Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Newsletter

twas

BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA
مكتبة الإسكندرية

CSSP

Nan⊙Technology
The Big Potential of the Very Small

By Professor
Mostafa El-Sayed

Tuesday, 27 December 2011 at 15:00 pm
Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Conference Center, Lecture Hall
Alexandria, Egypt

Open to Public

technology

nanosciences small futuristic
innovative applications
nanoscale

© 2011 Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Designed by Reem Noaman

CONTENTS

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Newsletter

Director, Bibliotheca Alexandrina
General Supervisor
Ismail Serageldin

Editor-in-Chief
Khaled Azab

Managing Editors
Ayman Elsherbiny
Sarah Elhaddad

Contributing Writers
Kholoud Said
Mohamed Musaad
Dina Magdy

Proofreading
Publishing Department

Photographs
Media Department

Graphic Designer
Reem Noaman

BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA
مكتبة الإسكندرية

Media
BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA

Editorial

THE MAKING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE*
Pluralism, Cohesion and Social Participation

Ismail Serageldin
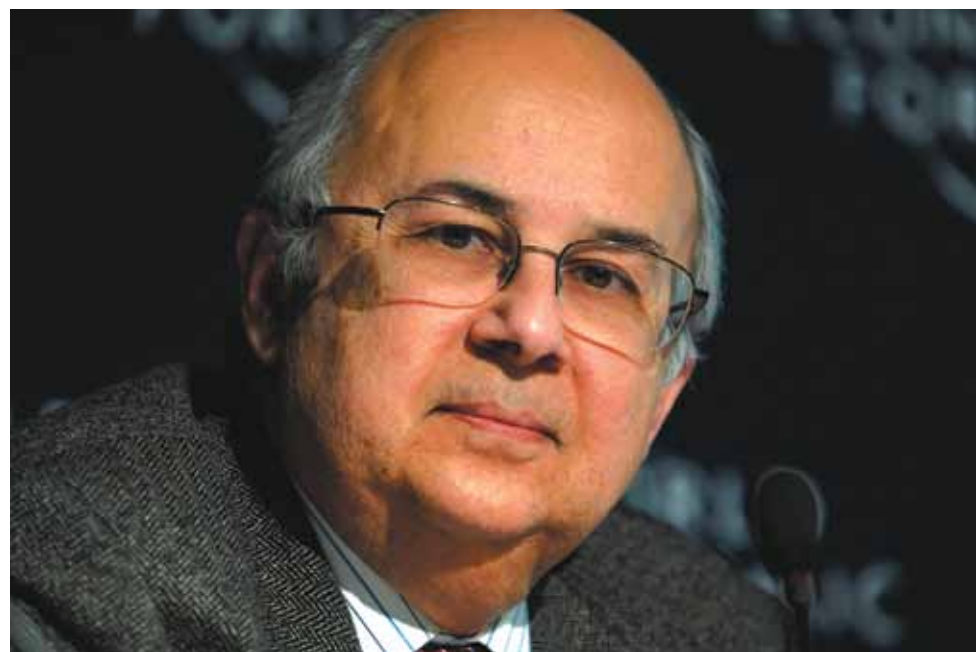
"During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Nelson Mandela

If modern democratic states are based on a social contract that unites the human family within its borders in a framework of citizenship, then the felt presence of a modicum of social justice is the necessary glue that will hold that society together.

Apartheid was the epitome of social injustice, and its overthrow was a great moral victory for freedom, equality and justice. The light shining from South Africa has finally reached the northern part of the continent.

This has been the "Arab Spring". Ordinary citizens have toppled autocrats and still battle dictators armed with little more than their convictions. Ultimately, they cannot be denied. For as Victor Hugo has said: "No army can defeat an idea whose time has come". Freedom, human rights and democracy are ideas whose time has come for even the most remote corners of the globe.

This surge for freedom will face setbacks to be sure. But ultimately, it must triumph. And it is more than a demand for freedom of expression. It is also a demand for the making of social justice. For our youth are revolting against a society where there is corruption in high offices, aimlessness amongst youth, anxiety among the elderly, and a profound sense of loss among those who look beyond material success for the inner meaning of their lives. A new society has to be built on the basis of social justice.

What is Justice?

If we try to answer in the shorthand formulation made famous by John Rawls: "Justice is fairness", we will find that its deceptive simplicity hides profound issues. Surely we all desire "fairness". Yet we shall find that justice has multiple components including freedom, equality, inclusion and social interaction.

This last requires some clarification. For if humans need their freedom as much as they need air, they also need to interact with other humans for we are fundamentally social animals. The worst punishment we can think of is solitary confinement, and in some communities, a fundamental tool of social coercion is the threat of "shunning", cutting

"Freedom, human rights and democracy are ideas whose time has come for even the most remote corners of the globe."

off all social interaction with the offending person by the entire community. The stigma attached to some diseases results in the exclusion of these members from social interaction. Likewise such stigmatization by race, gender or religion is equally damaging to society, and clearly undermines our sense of justice.

Equity, utility and entitlement are only some of the criteria of social choice. All social problems and policies involve a mix of these dimensions, and choosing in a fair way has a lot to do with how society values these different dimensions and the weights that we put on each of these at a particular moment in the history of that society.

To redress past injustices, it may well be very necessary to put the emphasis on one or the other of these dimensions. That is frequently the case when allocating quotas or according compensatory preferential treatment to some underprivileged group in a society. Clarity in the political debate, and lucidity in our social intercourse can ensure that social cohesion is enhanced and not undermined by the use of such methods.

So, if Social Justice has many dimensions, how do we get there? The two pillars of achieving Social Justice are, to my mind, Freedom and Equality. Freedom entails the exercise of rights, and equality may need to take into account the innate inequalities between individual capabilities. Each of these points needs some discussion.

"Equity, utility and entitlement are only some of the criteria of social choice. All social problems and policies involve a mix of these dimensions, and choosing in a fair way has a lot to do with how society values these different dimensions."

"The two pillars of achieving Social Justice are, to my mind, Freedom and Equality. Freedom entails the exercise of rights, and equality may need to take into account the innate inequalities between individual capabilities. Each of these points needs some discussion."

Freedom, Rights and Equity

The meaning of Freedom is ingrained in the soul of all humans. It is the most fundamental of human rights.

Freedom is about the ability to decide, to choose. But we very quickly notice that many in society are not able to choose, even if the law guarantees them that right. Thus, extreme poverty severely limits the choices open to an individual. Lack of education or illness can also be important constraints in an individual's ability to fulfill his or her potential, not to mention social attitudes towards gender or ethnicity.

Therefore, the exercise of rights needs the empowerment of individuals with certain capabilities that allow them to effectively practice such rights. To many, society's assistance to each individual to ensure that they acquire such capabilities becomes itself a human right since it is necessary to exercise these rights. Without that, there can be no Social Justice.

Amartya Sen has cogently argued about the importance of balancing rights and capabilities to ensure the exercise of freedoms, and he recast the issues of development as broadening the space of freedom in which people can thrive.

Other specialists refer to positive and negative rights. They categorize Human Rights into positive rights which require active provision of entitlements by the state and negative rights, meaning the state can protect them simply by taking no action (the state being required only to prevent the breach

"The exercise of rights needs the empowerment of individuals with certain capabilities that allow them to effectively practice such rights."

of rights). They are further categorized as Political and Civil rights on the one hand or Economic, Social and Cultural on the other. The former are often considered to be cost-free, precise and enforceable in a court of law. The latter are viewed as costly to provide, vague and cannot be properly judged in a court of law.

Such categorizations are confounded by reality. Thus building up and maintaining a judicial system, essential for the civil right to due process before the law and for other rights relating to judicial process, is positive, resource-intensive, and vague, while the social right to housing is precise and easily enforceable in a court of law.

I believe that a broad definition of rights with adequate boundary limits is essential for ensuring social justice and social cohesion.

