

# Israel and the coming Arab revolution

Thursday 14 August 2014, by [ALBA RICO Santiago](#) (Date first published: 22 July 2014).

Let's imagine a Syrian who was dreaming of enjoying a little bit of democracy, a little bit of freedom, a little bit of social justice: in short, of enjoying a little human dignity. Which forces, and how many of them, would he or she have to struggle against?

First, against a dynastic dictatorship that, for more than 40 years, has repressed, impoverished, and murdered its own people and that, for the last three years, has not hesitated to resort to torture, extrajudicial executions, aerial bombardment, and even chemical weapons, not to mention spreading sectarian poison and the most abject propaganda.

Second, that Syrian dreamer would have to struggle against the jihadi groups that, under cover of the chaos and more or less tolerated by the Syrian regime, are attempting to impose, as an alternative to the dictatorship, their own dictatorship, one that is no less atrocious than the one in power, based on a primitive, fanatical and monolithic religious idea – a mouldy and repulsive idea that nevertheless doesn't prevent them from using the most modern weapons and the most sophisticated means of communication and propaganda.

Third, that Syrian dreamer would have to struggle against the bars of a geopolitical cage with countless locks: the protoimperialist allies of the dictatorship (Iran, Russia, or Hezbollah) and the protoimperialist allies of the jihadis (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey) — all of whom, to defend their interests in the region, are fuelling the confrontation while diverting it from its initial democratic impulse. The Syrian dreamer, so to speak, is buried alive under a colossal mass of multinational geological strata that are crushing his or her dreams.

Fourth, crowning the mountain of material and political rubble atop our Syrian dreamer is the duo upon which, ultimately, all the shifts in the relationship of forces in the region depend: the alliance between the United States and Israel, which in the case of Syria – as Yassin Al-Haj Saleh describes so well [\[1\]](#) – has clearly chosen to passively support the Syrian dictatorship and/or the prolongation of its death throes, leading to the destruction of the country.

If that Syrian dreamer were also Kurdish, he or she would have to struggle against a fifth element: the mistrust, if not the hostility, of other Syrian dreamers who consider that the “Arab nation” and the “Arab language” are fundamental and not subject to negotiation.

Well, the fact is, in 2011 that Syrian dreamer was not just one person but thousands, hundreds of thousands, even millions. If today there are fewer of them or if they have less weight or visibility, it is because some of these geological forces have killed them and others have abandoned them. They have been abandoned by the media and most of the left parties and intellectuals, who – either through act or omission – have wound up accepting the dictator's barrels of dynamite as something quite natural and almost justifying them with an arrogant pragmatism on account of the jihadis' atrocities.

This is the situation of an actually existing Syrian dreamer. But, with variations in the degree and intensity of the tragedy and in the combination of the elements, it can apply to any citizen of the Arab world who dreams. An Iraqi dreamer faces the same situation, suddenly forced to choose

between the Islamic State, supported or tolerated by what is left of the Ba'ath party of Saddam Hussein, and the sectarian, authoritarian government of Nouri al-Maliki that is supported by both the U.S. and Iran. Likewise for a Libyan dreamer, trapped between a "Saudi" coup d'état and some militias without a national vision. So too an Egyptian dreamer, suppressed under the boot of a new pro-Saudi, pro-Israel military dictatorship, which in turn feeds the jihadi violence that is being used to justify the dictatorship. And a Tunisian dreamer, who sees all of his or her victories receding through the narrow-mindedness of the binary opposition between an elite consensus and jihadi terrorism (which last week cost 14 lives).

Let's be clear, in any case, that these dreamers, whether they be Syrians, Iraqis, Libyans, etc., are not only dreamers but also fighters, often at the cost of their lives or their freedom, and that they deserve at least as much solidarity and support as a Honduran or Greek dreamer (if not more, given the number of their enemies and the risks that they face).

