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Algeria

# **“The West prefers a regime subject to its interests”**

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**The world is discovering with great fascination these Algerians who go onto the street by millions, not to advance social demands, but for their dignity and freedom ...**

I think it's a very ideological reading, neoliberal and purely factual, which stops at what is observable to the naked eye without bothering to get to the bottom of things and understand the deep springs of this popular explosion. Dignity and freedom have a material basis that resides in the economic independence of the individual. Economic and social demands are not yet sufficiently emphasized in the popular movement and I regret it. Everything must be changed so that the trade union and workers' movement becomes the backbone of the movement, because while workers, the unemployed, pensioners and young people struggle. the partisans of the market economy who ask them to be “above all these low social demands”, fight for their part to preserve and increase the immense subsidies granted to them by the regime for decades. They also struggle to seize power and share the “Algerian cake” directly while imposing “necessary sacrifices” on the people. Understand by this austerity, unemployment, the end of social housing, health and free education, the legal challenge to the right to strike and other joys of the market economy.

**Does this Algerian *Hirak* fit in for you with the dynamics of the Arab revolutions of 2011?**

There are two questions here. Algeria is part of several geostrategic zones: the Arab world, the wider Middle East, the Sahel and the Mediterranean basin. These geostrategic zones have in common that they are dominated by the imperialist powers (G7, IMF, NATO and so on). From this point of view, what is happening in Algeria undoubtedly has to do with the process that began in 2011 in the Arab world. All the peoples of this region are subject to political and military domination by the United States and its European, Israeli and Arab allies. They are naturally rebelling against this imperialist order.

I do not think that we are, in Algeria today, in a revolutionary process. Rather, we are in a pre-revolutionary situation where the people exert pressure on the regime to carry out reform. Most Algerians no longer accept the current political order, but it is not, for the moment, at least, in a strategy of direct confrontation aimed at overthrowing the regime. And the latter, which has been on the defensive since February 22, still has forces in reserve and tries to take the initiative with the application of Article 102 and the implementation of a strategy of tension. We are still in a situation of unstable equilibrium.

**The chief of staff accuses a “foreign hand”, which he does not name, of wanting to destabilize the country.**

This conspiracy view has become a universal constant of authoritarian regimes. The Western “great democracies” which are increasingly authoritarian (United States, France and so on) incessantly accuse Russia or China of wanting to destabilize them. In the countries of the Arab world, it is the foreign hand that is emphasized as an explanatory factor by authoritarian regimes, by sycophants or by imperialist thinkers and politicians fighting against competitors. Three recent examples are particularly striking. [\[1\]](#)

Let us first remark that these texts can be applied to any crisis. It is more of a standard form than a concrete analysis

providing a little detail of the present Algerian reality. In these texts, the main actors are neither the regime, nor the people, nor the oligarchs, nor the workers, the magistrates, the doctors or the students, nor even these millions of people who have gone out onto the streets of the country every Friday since February 22nd. The many contradictions of Algerian society are not mentioned at all. They clearly do not represent the main factor of the crisis. The actors are Western services.

These authors proceed by analogies. They completely decontextualize the political dynamics whose bases they do not seek at any time to bring out. They magnify under the microscope an element of the conjuncture, that of the actions of great powers, actions that are in any case permanent and that no analyst can ignore, and they make them “the” main factor, even almost the sole explanation of the crisis. As if a movement of the millions and millions of individuals who make up the people could be activated remotely or by local relays. Now, no movement of this magnitude can be chemically pure. It necessarily contains within itself contradictory forces, national and foreign. But to orient so ostentatiously the gaze on this single aspect is as caricatural as it is miserable.

These texts finally turn out to be tragically poor. We do not find there any historical analysis, even the briefest, of the Algerian social formation nor the least analysis of the political sequence that we live through, of the economic, social, political and ideological crisis of the country. The real Algeria – in the complexity of its social classes and their struggles, its political regime, its ideological currents – apparently does not exist. Our people are presented in the most contemptuous way as an object without soul or spine. A people devoid of conscience, an object reduced to the name of the “street”.