But if freedom is ultimately to allow each person to live as fully as they can, then the inherent differences between people challenge us in terms of the inequalities that they will generate. People are multi-dimensional and we are unequal in our endowments in various dimensions.

To measure equality before the law is but a start. Some people would see fairness as the provision of equal opportunities only. If the result is to have some who are as rich as Bill Gates and some who are extremely poor, so be it. Others, most of us in fact, would see that a society where some people are lighting cigars with thousand dollar bills and others are starving is inherently unjust whatever the starting position was and whatever the procedural guarantees have been.

Extreme inequality is corrosive. It hardens the attitudes of the rich and powerful towards the poor and lowly. It builds acceptance of the incongruity of wealth amidst misery and exclusion, undermines the very notions of social justice and social cohesion, makes a mockery of fairness and leads to the slippery path of class warfare as the only means of redress.

Indeed, recent studies have confirmed our suspicions that far from being a necessary corollary to compensate the talented and inventive, those forces in society that propel society forward, excessive inequality was inefficient and was associated with a variety of social ills.

But all efforts to provide equality of outcome have run afoul of the inherent different endowments of people, as witnessed in communist societies who ideologically pursued such notions. Thus most of us would demand a minimum of decent standards of living in the outcome in addition to the equality of opportunity in the start position.

"Extreme inequality is corrosive. It hardens the attitudes of the rich and powerful towards the poor and lowly. It builds acceptance of the incongruity of wealth amidst misery and exclusion, undermines the very notions of social justice and social cohesion, makes a mockery of fairness and leads to the slippery path of class warfare as the only means of redress."

Perhaps it is better to talk of equity rather than equality. The former is more relational, the latter more absolute. Equity is defined as something that is just, impartial, and fair. That leads to a view of Justice applied in circumstances covered by law yet influenced by principles of ethics and fairness. How these latter must be exercised can and will change over time as social circumstances change as well.

Justice in the sense of equity brings to mind that many things can be legal and correct but the outcomes of their rigorous application can remain unjust. That calls to mind that Justice must be tempered by mercy. But beyond justice and equity, lies the qualities needed for Social cohesion to bring the disparate elements of society together. All nations are gradually becoming rainbow nations. We are entering the age of pluralism.

Cohesion in the Age of Pluralism

The ideas of racially pure, ethnically unique or homogenous religious societies are now things that have been rejected by the overwhelming majority of humanity. Those who promoted that by genocide and ethnic cleansing have been defeated. But the corollary, the acceptance of pluralism, is not easy to implement. Diverse communities may indeed be enriching the mosaic of a multi-cultural society, but it also generates a sense of unease among the population. We have witnessed disasters in the Balkans and Rwanda, and dissolution of the state in Yugoslavia and Sudan…all reminders that pluralism is difficult to implement, even in the democratic societies of Europe, without verging into separation.

For many, the "melting pot" approach of the United States remains attractive. But it involves a negation of cultural pluralism, even as it exalts the uniformity of the national values and the diversity of the ethnic and religious mix of the citizens.

What used to be called "cosmopolitanism" in great cities such as Istanbul and Alexandria has been lost. Recapturing the spirit of that cosmopolitanism today is proving illusive. For cosmopolitanism involved diverse communities with very distinct identities rubbing shoulders and interacting every day.

Editorial

"Youth have also led the way in the formation of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. They bear witness through YouTube and Flicker. In so doing, they have not only created their own special means of communications, they have also revolutionized the notion of how societies interact."

Today, co-existing pluralistic communities find recapturing that cosmopolitanism elusive without slipping into exclusion and hostility. But youth and technology are coming to our rescue.

The Internet culture created by youth and predominantly pioneered by youth has been able to dissolve boundaries of politics and geography, to help create networks of like-minded people who can communicate, share experiences and reinforce each other on common causes in ways that were unthinkable a generation ago. Youth have also led the way in the formation of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. They bear witness through YouTube and Flicker. In so doing, they have not only created their own special means of communications, they have also revolutionized the notion of how societies interact.

Thus cohesion and social interaction in the virtual world are becoming as important as that practiced in the physical world of daily contacts, and many young people spend hours every day in such virtual connections.

Yet, the presence of these additional multiple overlays, as one is part of many networks, may enrich life, but it leads to two other problems. Where friendships based on physical contacts are few and deep, those nurtured by the web are broader but shallower. They may constitute a complement, even a support for, the traditional friendships that have existed from time immemorial, but will not replace them. That is not necessarily a problem, but it

"We must hope that what we are living through will turn out to be not just a knowledge revolution, but the start of wisdom."

becomes so if it takes too many hours away from the activities in the real world and the real society. It could even be a real positive force for strengthening social cohesion if it is used wisely.

The second problem is more difficult. Where the old media usually tried to expose people to a variety of opinions, the enormous explosions of outlets that the new media has created allows people to gravitate towards the specific outlets that support their point of view. They get reinforced in their prejudices. That in turn leads to more polarization in debate, even as it caters to a wider variety of opinions and removes the barriers to expressing such opinions.

On balance, however, I have unlimited confidence in youth. They will craft a world in their own image, idealistic, dynamic and imaginative. But it will be a different world than that which we have known. We are on the cusp of a major global revolution.

That global revolution is often referred to as the coming of the Information Age or the Knowledge-based Society. Yet to address the issues of social justice, pluralism, freedom, equality or participation we need much more than information or even knowledge. We need wisdom.

We must hope that what we are living through will turn out to be not just a knowledge revolution, but the start of wisdom.

I am not pessimistic. Indeed, I am excited and I invite others to share my wonder and admiration, my concerns and my misgivings, and above all to be infected by the excitement of the times, and the fantastic explorations that lie ahead that will transform forever our views of ourselves and of our societies, as we move to realize our aspirations for social justice.

The Centrality of Participation

How does a society promote that social capital, that glue that holds society together, promotes trust and makes transactions between people possible? Actually the evidence is overwhelming that Participation is absolutely central to a properly functioning society. Participation promotes transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. It fights corruption and promotes efficiency in government.

In a landmark study entitled "Making Democracy Work" published in 1993, Robert Putnam of Harvard showed that much of the variation between the performance of the northern and southern parts of Italy, where the north is rich, dynamic and growing rapidly while the south is poor, stagnant and corrupt could be traced to the much greater level of citizen participation in the north. It did not matter what form that participation took, it was the intensity of social interaction in the voluntary-based, horizontally-structured organizations, as opposed to being part of coercive hierarchical organizations, that made all the difference.

That after all is the definition of social cohesion and social interaction. It is essential in this time of pluralism and diversity, and it is a manifestation of that dynamic "Rainbow nation" that Nelson Mandela helped to nurture on the rubble of racism and injustice.

We, who believe in democracy and in liberty, are going to win…No one can stop the tides of change and progress. The last 400 years have been a global march towards liberating the human mind from the shackles of dogma, and liberating the human condition from oppression and despotism to where democratic government is not an exception, but the norm. Setbacks are momentary, mere blips in the sweeping march of history.

These powerful societal forces of democracy and human rights are like the deep, unseen ocean currents that govern the climate and shape our destiny. Many people focus on events that grab the headlines and generate intense debate, but they are like surface storms that can sink ships and drown people. They are undoubtedly important, but, unlike the deep currents, they lack the staying power, the lasting effect that real societal change is based on.

These enlightened values of human rights, the rule of law, democratic participation and social cohesion to promote social justice, are the values that can provide youth with a sense of a higher purpose than mere material gain. They under-gird the dignity of the individual and the mutual respect so necessary for civilized discourse. They allow our children to grow in the belief that the ideals of truth, goodness, liberty, equality and justice are more than empty words. It is these values that promote a culture of humanism, a culture of peace.

"These enlightened values of human rights, the rule of law, democratic participation and social cohesion to promote social justice, are the values that can provide youth with a sense of a higher purpose than mere material gain."

