

Personality and Institution Building : Role of Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia

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MISS ANJU BALI



**CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
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जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled "Personality and Institution Building : Role of Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia", submitted by Miss Anju Bali is for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University and is her own work. We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Vijay Gupta
Chairman

(K.R. SINGH)
SUPERVISOR

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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Anju Bali
(Anju Bali)

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Chapter I

Role of Personality in Institution Building

Chapter 1

Three major variables influence politics of a developing country. They are ; personality of a leader, institutions and environment.

Personality of a leader is often based upon charisma. The concept of charisma was derived from the reference in 11 Corinthians which described the forms in which the gifts of divine grace appear. It was taken up by Rudolf Sohm (1892-1923) in his analysis of the transformation of the primitive Christian Community into the Roman Catholic church. The emphasis there was on a "charismatic institution". The concept of charisma underwent its most important extension and formulation in the writings of Max Weber. He treated charisma as a property attributed to great personalities who disrupt traditional systems and establish a system of authority claiming to be legitimized by the direct experience of divine grace. Weber also applied the concept to creative, expansive and innovative personalities who are regarded as 'extraordinary' even though they neither claim to possess divine grace nor have it imputed to them.¹

1 David L. Sills, International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 2 (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1968), pp. 386-87.

Charisma has been defined as the ability of a person to make others feel more powerful in his or her presence. In politics, however, charisma involves a complex psychocultural relationship between a leader and the masses who are led to believe themselves to be more powerful, simply by being in the presence of the great ruler.²

Charisma has several functions in a developmental setting. Aided by the apparatus of modern mass communications, the charismatic leader bypasses the traditional bosses, chieftains and heads of the local areas and reaches out to enter the consciousness of the low income and low status citizens who previously were shielded from national politics by their patrons. Thus armed, the charismatic leader can persuade the masses to undergo sacrifices, to unite in national movements, to carry out grand schemes, and to feel themselves part of a larger enterprise; the building up of a nation. On the foreign scene, a charismatic leader personifies the nation in its relations with other States and can, when necessary, direct the sentiment of the people against foreign enemies or to meet external

2 Gary K. Bertsch and Robert P. Clark and David M. Wood, Comparing Political Systems ; Power and Policy in Three Worlds (New York, 1978), p. 460.

threats.³ Not all personalities are, however, endowed with charisma. Many evolve due to hard work at political, economic or cultural level. One such example is that of Hourri Boumedienne of Algeria who was treated as a dictator when he overthrew Ben Bella in 1965. But, after ten years of hard work, he was able to place Algeria, a totally shattered State, on a sound footing and thereby won respect and legitimacy of majority of the Algerians.

If the individual leader is not particularly well endowed with charisma, a frequently used substitute is leadership through ideology. Many people in the developing world live in a confusing state of rapid change. One way to secure their support and loyalty is to make rapid change understandable and rational to them. An ideology, in its cohesive and comprehensive picture of the world, makes sense to the populace and enables them to grapple with a world that is more and more threatening. Moreover the leadership as the custodian of the official ideology is given the authority to carry the ideological prescriptions out to their logical policy conclusions.⁴

The essence of leadership is the ability to persuade others to comply voluntarily with one's wishes.

3 Bertsch, n. 2, p. 460.

4 Ibid.

A person enjoying the powers inherent in the role of 'leader' may not necessarily be exercising leadership nor is "leadership" necessarily confined to the occupants of such roles. Burns described leadership as a special subset of a more general power relationship in which "leaders induce followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations, the wants and needs, the values and aspirations of both leaders and followers". Thus, leadership is the ability to obtain non-coerced, voluntary compliance which enables followers to attain goals which they share with the leader.⁵

There were certain qualities in the leaders of African states which enabled them to emerge as prominent personalities and retain power. There were different ethnic groups in Africa, who held different views of leaders. Within Nigeria, for example, Hausa culture favoured leaders born to high status families and supporting a rigidly hierarchical society. Ibo culture, on the other hand, favoured the self-made leader. A leader acceptable to Hausas then would not be accepted by Ibos. Thus, we see, different views are given by different groups regarding leaders.⁶

5 John Cartwright, Political Leadership in Africa (London and New York, 1983), pp. 19-21.

6 Cartwright, n. 5, p. 28.

After coming to power, the vital problem before the leader is how to retain power. To retain power a leader needs support from the public and the public can support a leader only if it lays trust in him or her. This is only possible when the public sees some qualities inherent in a leader like selflessness, intellectual ability etc. Perhaps selflessness, the perception that what the leader is doing is for the good of all and not particularly for his own benefit, comes closest to being a necessary ingredient in creating this bond.

Beyond this general base of support a leader also needs support for specific policies he is pursuing. In shaping the policies a leader can choose between two approaches to win support. He can either take people's attitude and the line of division among them as given and act as a "broker" trying to put together a body of supporters by bargaining among these exciting interests or he can try to get people to look at their situation in a new way which allows them to override their divisions and unite together in support of his goals.⁷

Potential leaders emerged in Africa and Asia as the movement towards independence started. It was

7 Cartwright, n. 5, pp. 37-38.

generally a matter of luck and timing that one amongst them emerged as the leader.

The fact that Kwame N'Krumah was called back to the Gold Coast to work for the United Gold Coast Convention in 1947 and did not stay in England another two or three years, as was planned, or that Julius Nyerere was back in Tanganyika and available while potential rivals were abroad were decisive factors in their becoming nationalist leaders. Once an individual with the training, skill and courage to challenge the colonial rulers had gained a position which enabled him to make such a challenge, his stature was magnified, and he thus acquired more authority to direct the struggle, including the opportunity to set up an all embracing nationalist movement.

Leadership while often acquired through ones own efforts can sometimes also be inherited, especially in a developing society where family loyalty is still an important instrument of political legitimacy. Rajiv Gandhi is an example of inherited leadership. That leadership however, has to be tested at the popular level also if it has to endure.

Leadership can also be acquired either through army coup or political struggle. The emergence of Nasser

to power was through an army coup d'etat. By 1952, King Farouk's Government was viewed by Egyptians nationalists as incompetent, corrupt and unable to deal effectively with either the British or the problem of Israel. On 23 July, 1952, members of a small clandestine military organization, known as the Free Officers, launched a coup d'etat that established a new system of Government. Farouk was forced to abdicate and left the country on 26 July, 1952. The guiding hand of the new system was the Revolutionary Command Council. Egypt was declared a republic, with Naguib as both President and Prime Minister. Shortly afterwards, in 1954, Gamal Abdal Nasser, the person who had organized the coup, emerged as the primary force of Egyptian national life.⁸

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, acquired leadership through political struggle. He was the President of the Indian National Congress in 1936. Nehru was the first Prime Minister of India (1947-64). He had played an historic role in the fight for the country's freedom and was the principal architect of independent India.⁹

8 David E. Long and Bernard Reich, ed., The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa (Colorado, 1980).

9 Subhash C. Kashyap, Nehru and Parliament, Lok Sabha Secretariat (New Delhi, 1986), p. 67.

Thus, we witness several qualities that help personalities to emerge as prominent leaders. But, apart from these factors, environment also plays an important role in the emergence of these leaders. Environment can be defined as the aggregate of all the existing conditions and influences affecting the life and development of an organism (Webster's new Colligate dictionary).¹⁰ Historical environment implies the social, economic and political conditions of a particular country which help the personalities to emerge as leaders.

Different types of environment influenced different countries of Asia and Africa, during the colonial and the post-colonial period. In the colonial period, in some countries like India, struggle was going on for the liberal democratic principles while in some other countries like Algeria, Angola and Vietnam, armed struggle was carried on. That influenced the political environment of the country after it won its political independence. India opted for democracy. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's unrivalled leadership and allegiance of the people that he commanded gave him the powers of a virtual dictator if he had so wished to be. But Nehru's own training and

10 David L. Sills, ed., International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 5 (Macmillan Company and the Free Press), p. 91.

temperament led him to choose democratic means and a democratic way of life for the Indian polity.

Armed struggle took place in Algeria between 1954-62. This was in reaction to the policy of total colonialism adopted by the French. The initial French conquest of Algeria in 1830 was relatively easy, but another four decades passed before all of Algeria was pacified under French control. The French colonial implantation was massive. There was extensive violence and brutality in the revolution and it finally culminated in formal independence in July 1962 after almost a decade of arms struggle and a near total divide between the local Algerians and the local Algerians and the French colous. That affected Algerian environment after it attained independence.¹¹

Different types of environment were seen in the countries during the post-colonial period. While some set-up democratic framework, in some countries there was an erosion of democratic values. India set up democratic framework. Indian political leaders and constitution makers deliberately opted for a parliamentary form of Government in which parliament would be supreme. Nehru's own democratic principles and temperament, and

¹¹ Long, n. 8, pp. 415-16.

the environment at that time helped in the emergence of a democratic India.

On the other hand, in some countries democratic values were eroded, like in Egypt, during the post-colonial struggle. Egypt experimented with several variations of political systems in search of a permanent structure. In 1956, Nasser inaugurated a new system that consolidated power in his own hands through the single party system and a presidential form of government.

Erosion of democratic values either led to army rule, or religious movements like in Iran, or fascist movement as in Italy.

While religion has always played an important role, even in the nationalist movement in Asia and Africa, of late, the erosion of democracy has given a new boost to the process of politicization of religion. Iran is a good example of that trend. Thus religious leaders and religion per se have acquired a new credibility and legitimacy in the politics of the developing countries. While religion had played an important role in the politics of Iran even earlier it became the instrument of political change in 1978-79 under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. After the revolution of 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini played

a dominant role. In fact, it can even be argued that Khomeini was to the Islamic revolution what Lenin was to the Russian, Mao to the Chinese and Castro to the Cuban revolutions. The outcome of the revolution in Iran was the predominance of clergy in power, with Khomeini as the head of the State. Ayatollah Khomeini added a new dimension to the question of Imamate. He rejected the very concept of sharing of power between the King and the 'ulama which had been the basis of legitimacy of Iranian rulers since the sixteenth century. He propounded instead the theory of supremacy or sovereignty of the just jurists. Thus his theory totally rejected the earlier principle of dualism of authority between the King and the 'ulama and made the State subordinate to the jurists.¹²

This was a major ideological formulation by Ayatollah Khomeini, and it has since been incorporated into the constitution of Iran.

Apart from qualities of leadership and particular environments prevailing in different countries, institutions also play a vital role in shaping the leadership. In the developing societies where institutions have not had time

12 K.R. Singh, "Constitutional Basis of Religious Power in Iran", International Studies, (New Delhi, London, 1988).

or the environment to take deep roots to mature fully, personalities and institution often seem to interact with each other. When a new leader emerges, he or she might shape institutions, that reflect his or her environment, personality and pattern of legitimacy. The new leader might or might not maintain the previous institutions. Often, the new leader fashions institutions to suit new requirements. Thus, one finds change from army to civilian rule, from single-party system to multi-party system, from free enterprise to socialism or State control over economy etc.

However, the question which needs to be examined is what is an institution. Institutions are usually conceived of as the basic focus of social organization, common to all societies and dealing with some of the basic universal problems of ordered social life. Three basic aspects of institutions are emphasised. First, reflects patterns of behaviour which are regulated by institutions (institutionalized) and which deal with some perennial basic problems of any society. Secondly, institutions involve the regulation of behaviour of individuals in society according to definite and organized patterns. Finally, these patterns involve a definite

normative ordering and regulation.¹³

It is tentatively suggested that institutions or patterns of institutionalization can be defined as regulative principles which organize most of the activities of individuals in a society into definite organisational patterns from the point of view of some of the perennial basic problems of any society or ordered social life.¹⁴

Major Institutional Spheres:

There are different institutional spheres like the sphere of family and kinship, of education, cultural sphere and political sphere. The political sphere deals with the control of the use of force within a society and the maintenance of internal and external peace as well as the control over the mobilization of resources for the implementation of various goals and the articulation and setting up of certain goals for the collectivity.¹⁵

There are various political institutions like the constitution and the party system. In the eighteenth

13 David L. Sills, International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 14 (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press), pp. 409-10.

14 David L. Sills, n. 13, pp. 409-10.

15 Ibid., p. 410.

and nineteenth centuries, constitution was regarded as a formal written document. In addition, one finds several broad philosophical and legal concepts of constitutions. The basic objective of a constitution is to protect the individual member of the political community and institutionally safeguard the division of political power. In this perspective, a constitutional government is one in which effective restraints divide political power or, to put it negatively, prevent the concentration of such power. In contemporary juristic works, a constitution is more commonly defined as a decision concerning the organisation of government.¹⁶

Parties are another type of political institutions. Historically political parties have appeared in political systems under three conditions. First, in the older parliamentary systems of Western Europe and North America, parties were preceded by the emergence, within the legislature, of factions that organized themselves internally and then turned their attention to the winning of electoral support from the populace. Parties can also emerge, during a specific developmental crisis that has to do either with the legitimacy of the regime or with

16 David L. Sills, International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 3, (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press), pp. 318-19.

the establishment of an integrated national society.¹⁷

In the developing countries political parties have emerged as a part of the nationalist movement and an instrument of anti-colonial policy of the nationalist movement. These movements got consolidated as political parties with mass base when they were forced to legitimize their role through elections, as happened with the Congress Party in India, even before the country attained its full political independence. After the attainment of independence most of these anti-colonial movements got consolidated as political parties like the FLN in Algeria.

The formation of the political parties is also influenced by the process of social modernization of the country and the need to harness the unleashed social forces and to turn them to some political benefit. Destourian Socialist Party of Tunisia is its example.¹⁸

In the study of the party systems, attention has so far been given to two opposite phenomenon, the multi-party system on the one hand and the single party system on the other.¹⁹ Some countries, like Nepal or Libya,

17 Bertsch, n. 2, p. 407.

18 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

19 Rajani Kothari, Party System and Election Studies (Bombay, 1968), p. 1.

have no party system as such and have evolved system for direct participation by people without political parties.

Apart from parties forms of government also deserve special attention especially in the developing countries. Normally, there are three forms of government which are legitimized under the constitution. They are the presidential form, the parliamentary form and the monarchical forms of government. Attempts have also been made to legitimise and even institutionalise army rule as in Turkey or Pakistan, but it has not yet attained the legitimacy that other forms of government have attained.

At the most general level, government consists of a group of individuals sharing a defined responsibility.²⁰ In a true presidential form of system, a president, elected by the people is responsible to them, rather than to the legislature. The legislature in turn is responsible to the people which elects it and not to the president. This provides for checks and balances, with the public acting as arbiter during periodic elections held at fixed intervals.²¹

20 David L. Sills, International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 6, (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press), p. 214.

21. Ibid., p. 224.

In the parliamentary system, parliament is supreme and the Prime Minister is responsible to it and holds office at its pleasure. Through votes of confidence and changes in parliamentary party membership, a government can fall in which case a new general election to parliament may become necessary unless a new coalition is formed. Under such a system, the president is largely a figure-head.²²

Monarchy has been described by ancient writers, especially Herodotus, as the rule of one man (or woman), whether good or bad. Plato and Aristotle described it as a rule by one good person. Plato defined 'good' by reference to law and Aristotle did so by reference to happiness. In the modern West, monarchy designated a particular type of one-person rule, characterized by legitimate blood descent, no matter how the extent of the governing functions; indeed, the term may even refer to regimes in which the monarch had no governing functions at all, as in Great Britain and the Scandinavian Kingdoms.²³

22. David L. Sills, n. 20, p. 224.

23. David L. Sills, International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 10, (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press), p. 412.

Monarchy has been an ancient political institution and is still retained in some form even in the developed countries like U.K., Sweden and Netherlands. That institution is still of great significance in the developing world and prevails in several States like Thailand, Nepal, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco etc. Tunisia also had a monarchical institution in the form of 'bey' till that was abolished under the constitution.

There are certain economic institutions like the trade unions, state enterprise, private enterprise etc. that influence even the developing States. Trade unionism is a child of industrialization. Great Britain which pioneered industrial development was also among the first to develop modern trade unions. When trade unions were first created in the Western world they were often regarded as criminal organizations, even if their existence was tolerated, most of their activities were treated as unlawful. Today, however they are legal organizations. Starting under political guidance, the unions gradually acquired more status within the labour movement as industrialization progressed.²⁴ In the developing countries trade unions played a dual role. On the one hand they

24 David L. Sills, International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. 10 (The Macmillan Company and the Free Press), p. 412.

protected the interests of the working class. On the other hand, they became an instrument in the national struggle against foreign dominance. Hence the nationalist movement and the labour movement interacted in these countries. The UGTT of Tunisia, the UGTA of Algeria and the UMT of Morocco were closely linked to the neo-Destour Party, the FLN and the Istiqlal Party of Morocco respectively.

There is a close relationship between all these variables i.e. personality of a leader, environment and the institutions. Change in environment brings about a new political leader and the leader generally creates new institutions and abolishes old ones to suit his personality, environment and need for legitimacy. This formulation can be best explained by analysing some cases like President Sukarno of Indonesia, Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, N'Krumah of Ghana and King Mahendra of Nepal.