The existence of more or less brutal or subtle pressure and interference from Western foreign powers, but also from certain Gulf monarchies, is beyond doubt. The opposite would have surprised us as it is, in reality, a truism. But these external actions must imperatively be placed in the general context of the foreign policy of these powers and their precise role explained through internal contradictions in the country. Is it certain, for example, that French interests are not already served through the exceptional partnership signed between the Algerian government and Paris? And what about the “excellent relations between Algeria and the United States” highlighted by former Foreign Minister Abdelkader Messahel just days before the 4th session of the Algerian-American Strategic Dialogue held in early February 2019 in Washington? It is obvious that France and the United States would prefer to deal with a regime totally subject to their interests and desiderata. Are they ready to set Algeria on fire to get there, knowing that most of the people and opponents – with the exception of a handful of ultra-liberals defending the interests of the comprador fraction of the Algerian bourgeoisie is viscerally attached to the national independence of the country of the revolution of November 1st? This is theoretically possible, but neither General Delawarde, nor Ahmed SaËda, nor the author of the Lebanese article has provided any proof.

### **Will Algeria finally emancipate itself from the regime set up in 1962?**

The reduction of the history of independent Algeria to a regime of dictatorship seems to me as reductive as it is dangerous. Independent Algeria has certainly seen the introduction of a single party regime. But this regime, during the first two decades, worked to build a state and an economy independent of the former metropolis and any other imperialist power. It has undoubtedly democratized education and health, opened the doors of the university to the people, substantially improved the condition of the urban and rural popular classes, slowed the development of social inequalities contrary to what we have seen in Tunisia and, above all, in Morocco. It has prevented the development of a comprador bourgeoisie that serves as a relay for international capitalism to plunder the natural and human resources of our country. It industrialized the country and fought against capitalist and imperialist international domination and united with the struggling peoples of the world in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Fight the authoritarian regime with a democratic façade yes, but without throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Our project must combine democracy, social justice and national sovereignty and therefore fight against

authoritarianism, economic liberalism and imperialist interference and looting.

### **There are a multitude of proposals for ending the crisis. How do you see them?**

The first, that of the regime, is to retain the current liberal-authoritarian regime with a democratic façade. It is massively rejected by the people. The second is that of the ultra-neoliberals of the opposition (democrats, Islamists and nationalists) who use the democratic demand to apply an even more anti-national economic policy and an even harsher social policy (the “necessary sacrifices”). Such an outcome implies the election, as soon as possible, of a President who can, with the vote of the citizens, apply his ultra-neoliberal potion. The third is the one defended by the leftist forces who propose the establishment of a Constituent Assembly so that the people decide not only to elect their representatives, but also and above all, first, on the institutional architecture of the country. Do we need a president of the Republic or not, a Senate or not?

How many times can a deputy, a mayor ... be re-elected? What should they be paid? Can they be recalled by citizens if they betray their commitments? The more the citizens participate massively in the definition of the political regime the more the latter will be solid because based on the trust of the constituents. The argument of urgency does not stand up to the need to give the people the real, not the theoretical, means to really exercise their sovereignty.

*PS:*

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[1] Belalloufi refers here to three articles: one by Ahmed Bensaada,

[https://www.ahmedbensaada.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=475:2019-04-04-22-50-13&catid=46:qprintemps-arabeq&Itemid=119](https://www.ahmedbensaada.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=475:2019-04-04-22-50-13&catid=46:qprintemps-arabeq&Itemid=119), one by General Dominique Delawarde

<https://www.breizh-info.com/2019/03/22/114808/algerie-revolte-spontanee-ou-destabilisation-premeditee-et-organisee-lagora> and one by Mohamed Sadek El Hoceini

<https://www.al-binaa.com/archives/article/208705?fbclid=IwAR2mrqsxyN47bmxU2CNZ2Mp6e902jeSxvINW6p0kAB53pnDLvPUk7zwr4T8>.