To our youth, from the Cape to Cairo and beyond, I say: You have been called the children of the internet, or the Facebook generation, but you are more. You are the vanguard of the great global revolution of the 21st century. So, go forth into the journey of your lives, to create a better world for yourselves and for others. Think of the unborn, remember the forgotten, give hope to the forlorn, include the excluded, reach out to the unreached, and by your actions from this day onwards lay the foundation for better tomorrows. Get on with the task of creating Social Justice, based on Pluralism, Cohesion and Social Participation.

BA Highlights

DIRECTOR OF CMEC* REFLECTS ON EXPERIENCES OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

Sarah Elhaddad

Paul Salem

Since January 2011, the whole world realized that the Arab World will never be the same again. The revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests announced the fall of dictators and the end of authoritarianism. Finally, the Arab Spring is here, and democracy is in the making.

However, the transition from authoritarianism to democracy is known to be very critical. Countries like Tunisia, Egypt, and recently Libya, are taking serious steps towards reform, in a very vital transitional period that would hopefully lead to democratic states.

In this regard, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) Center for Peace and Democracy Studies (CPDS) held a lecture by Dr. Paul Salem, Director of Carnegie Middle East Center (CMEC), entitled "Transitions from Authoritarianism to Democracy: Global Experiences and the Arab Challenge".

The lecture aimed at shedding the light on global experiences in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy, a step that could be of great importance in the challenge facing Arab countries these days.

Nevertheless, Dr. Paul Salem affirmed in the beginning of his lecture that by going through literatures on democratic transitions, and observing the details of global experiences, it is certain that there are no set models in democratic transition.

"Every transitional phase differs from one country to another. There are no models that can be exported or paths that can be copied and reproduced," he said. "However," he added, "we can definitely derive lessons from the experiences of 120 different countries who went through the same experience".

Salem presented the waves of democratic transition, starting from the French Revolution until the fall of the Berlin Wall, that spread over different parts of the world but only reached the Arab World early this year with the Arab Spring that not only took the autocratic systems by surprise, but also renewed waves of democracy in the world. He also said that Democracy is an international trend that was destined to reach the Arab World, sooner or later.

He maintained that overthrowing a dictatorship does not necessarily mean having a democratic system; in some countries this was followed by a civil war, or even paved the way to another dictatorship. He highlighted that sustaining a democracy is the work of a generation or two; for democracy is not just another phase but a complete process.

Salem also stressed that a democracy rests on a network of institutions; active social players; a constitution and legal system; civil society; free media and market; independent juridical apparatus; effective bureaucracy, electoral institutions, and accountability.

As for the situation in Egypt, Salem affirmed that the process of democratic transition could be much easier than the situation in other countries; such as Libya, stating that Egypt already has political and civil organizations and institutions, active journalism and civil society, and laws. He stressed on the importance of taking decisions to activate these laws, reviving the role of organizations, and finally, the transmission of authority to the elected bodies.

"National unity is another essential element in the transition to democracy," said Salem. "Unity is the cornerstone of democracy, especially in countries with different levels of sectarian diversity; such as Egypt and Syria, and tribal diversity, such as Yemen and Libya."

Salem pointed out that the transition to Democracy can be implemented in several ways, whether through a popular uprising, or as a form of governance imposed by an authoritarianism regime, or through military intervention.

He said that democracy is more likely to be achieved when it is implemented by the ruling regime, which was the case in countries like Portugal and Brazil. He stated that this advantage is not present in the Arab spring. "However, military forces in some Arab countries made up for this element, as they realized that they should support the change and dismantle the dictatorship," he added.

Meanwhile, Salem pointed out to the fact that democracy can be somehow threatened in the previous case, as it might lead the military institution to obtain more advantages in the transition to democracy, or drive it to take part in the political life, leading to the reproduction of a military rule.

As for the transitional period, he affirmed that the success or failure of this phase depends on the mechanism of managing it, starting from determining when the transition starts and when it ends, to the important and decisive decisions made in this period. He mentioned that a new constitution, free elections, and elected institutions, are the most important elements that form a successful transitional period.

"The mechanism of amending the constitution is as important as the content itself," he stressed. "The constitution amendment process must depend on general consensus, it has to be given an appropriate amount of time, and finally, to be approved in a public referendum".

As for the form of governance chosen by the countries after the transitional phase, Salem said that most countries chose the parliamentary form, to make sure all political parties get the chance to be involved in the political process. He added that these countries also feared the return of centralization of power that can can occur in presidential forms.

"However, this doesn't necessarily mean that presidential regimes are doomed to fail, or recreate dictatorships," Salem confirmed. He added that presidential regimes can be successful in achieving democracy, but they often have greater responsibilities, as they fight the temptation of rebuilding political authority centralization, and they also have to deal with the power of the military.

He pointed out that proportional representation in elections was the system chosen by most countries in the transitional period. "The reason proportional representation was so popular among those countries is that political bodies didn't have enough time for organization. Proportional representation paves the way for an open political life and enables the society to integrate with its democratic organizations," he said.

In conclusion, Salem affirmed that global experiences proved that the process of transition to democracy is often very difficult and complicated, and has many challenges and economic and social prices that have to be endured by the people, because it is considered a shift from a stable path.

"Although there is no magical way to avoid hard work, and despite the difficult challenge, Egypt and Tunisia are already taking very important and effective steps in the path of transition to democracy," he said.

THE JANUARY 25 REVOLUTION:
Reflections on the Present and Insights on the Future
Mohamed Musaad and Dina Magdy

In light of the January 25 Revolution, several debates on the future of Egypt and the role of youth, in particular, were triggered. Focusing on their key role in sparking the Revolution and ousting the former regime, the Egyptian youth have paved the way for community participation to reshape the future by laying the cornerstones of a democratic state.

Right after the former Egyptian president was overthrown, Egypt started to witness a number of individual and collective initiatives that attempt to disseminate political awareness and support democratic political culture; factors that drive, particularly young people, and the society at large to act and participate in the public domain. Furthermore, many initiatives that aspire to fight corruption in various state and civil institutions have been launched.

Such a revolutionary atmosphere has opened the doors for researchers in the fields of social and political sciences to engage in community education and awareness, as part of their scientific contributions, and within the broader context of social change—one of the most important milestones of the Egyptian Revolution.

Being "the World's window on Egypt" and "Egypt's window on the World", the BA has not been away from the political scene in Egypt. Recognizing the crucial role played by youth in the January 25 Revolution, the BA was a pioneer in hosting a number of youth activists, initiatives and researchers, who themselves have taken part in reshaping

Revolution Graffiti in Alexandria, **©facebook.com**

Egypt's present and future, in an attempt to integrate them in a society that is currently being renovated.

In this context, the BA Futuristic Studies Unit organized two academic seminars, hosting Professor Asef Bayat, Professor of Sociology and Middle East Studies University of Illinois; and Dr. Linda Herrea, Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois, as the main speakers, in addition to a group of young Egyptian researchers. These two seminars were held within the framework of the BA Futuristic Studies Unit strategy to spread political awareness, in addition to its attempts to comprehend the post-revolutionary scene in Egypt, partly by analyzing different political and ideological trends.

Professor Asef Bayat has published widely on issues of political sociology; such as social movements, urban space, the Iranian Revolution, policies of the Middle East, contemporary slam, and everyday politics. Bayat's notions of "social non-movements", "post Islamism" and "post ideology" succeeded in explaining the social interactions in Egypt away from the mainstream academic

western frameworks which failed to predict, explain or analyze the Egyptian case study.

Dr. Linda Herrera's major research interests and writing are around issues of youth and citizenship in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), operating policies and international development policy and new media. In 2010, Bayat and Herrera co-authored a book entitled "Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politics in the Global North and South."