Indonesia was under the Dutch rule. The Japanese inflicted a defeat on the Dutch in 1942 and occupied the archipelago. Japanese rule on Indonesia was both ruthless and unefficient. By their frequent confiscation of food, their secret police method and their arbitrary beatings, they caused tremendous social dislocation and

earned the intense hatred of the great mass of the Indonesians.²⁵ However, they promised Indonesian independence in the near 'future'. On 17 August, 1945 Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia. There were certain changes in 1945 but ultimately Federal Republic of the United States of Indonesia was established on 27 December, 1949. Sukarno was sworn in as its President.²⁶ The period after December, 1949 is described as the period of 'liberal democracy'. It can be distinguished quite clearly from the 'guided democracy' period which succeeded it. In the former period, power was in the hands of the political parties. Parliament was an institution of some authority. In the years immediately after 1949, political power was shared mainly by the Masjumi and the nationalist PNI. They were two large parties in the temporary parliament, the Masjumi having 47 seats and the PNI 35 in an assembly of 234 members. In addition, a large number of smaller parties were able to wield power.²⁷ The parties which had been powerful in the previous eight years were, over years,

25 George M. Kahin, Government and Politics in South East Asia (New York, 1964), p. 204.

26 Kahin, n. 25, p. 205.

27 Ibid., p. 213.

largely demoralized and without influence.²⁸ It also coincided with Sukarno's quest for absolute power.

In 1959, President Sukarno and the Cabinet decided to accept an army proposal on the concrete forms to be given to 'guided democracy'. President Sukarno re-enacted the revolutionary constitution by presidential decree on 5 July, 1959 and thus dissolved the Assembly.

As the 1945, constitution incorporated the principles of the Pantja Sila and made no reference to Islam, its re-enactment meant that, an official end had been put to the long and acrimonious debate on the ideological foundations of the State. Also involved was a change from a parliamentary to a presidential system of government. Sukarno became both President and Prime Minister. The National Council was reconstituted to become the Supreme Advisory Council and the National Planning Council was established. Soon, there was a complete reorganization of regional government making it more authoritarian and centralistic.²⁹ Also, number of other new political institutions were brought into existence. An appointed Gotong Rojong (Mutual Aid) Parliament was established in June 1960, after President Sukarno had dissolved the

28 Kahin, n. 25, p. 213.

29 Ibid., p. 214.

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then existing elected assembly. A National Front was also established in August with a view to bringing about closer cooperation between all groups, parties and individuals who supported the political manifesto (President's Independence Day speech, interpreting the change i.e. more authoritarian and centralistic, which was declared as the political manifesto).³⁰

In November-December 1960, the inaugural meeting was held of the highest organ provided under the 1945 constitution; the People's Consultative Assembly, or more precisely, of the appointed interim equivalent of that assembly. It endorsed an Eight-Year Over-all Development Plan which had been drawn up by the National Planning Council.

The most important reason for Sukarno's success in enhancing his constitutional position was that he was himself the strongest political force in Indonesia at that time. He claimed to be the principal leader of the nationalist revolution and was accepted as such by the Indonesians. As a politician he far surpassed all the rest in his personal magnetism and oratorical skill and this combination of gifts gave him a mass following which none of his rivals could

30 Kahin, n. 25, p. 215.

equal.³¹

Moreover, Sukarno had thrown himself into the struggle for Indonesian liberation in the late twenties. Sukarno's power rested on the fact that he alone possessed the ability to maintain a balance between conflicting cliques, conflicting interests and conflicting regional aspirations. And he alone had been able to hold some sort of balance between the two most powerful opposing groups - army and the Communist Party.³²

Ayatullah Khomeini played a dominant role in the Iranian revolution of 1979. Two factors explain Khomeini's decisive role and widespread popularity. The first was his personality, especially his simple way of life and his refusal to compromise with a 'satanic tyrant'. In a country in which most politicians lived in luxury, Khomeini led a life as austere as that of a sufi mystic and as devoid of material opulence as that of the common people.³³

31 Lennox A. Mills, South East Asia, Illusion and Reality in Politics and Economics (London, 1964), p. 64.

32 Keith Buchanan, The South East Asian World (London, 1967), p. 121.

33 Ervand Abrahamian, Iran Between Two Revolutions (New Jersey, 1982), p. 531.

Similarly in a decade notorious for cynical, corrupt, defeatist and inconsistent politicians, Khomeini appeared to be thoroughly sincere, defiant, consistent and, most important of all, incorruptible. In brief he was a charismatic revolutionary leader at a time when such leaders were in short supply and in great demand.³⁴

The second factor that explains Khomeini's prominence is his astuteness, in particular, his ability to rally behind him a wide spectrum of political and social forces. In his fifteen years of exile, he carefully avoided making public pronouncements, especially written ones, on issues that would alienate segments of the opposition. In denouncing the regime, Khomeini promised to liberate the country from foreign domination, extend freedom to all political parties even 'atheistic' and bring social justice to all, particularly to the bazaaris.³⁵

Khomeini moreover won over diverse social groups, each of which saw in him its long awaited savior. To the petty bourgeoisie, he was not only the sworn enemy of the dictatorship but also the guardian of private

34 Abrahamian, n. 33, pp. 531-32.

35 Ibid., p. 532.

property; to the intelligentsia, he appeared, despite his clerical garb, to be a militant nationalist, and to the urban workers he was a man of the people, eager to enforce social justice.³⁶

The outcome of the revolution of 1979 was the predominance of clergy in power, with Khomeini as the head of the State. Clerical constitution was drawn, replacing the State judiciary with Sharia courts and denouncing Western concepts such as democracy as heretical. In fact the Islamic revolution was unique in the annals of modern world history, in that it brought to power not a new social group equipped with political parties and ideologies but a traditional clergy armed with mosque, pulpits and claiming the divine right to supervise all temporal authorities.³⁷

The most notorious aspect of Khomeini's new set-up which had attracted the widest condemnation was the institution of the so-called Islamic courts. These courts combined two functions ; judging the culprits on the basis of the Islamic legal code, based, among other things, on the Sharia, and more important than that, the functions of a "revolutionary court" sitting

36 Abrahamian, n. 33, p. 532.

37 Ibid., p. 530.

on judgement on the power elite belonging to the erstwhile regime. They were charged with torture, massacre of people, treason and corruption. The arrests were arbitrary. The trials devoid of all norms of well established judicial procedures. More than 150 persons were reported to have been executed by these courts. Such trials evoked protest not only from outside but also from within Iran. This in result led to a halt to such trials before the March referendum, but once the votes were counted the courts renewed their function. Though there was no overt criticism of these trials in Iran, yet the Iranians looked upon them as a symbol of political execution rather than as a symbol of revolutionary justice.³⁸

Iran, since the revolution, was not only progressing towards a theocratic, clergy dominated system, but also, under the new constitution, the elected institutions like Parliament and the president played a subordinate role to non-elected institutions like the Wali Faqih and the Council of Guardians (Khomeini was accepted as the Wali Faqih in Article 107). The Iranian President played a role secondary to the leader, and could act as a link between the legislature, the

38 K.R. Singh, Iran Quest for Security (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 386-87.

executive and the judiciary (Article 113).

The new Parliament too had been elected. The Islamic Republican Party got substantial seats, while the opposition was divided. Yet the appointment of the Prime Minister was delayed. Thus Iran after the revolution was a country having parallel administrations. The formal administrative apparatus with its conventional bureaucratic base, was ineffective. But the parallel apparatus, based upon the clergy-dominated committee system, that operated during the last days of the monarchy, continued to function even afterwards.³⁹

Thus in brief one can say, that it was a combination of permanent and temporary forces that brought the clergy to power. The permanent ones include the Shia culture of the urban masses, and the recent socio-economic changes that have swept away the powerful tribal chiefs and the large landlords. The temporal factors that account for clerical ascendancy include the charismatic personality of Khomeini, the intense aversion felt by the public for the Shah, and the organisational handicaps that the regime had placed for

39 K.R. Singh, Iran Quest for Security (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 425-26.

a quarter of a century on the secular political parties.

N 'Krumah returned to the Gold Coast (Ghana) in December 1947 after a twelve-year absence in America and Britain. He was in fact called back. N 'Krumah was successful as a politician mainly because he devoted his whole time and energy to politics and identified himself with the people whose support he counted upon to win him the power he sought. He collected the youth around him and fostered their cause. In July 1949, N 'Krumah was dismissed as Secretary General of the UGCC. Had it not been for the youth to help him, it would have been the end of his career. The youth encouraged him to constitute the Convention People's Party.⁴⁰

Another attribute of N 'Krumah that helped to raise him above his political opponents was his quickness in sensing a political situation and his instinctive knowledge of how to take advantage of opportune movements. N 'Krumah was singularly hard working. He could work days and nights without any thought of food or drink until the task at hand was complete. Even The Times

40 I.T. Peter Omari, Kwame N 'Krumah - The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship (London, 1970), p. 36.

(London) of 24 May, 1949, reported of N'Krumah as a 'single-minded and hard-working fanatic', who was agitating for self-government within the year.⁴¹ He was anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-racialist.

N'Krumah changed Ghana and its institutions to suit his own image and likeness; but he chose it to do it the 'legal' way, which was the way he had always done things; first to undermine the existing institutions and then to offer alternative and apparently more realistic proposals.⁴²

N'Krumah organized the UGCC as a political party and later turned his talents to the formation and organization of the Convention People's Party. After independence, he was intent on seeing that his own political party should remain strong enough to see him Prime Minister and later President of a Republican Ghana. There were about 61 affiliates to the CPP.⁴³

N'Krumah considered parliament as the most important single instrument for political expression. Certain acts like the Anti-discrimination Act and the

41 Omari, n. 40, pp. 38-40.

42 Ibid., p. 58.

43 Ibid., p. 58.

Ghana Constitution Act were passed. The Ghana Constitution Act, gave N'Krumah near-absolute powers. The Preventive Detention Act, virtually abolished Habeas Corpus and enabled N'Krumah's regime, with the assistance of the supreme court, to detain citizens without trial and so make a mockery of freedom and justice.⁴⁴

Despite his quest for near dictatorial powers, N'Krumah, retained his leadership and legitimacy for a long time by projecting the image of a revolutionary leader at home and abroad, especially by promoting the cause of African unity.

On 18 February, 1955, the ailing King Tribhuvan of Nepal issued a proclamation dissolving the Regency Council and vesting all Royal powers in the Crown Prince. On 2 March, Crown Prince Mahendra accepted the resignation of the government. King Tribhuvan died on 13 March, 1955. In the next four or five years these important political institutions were eroded, especially that of the multi-party system.

In February 1959, King Mahendra announced the replacement of the Interim government of Nepal Act of

44 Omari, n. 40, pp. 67-70.

1951 by a new system under which the King retained supreme executive power and extensive discretionary and emergency powers.

The royal takeover of 15 December, 1960, initiated a new phase of direct Palace rule which had been put into effect during the post-Rana period between 1951 and 1959. The political model that was adopted in Nepal after the change in 1950-51 was that of Parliamentary democracy under the aegis of a constitutional monarch. After 1960, the multi-party Parliamentary system was publicly disallowed by King Mahendra, and Panchayat Raj was substituted instead.⁴⁵

The salam or darshan was the traditional institution of individual or group audience with the ruler to secure direct justice and a quick redress of grievances. The practice of salam or Darshan in its traditional form and spirit, was subtly resuscitated by King Mahendra's much talked about tours in the countryside for popular contact (Jana Samparka) and mobilisation of the masses.

Pajani or annual renewal of service was an old institution (of Rana despotism). In addition to the

45 Rishikesh Shaha, Essays in the Practice of Government in Nepal (New Delhi, 1982), p. 20.

above institutions, special tribunals, reminiscent of the Star Chamber and Courts of Commission in Tudor England became the order of the day.⁴⁶ The Palace Secretariat once again became the nerve centre of the administrative and political structure as it was during the Rana period. The renewal and prevalence of the traditional practices during the post 1960 era led many serious minded observers to believe that what King Mahendra had attempted since 1960 was to institutionalise personal rule within the Panchayati framework.⁴⁷

A brief study of the developing countries, thus reveals that unlike the developed countries whose socio-economic and political institutions have taken deep roots, the newly emerging States are yet to reach that stage of relative stability. Hence, variables like personality, environment, institutions, and their mutual interaction plays a vital role in the evolution of the nation.

46 Shaha, n. 45, p. 22.

47 Shaha, n. 45, p. 22.

CHAPTER 2

BASE OF BOURGUIBA'S POWER

Chapter 11

Historical Background:

Tunisia is a small country, one twentieth the size of Sudan (Africa's largest). It has a long history. It also has a geographical position that is very important in the Mediterranean world for it too have been permitted peaceful development as a small State.¹

History of Tunisia is closely bound up with that of North Africa as a whole, that is to say with the destiny of the Berbers, who were the earliest known inhabitants of the country, apart from the pre-historic peoples who had left traces of themselves in the settlements of Gafsa. It was mainly through Tunisia that other races penetrated into North West Africa and, in Tunisia itself, many decisive battles were fought.²

Within the Arab-Berber population of North Africa, Tunisians are practically a separate nation. Paradoxically they are more diverse and yet also homogeneous than even the Somalis who are a distinct ethnic group. The ethnic

1 William Zartman, Government and Politics in Northern Africa (London, 1964), p. 66.

2 Nevill Barbour, ed., A Survey of North West Africa (London, 1959), p. 295.

unity of Somalia has been broken by regional and tribal rivalries, by traditional life and by colonial rule. It needs rebuilding in modern terms to provide a durable reality. The unity of Tunisia has been recast by a fusion of the multi-ethnic invading groups including the Berbers, Phoenicians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Turks and even French and Italians.³

In antiquity, Carthage was the capital city for thirteen centuries under the Phoenicians, the Carthagians, the Romans, the Vandals and Byzantines. Throughout that period it owed its prosperity and fame principally to the Carthagians and the Romans. From time to time, however, the native (Berber) population asserted its independence and succeeded in forming ephemeral kingdoms such as those of Massinissa, Jugurtha and Juba.⁴

The three Punic Wars (264-241 BC, 218-201 BC and 149-146 BC) ended in the utter destruction of the Carthagian Empire and its incorporation within the Roman Empire. However, Carthage was rebuilt by Emperor Augustus and intensive colonization brought a new prosperity to it. The city was lost to the Vandals, to be recovered by

3 Zartman, n. 1, p. 66.

4 Barbour, n. 2, p. 295.

the Byzantine Empire in 533-34.

Arab control was established in North Africa with the conquest of Carthage in 698 and the foundation of Tunis. Islam spread rapidly amongst the Berbers.⁵

The Arab Islamic rule was full of internal turmoil though some influential dynasties like the Umayyad, Aghlabid, Fatimid and al-Mohamed ruled out the region. It was the period of cultural renaissance in the Arab world which influenced Europe also. After the fifteenth century, Tunisia like the Maghreb, was caught in the struggle for supremacy between the Ottoman Empire and Spain.

Spanish troops ousted the Turks and restored Tunis and its port, La Goulette, to the Hafsiids in 1535. By assuming a protectorate over the debilitated monarchy, Spain assured itself of a friendly government in the barrows linking the western and eastern basins of the Mediterranean. The Hapsburgs well knew that any escalation of Ottoman-Spanish warfare would make the control of the straits between Tunisia and Sicily of the utmost importance. Muslim corsairs, equally attuned to the area's strategic significance, set about creating bases

5 The Middle East and North Africa, 1987,
(London, 1986), p. 776.

on Tarba and other former Hafsid territories during the 1540s.⁶ Succeeding three decades saw a struggle for power between the Ottomans on the one hand and Spain on the other with the local Arabs trying to use one against the other to retain their power and position.

In 1574, an Ottoman expedition finally put an end to the Spanish power in Tunis and to the Hafsid dynasty itself. In fact, the Ottoman rule during this period was nominal and grew weaker as time passed. The semi-independent Tunisian rulers for their part continued to play off the Ottoman power against the European States. At the beginning (1590-1640), Tunisia was governed by military chiefs (deys) whose position was buttressed by Turkish garrison.⁷ Nominally under the Ottoman rule, Tunisia was in practice independent of the Turks. Government was in the hands of the Bey and his advisers.⁸ The deys controlled the cities with relative ease but assigned the more difficult task of maintaining order and security in rural region to an official called the

6 Kenneth J. Perkins, Tunisia Crossroads of the Islamic and European Worlds (Colorado, 1986), p. 52.

7 Gwendolen M. Carter, ed., African One Party States (New York, 1962), pp. 19-20.

8 Wilfrid Knapp, Tunisia (London, 1970), p. 87.

bey.