But this is the real situation in the Arab world, where at least ten open wars, cold and hot, are being waged. So, then, was Bashar al-Assad right when, in his recent investiture speech, he said that "the only things that the Arab revolutions have brought to the region are chaos and violence"? Was he right? To measure the reasonableness of these words of the Syrian dictator, suffice it to recall that they are actually plagiarised from a statement of Netanyahu a little over a year ago that said the same thing.

Bashar al-Assad points his finger at the ruins of his country and says, "look at the destruction that your demand for democracy has wrought". Today Netanyahu points to Gaza and says to the Palestinians, "look at the destruction wrought by your support for Hamas". No, what has wrought chaos and destruction in the Arab world – and let's not forget that the chaos and destruction has been deeply rooted there for decades – is the counterrevolution, of which Assad's bombing is the oldest and most active source; and what has wrought chaos and destruction in Palestine is the Israeli occupation, of which Netanyahu's bombing is merely an extension.

Because something else needs to be said of the Palestinian dreamers, who are more or less buried in the same geological depth of stones and rubble as all their sisters and brothers, but in a different order and combination. Because while the Israel-US duo crowns the mountain in Syria, Yemen, or Jordan, in the case of Palestine it presses down directly on the territory and its inhabitants, without mediation or interposed strata. No doubt this explains the unanimous solidarity, or the special attention, that the Palestinians receive and that is not afforded to the Syrians, Egyptians, Iraqis, or Tunisians. Because Israel, protected by the USA, determines the life and death of millions of human beings in lands that do not belong to it. The particular relevance of Palestine has to do with the fact that it is the "last colonial conflict", as Alain Gresh reminds us [\[2\]](#), or one of the last.

The other day on this site [\[3\]](#) I pointed out that Zionism was a colonialist and racist "European project" that in a paradoxical and perverse way, turned into reality the "assimilationism" that was aborted by the combination of anti-Semitism and Zionism in Europe in the last century: Israel Europeanised the Jews outside of Europe and turned them against other peoples. But it is no less true that Israel, as the editorialist of the daily Al-Quds puts it so well, has now been transformed into "another Arab regime". That is why in the first place, like with all the other Arab regimes, we see emerging there the thread of the colonial division of the region that was crystallized in the Sykes-Picot agreements of 1916, which configured the Arab world politically and territorially after the fall of the Ottoman empire. But it is also why, in terms of its political and military behaviour, Israel is no different from the other Arab regimes. It is no accident that today, when Israeli airplanes, like those of Syria, smash houses and tear children to pieces, Netanyahu finds that his most solid and advantageous support comes from the "Arab regime" par excellence, Egypt under the military dictator al-Sisi (or from the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, or from the notable

passivity of Syria and the Arab League). Israel is another Arab dictatorship which, like the others, can only be brought down by another “Arab Spring” that — this time — achieves its objectives.

So is there no difference between Israel and, for example, Syria or Egypt? Yes, there is. The first difference: the Israeli “jihadis” greatly outnumber the jihadis in neighbouring countries, as we see in the complacent and even orgasmic reaction of most of Israeli society toward its own army’s atrocities in Gaza (the nihilism of many Israelis who cheer the death of children and call for napalm or atomic bombs to be used against “those vermin” can only be compared to the decapitations carried out by the Islamic State). The second difference: the dreamers in Israel are much fewer than those in Syria, Egypt, or Tunisia. Fewer indeed, but we must not forget them (Amira Hass, Gideon Levi, Uri Avneri, Michel Warschawski, Ilan Pappé among others) because without them - and without all the anti-Zionist Jews who are risking their necks around the world by adopting the most difficult position, that of the just among the unjust - the coming “Arab revolution” will not triumph.

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## **P.S.**

\* Source: Israel y la próxima revolución árabe

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<http://www.cuartopoder.es/tribuna/israel-y-la-proxima-revolucion-arabe/6121>

\* This article was translated from Spanish by Art Young.

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## **Footnotes**

[1] <http://rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=187517>

[2] <http://www.leninology.co.uk/2014/08/israel-jews-and-gaza-lies-of-bhl.html>

[3] <http://www.cuartopoder.es/tribuna/palestina-la-culpa-es-de-las-victimas/6080>