On 13 and 14 July, the two seminars entitled "The Egyptian Revolution: Comprehending the Present and an Attempt to Read the Future" were held, during which participants discussed their viewpoints and future concerns about the Revolution, on top of

Asef Bayat

Linda Herrera

which is the possibility for the former regime to reproduce itself.

In the BA affiliated El-Sennary House in Cairo, the first seminar focused on the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of redefining the Revolution, and transcends the secular-versus-Islamic dichotomy by the concept of "Post Islamism." As clarified in his thesis, Bayat thinks that the Egyptian Revolution lies somewhere in between "Reform" and "Revolution", thus he coined the term "Refolution." Researcher Ismail Alexandrani indicated that the Egyptian Revolution is an embodiment of "social non-movements", while Aly El-Raggal, a researcher at the BA Futuristic Studies Unit, described it as part of the rhizomatic struggles against authority. Dr. Herrera believes that the young Egyptian revolutionists are capable of causing an epistemological break with the former regime, being exposed to the new and social media as they are.

The second seminar, held on 17 July in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Conference Center, included three successive sessions on informal education, social media and art in light of the January 25 Revolution.

In the session on informal education, participants addressed the forms of informal education, which widely spread all over Egypt during the last decade, providing the

main platform for youth involvement and awareness outside the formal education framework. These forms include simulation models of local, regional and international political institutions, as well as educational and NGOs initiatives.

However, the death of Khaled Said, a 28-year-old Egyptian man brutally beaten to death at the hands of the two secret police officers in Alexandria in June 2010, was a turning point for many, especially in Alexandria. A couple of days after his death, a prominent Facebook group, "We are all Khaled Said", brought attention to his death and contributed to growing discontent with police brutality and corruption in the weeks leading up to the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. This accident incited many opposition vigils— growing even more robust and compelling— thanks to informal education initiatives that create a network among young people though exposing them to political concepts and political activism skills.

Participants raised the issue of promoting cooperation between informal education initiatives and the State, since most of informal education initiatives are carried out through students' activities within universities and simulation models, in particular. While some urged to involve informal education programs into formal educational system, which, in their opinion, will eventually contribute to the renovation of the overall educational system in Egypt after the Revolution; others feared the Government's control over such initiatives to serve its own goals and policies. Hence the importance of cautious cooperation is highlighted.

In the session on Social Media, researchers explained the differences between the New Media, also known as the Electronic Media, which holds out a possibility of on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device via social networking

BA Workshops Attendees

websites; and the Community Media—a form of media that is created and controlled by a community. Community Media is, in a broad sense, is independent of the market-driven commercial and mainstream media outlets, and away from the dominance of the state-run media. It can take so many forms, be applied by so many different groups of people, and be directed at such a wide range of issues. Some of its traditional forms include posters, graffiti and calls of street vendors. However, the cabling installation project for broadcasting satellite television channels, for instance, is one of its modern forms that have spread widely during the past decade in the Egyptian society, and more specifically in poor and middle-classed neighborhoods.

Participants also attempted to define different terms used in that regard; such as citizen journalism, people's media, grass root media and collaborative journalism. They addressed the possibility of toggling between multiple forms of media after the Revolution.

The third session on Art included an exhibition of Alexandrian graffiti, a genre of street revolutionary art that have spread widely in public places serving as a platform for young people's freedom of expression—especially after the Revolution. During the exhibition, participants discussed the degree of professionalism and aesthetic dimensions of the graffiti on display, with a special focus on the relation between beauty and ugliness as far as the Revolution was concerned, in addition to the social, educational and cultural influences on professional and amateur artists.

In this regard, some researchers questioned the existence of English script or Latin letters rather than Arabic one. While analyzing the relation between art and revolution, they shed light on the development of graffiti artists' perspectives during Mubarak's regime on one hand, and the current transitional phase on the other hand.

Apart from being a center of excellence in the production and dissemination of knowledge and a beacon for dialogue, learning, freedom of expression and understanding between cultures and peoples, the BA has also dedicated itself to enhance the role of youth in politics as well as determine how their political awareness and participation can be promoted. When all is said and done, this has been the goal ever since its inauguration, and youth—members of the Internet generation—have always been at the core of the BA concerns, and for that matter, will always be.

NASSER DIGITAL ARCHIVE NOW IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Kholoud Said

Extending the collaboration between the BA and Nasser Foundation, aiming to document the life of the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the BA has launched a trilingual interface of the current digital archive. The new launch targets increasing the scope of access of the Archive to include non-Arabic users as well. Hence, http://nasser.bibalex.org is currently available in Arabic, English and French.

The Nasser project lies integrated under a single interface and in a fully searchable form of metadata and content. This applies to the trilingual interface as well. The material on
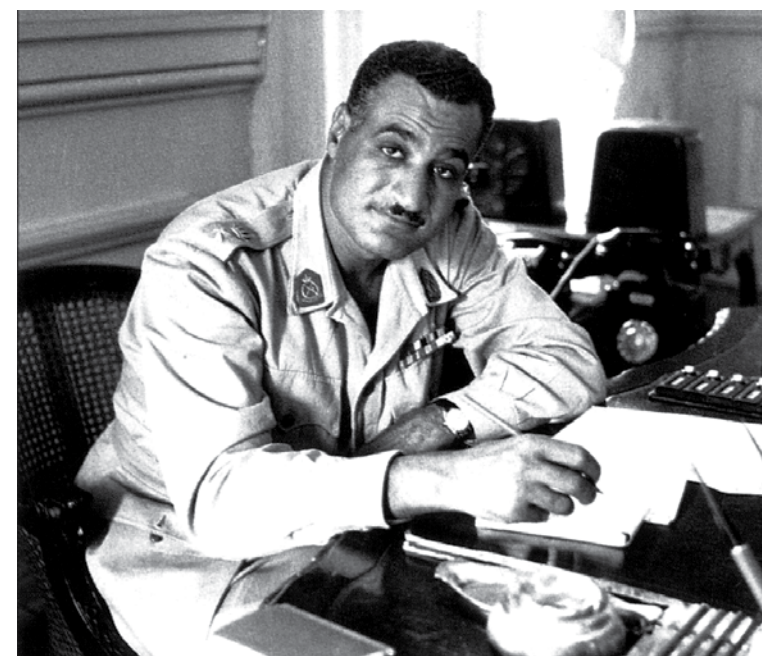
Gamal Abdel Nasser

Nasser Archive is categorized by either date, author, source or type. Through the trilingual interface, non-Arabic users can retrieve archived material through facilitated search or through simple browsing.

Famous speeches of the Late President in various events—such as the Nationalization of the Suez Canal, and the announcement of the Union with Syria—are among the valuable historical material available in the Archive. For the first time, Nasser's speeches are provided online in text, audio and video.

The pamphlets are also a very unique addition to the collection, published by the Free Officers Movement to encourage the Egyptian army and people to revolt against the British occupation. This gives users a taste of what was happening at that time. The Archive also contains Nasser's writings, including 3 books: Philosophy of the Revolution; President Abdel Nasser's Diary during the Palestinian War; and On the Way to Freedom which he began as a high school student and which won first prize in the competition held by the Supreme Council for Arts, Literature and Social Sciences. This is in addition to 138 poems written about Nasser by different poets on various occasions.

The collection has recently been expanded to include a collection of handwritten documents including the President's personal correspondence with family and friends, lectures, drafts, personal notes and other relevant documents. The majority of the documents are being published for the first time.

Nasser in Africa

Over 1,400 national songs which emerged during Nasser's reign and were related to major events in Egypt and the Arab region are available online. They represent his influence on the culture of the region as a whole, addressing various issues such as the 1952 Revolution, nationalization of the Suez Canal, agricultural reform, the High Dam, the Yemen War and Arab nationalism.

The Nasser Digital Archive has also been recently enriched by new features. The "Happened on this Day" feature allows users to view events, news, speeches, or documentary movies that happened on the same day in a certain year. One of the easiest ways to gain a considerable amount of historical information, the feature will help keep younger users in better contact with Nasser's history, as part of that of their country.