Husain ibn Ali, claimed the title of the bey in 1705 after leading the Tunisian resistance to the Algerian invasion. The Sultan's bestowal of the title of pasha on Hussain in 1708 acknowledged his position and gave him the important seal of Ottoman legitimacy.⁹

After the Napoleonic wars and Hamuda's death in 1814, there was a violent power struggle between rival branches of the Husainid family, and this gave the Europeans an opportunity to take the political and economic offensive after 1815. The powers began by curbing the corsairs. By 1830, France occupied Algeria.¹⁰

Ahmed Bey assumed the throne in 1837-55. He was succeeded by Muhammad Bey (1855-59), who preferred to distance himself from the Europeans, with whom he thought Ahmad had consorted too freely and their philosophies.¹¹

Muhammad al-Sadiq Bey (1859-82) forcefully promulgated a constitution in 1861. It established a constitutional monarchy with the bey's ministers responsible to the Grand Council - a newly elected legislative body

9 Perkins, n. 6, p. 61.

10 Ibid., p. 64.

11 Ibid., p. 73.

whose sixty members the ruler himself named.¹²

By the middle of the 19th century Tunisia had a decayed economic life and its archaic political regime was in acute financial difficulties. Thus it became an obvious field for European expansion. The economic life withered until it barely sufficed to keep the population above starvation level. Moreover, a severe crisis arrived in the 1860s when after a new tax levy, a serious revolt broke out in 1864. Desperate for money, the Finance Minister floated loans from European bankers. Tunisia was given loans at interest rate of 12 to 15 per cent. This weakened the country even more. An international scramble was going on in Europe.¹³ In such conditions, a reform movement was organized in Tunisia.

One of the most significant aspects in the history of that epoch was the awareness of the Tunisian government, under the guidance of the statesman Khair al-Din, that the best way to resist European designs would be through a overhaul of the anachronistic state machinery and by an enlightened leadership of the nation towards real

12 Perkins, n. 6, p. 74.

13 Barbour, n. 2, p. 298.

progress which had given the West its ascendancy.¹⁴ Khair al-Din Pasha was a reformer, who had been deeply affected by the principles and the thought of the French Revolution. He was convinced that the East must abandon its tyrannical forms of government. A contemporary of the last phase of the Napoleonic era, he had seen for himself the plight of Algeria and the collapse of the resistance offered by Amir Abd al-Qadir. Khair al-Din was firmly convinced that the great danger was not posed by European attack against the country. Rather, it was to be found in the social and moral diseases that had plagued the country and sapped its vitality. Khair al-Din studied the new laws and organizational set up introduced by Turkey.¹⁵ He had also listened to the views of such great Ottoman reformers as Fu 'ad Muhammad Pasha and Rashid 'Ali Pasha. The reformers had been endeavouring to relax the absolutist regime in the Ottoman Empire and to replace it by a new Ottoman constitution, based upon the Italian constitution of Cavour. Those were the enlightened and progressive views which had found

14 Alal al Fasi, The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa (This work is complete translation of al - Harakat al - Istiqtaliyah fi al - Maghrib al - Arabi by Stal al Fasi, published by Matba' ah al - Risalah, Cairo, 1948)(London, 1954), p. 41.

15 Fasi, n. 14, p. 41.

their highest embodiment in the great Ottoman constitutional reformer, Midhat Pasha. Khair al-Din wrote a book embodying his views on constitutional and other reforms.¹⁶

The Tunisian reformer attempted to implement his progressive views in Tunisia. His attempts, were foiled by two major obstacles. The first was the authoritarian regime of Prime Minister Mustapha Khazindar, who had ruled Tunisia for 34 years, the second obstacle to reform was posed by the religious sheikhs who enjoyed absolute sway over the mentality of the people. Khair al-Din did all he could to weaken the power of Khazindar, but to no avail. He became convinced that the only way to do so was to win the sympathy of the Bey. With this end in view, he introduced to the court of Bey a youth named Mustapha ibn Ismail. The youth succeeded in winning favour with the Bey and in influencing his actions. Eventually, Khair al-Din was able to exert influence in the court and he converted the Bey to the plan for a constitutional government. In 1867 the new constitution of the Kingdom of Tunisia was proclaimed. This bold act was the most effective step towards rejuvenating the Tunisian State and ensuring its protection.¹⁷

16 Fasi, n. 14, p. 41.

17 Ibid., pp. 41-42.

European powers, with designs on Tunisia, were not too pleased over such a constructive endeavour. They resorted to various means of sabotage.¹⁸ The representatives of France and Italy, who had hitherto been advocating the establishment of a dynamic system in Tunisia, now openly voiced their government's opposition to the reform. They were supported by the other signatories of the Paris Treaty of 1856 which had concluded the Crimean War and established the status-quo in the East. The colonial powers through incitements succeeded in arousing the people themselves against the new constitution. The new constitution, thus remained ink on paper.¹⁹

Although Khair al-Din was anxious to promote western knowledge, he remained a devout Muslim. As such, he saw merit in strengthening the connection between the bey and the sultan, thereby contributing to unifying a Muslim world beset by external pressures. He also hoped that a revival, of the links between Tunis and Istanbul would tie the issue of Tunisia's international status to the broader 'Eastern Question' and preclude a European take over for atleast as long as the empire lasted. This thinking led him to close relationship with Great

18 Fasi, n. 14, p. 42.

19 *ibid.*, p. 42.

Britain.²⁰

Khair al-Din Pasha did not belong to the masses. He was a great landowner with considerable financial connections and interests. His financial transactions brought him into league with M. Theodore Roustan, French Consul General, who was himself an aggressive financial manipulator. Thus, he aroused both public opinion and the Bey against him and he was removed from the Cabinet on 21 July, 1877.²¹

When Abd al-Hamid succeeded to the throne, he appointed Khayr al-Din Pasha as his Prime Minister, as Abd al-Hamid was himself interested in constitutional reforms.²² After one year of effort, he found himself in headlong collision with two obstacles, the first was the inflexibility of the Ottomans in their approach to and understanding of Islamic jurisprudence and the second was the vacillation of Abd al-Hamid who chose to retreat to the traditional ways of government, as they had existed in the days of his predecessors. Khair al-Din was forced to withdraw but remained in Constantinople until

20 Perkins, n. 6, p. 82.

21 Fasi, n. 14, p. 42.

22 Ibid., p. 43.

his death.²³ Though he did not fully succeed in his aspirations, Khair al-Din Pasha played a major role in introducing modern liberal thought institutions and education in Tunisia. He did not succeed because the socio-economic and political conditions of Tunisia were not ripe for such a modernization. But for his efforts he is acknowledged as the father of Tunisian nationalism. Despite the efforts made by Khair al-Din Pasha Tunisia was not saved. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Lord Salisbury informed the French that they could have Tunis, if England got Cyprus. In 1881, the French troops entered Tunis.²⁴

In 1881, the Bey Muhammad Sadoq (al Sadiq) signed a treaty at Kaser said authorizing France to occupy Tunisia militarily and to take charge of foreign affairs and finance. Two years later, on 8 June, 1883, a further Convention was signed at Mersa which placed the internal sovereignty of Tunisia also under French supervision.²⁵

23 Fasi, n. 14, p. 43.

24 Lorna Hahn, North Africa Nationalism to Nationhood (Washington, D.C., 1960), pp. 4-5.

25 Barbour, n. 2, p. 299.

Supervision very soon turned into more or less direct administration. Large modern departments were created and directed by Frenchmen - Finance, Public Works, Public Instruction, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Justice. This administration, acting in the name of the Tunisian sovereign but in fact under the direction of the Resident General, legislated and created organs of government and became all powerful.²⁶

France further succeeded in persuading other European powers to surrender their capitulations in favour of the French tribunals which were given competence in all cases in which a European was involved.²⁷

In order to satisfy the aspirations of this French community, principal human liberties, including freedom of press, rights of meeting, of free speech and of forming associations were guaranteed to them. They were also granted certain representative institutions. These privileges were gradually extended to the Tunisians as well.²⁸

26 Barbour, n. 2, p. 299.

27 Ibid., p. 299.

28 Ibid., p. 299.

By allowing the French colony to participate in the direction of public affairs, the French protectorate was tending to establish a joint Franco-Tunisian sovereignty.²⁹

The Nationalist Movement After
the Occupation:

The French consolidated their hold upon Tunisia. A national movement at that time drew inspiration from the reformist movement in Islam and was organized under the leadership of Sheikh Muhammad al-Senusi.³⁰ A deputation was selected to convey to the Bey a petition signed by people from various strata of society protesting the imposition of direct French rule upon the land. The leader of the delegation Sheikh Senusi, was however, soon deported.³¹

Two years later, a new religious leader, Sheikh al-Makki ibn Azuz of the Zaytunah Salafiyah ulemas, launched a campaign against the stagnant attitudes and policies of those theologians who had effectively resisted the reforms of Khair al-Din and his successors.³² To

29 Barbour, n. 2, p. 299.

30 Fasi, n. 14, pp. 44-45.

31 Ibid., p. 45.

32 Ibid., p. 45.

Sheikh 'Ayuz belonged the credit for having formed a circle of enlightened ulemas which included the renounced Sheikh 'Abd al-Aziz al - Tha - alibi. Sheikh Maaki emigrated to the East where he remained till his death. But the enlightened views which he had implanted in his pupils continued to flourish.³³

In 1888, the salafiya sympathizers in Tunis, began publishing al - Hadira, a newspaper dedicated to promoting social change within an Islamic framework. Because the paper stressed the importance of adopting Western concepts, the French authorities viewed it as a potential bridge between the two communities and provided al-Hadira with a government subsidy which continued until it ceased publication in 1910.³⁴

The salafiya group established an educational organization called the Khalduniyya in 1896, named after the fourteenth century Tunisian scholar Ibn Khaldun. It offered Arabic language institution in a wide variety of modern subjects.³⁵

33 Fasi, n. 14, p. 45.

34 Perkins, n. 6, p. 92.

35 Perkins, n. 6, p. 93.

In 1907, a 'Young Tunisian Party' was founded; this urged the right of the Tunisians to manage their own affairs.³⁶

The Young Tunisian, enunciated the views of only a handful of their compatriots but their visibility garnered them opposition from several quarters. Few colons approved of their demands to make modern education more widely available to Tunisians. The French feared that such a policy would force them to compete with Tunisians who would qualify the jobs previously reserved for them.³⁷ Under pressure from the colons, the Tunisian government closed a number of Franco-Arab schools.

However, to bring the plight of the Young Tunisians to the attention of a wider audience, a prominent reformer named Ali Bash Hamba started a French Language newspaper, Le Tunisien, in 1907. Le Tunisien, focussed sharply in educational matters. Ali Bash Hamba and his associates paid less attention than their predecessors from al-Hadira and the Khalduniyya to Tunisia's Araba-Islamic heritage. Their fascination was with the West and their ideas about

36 Colin Legum, Africa - Handbook to the Continent (London, 1961), p. 55.

37 Perkins, n. 6, p. 93.

the rule of religion in the modern world threatened and frightened the conservative ulema. The religious establishment especially resented criticisms of the Zaituna curriculum. The antagonism of the two groups peaked in 1910 when the Young Tunisians supported a student strike, at Aaituna demanding the introduction of a more modern course of studies.³⁸

Eventually the Protectorate Administrators also soured on the Young Tunisians, whose militant pursuits of several causes alienated the authorities. Two incidents in 1911 illustrated that the Young Tunisians were far from renouncing their interest in Islam. The first was a campaign the Young Tunisians organized to send aid to Tripolitanian Muslims in the wake of the Italian invasion. The second was a riot of the Jellaz Cemetery in Tunis. Muslims feared that a city-ordered survey and registration would defile the burial grounds and ultimately lead to the expropriation of the land for other purposes.³⁹

Whereas the war in Tripolitania caused anti-Italian feelings to run high among Tunisians, the Jellaz incident nurtured increased antipathy toward the French. When

38 Perkins, n. 6, pp. 93-94.

39 Ibid., p. 94.

an Italian tram driver accidentally ran down a Tunisian child in 1912, the Young Tunisians organized a boycott of the trams. The conditions for ending the boycott included the removal of Italian workers and the promise that Tunisian tram workers would receive the same pay as the European colleagues. The Protectorate officials were worried over this. As a result the government ordered the arrest of their leaders, many of whom were exiled and emergency was declared in the country. The Young Tunisian movement did not recover from this blow.⁴⁰ Also, events took a new and more dramatic turn after the First World War when the nationalist movement was organized on a sound footing.

The nationalists in 1920 organized the first effective Tunisian political party called the Destour. Sheikh Abd al-Aziz Taalbi was its organizer and prime mover. The thesis of al Taalbi's pamphlet (*La Tunisie Martyre*) was that the Tunisian people were now mentally matured and the time had come to grant these people, quasi independence, through a constitution.⁴¹ Because of its emphasis upon constitutionalism, it chose Destour,

40 Perkins, n. 6, pp. 94-95.

41 B. Rivlin, "Tunisian Nationalist Movement; Four Decades of Evolution", Middle East Journal, vol. 6, no. 2, 1952, p. 169.

meaning constitution as its name. The emphasis on Destour or the constitution also referred to the 1857 constitution of Tunisia that was granted under the pressure of Khair al-Din Pasha. The constitution, therefore, would reassert the independence of Tunisia and elections would provide a role for Tunisians to influence decisions in their favour. Hence the focus on constitution or Destour.

The Destour coalesced around a nucleus of bourgeois merchants, artisans, middle-and lower-middle level ulama, and community leaders, most of them from Tunis. These were individuals whom the protectorate had adversely affected, robbing them of the economic power and political and social influence they had once enjoyed.⁴² According to one writer, despite their setbacks, they had never stopped thinking of themselves as the backbone of Tunisian society. They had bridled at the Young Tunisians claim to interpret Tunisia for the French and were offended by the eagerness of the Western educated whom they seemed as social climbers to assimilate European concepts themselves and to urge their acceptance on others. They had little sense

42 Perkins, n. 6, p. 98.

of the realities of Tunisian life beyond the boundaries of their own class. Their goal was not to spark a revolution but to find a mechanism to protect the few privileges remaining to them after nearly half a century of French rule, and perhaps in time to restore other. Thus the Destour appeared, as a party, unlikely to attract popular support.⁴³

The Destour programme, however, demanded "the emancipation of the Tunisian people from the bonds of slavery" and set down the following nine-point programme for its achievement - creation of a deliberative assembly composed of Tunisian and French deputies possessing equal rights and elected by universal suffrage; responsibility of the government to the assembly; separation of legislative, judicial and executive powers; official posts to capable Tunisians; equal pay for Tunisian and French officials performing equal work; elective municipal councils; compulsory primary education in Arabic; participation of Tunisians in the acquisition of crown lands and of lands for colonization; freedom of press and assembly.⁴⁴

43 Perkins, n. 6, pp. 98-99.

44 Rivlin, B., n. 41, p. 169.

Ever since its formulation in 1920, this program has served, with certain modifications, as the core of nationalists demands. It cannot be said that the nationalists had succeeded in getting any one of these demands permanently accepted. All Destourian efforts to stimulate French action on this program failed and Taalbi went into voluntary exile in protest against French inaction. Soon his exile became involuntary as the French pursued a tough policy with the nationalists.⁴⁵

By the middle of the 1920s the nationalist movement, weakened by loss of leadership and repressive French policy, declined and fell into inactivity, and it was not until the early thirties on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the French protectorate over Tunisia, that there was a revival in nationalist activity.

Characterizing the nationalist resurgence was its growing identification with the masses. A religious issue first aroused popular support for the nationalists. A French Law of 1923 offered French citizenship to qualified Tunisians. In conjunction with religious leaders, the nationalists launched an intense campaign

45 Rivlin, B., n. 41, p. 170.

against French naturalization, which was condemned as an act inconsistent with the true tenets of Islam. In fact naturalization was considered in the eyes of many Muslims as heresy since it involved the acceptance of French law and the jurisdiction of French Courts in place of Islamic law and Muslim Courts.⁴⁶

Upto this time, nothing had generated so much anti-French feeling as this campaign, which reached its climax in mass demonstrations and violence over the burial of naturalized Tunisians in Muslim cemeteries. Feeling was so strong among Tunisians that the French were able to resolve the controversy only by the creation of separate cemeteries for the Muslims who had accepted French naturalization since normal Tunisian cemeteries were forbidden to them.⁴⁷

Yet the nationalist movement as a whole was full of confusion and false starts. The Destour party itself had no clear plan of action. It lacked the nerve and the resources to be an out and out revolutionary party vowed to the overthrow of the Protectorate. It lacked the political acumen to make political capital out of

46 Rivlin, B., n. 41, p. 170.

47 *ibid.*, p. 170.

otherwise trivial incidents. It drew up a long list of 'demands' and then rested its case. Although its branch organizations spread in the 1920s it was ineffective in building widespread popular feeling into a mass party.⁴⁸

Other forces were also competing with the Destour Party. The French trade union organization, the CGT, still at this time a socialist, not communist organization, assumed that Tunisian workers, would join the French Unions, without trying very hard to persuade them to do so. Suddenly in 1924 an independent Tunisian union emerged, to be suppressed by the protectorate.⁴⁹ Rapidly a Confederation generale des travailleurs tunisiens was formed. It secured the adherence of dock workers, municipal employees and others. The weakness of the Destour was amply demonstrated by its aloofness from this flowering of national working class organization.⁵⁰

Another point of its weakness was that from its inception the Destour Party was perhaps more of a movement than a political party. It encompassed within it various shades of opinion; religious, traditionalists and Western modernists. It is not surprising, therefore, that differing

48 Knapp, n. 8, p. 125.

49 Ibid., p. 126.

50 Ibid., p. 126.

viewpoints and rifts should result. By 1934, it proved impossible to contain all the factions within the single body.⁵¹ In March 1934 the final break came and the Neo Destour Party was formed at a historic conference held at Ksar Hellal, under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba.

