined by the World Bank as two dollars per day. The Gallup Organization in its report said that about 16 percent of the people of the Middle East and Africa live on US \$1.25 per day or less, while 28 percent of the region's population lives on US \$2 or less per day. The results also show that those in African areas live in the worst kind of poverty in the world with 54 percent of the population in 27 different countries living in extreme poverty. On the other hand, the number of people living on \$1.25 per day in economically developed areas, such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada and Europe, does not exceed 1 percent. Thus poverty areas in the world are the Third World countries¹¹⁶

Conclusion:

Despite the differences that appear in the details of scenery in each of the countries that have witnessed uprisings or revolutions in the region, there are visible features in the pre-revolution situation in the area of social justice that were reflected in the decline in the productive economy in favour of a service economy, increased dependence on rentier resources of the economy, an increased tendency to adopt a developmental pattern which depends on the idea of the falling fruits - despite the fact that the capitalist economic crisis in 2008 put this idea at doubt in the very heart of the capitalist countries. It even raised questions on the nature of representative democracy historically associated with the growth of the capitalist system. And finally the control of business-led networks on the economies of nations, the emergence of monopolies and the formation of alliances between them and the ruling political power.

However, the most prominent similarities after the revolutions are the continuation of these features, dominance of what is political on the economic and the absence of enough links between the two. The papers presented in this book show that the link between social and/or protest movements of social nature and the political sphere is the basis of this separation and that the biggest winner until now, in most of the countries, is the Islamist stream and more specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, where social justice, in

¹¹⁶ For the report of the World Bank on poverty in 2013, visit the following link: <http://is.gd/sSXKTX>

its deepest sense, is not part of the agenda because it carries the same ideas on the development pattern adopted by the pre-revolution regimes.

This has enabled the same economic elites to tighten their grip on the resources of these countries again after three years. Here we can speak about revolutions on the level of mass movements but we cannot speak about them in the sense of inducing structural changes in Arab societies. However monitoring protest movements as presented in the papers of this study confirms that the march is not yet over and there are still young groups who insist on completing their path to achieve demands that could change the composition of societies towards a more equitable system.

In Egypt, two years after the revolution, the revolution started to flare again on June 30, 2013. Social movements found that social and economic goals of the revolution had not yet been implemented on the ground. This aggravated the situation and fuelled the idea of creating a new alternative by going down to the streets again in the hope of achieving social justice.

Things were not different in Tunisia. Since the eruption of the December 2010 revolution, youth and social movements have played a prominent role in leading the crisis and in ensuring that it does not deviate from the path toward social justice although it is sometimes deviating from the democratic path. However, the situation has become worse because of the continuation of policies hostile to all wage earners and workers. It is getting more severe with the increase in unemployment rates and the marginalization of hundreds of thousands of the workforce, including the unemployed holders of university degrees. In addition, the plundering of the natural resources of the country as well as the depletion of its financial resources, especially with the continuation of the corrupt debt system and the smuggling of capital abroad. This will make the revolutions and uprisings return to the Tunisian street again.¹¹⁷

One cannot overlook the changes brought about by these revolutions at the societal level as well as their impact, in many cases, on centres within the state and its institutions. However, this cannot be a decisive factor without institutions which are supposed to carry this project of social justice interacting with it – that is, the serious progressive parties, developmental and human rights organizations and popular movements which were formed in

¹¹⁷ For more information, see the case studies in this book.

the post-revolution countries, especially the younger ones, which need the support of unions and commissions representing the interests of marginalized groups and communications which enables making a link between social demands and the economic and political development pattern. In addition to mobilization efforts, this requires a theoretical effort by research and cultural elites who belong to this project. Moreover, the revolutionary path should be connected with the political path by introducing the demands of the revolution and the alternatives offered by entities associated with it in the political arena through an organized effort to communicate with the media or through representatives in national and local institutions.

In addition to the above, there is a direct correlation between the implementation of social justice policies and political development in Arab countries. Without a democratic political system characterized by transparency and accountability of political officials in the executive or legislative bodies, an independent judicial system which ensures free circulation of power, there is no assurance that there will be an authority which will adopt these policies. However, this traditional democratic style is also not enough at this stage, which requires, as we said earlier, the dismantling of dominant pre-revolutionary networks of interest. This requires a democracy which activates the role of citizens and entities representing different interests, a participatory democracy, through a participatory process similar to that prevailing in Latin America, which saw a democratic transition during the first part of this century.¹¹⁸

Moreover, the international dimension is an essential part in the formation of hostile policies towards social justice. Thus, internal confrontation will not be enough without regional coordination and without confronting what international financial institutions dictate. This should be done through the formation of a front composed of developing countries that wish to affect the agenda of these institutions, with curtailment or the imposition of an alternative agenda on them as the highest ambitions. This front should be represented in organized movements and alternative entities. Here the role of social forces in supporting such international alliances becomes important. These entities could be capable of representing

¹¹⁸ For more information see: Elagati, Mohamed et al., "From representative democracy to participatory democracy .. Towards a new Egyptian constitution, experiences and insights, AFA, at the following link : <http://is.gd/AlqdsG>

more than just pressure on these international institutions at a later stage – they could also become an alternative to them in light of the crises of the capitalist system and the re-drawing of the international map. This stage may be closer than we imagine - and the absence of alternatives only serves the interests of those dominant forces still hostile to the concept of social justice.