The Archive has been recently updated with more press articles from Arabic and English publications featuring different

Nasser and his son

stages in Nasser's life. The update represents content from The New York Times, Daily News, The Washington Post, Al-Ahram Weekly and others. Another two important documentary movies: The Egyptian-Syrian Unity and Arab Dream Symbol were added as well.

A photo collection with the translated metadata was also added, documenting a variety of events during Nasser's era. Another unique collection of stamps, coins and caricatures of Nasser are available with descriptions in English and French.

Users may also contribute with their comments or inputs in electronic form, which is then sent to the project's team.

Future work includes continuous addition of new material to the Archive comprising important details about one of Egypt's most important eras.

The Digital Archive of Gamal Abdel Nasser was created in 2005 in cooperation with the Nasser Foundation. The International School of Information Science (ISIS) had digitized and published everything related to the President through an integrated searchable web-based system. The entire digital archive is freely available and has been receiving an average of 1.5 million hits per month.

Nasser and fidel castro

Contributions

CONFRONTING THE ABSENCE OF PALESTINE REFUGEE RIGHTS

Karen AbuZayd*

Karen AbuZayd

Tumultuous events in Tunisia, Egypt and all round the region, provide confirmation that a rights-based approach is appropriate and necessary to pave the way along the path to justice, not only for Palestinian refugees, but also for all Palestinians, as well as for their compatriots in neighboring countries.

The US Department of State's annual Human Rights Report, released on 8 April, identifies Israeli institutional, legal and societal discrimination against Arab citizens and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It also addresses poor treatment of prisoners by the Palestinian Authority and abuses by Hamas, among them strict restrictions on speech and religion.

In addressing the topic of confronting the absence of Palestine Refugee rights, it is useful to begin with a selective look at the guiding document for establishing the ideal rights regime for all the world's peoples, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. Perusing the UDHR allows us to determine which rights are not enjoyed by Palestine refugees.

While all 30 rights listed in the UDHR could be deemed absent for Palestinian refugees, particularly those living under occupation, 11 are particularly relevant to refugee condition generally, and therefore particularly egregious in their absence. In summary form (citing their UDHR numbers), these are:

- No torture or cruel or degrading treatment or punishment (5);

- All equal before the law, entitled to equal protection (7);

- No arbitrary arrest, detention or exile (9);

- Freedom of movement and residence within borders; right to leave and return to one's own country (13);

- Right to a nationality, not to be arbitrarily deprived of one's nationality (15);

- Right to own property, not to be arbitrarily deprived of property (17);

- Freedom of opinion and expression without interference (19);

- Freedom of peaceful assembly and association (20);

- Right to work, free choice of employment and favorable conditions of work...equal pay for equal work (23);

- Right to an adequate standard of living for health and well being (25); and

- All entitled to a social and international order where the UN Declaration of Human Rights can be realized (30).

This, admittedly, is an idealistic list for the poor or oppressed anywhere, and it is absent in its entirety for Palestinian refugees living under occupation since 1967 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Leaving aside the discriminatory laws being passed by the Israeli Knesset against its own Arab/Palestinian citizens, inequality of protection before the law for occupied Palestinians is strikingly demonstrated by statistics related to property rights. This is a discrimination made possible by certain provisions of the 1994 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP), more commonly known as the Oslo Accords.

The Accords divided the West Bank into Area A (Palestinian control, 20% of the land), Area B (Palestinian civil and Israeli military control, another 20%) and Area C (complete Israeli control, 60%). The Israeli government, basing its action on this supposedly temporary regime, as land was to be gradually transferred to Palestinian control, has 'allowed' 300,000 Israelis to settle illegally in 121 official and three unofficial settlements and in 100 outposts in the West Bank (mostly in Area C), and another 200,000 to establish 12 settlements in East Jerusalem.

In a report covering the years 2000 to 2006, the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem states startling figures for building permits granted by the Civil Administration. In the six years analyzed, settlers received 6,945 permits. Palestinians, who applied for a mere 1,890 permits, received only 105! Figures such as these speak for themselves regarding unequal treatment. A February joint UNRWA/OHCHR press release stated that 94% of all Palestinian permit applications for building in Area C have been rejected in recent years.

There has been a significant increase in the number of demolitions in East Jerusalem from January to March this year. From 29 demolitions in January (affecting 70 persons, 47 of them children), the figure rose to 70 in February (105 persons, including 43 children) and to 76 in March (158 people, 64 children). At the same time, approvals are given on a regular basis for Jewish settlers

* Karen AbuZayd is the Former Commissioner-General of the United Nation Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian Refugees. She is currently a Commissioner at the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (UNHRC). This article was given as a speech at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 19 April 2011.

and businessmen to construct housing units and hotels in East Jerusalem.

On arbitrary arrest or detention, some 6,000 Palestinians are in Israeli custody, with six to seven hundred in six months, repeatedly renewed administrative detention. A General Assembly document earlier this year pointed out that among those arrested are 250 children and 27 women.

Freedom of movement and residence within borders is curtailed by the checkpoints, and the right to leave and return to one's own country is not granted even to many of the most senior Palestinian officials. The borders are controlled by the occupying power intent on making movement difficult, particularly in and out of Jerusalem. Families are split, work and educational opportunities are lost and visiting religious sites, medical facilities or relatives is not possible for most West Bank residents.

On the right to a nationality, until there is a declared and recognized Palestinian state, 'Palestinian' is a nationality in name only, without the full benefits that define that status. Freedom to express one's opinion without interference and freedom of assembly and association are prevented when it comes to protests or demonstrations.

Workers and landowners are prevented from reaching their places of employment or their farmlands, as there are multiple obstacles put in front of many workers and farmers in the West Bank by the security fence or wall, by 99 fixed and 310 flying checkpoints, at last OCHA count, and curfews. An additional and major problem for economic development is the difficulty faced in importing or exporting the materials and products that make West Bank livelihood possible. Also, only 11% of UNRWA's 2009 request for house repairs and reconstruction materials, needed after the destructive war of that year in Gaza, has been approved.

The absence of these basic, universal rights—to thought, to movement, to work, to property, to association—prevents the realization of the other rights; to an adequate standard of living for health and well-being and to an international order where the UDHR can be realized.

What are some broader messages to be derived from this litany of neglect or abuse of universal values and human rights?

Taken one by one, they paint an unpleasant picture of oppression (as in occupation) and an undeniable impression that there is intent to force or 'encourage' Palestinians to leave what is left to them of their land for more welcoming and comfortable locations, or otherwise to accept to be confined to small, non-contiguous spaces, without sufficient goods, services (as basic as water in some places) or opportunities to live free and fruitful lives.

Taken as a whole, beyond the long term debilitating effects on the health, wellbeing and psychology of those affected, they call into question the seriousness of the Israeli partner in the search for a negotiated peace with the Palestinians, with consequences on peace in the Middle East more generally.

One can conclude that there must be an agenda to create facts on the ground, to force Palestinians out of East Jerusalem, the designated capital of the eventual Palestinian state, and away from West Bank areas which border settlements, are sites of water aquifers or simply wanted for other, often security purposes, as in the Jordan Valley.

Having offered this dismal description of missing human rights set against the historical document establishing these basic rights, are there actions or approaches that are relevant and feasible to address the long term, far-reaching consequences of the missing rights?

I would point out a more immediate possibility to which I can testify, having lived for over nine years in Gaza as UNRWA's Commissioner-General. A place to begin is to rely on the renowned Palestinian steadfastness and resilience. I have often challenged Palestinians about their being 'too' adaptable, always finding ways to live with or get around whatever challenges arise. But this creativity is precisely the attribute that could allow elimination of obstacles that impede Palestinian ability to address their economic, political and cultural conditions, including the right to govern themselves fully. Their achievements under occupation and under siege are indications of what wonders they might accomplish were they to enjoy freedom of movement of people and goods—and of thought.