The Destour party continued to operate and convened a conference on 12 May, 1933, at the party club in Qism al - Jabal. The following manifesto was issued at the conclusion of the conference, "the objective of the party's political activity is the liberation of the Tunisian people and the attainment of a social and stable system of government through a constitution that preserves the Tunisian entity and realizes the sovereignty of the people. The objective was to be served through - a Tunisian competent to draw up its own agenda and in possession of full legislative powers; a government responsible before parliament; separation of legislative, judicial and executive branches of government; the extension of jurisdiction of the Tunisian judiciary over all residents of Tunisia; civil right and freedom for all citizens without exception; compulsory education for all; safeguarding the economic life of country; to uplift

51 Rivlin, B., n. 41, p. 171.

the country.

The Resident General reacted to these resolutions as would have been expected. He outlawed the Destour Party and suspended its press organs.⁵² The break in the nationalist movement meant that while the old group continued its slow march, the Neo Destour, representing the radical group under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba was taking more dynamic actions.

Habib Bourguiba was born in 1903. He showed interest in political life since his high school days. He was educated in Tunis and Paris. He married a French woman. He began to practice law in Tunis in 1927. He became an active member of the Destour Party and began to publish a radical journal (L'Action Tunisienne) in 1932. Less than a year later, the paper was banned by the authorities but the name of its editor had become well-known.⁵³

Bourguiba addressed at the Ksar Hellal Congress of March 1934. The main thrust of his speech was that the new team had greater credibility among the French authorities. He also made the point that it was precisely the ability of the ne team to have the ear of the government

52 Fasi, n. 14, pp. 65-66.

53 Keith Callard, "The Republic of Bourguiba", International Journal, vol. 16, no. 1, 1960-61, p. 18.

in France that led the Executive Commission of the Destour Party to fear them.⁵⁴

At the end of the day, a resolution was passed, dissolving the Executive Commission. Another resolution passed a new charter of internal by-laws which called for a 'Bureau Politique' - composed of President (Mahmoud Materi), Secretary-General (Habib Bourguiba), Assistant Secretary-General (Tahar Sfar), Treasurer (M'Hamed Bourguiba) and Assistant Treasurer (Bahri Guiga). A 'National Council' was also instituted, composed of the Bureau Politique and 30 members elected from the party cells. Finally, a Party Congress was to be held annually in order to elect a new Bureau Politique and National Council and to oversee the finances and activities of the Party.⁵⁵

The new Destour believed that it had solved the question of political survival by the new organizational plan which it had adopted. That called for a double-tiered leadership, the Bureau Politique and the National Council.⁵⁶

54 Norma Salem, Habib Bourguiba Islam and the Creation of Tunisia (London, 1984), pp. 95-96.

55 Salem, n. 54, p. 96.

56 Ibid., p. 96.

The Neo Destour Party announced that the platform adopted at the Qism al-Jabal conference of 1933, that is the achievement of an independent and sovereign Tunisia, remained the basic policy of the party. At the same time the party decided to proceed to its realization in stages. As an initial step it pressed for a return to the spirit and the letter of the occupation statutes, which either had not been mutilated in a manner contrary to its original purport. Under the treaty of Protectorate French trusteeship over Tunisia was not intended to be permanent. In pursuance of its aim the party urged the speedy implementation of the following reforms : abolition of the "colonial allowance" (this is an allowance amounting to 1/3rd of the basic salary paid to French employees in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco); cessation of official colonization of the land; compulsory education for all; the setting up of elected municipal councils; appointment of Tunisians to various government jobs, including a greater share in pivotal posts; a more effective relief program; anti-usury legislation; abolition of the Grand Council and its replacement by a duly-elected Tunisian parliament and a government responsible to it.⁵⁷

57 Fasi, n. 14.

Thus gradualism was seen as a intrinsic part of the policy of neo destour party's programme. The Tunisian Trade Union (UCTT) took shape in 1945. This Tunisian labour organization was perhaps the strongest arm of the Neo Destour. Through it the Neo Destour was able to effect political strikes.⁵⁸ The Tunisian Artisan and Commercial Union (UTAC) was founded in 1946, the National Union of Tunisian Agriculture (UNAT) in 1946, General Union of the students of Tunisia (UGET) in 1953 and the National Union of the Tunisian Women (UNFT) was founded in 1957.⁵⁹

The Neo Destour Party launched a programme of mass education or re-education, a programme whereby the intellectuals went to tiny, backward villages, taught people who had been idle, simply to read and write and to learn a new interpretation of their Moslem heritage. Citing the Koran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad, they took the approach that the Moslem religion was really not one of asceticism and renunciation, but one which upheld the dignity of man, held him alone responsible

58 Clement Henry Moore, "The Neo Destour Party of Tunisia; A Structure for Democracy", World Politics, vol. 14, no. 3, April 1962, p. 462.

59 Zertman, n. 1, pp. 77-78.

for his actions and made it a sacred duty to try to improve his life on earth.⁶⁰

Soon after its appearance on the scene, the Neo Destour became the leading nationalist party. Its activities sparked by the exuberance of youth, eclipsed those of the old Destour. In the ensuing years, several attempts were made to bring the factions together but to no avail. The most important hopeful attempt was in 1937 when Thaalbi tried to effect a reconciliation but he too failed. His sympathies were with the older-group and the Neo Destour refused to bruckle under his pressure.⁶¹

In 1946 another unsuccessful attempt was made to heal the breach. A national front was formed but it did not last. Besides doctrinal differences between the two groups, there seemed to be an irreconcilable clash in temperament and personality of the respective leaders.

The fundamental difference between the New and the old Destour was, however, a matter of tactics as at a particular moment in history the first called for action while the second rested on quiescence for the

60. Hahn, n. 24, p. 19.

61. Rivlin, B., n. 41, pp. 171-72.

sake of survival.⁶²

Unlike the old Destour, the Neo Destourians were secular nationalists. Yet they too were not averse to using religion as a political weapon occasionally. They also turned to the masses for support. The Neo Destour was committed to the national independence as well as to the modernization of the country via extensive grass root organizations, and political education and mobilization.⁶³

Thus we see that the Neo Destour achieved its superiority over the old Destour through an intensified campaign of mass education, organizing youth groups, holding demonstrations and establishing party organizations throughout the country.⁶⁴ Neo Destour's greatest triumph was the launching of a strictly Tunisian labour movement, which was to become not only its most important striking arm within Tunisia, but also one of its most effective means for obtaining outside help. Moreover, the early period of the Neo Destour Party leaves no doubt as to the popularity of Bourquiba among the masses, which continued even after the establishment of the Republic of Tunisia. His charisma also operated on a person-to-

62 Rivlin, B., n. 41, p. 172.

63 David E. Long and Bernard Reich, ed. Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa (Colorado, 1980), p. 440.

64 Rivlin, B., n. 41, p. 172.

person level as his penetrating blue eyes bore into his interlocuteur.

The Neo Destour Party employed methods of widespread political agitation as a result of which Bourguiba was exiled. With the victory of the Popular Front in France in 1936 Bourguiba returned to Tunisia but little was achieved in direct negotiations with the new French Government of Leon Blum, from which much had been expected in the way of reforms. Neo Destour was built up as a powerful organization and its strength was proved in a successful general strike in 1938. Following widespread clashes with the police, martial law was proclaimed. Some 200 nationalists were arrested and both the Destour and Neo Destour parties were dissolved. Bourguiba remained in detention in Europe until the Axis Powers freed him in 1943.

After renewed difficulties with the French he went into exile from 1945 to 1949.⁶⁵ Some of his time was spent in Cairo at the Maghreb Bureau there. He also travelled to the USA and sought support for the Tunisian cause at the UN. But he achieved limited success. In the meanwhile events were moving fast in North Africa and

65 K. Callard, n. 53, p. 18.

an atmosphere was being created for a negotiated settlement. That brought Bourguiba back to Tunisia.

In April 1950 Neo Destour's proposals were put forward for the transfer of sovereignty and executive control to Tunisian hands, under a responsible government with a Prime Minister appointed by the Bey and an elected national assembly which would draw up a democratic constitution. These proposals were met with a reasonable response in France and a new Tunisian government was formed in August 1950.⁶⁶ Further reforms were effected in September 1950 and February 1951, when French advisers to the Tunisian ministers were removed and the resident-general's control over the Council of Ministers was reduced. The essence of the reforms was to grant the Tunisians a greater measure of self-rule by increasing the participation of Tunisians at all levels of government administration.

The Colon lobby, however, saw a long-term threat to its privileged position in these moves and put pressure for a strong-arm measure. Bourguiba was arrested once more, in February 1952, on the order of a new 'resident-general', Jean de Hauteclocque. A

66 The Middle East and North Africa, n. 5, p. 815.

wave of violence spread throughout the country, culminating in the arrest and removal from office of the Chief Minister and the imposition of French military control. Mendes - France permitted Bourguiba to live under surveillance in France and a year later in 1954 he returned finally and in triumph to Tunis.⁶⁷

By this time Bourguiba was a national hero but he was not yet in power. In July 1954, the French accepted the principle of internal autonomy for Tunisia. Negotiations began between the two sides. Bourguiba advocated moderation and a willingness to meet the French more than half way. The final agreement was signed in June 1955. Series of conventions were signed to implement this agreement. The main items of the agreement were - Tunisian foreign policy would remain under French supervision; three-seventh of membership of municipal councils, where a large French population exists, should be French; Tunisia would remain within the French bloc and the French Union; for the next ten years, police officers should continue to be French; during a period of 20 years affairs of justice would be gradually transferred to the Tunisians; Arabi would become the official language of

67 The Middle East and North Africa, no. 5, p. 779.

the country, but French should continue to be taught in all schools.⁶⁸

The Tunisian State in 1955, was, apart from the French pressure, an absolute monarchy. There was no constitution and the Bey had full power, atleast in theory, to appoint Ministers of his own choosing and to enact any law. For Bourguiba and the Neo Destour it was necessary to fight against the French as well as the 'legal' Tunisian State. They had to appeal for the transformation from the "pays legal" to the "pays reel". Pressure had to be applied to the court but not so much as to drive it irrevocably into the hands of the French.

The apprenticeship of the Neo Destour was not an apprenticeship in democracy. Through most of its history, the Neo Destour was illegal, and its leader were in detention or in exile. Bourguiba's leadership while acknowledged by public opinion had inevitably suffered by his inability to exercise continuous and detailed control.⁶⁹

68 Nicola A. Ziadeh, Whither North Africa (Institute of Islamic Studies, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1957).

69 Keith Callard, n. 53, pp. 19-20.

Bourguiba, at that time had to confront three dangers. Firstly, he had to avoid giving the French an excuse for coercive action. Secondly, he was to transform the Beylical regime without violence. Thirdly, he was to guard against dissidence within his own party particularly from those who accused him of showing too much restraint toward the French. This radical group within the Neo Destour Party was led by his close associate, Salah Ben Youssef.

Bourguiba's steps to complete control were rapid. Ben Youssef was expelled from the party for opposition to the recent agreement (1955) and for dividing the party. A Neo Destour Party Congress at Sfax in November 1955 confirmed the expulsion and re-elected Bourguiba as the Party President.⁷⁰

The Congress accepted the agreement but at the same time reaffirmed that it would be satisfied only with complete independence and demanded the election of a constituent assembly. Clashes between 'Bourguibist' and 'Yousseufist' factions followed and in December a conspiracy to set up a terrorist organization to prevent the implementation of the agreement was discovered.

70 Keith Callard, n. 53, pp. 19-20.

Salah Ben Youssef fled to Tripoli in January 1956. Many suspected Youssefists were placed in detention. At the same time fellaghas (armed bands) which had been active in 1952-54 against the French were revived.⁷¹

These armed bands became active in the remoter parts of the country and acts of terrorism were being committed against the Frenchmen and also members of the Neo Destour.

Final independence to Tunisia was accelerated due to events in Morocco where the French and King Mohammad V were negotiating for full independence for Morocco. French opted for full independence for Tunisia also. Both these developments were also influenced by the Algerian war of independence which had started in 1954.

Against this background, a Tunisian delegation led by Bourguiba began negotiations for Tunisian independence with the French government in Paris on 27 February, 1956. On 20 March, 1956, a protocol was signed by Tunisian Prime Minister, Taher Bin Ammar, and French Foreign Minister, M. Pinay, which recognised the independence

71 The Middle East and North Africa, no. 5, p. 780.

of Tunisia in foreign and defence matters. It sought for the abolition of the treaty of Bardo (1881) and arranged for further negotiations between the two countries on all issues.⁷²

A transitional period was envisaged during which French forces would gradually be withdrawn from Tunisia including from the major base at Bizerta.⁷³ Set was not ready for Bourguiba to create institutions that would enable him to assume power.

Elections for a constituent assembly were immediately held on 25 March, 1958. They resulted in all the 98 seats being won by candidates of the National Front, all of whom acknowledged allegiance to the Neo Destour. The election was, however, boycotted by the 'Youssefist' opposition. Habib Bourguiba became Prime Minister on 11 April, 1956, leading a government in which 16 of the 17 Ministers belonged to the Neo Destour.

He was now legally in power and there was no opposition in the assembly and very little in the country. Salah Ben Youssef was in exile and his group was under pressure in Tunisia. Bourguiba's political objectives

72 Ziadeh, n. 68, p. 41.

73 The Middle East and North Africa, no. 5, p. 780.

were to unify the party on the broadest possible base and to secure a virtual monopoly over it. The institution of monarchy under the Bey of Tunis stood in his way to absolute power. Accordingly, in July 1957, the Assembly declared Tunisia to be a republic and Bourguiba became President. He succeeded to the absolute executive and legislative power of the Bey. The Assembly had only the function of framing the constitution. It did not control the government and did not pass ordinary laws. This period of legal absolutism came to an end with the proclamation of the new constitution on 1 June, 1959.

Bourguiba cannot be discussed as a simpleton or as a man who ruled his country by whim and fancy rather than foresight and meticulous planning. His survival in the often troublesome political climate of Tunisia attests to the latter.

Thus in brief we can say, that the success of Neo Destour Party and Bourguiba was due to the mass support enjoyed by them due to the various affiliates like labour union etc., by organizing youth groups, and by active party activities like leading demonstrations, establishing party organizations, as well as the gradualist approach both towards France and Tunisian

elite etc. Moreover, the charismatic and authoritative leadership of Bourguiba were also vital causes.

Chapter 3

Institutionalisation of Power

Chapter III

Bourguiba's role was vital in shaping the nationalist movement of Tunisia. It was obvious that he would also lead the government of independent Tunisia. On 11 April 1956, he became the Prime Minister and in July 1957 the Assembly declared Tunisia a republic and Bourguiba became its President.

Bourguiba's personality cult had grown over a long period of time. His participation in La Voix du Tunisien, editorship of L'Action Tunisienne and exile in France, Egypt and other places had broadened his national impact and visibility substantially.¹ Upon returning from exile in 1955 Bourguiba called nationalism, as propounded by the old Destour party, a sham. It consisted of rhetoric and static notions of the concept involved. Above all, it was based on an emotional appeal against the French. Bourguiba accurately sensed that this appeal would prove totally unsatisfactory to accomplish the concept of nationalism he envisioned. Although independence was certainly part of his plans, modernization of Tunisia, was equally important.²

1 Dirk Vandewalle, Bourguiba Charismatic Leadership and the Tunisian One Party System, Middle East Journal, vol. 34, no. 2, 1980, p. 149.

2 Dirk Vandewalle, n. 1, p. 149.

Bourguiba also sensed that his charismatic appeal was doomed to vanish if it did not become identified with an ideology that would strengthen and preserve it. Also, whereas charisma could easily persuade the masses, a coherently formulated rational formula would be needed to attract the Tunisian elites.³ Ideology and charisma were meant to be mutually reinforcing, with nationalism providing the element for better cohesion.

It also called for a leader who could organize the political system and transmit his political beliefs. Bourguiba's legitimacy had sufficiently been resolved before independence. What the Tunisian strongman wanted in the future, however, was institutionalization - a process that could only be achieved when the political structure is valued, not for what it does, but for what it is.⁴

After coming to power Bourguiba abolished the old institutions and created new ones to suit his own personality and the new environment that he wished to generate in Tunisia.

