

Los Angeles Times | WORLD

[LOCAL](#) [U.S.](#) [WORLD](#) [BUSINESS](#) [SPORTS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [HEALTH](#) [LIVING](#) [TRAVEL](#) [OPINION](#) [SHOP](#)
[Weekly Ad](#)
[EGYPT](#) [AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN](#) [AFRICA](#) [ASIA](#) [EUROPE](#) [IRAN](#) [IRAQ](#) [LATIN AMERICA](#) [MEXICO UNDER SIEGE](#)
IN THE NEWS: [JANE HARMAN](#) | [EGYPT](#) | [J. PAUL GETTY III](#) | [DONALD RUMSFELD](#) | [LAKERS-GRIZZLIES](#)

Babylon & Beyond

OBSERVATIONS FROM IRAQ, IRAN, ISRAEL, THE ARAB WORLD AND BEYOND

from the staff of the Los Angeles Times and...


[« Previous](#) | [Babylon & Beyond Home](#) | [Next »](#)

ISRAEL: Researchers see Tunisia as a textbook revolution

February 2, 2011 | 8:45 am



(16)



(44)



Comments (5)

Revolutions seem to take place all of a sudden, but usually they don't really come out of the blue. Whether religious, political or economic reasons are behind upheaval, it often reflects a long process that reached a tipping point and a window of opportunity.

The time must be right but the ground must be ripe, too. In this context, an Israeli research group suggests Tunisia's was a textbook revolution. Not in the sense that it was a perfect storm or that it followed a certain formula -- no two revolutions are the same -- but in the sense that it may actually have begun in school textbooks.

[The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education](#) (IMPACT-SE) is a group that conducts in-depth studies of school curriculum throughout the Middle East, checking hundreds of books per country and they way they teach about tolerance and peace.

A [comprehensive study of the Tunisian curriculum](#), completed in 2009 and presented before the European parliament, found that education in Tunisia cultivates equality and is much more progressive in teaching tolerance than any other Arab country.

But it wasn't always so, says Yohanan Manor, a retired Jewish Agency official and political scientist who established the research group a decade ago. According to Manor, Tunisia began instituting educational reform in the mid-1990s, when Zine el Abidine ben Ali (who was overthrown last month) appointed a political opponent as minister of education. Mohamed Charfi, who died a few years ago, was a lawyer and longtime human rights leader in Tunisia and a fierce critic of Ben Ali, in particular concerning human rights issues.

The now-deposed president had placed Charfi in charge of the education ministry, maybe so that he could keep an eye on him but also because Ben Ali was interested in letting the rights leader implement his agenda, which was separating religion and state, Manor said, noting that the issue is a longstanding one in Tunisian history.

The first phase was to extricate the school curriculum from the influence of the clerics -- not in an action against religion, but rather from the position that democracy and Islam can work together so long as "church" and state were separated. A second phase followed later on, geared to prepare for globalization rather than resist it.

The material still takes the Palestinian side in their conflict with Israel, researchers found, but not in a way that negates Jews or Israel. Above all, the study found the educational system to have a "profound understanding of equality and democracy."

Charfi's reforms shaped the younger generation in Tunisia that ultimately rebelled. "Mohamed Charfi is the true champion of Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution," Manor said.

L.A. Times on Facebook

 34K

 Create an account or [log in](#) to see what your friends are recommending.


Man killed by armed bird at California cockfight, was stabbed by rooster with attached knife
1,607 people shared this.

Stay connected:



RSS

[twitter](#)
[facebook](#)

advertisement

About the Contributors

Maher Abukhater
Borzou Daragahi
Jeffrey Fleishman
Amro Hassan
Meris Lutz
Ramin Mostaghim
Ned Parker
Raheem Salman
Alexandra Sandels
Edmund Sanders
Batsheva Sobelman

Carnegie Middle East Center

Recent News

- MIDDLE EAST: Governments clamp down on Egypt-inspired protests, rights group says | [February 8, 2011, 11:07 am »](#)
- EGYPT: Government forms committee to propose constitutional changes | [February 8, 2011, 10:07 am »](#)
- IRAN: Opposition comes out swinging as revolutionary anniversary approaches | [February 8, 2011, 9:24 am »](#)
- EGYPT: Freed Google executive Wael Ghonim joins protests | [February 8, 2011, 9:05 am »](#)
- MIDDLE EAST: Ignoring Egyptians, Iran continues to hail 'Islamic awakening' | [February 8, 2011, 8:32 am »](#)