Prime Minister Fayyad, having concentrated on institution- and state-building, is moving steadily toward the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state on 1967 borders,

Palestinian refugees in 1948 **@wikipedia.com**

seeking recognition at the United Nations in September. In recent days, the UN, the EU, the World Bank and the IMF have all proclaimed that Palestine is ready to function as a sovereign state. Those who oppose this move or see it as unhelpful, even 'dangerous', should come up with a viable and meaningful alternative.

Meanwhile, Israel is becoming ever more widely recognized as an oppressive occupying power. While the strength of its economy and military ought to give the Israeli government confidence, instead it worries about an unlikely 'delegitimization' and bases its policy almost entirely on security issues. International surveys show that foreigners who see Israel in a positive light have shrunk to a mere 19%. Many Israelis themselves bemoan the fact that their international standing has never been lower.

Israeli worries are always tempered, of course, by the political and financial support they can count on from the United States, particularly the Congress. The UN is also kept

in check by the US Security Council veto of any resolution even remotely unfavorable to Israel, no matter how grounded in international law.

Diminishing the Israeli fears, working toward a fairer and more balanced US policy on Palestine and, again, ending the occupation are all pre-requisites for realizing Palestinian rights.

Yet another approach by many who are deeply involved with Palestine and watching closely what is happening in the occupied territory, is promoting the 'one state' solution. This again brings us to the role of the political actors in the international community, particularly again the United States. Fortunately, there are more and more voices in the Arab World, Europe and even in the US acknowledging that the 'no peace, much process' negotiations must undergo radical transformation. In the first place, all major parties to the conflict, including Hamas, must be openly involved. Nowhere has resolution to a conflict been achieved by excluding one of the parties that represents a large percentage of the population, and in this case, won free and fair elections, encouraged and observed by external actors.

A flurry of other initiatives are beginning to appear. Amnesty International has petitioned the UN Human Rights Council with 67,000 signatures calling for crucial steps to be taken to ensure international justice for victims of the 2008/2009 conflict in Gaza and Southern Israel. New and larger flotillas are on their way to Gaza.

The growing number, breadth and depth of these actions is a recognition that there are tools available for a just struggle, that documents such as the UDHR, adopted by the international community, are valuable and should be used to advance just causes.

It is time to pay attention to the aspirations of Palestinians before they disappear in the fog of another war—or even the fog of more negotiations as some have quipped.

The stability of the region, and beyond, will continue to be affected by an unresolved Palestinian condition, a lingering wound that must be treated, first and foremost by the two parties to the conflict themselves, but with input, that helps rather than hinders, from outside parties, if it is not to interfere with and undermine the achievements of Palestine's Middle East neighbors.

The Middle East, and those engaged with it, cannot expect to be at ease until peace comes to Palestine and justice to the Palestinians.

MIDDLE EAST REVOLUTIONS:
An Environmental Perspective

Mohamed Abdel Raouf*

Most of the numerous articles written about the ongoing revolutions in the Middle East have focused on their political and/or economic causes and likely consequences. However, environmental and natural resource-related issues, which are also at the center of these revolutions, have received little or no attention.

This article discusses the salience of such issues in the 2011 Middle East revolutions, with particular reference to the case of Egypt. More specifically, it argues that environmental and resource-related issues were "hibernating phenomena," that is, they were among the underlying causes of the conflict with Egypt's ruling establishment.

Roots of Popular Revolution—The Case of Egypt

The Middle East uprisings in general and the revolution in Egypt in particular stemmed from the anger of ordinary people. The 25 January Revolution in Egypt was initiated by well educated youth, and not, as might have been expected, by the poor or by the masses of unemployed. Yet, although youth were the vanguard of the uprising in Egypt, the overwhelming majority of the population supported their demands. Moreover, contrary to predictions, political, rather than economic grievances were at the forefront of the protesters' demands.

During the 25 January Revolution, protesters raised banners and chanted slogans cast mainly in political terms, such as: "Down, down Hosni Mubarak," "Leave, leave Hosni Mubarak," "Get out," "Game over," and "People want freedom." The key slogan of the revolution has been, "The people want the downfall of the regime."

How, then, do we explain the uprising? In seeking to ascertain the direct and indirect reasons for it, one must be careful to avoid conflating the triggering events, the tools employed, and the underlying causes.

There were several events that can be said to have triggered the Egyptian Revolution:

1. The death of the young internet activist; Khaled Mohamed Saied.

2. The death of the young Islamic activist; Sayed Belal.

3. The bombing of the Kedeseen Church in Alexandria on 1 January 2011.

4. The inspiration provided by the Tunisian Revolution (December 2010 – January 2011).

*Dr. Mohamed Abdel Raouf Abdel Hamid is an independent Environmental Researcher, currently working as an expert for UNEP West Asia GEO-5 report, HBS-Middle East, and others. Previously, he was the Program Manager—Environment Research at the Gulf Research Center, Dubai.

To be sure, social networking media, including Facebook and Twitter, played a key role in the Egyptian Revolution. However, it is important to emphasize that social networking is a communications tool, not in itself a triggering event or an underlying cause of revolution.

In fact, there were a multitude of underlying causes, or what might be called "hibernating phenomena," that led to the conflict with the ruling establishment in Egypt. They include:

1. Continual elections fraud.

2. Manipulation of laws.

3. Massive theft of the nation's financial and natural resources.

4. Emergency law.

5. Police brutality.

6. The Mubarak regime's foreign policy orientation, especially its policies toward the West and Israel.

7. Corruption and bad economic, social and political conditions.

8. The anticipated transfer of power to the President's son; Gamal Mubarak.

The Egyptian Revolution and the Environment

The most obvious connection between the Revolution and the environment was the adverse impact on the man-made sphere and biosphere caused by the burning or destruction of a number of buildings and other property during the protests.

Yet, there were many less obvious and arguably far more meaningful connections. For example, some signs displayed during the protests; such as the one depicted in Picture 2 below, indicate that the ruling regime had come to be viewed as culpable for squandering the country's precious natural resources.

A man stands on a burned-out car photographing the burning of the main building of the National Democratic Party in Tahrir Square, Cairo, ©flickr.com

Indeed, environmental and resource-related issues were at the very core of the Egyptian Revolution, as many of the policy decisions and their consequences of ruling regime had come to fuel popular discontent.

The export of natural gas, especially the unusually favorable terms on which gas was sold to Israel, is a case in point. In 2004, Egypt agreed to supply Israel with natural gas at approximately one-third of the international price for a period of 30 years. This agreement angered many petroleum experts, who argued, among other things, that the gas should be used to meet the Egypt's own domestic consumption requirements. Gas exports to Israel continued despite these objections and the fact that opponents managed to obtain a court decision in their favor.

A sign reads: "Leave, leave. You are the one who sold the land and the Nile", ©flickr.com

During and after the public protests that brought down the regime, protesters included environmental and resource-related issues among their catalogue of grievances, loudly proclaiming: "no" to carcinogenic pesticides and fertilizers, "no" to polluted water resources, and "no" to the bulldozing of farmland.

Youth cleaning Tahrir Square, ©BBC.com

The following caricature shows clearly that such issues were indeed "hibernating phenomena"—underlying causes of the revolution.

Some of the key slogans of the revolution were: "Cancer is everywhere, and the gas is sold for free" and "Husni Mubarak, you agent, you sold the gas and (only) the Nile is left (to be sold)." Of the many jokes circulating during the Revolution, some referred to the impact of the regime's policies on the environment: "Our Prime Minister's name is Nazeef (i.e. clean) and pollution is killing us all!"

It is revealing that, when the uprising ended, the same people who had been demonstrating for 18 days immediately started to clear Tahrir Square of trash and debris. Similar cleanup operations occurred in cities throughout Egypt.