The Tunisian state in 1955, apart from the French colonial presence, had the inbuilt attributes of an absolute monarchy. There was no constitution and the

3 Dirk Vandewalle, n. 1, p. 150.

4 Ibid., p. 150.

Bey had full power, (in theory), to appoint Ministers of his own choosing and to enact any law. Tunisia had been a protectorate not a French colony and the French had preserved, even though in name, the old structure of government under the Bey.⁵ However, over a number of years, it came to be governed by a system of parallel administration. The Bey and the traditional administrative hierarchy had retained the shadow of power in the hands of Tunisians while the Resident General and French supervisors at all levels had governed the country. The Bey and the Caids (district governors) were useful to the French and once the nationalist movement had gained strength, the French were indispensable to the Bey and the Caids.⁶

The period of legal absolutism of the old system under the Bey came to an end with the proclamation of a new constitution, on 1 June 1959.⁷ The other important political components were the presidential form of government and the single party system.

Although the constitution took effect from the day of its promulgation (1 June, 1959), it provided

5 Keith Callard, *The Republic of Bourguiba*, International Journal, vol. 16, no. 1, 1960/61, p. 19.

6 Keith Callard, n. 5, p. 19.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

that the existing organization of political power was to be prolonged until elections for the Assembly and the Presidency were held in November 1959. Electoral districts were revised and the number of deputies was reduced from 98 to 90 (each deputy representing) about 40,000 inhabitants.⁸

The Neo Destour list of "National Union" faced less opposition in this election than did the "National Front" for the Constituent Assembly elections. Whereas one independent and thirteen communists lists had opposed the National Front in 1956 in eighteen districts, there were only two opposition lists in 1959 in seventeen districts. Bourguiba was the only candidate for the Presidency.

The provision in the electoral law invalidating any list which did not have as many candidates as there were seats disqualified at least one opposition list when one of its members withdrew at the last minute. List voting discouraged opposition candidates who would uphold local interests, and thus reinforced the constitution's provision that each deputy is a representative of the whole nation.⁹ The entire National Union was

8 Lee William, *The Government of Tunisia since Independence*, Parliamentary Affairs, vol. 13, no. 3, 1960, p. 380.

9 Lee William, n. 8, p. 380.

elected. 91% of those registered voted for Bourguiba and out of more than a million votes cast, only some three thousand went to the communist's list.¹⁰

The lists of the National Union were composed of, as in 1956, of representatives of the Neo Destour and of the national organizations representing labour, business and agriculture. About a fifth of the candidates were trade union leaders. The increasing place of women in political life was shown by the candidature of the president of the Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT).¹¹

Moreover, the National Union manifesto, reflected the recent themes in Bourguiba's weekly speeches. It announced the intention of its candidates to make the republican regime into an effective and efficient instrument guaranteeing the integrity and dignity of the nation, to resolve the sovereignty problems like the Bizerta base question and the southern frontiers to liquidate underdevelopment to redouble the construction effort in the battle for economic advancement to continue a foreign policy of Maghreb solidarity and international cooperation.¹²

10 Lee William, n. 8, p. 380.

11 Ibid., p. 381.

12 Ibid., p. 381.

The first official act of the Assembly, on 25 July 1957, was to pass an unanimous resolution abolishing the monarchy and proclaiming Tunisia a republic. Habib Bourguiba, then President of the Council, was entrusted with the duties of head of state in its present form, until the constitution would be applied. From then onwards until the general elections of November 1959, the Tunisian state functioned provisionally under the stewardship of Bourguiba, who exercised the dual functions of President of the Republic and President of the Council.¹³

The Constituent Assembly, finally approved the draft constitution on 1 June, 1959. It was ratified and promulgated on the same day by President Bourguiba. Its preamble contained the basic elements of Tunisian political belief and aspirations. In it, "the representatives of the Tunisian people"¹⁴ - proclaim that this people, who have liberated themselves from foreign domination, thanks to their solidarity and to their struggle against tyranny, exploitation and retrogression are determined on strengthening national unity and upholding human principles, accepted among people's who

13 Gwendolen M. Carter, ed., African One Party States (New York, 1962), pp. 47-48.

14 Carter, n. 13, p. 48.

safeguard human dignity, justice and freedom and who work for peace and progress and for a free cooperation between nations. On remaining true to the teachings of Islam, to the ideal of a Union of the Great Maghrib to their membership in the Arab family, to their cooperation with the African people's inbuilding a better future and to all people's struggling for justice and freedom, And on the establishment of a democracy, based on the sovereignty of the people, upheld by a stable system and founded on the principle of a division of powers. We declare that a republican regime is the best guarantee of human rights, of equality among the citizens both in their rights and their duties, that it constitutes the best means for achieving prosperity and the growth of the economy, for utilizing the country's wealth, for the good of the people, for protecting the family and for safeguarding the citizen's right to work, health and education.¹⁵ (Official English translation of the Secretariat of State for Information, "The Tunisian Constitution").

The constitution was composed of ten chapters encompassing sixty-four articles.

15 Carter, n. 13, pp. 48-49.

Part I - General Provisions

The fundamental characteristics of the Tunisian state as well as the basic rights of its citizens are spelled out in the first seventeen articles which form Part I of the constitution.

Article 1 proclaimed Tunisia to be a free, independent, sovereign state, whose religion was Islam, official language Arabic and form of government republican.¹⁶

Article 2 declared the Tunisian Republic to be an integral part of the Greater Maghrib and went on to assert that the new state would strive for the achievement of the unity of the Maghrib "within the bounds of the common interest".¹⁷

Article 3 stated that sovereignty was inherent in the Tunisian people to be exercised in accordance with the constitution.¹⁸

Articles 5-17 defined the rights and obligations of Tunisians. Article 5 dealt with the freedom of the individual; freedom of belief and of worship (exercise of

16 Excerpts Document, The Tunisian Constitution, Middle East Journal, vol. 13, 1959, p. 443.

17 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 443.

18 Ibid., p. 443.

religious rites).¹⁹ Article 6 dealt with the equality in rights and obligations, equality before the law.²⁰ Article 7 dealt with the freedom of thought and expression, of the press and publication, of assembly and association. Article 8 dealt with labour union or syndicalism.²¹

Article 9 dealt with the inviolability of the home and secrecy of correspondence.²² Article 10 dealt with freedom of travel in and out of the country as well as of choice of residence. Article 11 dealt with prohibition of banishment from the country or exclusion from returning to it. Article 12 stated that the accused was considered innocent until convicted before a court of law. Article 13 stated that the penalties were personal and in accordance with the provisions of the law in force antecedent to the act.

Article 14 stated the proprietary rights were guaranteed. Article 15 stated that the defence of the fatherland and its security was a sacred duty. Article 16 stated that the equitable sharing in taxes and public expenses was also the duty of every citizen. Article 17 dealt with the prohibition of extradition of political

19 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 443.

20 Ibid., p. 443.

21 Ibid., p. 443.

22 Ibid., p. 444.

prisoners.²³

Part II - (Articles 18-38) of the constitution deals with the legislative authority. The last two articles, however, dealt with the President of the Republic who was also designated as the chief executive and whose powers were the subject of Part III.

Article 18 provided that the legislative authority be exercised by the people through a single representative assembly to be known as Majlis al-Ummah (National Assembly). Article 22 stated that the Assembly would be for five years unless its tenure was extended as a result of a national emergency barring new elections, (Article 23). Article 19 stated that the Assembly was to be elected by means of general, free, direct and secret ballot.²⁴

Article 20 stated that every Tunisian citizen of at least five years standing and who had attained twenty years of age, enjoyed the franchise. Article 21 further stated that candidates for office, however, must be born of a Tunisian father and must have attained thirty years of age.²⁵ Articles 26 and 27 provided for immunities

23 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 444.

24 Ibid. p. 444.

25 Ibid., p. 444.

against arrest or prosecution for opinions expressed, or acts done, in the Assembly.²⁶

Article 28 stated that the Assembly was the sole legislative authority empowered to enact laws except in the following three instances - (a) when the Assembly delegated to the President of the Republic the power to enact decrees for a limited period of time and for a definite purpose at the end of which the decrees must receive the approval of the Assembly if they were to remain in force.²⁷ When the Assembly was in recess, the President of the Republic might, on the basis of Article 31, with the consent of the appropriate "continuing secretarial committee" enact decrees which must receive the approval of the Assembly in the next regular session.²⁸ According to Article 32, when the independence and security of the country were so endangered as to obstruct the normal processes of government, the President of the Republic might take such extraordinary measures as he might deem necessary. Such measures must cease with the end of the emergency and the President report to the Assembly on all measures so taken.²⁹

26 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 444.

27 Ibid., p. 444.

28 Ibid., p. 444.

29 Ibid., p. 445.

Article 28 further stated that proposals for new legislation were the prerogative of the President of the Republic and the members of the Assembly only. Presidential bills, however, had priority over all other bills on the agenda of the Assembly.³⁰ Articles 33 to 36 dealt with the state budget, public debts and international financial agreements, all of which must receive the approval of the Assembly.³¹

Part III comprised of the Executive Authority. Articles 37 and 38 stated that the President of the Republic was the chief of the state and assumed the executive authority in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. Article 39 stated that he must be a Tunisian citizen, born of a Tunisian father and grandfather, forty years of age and a Muslim by religion.

Article 40 stated that, his term of office was five years. He was elected by general, direct, free, secret ballot at the same time as the Assembly was elected and might not nominate himself for more than three consecutive terms.³²

30 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 445.

31 Ibid., p. 445.

32 Ibid., p. 445.

Article 43 stated that the President was responsible for the general policy of the State. He directed the execution of policy and reported to the Assembly on developments as they occurred. Article 43 stated, he appointed the members of his government who were responsible directly to him. Article 45 stated that all other civilian and military appointments were made by him.³³ Article 44 stated that the President must sign and publish in the official gazette legislation passed by the Assembly within fifteen days from the date it was referred to him. In the event of a veto, the bill must be sent back, to the Assembly for reconsideration. If the Assembly again approved it with 2/3rd majority, the bill becomes law.³⁴ Article 49 stated that the President was empowered to enter into international treaties, declare war and conclude peace with the approval of the Assembly. Treaties becomes effective only upon approval by the Assembly, in which case they assumed the force of law and superseded local conflicting legislation.

Part IV - comprised of the Judicial Authority of the President. Articles 52 - 56 provided for an independent judiciary, subordinate only to the provisions of the law

33 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 445.

34 Ibid., p. 445.

(Article 53). According to article 54 judges were appointed by the President of the Republic upon the recommendation of the Higher Judicial Council.³⁶

Parts V, VI, VII and VIII, in single article provisions, established the following agencies. Article 56 stated that a Supreme Court for the sole purpose of prosecuting a member of the government accused of high treason.³⁷ A Council of State was created under Article 57. It had dual functions : (1) it acted as an administrative tribunal empowered to resolve conflicts arising between citizens on the one hand, and the state and public authorities on the other, and in all cases in which the administrative exceeds its powers, (2) it also acted as an accounting department empowered to audit and examine government accounts.

An Economic and Social Council, sitting as a consultative body to advise on economic and social matters was appointed under Article 58. Municipal and district assemblies with local administrative functions were created under Article 59.³⁸

36 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 445.

37 Ibid., p. 445.

38 Ibid., p. 445.

Part IX of the Constitution comprised of the articles dealing with the amendment of the Constitution. Articles 60-62 provided for the procedure to be followed in amending the constitution. According to Article 60 both the President of the Republic and at least one-third of the members of the National Assembly, could propose an amendment to the constitution.³⁹ Article 61 further stated that a proposal to amend the constitution must be accepted by an absolute majority of the Assembly before it could be considered, subsequently by a 2/3rd majority of the Assembly in two consecutive reading.⁴⁰

Thus, the fundamental characteristics of the Tunisian constitution were - (a) republicanism with a Presidential system of executive, (b) democratic institutions and systems of checks and balances and (c) unity of the Greater Maghrib.⁴¹

Republicanism:

The new constitution affirmed and consolidated the change in regime which had already taken place two years earlier when the Constituent Assembly, by the proclamation

39 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 445.

40 Ibid., p. 445.

41 Ibid., p. 446.

of 25 July, 1957 had abolished the Beylical monarchy and proclaimed Tunisia a Republic.⁴² By this move the Assembly had sought to "strengthen the independence of the state and enhance the sovereignty of the people". It also considered the action as a step "in the evolution of a democratic order which is the aim of the Assembly in formulating the Constitution.

Democratic Institutions and Systems
of Checks and Balances

In providing for a presidential executive authority, the makers of the Constitution let loose from the political bottle the jinni of arbitrary rule which cast its imposing shadow over many of the new States today. However, the Tunisian constitution makers tried to provide for a system of checks and balances, so as to contain the arbitrary powers of the President under the Tunisian Constitution.

Firstly, the General Provisions of the Constitution, provided the necessary securities of individual rights essential for a free society. Secondly, the constitution established the type of governmental processes essential for a democratic society. Both the President of the Republic

42 Excerpts Document, n. 16, p. 446.

as well as the members of the National Assembly were chosen by the people by means of a free, direct and secret ballot.

The independence of the judiciary was also guaranteed. It was observed, however, that the constitution, while adopting the American form of Presidential executive does not provide for another American institution, the supreme court, empowered to pass judgement on the constitutionality of legislation. The constitution makers seem to have adopted English practice of the legislative supremacy of Parliament but without the British system of multiparty system.⁴³

Unity of the Greater Maghrib

Not only did the constitution declare Tunisia to be an integral part of the Greater Maghrib, but by virtue of Article ^wtoo Tunisia was obligated to work for the realization of the unity of the Maghrib.⁴⁴

The insistence on Greater Maghreb was important because of the nature of nationalist movement in the three Maghreb countries ; Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. All

43 Excerpts Document, n. 16, pp. 447-48.

44 Ibid., p. 448.

three were struggling against the French colonial dominance. All had common cultural, religious, linguistic and political base. Their leaders were in constant touch with each other and, for a long time, had sought to coordinate their policies from the Maghreb Bureau in Cairo. The concept of Greater Maghreb evokes sentimental responses even today.

Thus in brief we can say, that the constitution was made to suit the requirements of Habib Bourguiba who had already emerged as the dominant leader of Tunisia. The constitution reflected the enormous power the President had invested in himself. Members of the government were solely responsible to him. He had the power to decree laws in the absence of the Assembly.

Single party system was another institution which was created by Habib Bourguiba after Tunisia attained its independence. The Neo Destour party was founded in 1934, but it continued to be suppressed by the French for a long time. It was given official status only in 1954 when the French were prepared to negotiate a political settlement with the Tunisian nationalists.

Many national parties did not, in their internal functioning, live up to all the norms of liberal

democracy, because during the long period of nationalist struggle they were denied the liberal environment in the country. That was true of Neo Destour also.⁴⁵ Intra-party disputes could not be resolved in a spirit of democracy. That was true especially on the eve of independence.

Since 1955 when the Neo Destour took responsibility for a compromise agreement with France which did not meet all nationalist aspirations, the party became even less democratic than it used to be in the heat of anti-colonialist combat. The former Secretary General of the party, Salah Ben Youssef, launched campaign against the agreement with France. By early 1956, the intra-party dispute almost developed into a civil war. Though Bourguiba, with the aid of faithful political elites and the UGTT, finally eliminated the Youssefist threat, the experience conclusively demonstrated that Tunisia was not ready for democratic completion within the party.⁴⁶

Sensing need for a tighter control over the party, the Neo Destour was internally overhauled in late 1958.

45 Clement Henry Moore, "The Neo Destour Party of Tunisia: A structure for Democracy", World Politics, vol. 14, no. 3, April 1962, p. 466.

46 Moore, n. 45, p. 466.

Previously modelled on the basis of mass parties of the French left, the Neo Destour had consisted of cells freely elected at the local level supervised by federations which were annually elected by the cells, and headed by a national congress, an interim national council and an executive (the Political Bureau) which was elected by the Congress. In late 1958 the federations were replaced by a smaller number of provincial offices headed by officials appointed by the Political Bureau. In a sense the Neo Destour previously closer in structure to the French socialist party, was made to resemble a communist party, in which officials in charge of intermediate executive bodies, though in appearance elected, at regional congresses, in fact, were appointed by the central secretariat.⁴⁷

The mission of the Neo Destour, according to the 1959 Covenant, was the apparent paradox of maintaining its political monopoly in order to preserve Tunisian independence and to modernize the economy and the society, while "working for the consolidation of a truly democratic life in which responsibilities were limited and which guaranteed for individuals the enjoyment of their rights

47 Moore, n. 45, pp. 466-67.

and public liberties".⁴⁸

The Neo Destour Party was the basis of power for Bourguiba. Over years he had made it into a dominant party in Tunisia. But for absolute power, he tried and finally succeeded in converting the dominant party system into a "single party" system. He succeeded in that goal in a very short time. The single party system controlled by Bourguiba along with the Presidential form of government helped to consolidate the absolute powers of Habib Bourguiba.