Recent Comments

- RE:** IRAN: Opposition comes out swinging as revolutionary anniversary approaches | comment by Green messenger
- RE:** EGYPT: Freed Google executive Wael Ghonim joins protests | comment by PadrePete
- RE:** EGYPT: Freed Google executive Wael Ghonim joins protests | comment by alethean
- RE:** EGYPT: Freed Google executive Wael Ghonim joins protests | comment by alethean
- RE:** IRAN: Opposition comes out swinging as revolutionary anniversary approaches | comment by Andreas Moser
- RE:** JORDAN: Tribesmen slam Queen Rania, warn of revolt | comment by Freevoice

Categories

abu dhabi afghanistan africa al qaeda alex rodriguez alexandra sandels algeria amro hassan arab league armenians art asso ahmad asso ahmed australia aviation azerbaijan **babylon & beyond** baghdad bahrain barack obama batsheva sobelman becky lee katz benjamin netanyahu books books and literature borzou daragahi business canada carnegie endowment carnegie endowment for international peace carnegie middle east center caucasus censorship central asia child brides china christianity dubai economics edmund sanders education **egypt** energy environment europe fashion and design film food and drink games gaza gert van langendonck haiti haley sweetland edwards hamas health hezbollah hillary clinton hosni mubarak human rights intelligence **iran** iran election iraq islam **israel** jeffrey fleishman jerusalem jordan judaism julia damianova kurds kuwait labor latin america **lebanon** lgbt libya liz sly maher abukhater marines marines in afghanistan marines in iraq media meris lutz middle east mohamed elbaradei morocco movies music muslim brotherhood ned parker north africa nuclear technology obama in the muslim world olivia katrandjian oman pakistan palestinians patrick gallagher persian gulf piracy politics pope in mideast qatar ramin mostaghim religion richard

boudreaux russia saad fakhildeen saudi arabia
science south asia sports sudan syria tahrir square
taliban technology television the hajj 2007 theater
travel tunisia turkey united arab emirates united
nations usama redha video games web/tech weblogs
west bank wikileaks women in the middle east
yemen

Archives

February 2011

More from The Times

24 Frames	Afterword
All The Rage	Awards Tracker
Babylon & Beyond	Big Picture
Booster Shots	Brand X
Chatter	Company Town
Culture Monster	Daily Dish
Daily Mirror	Dodgers Blog
Fabulous Forum	Framework
Go Mobile	Greenspace
Hero Complex	Homicide Report
Jacket Copy	L.A. at Home
L.A. Now	L.A. Unleashed
La Plaza	Lakers
Ministry of Gossip	Money & Co.
Opinion L.A.	Outposts
PolitiCal	Politics Now
Pop & Hiss	Readers' Representative
Show Tracker	Technology
Top of the Ticket	Travel News & Deals
Varsity Times Insider	

Get the World Newsletter



The latest in daily news developments
from around the globe.
[See a sample](#) | [Sign up](#)

ADS BY GOOGLE

Jewish Summer Program

Travel Through 4 Regions Of Israel. Volunteer
Israel, Make a Difference

www.Nesiya.org

Is Jesus Really God?

Scholars Examine the Facts About Jesus' Claims to
be God

www.Y-Jesus.com/JesusGod

דילים שווים עד 90% הנחה

עד 90% הנחה על דילים שווים במיוחד באתר חדש מבית
mako (ו netex-קשת)!

www.BUY2.co.il

הקלה בכאבי שחיקת סחוס

אפוסתרפיה- טיפול רפואי חדשני המפחית כאב ומשפר
! תפקוד. לקבלת מידע נוסף

AposTherapy.info/OA-help

Fellowship in Israel

Make a difference in Israel with friends. Hike, learn
and play!

www.otzma.org

[Horoscopes](#)

[LATMG Media Kit](#) [LAT Events](#)

[About Us](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Contact Us | Help](#)

Los Angeles Times

Coastline Pilot | Daily Pilot | Huntington Beach Independent | Valley Sun | Burbank Leader | News Press | KTLA | Hoy | Brand X | LA, Los Angeles Times Magazine | ZAP2it Baltimore Sun |
Chicago Tribune | Daily Press | Hartford Courant | LA Times | Orlando Sentinel | Sun Sentinel | The Morning Call