The link between the revolution and the environment can also be seen in the actions taken by demonstrators. Immediately after the regime was ousted from power, youth campaigns were launched to clean, paint, and plant in streets and cities across the country. These and other acts of collective

"A guy thinking that he goes to stand in long line to buy water and pays a lot for it while it is polluted and will cause kidney failure or a disease that would kill him, so it is better to stay thirsty!! ©mazikao.net

"environmental citizenship" were very important. They sent a clear signal to the authorities challenging the self-interested

The NDP building burns next to the Egyptian Museum @publicintelligence.net

rational actor model that had pervaded official thinking and policies for decades and articulating the people's wider social interests and concerns.

Interestingly, the second and third lines of a flyer circulated during the run-up to the March 19 constitutional referendum asking people to vote "no" mentions a better quality of life and better health.

During the celebrations of the success of the Revolution, signs were displayed asking people not to dispose of garbage in the streets and to observe traffic signals.

The list of demands issued on 8 April, "Cleansing Friday," included several directly related to the environment:

1. Change old governors, break up local councils, and abolish the National Democratic Party;

2. Investigate the issue of looting of state land;

3. Investigate the carcinogenic effects of pesticide;

4. End the corrupt process of privatization of the public sector; and

5. Punish the killers of the demonstrators and those who poisoned the food and water and destroyed human health.

The common discourse was replete with expressions such as "the people want to achieve reconstruction and sustainability," instead of merely "the people want to overthrow the regime." On the occasion of Sham Al Naseem Day (Easter), on 25 April—exactly three months after the January Revolution—the literal and the figurative merged into one, as I heard nearly all people exclaiming, "This is the first time we can smell fresh clean air!"

Nevertheless, the road to sustainable development has not been cleared of all obstacles. One such obstacle is residual resistance to positive change, as indicated in a sign which reads, "Still there are clumsy people who are keeping fresh air away from us". Another is the sheer number and complexity of the environmental challenges facing the country, including issues related to the theft of Pharos monuments and gold mines "Alsukary" in the Eastern Desert and the most significant issue "the Nile River". The Revolution has made the enactment of policies conducive to sustainable development possible, though not inevitable.

Conclusion

It is clear that environmental issues and negative environmental impacts were among the underlying causes of the Egyptian Revolution. One of the important lessons of the Egyptian experience is that the Arab World needs to carry out continuous green projects that utilize individuals, especially youth, to serve and protect their countries. In this regard, it is the task of the international community through international aid, investment, and other forms of cooperation to support local efforts to pursue sustainable development.

Book Review

A NEW RECORDING REVITALIZES THE STUDY OF MAURITANIAN ROCK ART

"The rock art of the Sahara is a veritable library in which one can unearth a considerable number of clues as to technology, way of life and even the evolution of the population."

G. Camps
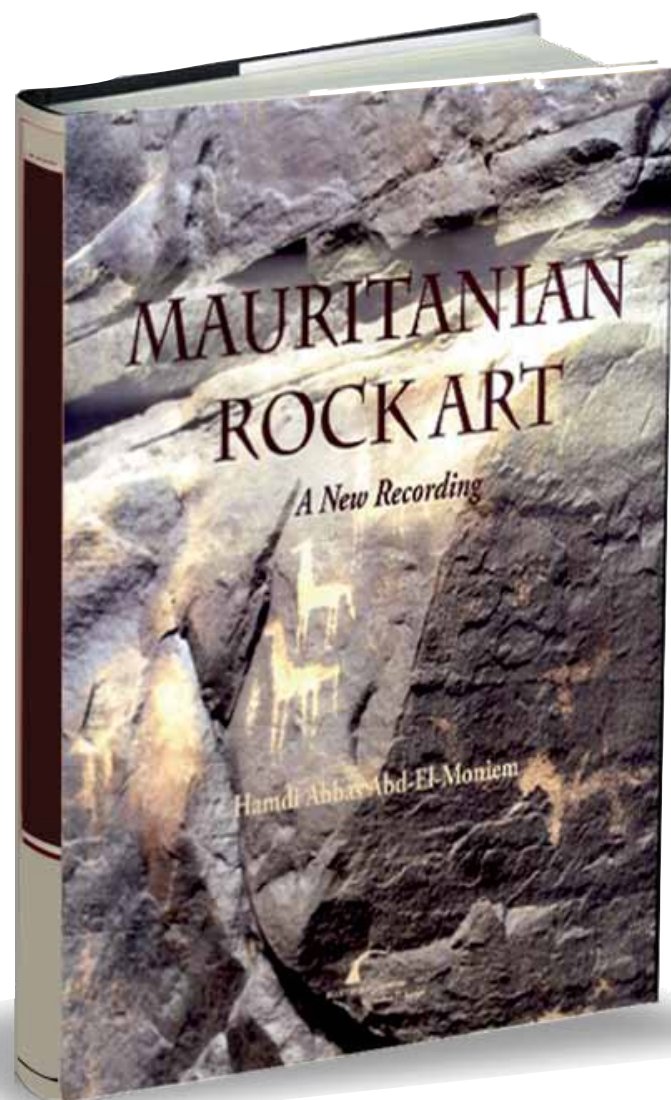
Despite the evident interest of researchers to study the rock art of the Sahara, Mauritanian rock art has received little attention compared to other rock art corpora of the Sahara. For this reason, Dr. Hamdi Abbas Abd-El-Moneim conducted a study for recording rock art in Mauritania, in which he obtained his phD from the University of London. His study was recently published by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) Calligraphy Center in a book entitled "Mauritanian Rock Art: A New Recording".

Mauritanian rock art was chosen as the core "case study" of this work for a number of reasons. Mauritania is interesting as a relatively untouched terrain of rock art research. The author affirms that it is important that researchers abandon their superficial judgment about the "beauty" of Mauritanian paintings and engravings in order to fill the large gap in our understanding of the Mauritania rock art in particular, and Saharan rock art in general.

He adds that the rock art of Mauritania may contribute to discussing and understanding a number of different archaeological issues that are difficult to interpret in the light of other past remains. The Mauritanian rock art is also worth recording due to its ongoing deterioration as a result of both natural and human factors.

Since a considerable number of rock art sites in Adrar Plateau in the northern part of the country has been studied, the author decided to conduct the survey in another portion of the region. The survey yielded two major new rock art sites: Foum Chor and Ahel-Ebdemmed. To carry out the study, Abd-El-Moneim attended two field training courses in Paspardo and Capo di Ponte in Italy, in order to prepare himself for the field work he would carry out in Mauritanian Sahara.

The Eastern Face of Foum Chor Rock

His work relied on several phases; including cleaning, mapping, naming the sites, photographing, rubbing, tracing, local researches and guides, and preliminary recording.

The two sites analyzed in this work have only engravings, which are dominated by animal representations and signs. The category of 'animal' rock art requires preparation prior to categorization and ultimate interpretive analysis. The researcher indicated a minimum number of pointers that were required to

The engraved area at Ahel-Ebdemmed

suggest a positive identification of an animal representation.

Pointers of identification were put according to some categories; which are Dogs and Allies, Hyaenids, Cats, African Equids, Bovids and Horned Ungulates, Dromedary Camel, Giraffe, Elephants, Rhinoceroses, and Hippopotamus.