The Neo Destour party had been active since 1954 in trying to capture the state apparatus. The party had placed its leaders and cadres in all key positions. It tolerated the existence of two opposition parties. The Communist Party with limited activities had little influence and was finally banned in 1963. The other, the old Destour Party, had no activities. Moreover, the autonomy of the UGTT was broken when many of its active members were inducted in the Neo Destour Party.⁴⁹

By 1956, Neo Destour had become an effective political organization. The party had 1,250 territorial

48 Moore, n. 45, p. 465.

49 Mark Tessler, Tunisia at the Crossroads, Current History, vol. 84, no. 502, 1985, p. 218.

and professional cells. They met to discuss national problems and raise public awareness. The party performed regulatory and distribution functions at the local level. It helped citizens solve problems and dispensed patronage. These activities built loyalty to the political system, and by 1965 the party claimed to have 400,000 active members. Auxiliary organizations like the National Union of Tunisian Women and the National Union of Tunisian Students, also mobilized and politicized the populace.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly then, a growing emphasis was placed on the Party to mobilize the masses. By November 1961 the party was entrusted with the complete responsibility for the Plan.

Under the single party system of the Tunisian constitution, no other political party could even contest elections. Hence the Neo Destour, as a party, had the monopoly. Bourguiba, as its President, controlled the party and through it the Parliament.

Since independence there had been four elections for the National Assembly under the constitution. All have been won by PSD candidates. On 4 November, 1979 all 121 seats in the National Assembly were filled by

50 Tessler, n. 49, p. 218.

candidates of the PSD. Thus we witness that the Neo Destour evolved as a well organized political party with a mass following.⁵¹

Apart from the basic changes like the republican system, a strong Presidential form of government and a single party system, there were certain other changes in the administrative system, that strengthened Bourguiba's power base. The administrative system was centred around the President, as head of state and chief executive officer. His cabinet was composed of secretaries of state for the various departments like foreign affairs, agriculture, commerce, plan and finances, industry and transport, interior justice etc. Coordination between the secretariats was provided by the secretary of state to the Presidency who was, in effect, the second most important figure in the administration.⁵²

Control of the security forces was transferred from the French to Tunisian hands on 18 April 1956. This was an important step designed to help combat small

51 David E. Long and Bernard Reich, ed., Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa (Colorado, 1980), p. 452.

52 Carter, n. 13, p. 52.

groups of followers of Salah Ben Youssef who were opposing the government, as well as to fight a rash of European terrorists both of whom had been flourishing in the troubled early months of that year. The system which emerged in 1956 divided the police force into urban police under the control of the Director of National Security and a small gendarmerie recruited from the National Guard. Both, the Director of National Security and the Director of the National Guard, were attached to the secretary of state for the Interior.⁵³ A small Tunisian Army was created in the Spring of 1956. It was formed at first from troops that were formerly serving in the French army. It also incorporated the Beylical Guard and some members of the resistance groups loyal to Bourguiba. Since then conscription had been put into effect. The defense forces included a small naval contingent to patrol coastal waters, a selected group of officer pilots and a parachutist elite unit. The Tunisian Army conducted itself with bravery in skirmishes with French forces in the Remada incidents in southern Tunisia early in 1958 and again during the short, bloody struggle for Bizerte in July 1961.⁵⁴

53 Carter, n. 13, p. 52.

54 Ibid., p. 53.

Most of the officers had been trained either in the French forces or at the French Military Academy at Saint-Cyr.

Parallel to the military service was a civilian corps to which a part of the annual call-up of trainees was assigned. This corps had played a praiseworthy role in stimulating the unemployed who were engaged in works projects throughout the country as a part of the economic program called the 'Battle against underdevelopment'.

The local administration was headed by the governors. Tunisia was divided into thirteen governorates. Each governor was assisted by an elected advisory council whose powers were in reality quite limited, although they provided a local sounding board which somewhat reduced the otherwise sweeping powers of the governors.⁵⁵

Municipal institutions remained decentralized as before. Municipal elections in which women voted for the first time in Tunisian history, were held in May 1957, and resulted in an overwhelming victory of Neo Destour everywhere.⁵⁶

55 Carter, n. 13, p. 55.

56 Ibid., p. 53.

The administration of justice, or more properly its reform, was one of the first concerns of the new Tunisian government. In 1955, two kinds of courts existed in Tunisia; French courts and secular Tunisian courts. The Judicial Convention signed in 1955 provided for a twenty-year transition for evolving a unified Tunisian system of justice. Moreover, forty Cantonal Courts, each presided by a single judge, were established to handle petty cases and a court of cassation at the highest level was designed to assure a uniform and proper application of the law.⁵⁷

A Nationality Code was promulgated in January, 1956, and a new code of Personal status also came into effect on 1 January, 1957. The Personal status code contained profound innovations for a Muslim state and placed Tunisia in a more progressive position as regards social and familial reforms than any other Arab country.⁵⁸

In the realm of social and religious reform, Tunisia adopted some of the most notable changes to be made in any Arab country. Only the prestige of the new independent government enabled it to embark on a policy

57 Carter, n. 13, p. 53.

58 Ibid., p. 54.

of modernizing old Islamic institutions. Under the laid inspiration of the Neo Destour the Constituent Assembly hedged on the matter of religion and made the simple statement that "Tunisia's religion is Islam". Collective religious lands came under the control of the state, and the institution of the Habous was abolished. The observance of 'Ramdan' was discouraged in order to advance the "war against economic underdevelopment".⁵⁹

Polygamy was abolished. Women were granted full equality before the law.⁶⁰ In the decade following independence literacy in Tunisia climbed from 15 per cent to between 35 and 40%, the proportion of primary school aged children attending class grew from 25 per cent to between 60 and 70% and the proportion of high school students rose from 3% to 30%. There were also vocational programs for students who terminated their education without completing high school.⁶¹

Arabic was made the basic language of instruction in the primary stage. Different types of education like the modern education in French; mixed Franco-Arab education;

59 Lee William, n. 8, p. 383.

60 Ibid., p. 383.

61 Mark Tessler, n. 49, p. 218 .

Muslim education in Arabic were merged into one unified national system.⁶²

In the economic realm, Bourguiba's policies seemed noticeably inadequate. In fact, the policies pursued in the first half decade of independence proved unsuccessful either in attracting significant private investment or preventing a serious decline in the economy. As a result the government turned to state planning, in order to encourage economic growth, to break up the rigidities of social stratification, to equalize opportunities and to increase social mobility. In May 1964, the Tunisian National Assembly enacted legislation authorising the expropriation of all foreign owned lands, mostly French. Thus the period between 1960-64 was highlighted by the regime's gradual shift from reliance on the private sector to reliance on the public sector.⁶³

Agrarian policy was enacted by the Minister of Finance and Planning, Ahmed Ben Sallah between the period 1964-69. Ben Salah formulated an ambitious ten-year plan of economic development and reform almost completely

62 Nevill Barbour, ed., A Survey of North West Africa (London, 1959), pp. 320-21.

63 David E. Long, n. 51, p. 443.

based on state control and initiative in industry and agriculture. The core of his scheme was a system of agricultural cooperatives that were to be developed primarily on the large nationalized French estates in the north of the country but were also to involve the Tunisian small landholders as well.

However, Ben Salah's cooperative scheme was seen as a direct threat by the Tunisian landowners. His management became an issue and ultimately in 1969 he was shifted to the Ministry of education and his agricultural plans abandoned.⁶⁴

Thus it can be said that Bourguiba, after his coming to power abolished old institutions and created new institutions to suit his requirements. On the eve of Tunisian independence there was the absolute monarchy of the Bey. Bourguiba abolished that, and created a Presidential form of government, with a strong Presidential constitution and a single party system. The constitution clearly emphasised the monopoly of President in all important affairs. The President also controlled the single party system. This combination in turn gave Bourguiba control over Parliament. Moreover, he had

64 David E. Long, n. 51, p. 443.

control over labour union and local assembly. The UGTT was the strongest arm of the Neo Destour and other organizations like UGAT etc. were also its affiliates. Thus we witness, that by 1965, Bourguiba had created institutions that gave him absolute power under the garb of constitutionalism.

Chapter 4

Growing Challenges

Chapter IV

During the first four years of independence (1956-60), Tunisia seemed the model pays pilote (model state or pilot country) that might provide political leadership for North Africa and a democratic pattern of development for other emerging nations. Political cohesion and stability gave the country, international prestige and influence incommensurate with its modest size, population and economic resources. Tunisia's nationalist and anti-colonialist credentials were more authentic in comparison to most Afro-Asian countries. This was due to the fact that Tunisia had developed best organized party in the Arab world, to win its independence virtually unaided against overwhelming odds during twenty years of long struggle.¹

After the attainment of independence, Tunisia faced the transition toward a more routine existence and popular enthusiasm of the leader and the masses waned. The early days of spectacular reforms; promise of progress around the corner, continuing confrontation with France and Tunisification of the administration had given way to less exciting prospects of economic planning on which

¹ Clement Henry Moore, "Bourguibism in Tunisia", Current History, vol. 44, no. 257, January 1963, p. 34.

Tunisians anyway were divided.² Tunisia, therefore, faced certain domestic and foreign challenges.

In the early 1960s the party Bourguiba once built had threatened to become a bureaucracy unable to elicit popular support because of lack of effective responsibility. The advocacy of an energetic party, used in a vanguard role, was his answer to political stagnation. Bourguiba did not enhance political development by finding new institutional solutions for existing social realities but rather by seeking to force realities within the mould of the single party system.³

In February 1961 Bourguiba realized that the Neo Destour party was decaying. Though this central instrument of the regime in theory represented the popular will, it had neither foreseen nor able to stop the anti-government Kairouian riots of 17 January 1961.⁴ (Kairouan is Tunisia's holy city. Seven visits to Kairouan according to tradition dispensed with the compulsory pilgrimage to Mecca. Kairouan was popular for its old mosque. It also had a flourishing carpet industry).⁵ Even though

2 Moore, n. 1, p. 35.

3 Dirk Vandewalle, Bourguiba, Charismatic Leadership and the Tunisian One Party System, Middle East Journal, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 1980, p. 156.

4 Moore, n. 1, p. 35.

5 Tibor Mende, Tunisia Faces a Challenge, The Listener, vol. 64, no. 1654, December 8, 1960, p.1033.

the relatively traditionalist Kairouan masses were possibly goaded to revolt by the city anti-Bourguibist old aristocracy and it did not represent the national mood their agitation destroyed the regime's myth of popular cohesion and harmony. The incident also enlightened Bourguiba's significant loss of popularity since his attack in February 1960, on the sacred Islamic custom of fasting during the month of Ramadan. Bourguiba's persuasive tactics were not working. The legitimacy of the charismatic leader was in question. Many of Tunisia's pious Muslims considered him as an atheist.⁶

The government was gradually moving from liberal democracy to autocracy. The political system was still being operated along the path predetermined by Bourguiba. Concessions were made only where they could be watched over by the party or the President himself. Justification for the monopoly of government remained firmly with the supreme commander.⁷

Bourguiba's economic policies aroused the apprehension of Tunisian businessmen. In 1956, much to their satisfaction, he had neutralized Ahmed Ben Salah who was

6 Moore, n. 1, p. 35.

7 Vandewalle, n. 3, pp. 35-36.

then calling for the nationalization of many key industries and a policy of rigid socialist planning by having him removed from his powerful position as head of U.G.T.T. In January, 1961, Bourguiba placed Ben Salah in charge of planning and finances.⁸

Ben Salah promulgated a Ten-Year Perspective Plan. It was drafted in August, 1961 after preliminary consultations with various interested groups including even the students. Bourguiba elaborated a doctrine of Neo Destour socialism that accepted domestic and foreign private enterprise but subjected it to increased state control and supervision - ranging from price controls to more rigid import restrictions in line with national planning objectives. Private business interests were carefully courted and identified with the elaborative of the plan, though those who remained hostile were neutralized in a reorganization of the party controlled Tunisian Union of Industrialists and Businessmen (U.T.I.C.) in January 1962.⁹

Then in late March, the moribund National Council of the party was reactivated to discuss and approve Ben Salah's definitive Three-Year Plan. It was ratified by

8 Moore, n. 1, p. 35-36.

9 Ibid., p. 38.

the National Assembly two months later. Bourguiba, succeeded in mobilizing the nation in support of the plan. The Three-Year Plan (1962-64) called for an overall gross investment of \$ 785 million, of which \$ 416 million was to come from domestic savings. In August 1962, the United States announced a commitment of \$ 180 million in support of the plan. Furthermore, the United States was hoping to finance specific projects with loans rather than providing indirect balance of payment in support through grants as in previous years at the rate of \$ 20-25 million a year.¹⁰ Thus, Ben Salah's plan for economic development based on the private, public and cooperative sectors, was ideologically attractive.

In agriculture, the earliest and most radical experiments were in the north where the government suddenly acquired large land holdings when French property was nationalized in 1961. In the central coastal plans a more subdued form of cooperative, for services and marketing, was instituted in an attempt to put citrus and olive lands under more efficient management.

The vast network of cooperatives, dependent on Ben Salah's superministry, was pushed to new heights in

10 Moore, n. 1, pp. 38-39.

early 1969. The President and Ben Salah spoke of a new agrarian reform law. The Party Congress scheduled for October was to be built around a major new departure designed by Ben Salah.¹¹ Early in the year, plans were announced to enlarge production cooperative from 2.5 to 10 million acres by the end of the year. That would have brought roughly half of the more productive land in Tunisia under the cooperatives. Landowners and peasants in the party's traditional power centers were told that by the end of the year their holdings would be converted into production cooperatives.

These proposals brought the discontent that had been building up both within and without the party to a head. It was noticed that, through the National Council of Cooperation, Ben Salah would achieve final control over the Ministry of the Interior which ultimately would exercise administrative influence. By 1969, Ben Salah was in a precarious position. On 8 September, 1969, he was demoted to the Minister of education.¹²

The industrial sector did expand under Ben Salah's tutelage. Phosphate production, in a slump since before

11 Douglas Ashford, End of An Era for Tunisia, Africa Report, vol. 15, no. 1, January, 1970, pp. 29-30.

12 Douglas Ashford, n. 11, p. 30.

World War II, revived as the government built treatment and processing plants capable of exporting phosphate products that were more lucrative than the raw mineral. In 1966, the start of production in Saharan oil fields prompted the construction of a refinery, which lessened Tunisia's need to import petroleum products that were crucial to industrialization. Similarly, steel mills and cement factories boosted national self-sufficiency by supplying essential materials for the building boom then under way.¹³

Ben Salah was facing growing opposition within the party. He was, however, allowed to contest in the assembly elections from Monastir, a sign of possible recovery in the eyes of the party, but received only 8,660 out of over 52,000 votes cast. By mid-November Ben Salah had lost all his positions in the party and government.¹⁴ The rise and fall of Ben Salah, and his cooperative movement marked the beginning of the deep rift in the Destour Socialist Party and the challenge to the direct and unquestioned leadership of Habib Bourguiba.

13 Kenneth J. Perkins, Tunisia Crossroads of the Islamic and European Worlds (Colorado, 1986), p. 133.

14 Douglas Ashford, n. 11, pp. 30-31.

After 1968 Bourguiba became ill. There was a struggle for power among his lieutenants. The major competition was between Ahmed Ben Salah and supporters of the cooperative program on the one hand and liberal members of the PSD Central Committee, led by Ahmed Mestiri, on the other. However, Bourguiba's health improved in 1969 and he sided with the liberals. Ben Salah was expelled from the party and was later convicted of high treason. He remained in prison until 1973, when he escaped and fled to Europe.¹⁵

The exit of Ben Salah did not ease the problem. Many members of the PSD wanted a more liberal functioning within the party. Ahmed Mestiri, Secretary of defense, had resigned in protest against the arbitrary nature of government. His criticism against Bourguiba was that, he had avoided political and social growth in Tunisia while attempting economic progress. The bitterness of the repression that followed indicated the rigidity that had overtaken Tunisian political life. The Party Congress supported Bourguiba, disapproving strongly of Mestiri's attitude. Thus it became clear that Bourguiba had successfully used the party in the 1962-69 period to

15 Mark Tessler, *Tunisia at the Crossroads*, Current History, vol. 84, no. 502, May 1985, p. 218.

fight apathy among the masses, but had not created a consensus among the political elites.¹⁶

Mestiri's refusal to cooperate, Ben Salah's disastrous economic policies and the ensuing crisis violently exposed the shallowness of unity in the Tunisian system. Bourguiba had failed to notice that his attempt at institutionalization was not appropriate to his country. As opposed to the Western model he had closely observed in Europe, Tunisia did not possess highly organized, specialized or independent interests groups for reaching decisions. With several of these elements now in decline, basic weaknesses became apparent. The two-way communication system between party and masses on which Bourguiba had relied to institutionalize his authority had failed. Mobilization and political education had been grossly exaggerated. Consultation with the masses or the elites concerning the implementation of the new agricultural reforms was non-existent.¹⁷

Two conditions had been essential until this time; a strong convincing leadership and a homogeneous elite behind the leader. These two conditions no longer prevailed

16 Dirk Vandewalle, n. 3, p. 156.

17 Ibid., p. 157.

in 1969. Even the most vocal supporters of Bourguiba had to admit that in trusting Ben Salah so "completely for so long, the usually infallible Bourguiba had been mistaken". Subordination of individual and party claims on the grounds of national interest had lost all relevance. Despite the consensus imposed from above the elites now differed substantially as to the tempo and scope of political change. Above all, the realization dawned on the Tunisian population that Bourguiba had carefully manipulated and orchestrated all political decisions until 1969, and that the Destour was, in effect, a means to achieve that end.¹⁸

With his charismatic appeal substantially diminished and his control over the Destour threatened, Bourguiba seemed careful not to antagonize the elites further and and for the time being the masses. In December 1969 he named Bahi Ladgham (Bahi al-Adgham), Secretary General of the Destour and a personal confidant of the President, as Premier of the country. He also urged the National Assembly to adopt Article 51 of the constitution which provided that a Premier picked by the President and not accountable to the National Assembly was to succeed him.¹⁹

18 Dirk Vandewalle, n. 3, p. 157.

19 Ibid., pp. 157-58.

Bourguiba's impact on the political process was slowly being eroded. After Mestiri and his collaborator Habib Boulares, Minister of Information and Culture, had threatened to resign because of what they called an "excess of stability within stability", Bourguiba was finally forced to make concessions. He felt that Tunisia would be more stable if his potential successor was someone used to handling executive and administrative affairs i.e. the Premier - rather than the head of the National Assembly as his adversaries wanted. By January 1971, this group, led by Mestiri, challenged Bourguiba who was forced to submit the amendment to the eighth Congress of the Destour. In retrospect the eighth Congress became the final battle ground between those seeking liberalization and the conservatives. The "successor amendment" was passed, the candidate was to be elected by the Party, not the President. As a result Bourguiba launched a press campaign against Mestiri and suspended him from all party activities in 1972. Although that strategy probably prevented the Congress from passing the amendment, the long-range effects were disastrous. A serious split was brought about in the DSP thereby further weakening Bourguiba's prestige to control the political process. The overall message of the Congress was anti-Bourguiba. The principle of electing his successor was agreed upon

and the principle of responsibility of the Premier to the National Assembly was also approved.²⁰

However, despite the initial setback, Bourguiba was able to rally support among the party delegates between 1972-74. By 1974, when the PSD Congress met again, he was in control of the situation and that Congress declared Bourguiba President for life.

The new regime was more conservative economically and was less concerned about social reform and political mobilization. Bourguiba named Hedi Nouria, the former Director of the National Bank, as the Prime Minister. Bourguiba and Nouria expanded the private sector, dismantled most of the nation's cooperatives and actively encouraged foreign investment, claiming that they were evolutionaries not revolutionaries.²¹

The machinery of the PSD atrophied. Although political freedom had been limited, the new regime was less tolerant of dissent and more narrowly tied to a single ideology. Grass root political activity diminished and the party lost its dynamism at the local level. Most PSD committees did little more than dispense

20 Dirk Vandewalle, n. 3, p. 159.

21 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 218.

patronage in order to retain the support of local notables. Opposition began to grow not only in Tunisia, where it was constitutionally not prevented, and also abroad where Tunisians were living in exile.²²

In such an environment Ben Salah established the Movement d'Unité Populaire (MUP) from his European base. The MUP was banned in Tunisia and between 1974-76, many sympathisers of Ben Salah were arrested.²³

Mestiri and his supporters also formed the Mouvement des Démocrates Sociaux (MDS) but their 1978 request for recognition was denied. They were, however, permitted to publish newspapers, which were occasionally shut down for criticizing the government.²⁴

Another contributor to the opposition crystallizing in the 1970s was Muhammad Masmudi. He was foreign minister in 1974. Masmudi had negotiated a Libyan-Tunisian merger that he claimed would alleviate some of Tunisia's economic woes by providing jobs in Libya for unemployed Tunisians. Bourguiba virtually accepted the idea but later withdrew his support and ejected Masmudi from both the government

22 Mark Tessler, n. 15, pp. 218-19.

23 Ibid., p. 219.

24 Ibid., p. 219.

and the PSD. The ex-minister did not create a formal political organization, but his criticism of the regime and his good relations with revolutionary Libya, made him an important focal point for anti-Bourguibist activists.²⁵

Students constituted the regime's greatest single internal challenge. The system's increasing authoritarianism disaffected many independent minded university students who responded with regular and intense demonstrations since the middle of 1960s. Regime's response to student agitation was harsh.²⁶ Many dissatisfied students and intellectuals supported the Tunis-based social Democrats and the radical MUP.

Ben Salah's downfall allowed his PSD critics to reassert their influence, precipitating a major reorganization of the economy. With the government perilously close to bankruptcy, only generous foreign aid and infusions of private capital were thought to be able to shore up the deteriorating situation. Private foreign investments were made as attractive as possible. Hadi Nouria was the principal architect of this new

25 Perkins, n. 13, p. 152.

26 David E. Long and Bernard Reich, ed., Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, 1980, p. 455.

policy.²⁷

In the first Five Year Plan of the 1970s (1973-77) the government stressed labour-intensive industries and anticipated that the creation of new jobs would be the primary contribution of most new investments made during the plan. Employment opportunities were clearly the greatest benefit of the "offshore" industries promoted by Nouira. However, on the whole, the decision to rely on private investors to create new jobs met only with relative success. The availability of places in the work force failed to keep pace with the population growth, which lowered around about 3 per cent annually nationwide and was higher in the cities. Moreover, women who had not previously worked held many new jobs. Foreign employers did not share the reluctance of their Tunisian counterparts to hire women. These factors reduced the new industry's impact on unemployment, and many men remained out of work or underemployed.²⁸

There was however a price to be paid for the economic policies of the Nouira government. The decision to gear the economy toward exports rather than internal

27 Perkins, n. 13, p. 136.

28 Ibid., p. 136.

consumption, the heavy emphasis on foreign investments, and the willingness to lean on labour migration to temper unemployment - in short, the extroversion of the economy had inherent dangers. Excessive dependence on foreign markets rendered Tunisia vulnerable to circumstances it could not influence. An oil glut on world markets, for example, lessened Tunisia's income, sending shock waves through an economy that had come to rely on substantial oil revenues for continued growth.²⁹

Oil exports remained steady at about 4 million tons a year, but their value skyrocketed after the world energy crisis of 1973-74. Income from petroleum exports increased more than ten-fold during the 1970s, making oil Tunisia's primary source of revenue. Early in the following decade, when production had risen by another million tons annually, oil supplied some 16% of the state's funds.³⁰

The price of oil rose dramatically in 1973. The oil prices, however, declined in late 1985 and early 1986. In Tunisia oil exports account for a substantial percentage of export and share in hard currency. With prices declining by more than half there

29 Perkins, n. 13, p. 137.

30 Ibid., p. 137.

were heavy losses not only in revenue but also in export earnings.³¹

Investors' desires for sizeable and rapid profits caused an imbalanced development in industrial sectors. Many more business employing workers with minimal skills (such as textile) were built than were the more sophisticated plants such as food processing factories. Though initially more expensive to staff and operate, these would have better served Tunisian economic interests in the long run. The siting of new factories brought about another form of imbalance. Investors preferred to locate along the coast, especially around Tunis, where the supply of well-trained workers was greater than elsewhere. As a result 90 per cent of all new jobs were in these areas, creating unemployment in neglected regions.³²

In final analysis, the shift from the self-centered development of Ben Salah's authoritarian socialism to the extroversion of Nourra's economic liberalism created social traumas cancelling many of the advantages of the economic growth achieved in 1970s.

31 World Bank Annual Report (Washington, 1986), p. 105.

32 Perkins, n. 13, p. 138.

The economic situation of the 1970s made class disparities glaringly and painfully evident. Twenty per cent of the inhabitants accounted for more than half of all funds spent by Tunisians, whereas the poorest twenty per cent accounted for a mere five per cent of those total expenditures. The widening gap between haves and have nots spawned jealousies and heightened tensions.

In the agricultural sector conditions also deteriorated. Many small farmers, to whom their land was restored, after the dismantling of the cooperatives lacked sufficient capital.³³ That added further to the economic discontent especially in the rural sector which had its political implication for the regime.

Thus in brief it can be said, that between 1960 and 1970, the average annual increase in per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was 1.2 per cent. In the vital agricultural sector it was only 0.05 per cent. Floods in late sixties had some impact on agriculture. The situation with respect to trade was similar. Exports increased every year but the balance of payments consistently worsened.³⁴

33 Perkins, n. 13, pp. 138-39.

34 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 218.

Tunisia's aggregate GDP increased about 7 per cent annually between 1973-76 and even more between 1977-80. As for the domestic economy, the position of manufacturing in GDP increased from 8 per cent in 1961 to 14 per cent in 1983. There was a large decline in the position of agriculture during this period from 24 per cent to 13 per cent of GDP.³⁵

The distribution of resources was further highly skewed. There was a distributive gap between the rich and the poor. Unemployment and underemployment was on a rise among the young and poorly educated segments of the population. The government tried to tackle these problems, but its success was limited. The development plan of 1982-86 increased investment in agriculture sector from 13 to 19 per cent to reduce food imports and to foster rural development. But due to weather conditions the projected 5% annual growth agricultural productivity was not met. On the contrary, cereal imports increased and agriculture's share of GDP continued to decline.³⁶

In 1983, the GDP was \$ 8.136 bn, and it came to \$ 8.027 bn in 1984; thus the GDP growth rate was 4.5 per cent in 1983 and it increased to 5.5 per cent in 1984.

35 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 220.

36 Ibid., p. 220.

Inflation was on a rise from 6.0 per cent in 1983 to 8.2 per cent in 1984; debt also increased from \$ 3.40 in 1983 to \$ 4.10 bn in 1984.³⁷

The GDP growth rate fell from almost six per cent in 1985 to one per cent in 1986, in part because of a drought that resulted in a thirteen per cent decline in agricultural output from its record 1985 performance.³⁸ Consequently the share of agriculture in merchandise export also declined substantially. Inflation reduced from 8.0 per cent in 1985 to 5.8 per cent in 1986; debt rose from \$ 3.8 bn to \$ 5.6 bn in 1986.³⁹

Problems of debt and inflation are closely linked to domestic fiscal imbalance. Government and overall public sector budgets were in a deficit in most of the region's borrowers. Deficits in countries like Algeria and Tunisia were significant in 1987.⁴⁰

Militant Islamic groups also emerged and became very active and vocal in the seventies, thereby further

37 The Military Balance, 1985-86 (London, 1985), p. 86.

38 World Bank Annual Report (Washington, 1987), p. 104.

39 The Military Balance, 1987-88 (London, 1987), p. 114.

40 World Bank Annual Report (Washington, 1987), p. 106.

complicating the political picture. The Association for the Protection of the Koran was founded in 1970 and was granted legal status as a cultural group. By 1984-85 the Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique (MTI), which was not a legal body had been dominant. They posed another challenge to the government as they condemned the regime and its policies. Many MTI leaders were arrested by the government in the early 1980s.⁴¹

Tunisian workers also became reactive. Habib Anhour, leader of the UGTT, attempted to establish a labour party at the end of 1977. Anhour, hoped for a United States backing, but it did not materialize and Anhour declared a strike instead.⁴² Following strikes in 1976, the government and the UGTT negotiated a "social contract" in 1977, giving industrial workers pay raises linked to inflation. But labour unrest continued, and the government was disturbed by the presence of many unemployed young people at anti government demonstrations. Some PSD officials argued that the disturbances were an understandable response to economic and social dislocations but Nouria took a hard line and Bourguiba supported him.

41 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 219.

42 Dirk Vandewalle, n. 3, p. 159.

There was a major cabinet reshuffle, and the government encouraged attacks on UGTT offices.⁴³

The Union's response came in January, 1978. Anhour resigned from his position in the PSD Political Bureau and the Central Committee. The UGTT called a general strike for January 26. Although violence was not encouraged by the UGTT, extensive rioting accompanied the strike, demonstrating the anger of the urban poor. At least 100 people were killed as the army struggled to restore order. Hundreds more were arrested, including Anhour. 26 January 1978 became known as "Black Thursday". Anhour was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and hard labour. Although Bourguiba pardoned him in 1979, he remained under house arrest until 1981. For its part, the UGTT moderated its opposition and appointed a new Secretary-General.⁴⁴ However Anhour was released in December 1981, when he was allowed to resume his position as the head of the UGTT.⁴⁵

January 1980 was marred by the Gafsa incident, when a group of dissidents, then thought to have been

43 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 219.

44 Ibid., p. 219.

45 The Middle East and North Africa, 1988 (London, 1987), edn. 34, p. 771.

Libyan inspired, attacked the southern mining town of Gafsa. The ensuing confusion strikingly exposed an alarming lack of preparedness and equipment in the Tunisian armed forces. Another ominous sign was the fact that Tunisians for the first time took up arms against the government and sought to spark off a popular uprising in a traditionally underprivileged region.⁴⁶

According to the official statements (1980-81), the Gafsa incident was only the last link in a long chain of attempts by Libyan strongman, Muamar Qaddafi to topple Tunisia's government. Moreover, the two leaders of the terrorist group that attacked Gafsa were long time opponents of President Bourguiba's rule. The rebels were Ahmed Mergheni and Ezzedine Sherif. Mergheni was sentenced to five years imprisonment in 1974 after trying to blow up the Tunis offices of the Destour Socialist Party. In 1976 he was freed as part of an amnesty and went to Libya, where he received guerrilla training. In 1962 Sherif was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for his involvement in an attempted coup against Bourguiba.⁴⁷

46 Howard Schissel, Facing a Future Without Bourguiba, Africa Report, vol. 29, no. 6, November-December, 1984, p. 68.

47 Peter Sidler, Tense Times in Tunisia, Swiss Review of World Affairs, vol. 30, no. 2, 1980, p. 20.

But these events cannot be relied as in 1984, it was known that the rebels had Algerian connections and not Libyan connections.⁴⁸

Events in Tunisia took a new turn. Nourra the protege of Bourguiba, suffered a stroke early in 1980 and was replaced with Mohammad Mzali, a former minister of education. The new government moved in the direction of political liberalization. Mzali released political prisoners. He also brought into his cabinet a member of the MDS and several former ministers who had lost their positions in 1977 for opposing Nourra's hard line against labour. Early in 1981, amnesty was granted to all members of the MUP except Ben Salah, who remained in exile.⁴⁹

At a special PSD Congress in April 1981, Bourguiba declared that non-PSD candidates would be allowed to participate in parliamentary elections scheduled for November. Any group receiving five per cent of the vote would be recognized as a political party. In July, the Tunisian Communist Party (PCT) was recognized and was exempted even from the five per cent rule. The PCT and the MDS both presented candidates, as did a Tunis-based

48 Schissel, n. 46, p. 68.

49 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 219.

faction of the MUP. Sometimes known as MUP-2, the new faction headed by Mohammed Bel Hadj Amor, distanced itself from Ben Salah's group in Europe. In the elections, however, none of these factions won seats. The PSD cooperating electoral front with UGTT won 95% of the popular vote, in an all 136 seats.

Continuing the trend toward pluralism, the MDS and MUP (Amor's) faction were recognized by the government in 1983. Nevertheless, because of the weakness of groups outside the PSD and irregularities in the 1981 voting, many critics doubted whether Mzali was seriously interested in creating a multiparty politics. Among his challengers were Driss Guiga, minister of the interior and an opponent of multiparty politics, and Mohammed Sayah, a former PSD Secretary General, who had supported Nouira's hard line in 1978. Some of his rivals were reportedly receiving support from Bourguiba's wife, Wassila.⁵¹

These developments increased uncertainty and political frustration. The PSD had lost its dynamism but it was resisting any movement toward genuine power sharing. Inside the party, Mzali and others were absorbed in intraparty battles. Finally, although

50 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 219.

51 Ibid., p. 219.

Bourguiba remained active, the President celebrated his 80th birthday in 1983. His advancing age added to concern about the country's future.⁵²

A struggle for power within the PSD had been under way for several years. Mzali's opponents had been trying to diminish his influence and the Prime Minister, on his part, had sought to remove challengers from important positions. In 1983, Mzali managed to oust Mansour Moalla, the Minister of Planning and Finance and Tahar Belhodja, the Minister of Information. Both were political veterans.⁵³ There was rivalry between Mzali and Driss Guiga, Minister of the Interior. He claimed that Mzali and others were responsible for the decision to raise bread prices in 1984. However, he was forced to resign and was later imprisoned. Mzali further removed a number of officials who had been associated with Guiga. There were also several cabinet shuffles. But Mzali's position was becoming increasingly insecure. There were some very strong challengers like, Foreign Minister Beji Caid Essebsi and Habib Bourguiba Jr. (President's son). Another strong opponent of Mzali was Mohammed Sayah, former PSD executive secretary.

52 Mark Tessler, n. 15, pp. 219-20.

53 Ibid., p. 229.

He was ambassador to Italy in 1984. Sayah came back to Tunisia in 1984, and became the Minister of Housing and Equipment.⁵⁴

Apart from these challenges, the number and strength of political rivals was increasing. The legal opposition comprised of the MDS, the PCT and MUP-2, although all three kept a low profile during 1984. MUP-1 was still banned.⁵⁵

The most serious institutional challenges came from labour and the religious groups under the MTI. UGTT was weakened in 1984 by a split leading to the formation of the National Union of Tunisian Workers (UNTT). UNTT was pro-government in orientations. UGTT, however, resisted Mzali's proposed austerity program, which it considered unfair to workers.⁵⁶

There was a crisis in January 1984. Mobs went on rampages throughout the towns and cities of Tunisia. Provoked by an increase in the price of bread and other basic items due to government withdrawing subsidies under the pressure of the IMF and the World Bank, masses

54 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 229.