Arabic Inscriptions and Animals

Abd-El-Moneim presents in his study a description of the recording work in the North of Atar-Mauritanian Adrar, and notices the presence of Arabic inscriptions. The first site; Foum Chor Site, consists of vertical large rock covered with engravings. The northern face of the rock, for instance, has four Arabic engraved inscriptions. All of them have very light patination.
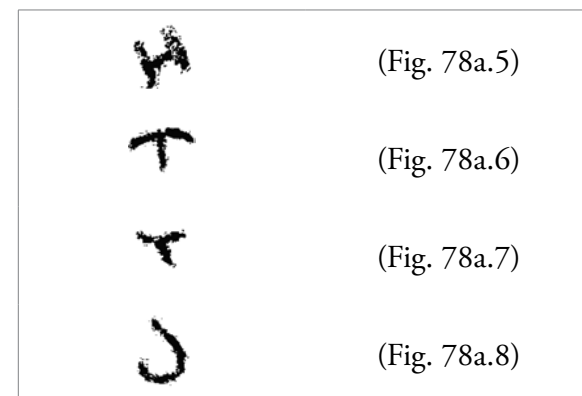
كمحمد	(Muhammad)
الله	(Allah i.e. God)
الحسين	(el-Hussein)
محمد	(Muhammad)

Arabic Inscriptions Foum Chor Rock

The engraver applied a pecking technique to place them in the central part of the rock. According to the study, the technique, quality, and common characters suggest that they may have been done by the same hand. The four Arabic inscriptions represent three Arabic names for signatures in addition to the name of Allah. From top to bottom they are: Muhammad, Allah, el-Hussein, Muhammad.

In addition to the inscriptions, the Northern face has also four engraved signs. They are pecked on the rock surface and are lightly patinated. Even though these signs could be seen as isolated motifs, their arrangement suggests a possible relation. The four engraved signs seem to be situated along the cardinal directions: North, South, East, and West.

At the Ahel-Ebdemmed site, the author found a group of animal depictions and signs carefully pecked then heavily abraded or rubbed in the rock surface. It includes 25 animals executed in a stylized manner and nineteen abstract signs. The approximate dimensions of the represented animals are 7-13 cm breadth and 10-13 cm in length.

of Foum Chor, there are no human figures represented among the depicted animals. The natural features and the shape of the rock of this site tend to separate the engravings into seven groups. Apart from the rock art, the site survey yielded no material culture.

Cultural History of Atar through Rock Art

The author has tried to use rock art to study the cultural history of Atar region—Mauritanian Adrar during late Holocene. He concludes that this art is quite different from that of sub-Saharan Africa. There is also no indication that it is directly linked with the Algerian corpus.

The engravings of Foum Chor and Ahel-Ebdemmed are most probably linked with the rock art of the northwestern part of the Sahara: the southern Morocco and the south-western provinces (formerly the Spanish Sahara). The rock art of northern Atar, therefore, is of northern affinities and constitutes a part of the known Berber
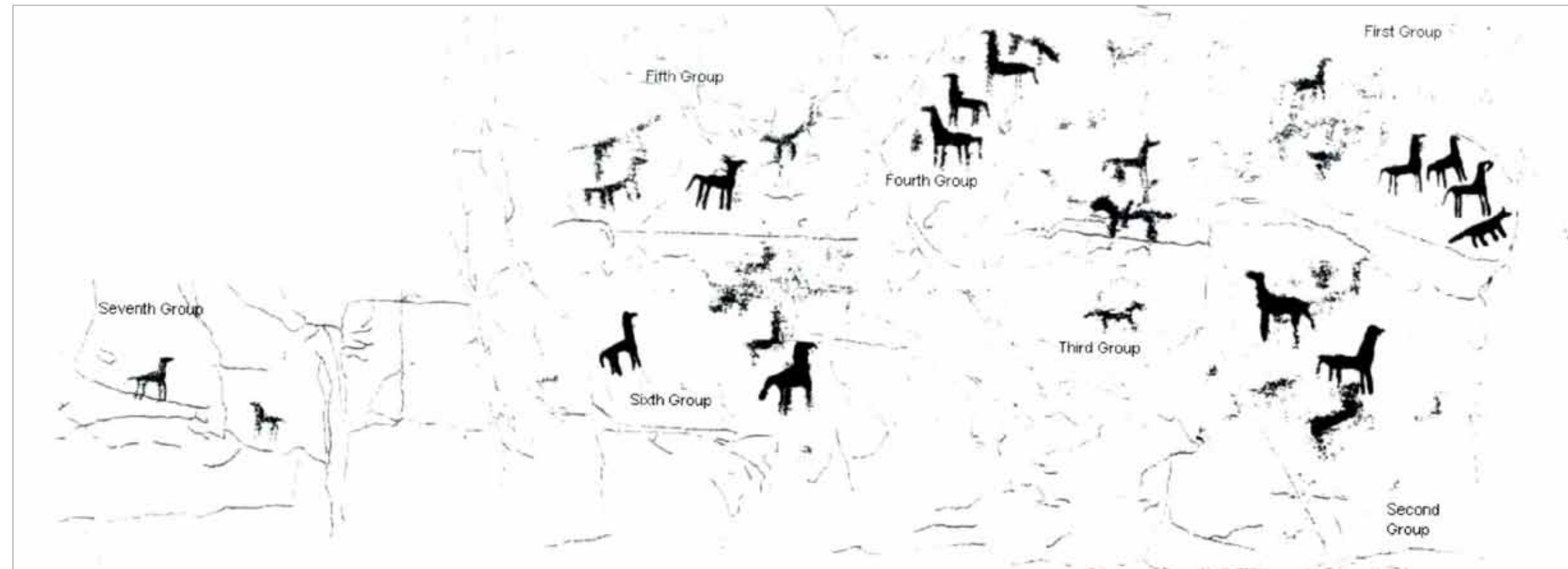
rock art, and consequently proto-Berber speakers would have been present in the northern Atar during the Late Holocene.

The study of the cultural history of the western part of the Sahara via rock art images is not an easy task, says the author. This is simply because the East/West and North/South migrations of the African peoples have confused the ethnic, racial, and linguistic map of the African continent. Multiple ethnicities, which are evidenced not only by archaeological materials but also by the recovered physical remains make for such a confused cultural landscape.

However, rock art can be used to detect social boundaries of ancient ethnicities or past ethnic groups. Rock art images of the northern Atar, as a remaining aspect of material culture, coincide with social boundaries of the Berber and/or proto/Berber population. Representational art as well as abstract signs and/or geometrical motifs can be seen as a 'language' employed in self-identification.

The engravings, above all, provide an additional source to study the cultural history of the Berber population. This art provides evidence for the existence of domestication and practicing nomadic pastoralism. The absence of wild animals that can be dated to the same period indicates that cattle herding was the main economic activity of the ancient population of Northern Atar. Game animals, which are executed in a different schematic style and have different level of patina, can be taken as an indicator of change in behavior pattern which was, and is always, controlled by change in climatic conditions.

In conclusion, the author mentions some future directions for rock art studies in northern Mauritania. He affirms that the encouragement of both foreign and local research may constitute the first and most important step to protect rock art heritage from destruction. He adds that by accurately recording and gauging the state of preservation of the rock art sites under research, then, researchers may be able to contribute to the protection of this wealth against aggression of natural forces.

(Fig. 78a.5)

(Fig. 78a.6)

(Fig. 78a.7)

(Fig. 78a.8)

Signs at Foum Chor Rock

Despite the small dimensions of these zoomorphic figures, they are in most cases, of fine craftsmanship. All of them, on the other hand, are in silhouette form. Consequently, most of the details such as the eyes, mane, and coat pattern, are not shown.

According to Abd-El-Moneim, what is remarkable is that the cases of superimposition are completely absent from among the engravings of the site. Similarly to the engravings

Seven artistic groups at Ahel-Ebdemmed

Words to
Remember

"Democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people."

—Oscar Wilde

"It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried."

—Winston Churchill

"In a democracy the poor will have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme."

—Aristotle

"A democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine."

—Thomas Jefferson

"Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few."

—George Bernard Shaw

"The true democrat is he who with purely nonviolent means defends his liberty and, therefore, his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind."

—Mahatma Gandhi

"A democracy is a government in the hands of men of low birth, no property, and vulgar employment."

—Aristotle

"Democracy consists of choosing your dictators after they've told you what you think it is you want to hear."

—Alan Coren

"Democracy is the process by which people choose the man who'll get the blame."

—Bertrand Russell