55 Ibid., p. 230.

56 Ibid., p. 230.

demonstrated veritable class hatred against the regime and its middle as well as upper classes. The President's convoy was stoned on returning from preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the ruling party. The events of 1984 marked not only a crisis of the government but also of the party and the society.⁵⁷ It projected the Army as a new factor in Tunisian politics.

In the 1984 riots the officers apparently resented on being ordered to fire on their countrymen. The composition of the officers corps was also changing fast. Professional soldiers, educated before independence, were retiring. Young officers tended to be more politically conscious and ideologically oriented. Some had modest backgrounds and were highly sensitive to socio-economic disparities. In the wake of challenges from Libya, the government had responded to the military's call for a program of modernization. It created a dilemma for civilian politicians, who wanted to keep the military happy, but who were reluctant to divert resources from other pressing needs. In view of these considerations it was not clear whether the military would remain subservient to civilian authority.

57 Clement Henry Moore, Tunisia and Bourguibisme: Twenty Years of Crisis, Third World Quarterly, vol. 10, no. 1, January 1988, p. 185.

58 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 230.

All these were challenges, which left Tunisia facing an uncertain future. If the PSD remained moribund but continued to preside over a hollow pluralism, popular frustration would increase and one or several of the government's rival's would challenge it by extra-legal means. Alternatively if the PSD permitted genuine competition for power, an effective multiparty system would gradually emerge. The PSD would be one of several major parties or a rejuvenated PSD might continue to dominate, demonstrating its leadership ability.⁵⁹

In the wake of all these political and economic challenges Bourguiba sought to take the initiative by bringing the so called economic stabilisation plan. It however, sought to strengthen the model of development that had led to economic discontent and food riots of 1984. Despite warnings the government persisted in its new economic policy.

The new plan, unveiled in stages after 19 August 1986 but already elaborated for the most part before Mzali's departure in July, applied the short-term teachings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the middle-term strategies of the World Bank (IBRD). The plan

59 Mark Tessler, n. 15, p. 230.

called for a return to a strategy of development based on promoting exports. Hence it led to fundamental modifications of the Tunisian dinar. It also called for a greater efficiency in the utilisation and allocation of resources. Hence, it introduced measures to remove price controls, to improve credit allocation, to liberate interest rates, to encourage private investment and to remove import restrictions, and also to diminish subsidies and loans to failing enterprises and to rationalise the tax structure. Lastly it sought to bring about a greater utilisation of manpower. Hence it offered encouragement to small and medium sized enterprises in labour-intensive sectors where investment was less costly.⁶⁰

If all the proposed reforms were fully applied, Tunisia would have a perfect liberal economy open to foreign trade. It was in fact stipulated that imports were to be totally deregulated by 1988 and that import duties was to be reduced to a maximum of 25 per cent by 1991.⁶¹

Since the balance of payments would not support deregulated imports without a dramatic growth of export-

60 Moore, n. 57, pp. 160-81.

61 Ibid., p. 181.

oriented industries the real financial task was to increase the allocation of credits to the latter. The structural reforms, therefore, gave priority to the reform of the banking sector. The first structural reform to be applied, was in fact the 'liberation' of interest rate, charged and offered by commercial banks.⁶² These so-called reforms hit the poorer section most and further eroded the stature of Bourguiba as the Life-President.

Foreign Policy of Tunisia

Despite the cordial relations between Bourguiba and the French Government, Tunisia often clashed with France. In October 1956, leaders of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) were kidnapped by French forces on their way to a meeting in Tunis with President Bourguiba meeting with King after this Muhammad V of Morocco. Demonstrations broke out in Tunis, and relations were strained to the point that Tunisia recalled its ambassador from Paris. Tunicians supported the Algerian rebels openly. This caused widespread French indignation and led to numerous protests and culminated in a suspension of French economic aid to Tunisia in May 1957.

62 Moore, n. 57, pp. 181-82.

There was a Frontier incident in 1956-57 which brought about an international basis in 1958. A French aircraft bombed the Tunisian border town of Sakiet Sidi Youssef, claiming that it was harbouring Algerian troops. Casualties among Tunisian civilians was heavy and the Tunisian reaction was heated. A blockade was imposed on French forces in the country, and incidents occurred in a few areas. After General de Gaulle came to power, an exchange of letters between him and President Bourguiba established a modus vivendi.⁶³

French troops evacuated all bases in Tunisia except the Bizerte complex; the Tunisian blockade was ended, and the French withdrew without opposition to Bizerte, whose future was left unsettled. Some French nationals were expelled from frontier governorates during the Sakiet crisis, and the European population, declined considerably in 1958.

By 1961 it appeared that France was not interested in settling outstanding issues with Tunisia, which was till then following a policy of moderation. These conditions led Bourguiba to renew the call for the "Battle of Education" and announce the blockade of the

63 G.M. Carter, African One Party States (New York, 1962), p. 75.

Bizerte bases.

Events at Bizerte soon escaped Tunisian control. Tunisian forces fired on French aircraft and impeded communications between isolated parts of the base. In a powerful counterattack, French paratroopers dispersed the blockaders, reestablished contact with all units, and occupied part of the city itself. The Tunisians lost over 1,300 men. The shock of the battle was deeply felt throughout the country. It was felt that cooperation with France could never be undertaken on exactly the same basis as before. However after Bourguiba's return from the Belgrade Conference in 1961, negotiations with France were under way on all outstanding issues, including trade and cultural arrangements.⁶⁴

Tunisia felt that the revolutionary Algerian leadership, which was close to Salah Ben Youssef would pose a threat. Also, after 1962, Bourguiba did blame Algeria for supporting the Youssefists. Relations between Bourguiba and Hourri Benemedienne of Algeria remained tense. However, Beumedienne's death in 1979 led to a change in Tunisian-Algerian relations. The new President, Shadli Ben Jadid, inaugurated a less

64 Carter, n. 63, p. 76.

ideological more pragmatic approach to foreign policy. Tensions eased with Tunisia. In 1983, the two countries signed an accord laying the groundwork for a Maghrib Union patterned on the European Economic Community and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

With other Arab countries Tunisia's relations since 1956 have been complicated and troubled. They were distorted from the start by the involvement with France. Relations with Morocco became tense after Morocco failed to support Tunisia in the latter's quarrel with Egypt at the Arab League meeting in 1958. In 1960 relations with Morocco were worst when Tunisia cosponsored Mauritania for admission to the United Nations and became the only Arab country to recognize the new state, whose territory Morocco claimed as part of its own. The Moroccan ambassador left Tunis, and violent attacks were made by the Moroccan press and state radio on Tunisia. These were stilled for some time after the funeral of Muhammad V early in 1961, but subsequently they increased again.⁶⁵

Tunisia had good relations with the more moderate African states, notably Nigeria, Togo, Cameroun and the

65 Carter, n. 63, p. 78.

members of the French community. Relations with Libya reached a low ebb in August 1985 after Tunisia expelled a total of 283 Libyan nationals, including most of the Libyan diplomats in retaliation against Col. Qaddafi's decision to expel some 30,000 Tunisians working in Libya. Qaddafi threatened the use of military force. However, Morocco offered to mediate between the two countries. In September 1985, Tunisia severed diplomatic relations with Libya.⁶⁶

Relations between Tunisia and the United States were close. Despite minimal private U.S. investments in Tunisia, the United States had been the largest single supplier of aid to the country, providing more than \$1 billion in the three decades since independence. U.S. assistance was intended to foster economic development and contribute to the stability of a nation whose policies with a few notable exceptions, have generally accorded with those of the United States. Beyond this confluence of views on matters of mutual importance, Tunisia's location beside the narrow searoads of the central Mediterranean is of great strategic value to the Western alliance in general and to the U.S. in particular. Initially, development aid constituted

66 The Middle East and North Africa, no. 45, p. 775.

the largest portion of U.S. assistance. Since the late 1970s however military aid rose in prominence. In 1984, military sales and grants to Tunisia exceeded \$ 100 million, compared with less than \$ 13 million in economic assistance. This contrasts with an annual total aid commitment of roughly \$ 50 million at the end of the 1970s less than half of which was earmarked for the armed forces.

The U.S. decision to emphasise military aid came in response to Tunisian government claims that its small armed forces needed more and better equipment to protect the country from neighbours intent in meddling in its domestic politics. Libya's role in orchestrating the attack on Gafsa in 1980 proved that the accusations levelled against Qadāfi had some substance. The United States agreed to Tunisian requests to escalate the already expanding military assistance program by making highly sophisticated weaponry available to the Tunisian military.

Relations between Tunisia and USA were temporarily soured in October 1985, as a result of the bombing by Israeli aircraft of the headquarters of the PLO, near Tunis⁶⁷ in reprisal for the murder of three Israeli's

67 Perkins, n. 13, pp. 166-67.

in Cyprus. Initially the U.S. government upheld Israel's right to retaliate but eventually modified its support, owing to Tunisian and international condemnation of the raid. However, by March 1986 relations between the USA and Tunisia improved.

Thus, there was a gradual and steady erosion of Bourguiba's popularity and credibility of the regime. 1984 was the high water mark in that respect. Opposition from students, labour union, Islamic growth, deteriorating economic condition and repeated clashes with other countries undermined Bourguiba's power base.

In such conditions, on 7 November 1987, Habib Bourguiba was removed from office at the age of 84 in a bloodless coup by General Zineh al-Abdin Ben Ali. The presidency was taken over by Zineh al-Abdin Ben Ali, whom Bourguiba had appointed to premiership only a month or so ago.⁶⁸

In a statement read over the national radio, Mr. Ben Ali said the 84 year old Bourguiba was deposed because "based on his faith in medical report" he was incompetent to rule as he was too old and sick.⁶⁹

68 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 8 November, 1987.

69 Ibid.

After coming to power, Ben Ali declared that there would be changes in the constitution and other institutions. Ben Ali, however, paid homage to the deposed President, whom he said, had made the greatest sacrifices to liberate Tunisia and said his age had rendered him totally incapable of carrying out his presidential duties.⁷⁰

Thus, the life of a charismatic leader ended as a senile old man.

70 Times of India (New Delhi), 8 November, 1987.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Chapter V

'Father of the Nation', the architect of modern Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba ruled the country ever since its independence from France in 1956 till his removal in 1987. A thickest figure of medium height and with piercing blue eyes, Bourguiba was given the ancient Berber warrior's title of "supreme fighter" by his people in recognition of the battles which marked his long political career before and after the independence for which he struggled so hard.

Bourguiba played a dominant role in the nationalist struggle of Tunisia. He was educated at Tunis and Paris and began to practice law in Tunis in 1927. He became an active member of the Destour Party which was founded in 1920 and began to publish a radical journal (L' Action Tunisienne) in 1932. Less than a year later the paper was banned by the authorities, but the name of its editor had become well known. In 1934 there was a break up in the destour party, and the Neo Destour Party was formed.

The success of the Neo Destour Party, with Bourguiba as its leader was due to an intensified campaign of mass education, organizing youth groups,

holding demonstrations, establishing party organizations throughout the country, having affiliates to the party like the UGTT, UTAC, UNAT, UGET and UNFT, and the charismatic and authoritative leadership of Habib Bourguiba.

The Neo Destour party employed methods of widespread political agitation as a result of which Bourguiba was exiled for quite some time. With the victory of the Popular Front in France in 1936, Bourguiba returned to Tunisia.

In 1938 both the Destour and the Neo Destour parties were dissolved. Bourguiba remained in detention in Europe until the axis powers freed him in 1943. He again went into exile from 1945 to 1949. In April 1950 the Neo Destour's proposals were put forward for the transfer of sovereignty and executive control to Tunisian hands.

Bourguiba was arrested once more in January 1952, on the order of new resident general, Jean de Harteclocque Mendes. France permitted Bourguiba to live under surveillance in France and a year later in 1954 he returned finally and in triumph to Tunis. In July 1954 the French accepted the principle of internal autonomy

for Tunisia. Negotiations began between the two sides. Bourguiba advocated moderation and willingness to meet the French more than half way. The final agreement was signed in 1955. The main items of the agreement, highlighted that Tunisian foreign policy would remain under French supervision and Tunisia would remain within the French bloc.

However final independence to Tunisia was accelerated due to events in Morocco where the French and King Mohammad V were negotiating for full independence for Tunisia also. On 20 March, 1956, a protocol was signed by Tunisian Prime Minister and French Foreign Minister which recognised the independence of Tunisia in foreign and defence matters also. On 11 April, 1956, Bourguiba became the Prime Minister and in July 1957, the Assembly declared Tunisia to be a republic and Bourguiba became its President.

After coming to power in 1956, Bourguiba abolished the old institutions and created new institutions to suit his personality. His major source of absolute power were mainly the constitution, presidential form of government and the single party system. In the beginning he was democratic in his outlook but with the passage of time, he became intolerant of criticism and started

showing signs of a dictator and tried to overpower the opposition through his hold over the institutions. Slowly because of this, he lost his power base and credibility and was ousted from his office in a bloodless coup on 7 November 1987 by Zineh al Abedin Ben Ali.

Presidentship was taken by Zineh al-Abdin Ben Ali, whom Bourguiba had appointed to premiership only about a month before the coup. Under the Tunisian law premier succeeded the president.

In a broadcast, the new President declared that the removal of his predecessor had become necessary because of senility and lingering illness which made him totally incapable of undertaking Presidential duties. Moreover, he said, it was not only Mr. Bourguiba's physical health, that led to his downfall. Tunisia had been going through a good deal of internal turmoil in the past few years. There were riots in January 1984 when Bourguiba raised bread prices. Moreover on 27 September, 1987 death sentences were passed on a number of Islamic fundamentalists, connected with the Islamic tendency movement in Tunisia. Mr. Ben Ali was very much connected with these arrests and banding out of sentences, because he was the Interior Minister before being appointed Prime Minister.

After coming to power, Mr. Ben Ali handed over the duties of Prime Minister to Mr. Hedi Bacchouche, formerly minister of social affairs. The new leader dumped the foreign minister Mr. Hedi Mabruk from office. Mr. Tijani Chelly was named the minister of education and scientific research, replacing Mr. Mohammad Sayah, who was considered too great an ally of Mr. Bourguiba. Mr. Abdallah Kallel was given the job of head of the President's office. Certain Tunisian figures had been placed under house arrest by the new authorities. They included Mr. Mohammad Sayah, former minister of state for education, and scientific research, Mr. Mansour Sikri, a close advisor to Habib Bourguiba, Mr. Hedi Mabruk, former foreign minister and Mr. Mahmoud Ben Lassire, presidential press office chief.

In April 1988, probably with the aim of increasing his control over the armed forces, President Ben Ali assumed the defence portfolio and appointed a secretary of state for security affairs in a cabinet reshuffle. He also took the opportunity to dismiss several associates of Bourguiba, to merge the two ministries of agriculture and of agricultural and food production for greater efficiency, and to divide the ministry of national education into two ministries.

Moreover, immediately on taking power, President Ben Ali began to effect a policy of national reconciliation. The publication was permitted of opposition newspapers which had been suspended by the Bourguiba administration. In late November the National Assembly approved legislation which limited the length of time during which a person could be held in police custody without the authority of the public prosecutor to four days. In December the state security court was abolished, along with the post of prosecutor general.

Ben Ali also attempted to normalize relations between the government and the UGTT. In April he attempted to reconcile the two rivals for the leadership of the UGTT, Habib Achour and Abd al-Aziz Bouraoui. Both Achour and Bouraoui subsequently agreed to give up their union responsibilities as a first step towards the reunification of the UGTT, which had split into 'radical' and 'moderate' factions under Bourguiba. The complete reunification of the UGTT and the election of a new secretary-general were to be effected at an extraordinary congress in January 1989.

Meanwhile, the new government consolidated its power. The size of the PSD political bureau was reduced from 20 to 13 members in December.

In accordance with his promises after taking power, President Ben Ali introduced proposals to increase political freedom and to introduce a more democratic system of government. In February, 1988, to signal the new administration's commitment to democratic reform, the Central Committee of the PSD announced that the party's name had been changed to the Reassemblment Constitutional Democratique (RCD) (Democratic Constitutional Assembly). In July the National Assembly approved a series of proposals to reform the Constitution. Under the amendments, the post of President-for-life was abolished, and the president was to be elected by universal suffrage every five years, and limited to two consecutive terms in office.

As a safeguard against senility, a maximum age of 70 years was to be introduced for presidential candidates. If the presidency fell vacant before the end of the term of office, the president of the National Assembly, rather than the Prime Minister, was to assume presidential powers until elections were held.

By mid 1988 a large part of Bourguiba's legacy of repression had disappeared. In April 1988 legislation was passed by the National Assembly instituting a multi-party system, although, in order to gain legal recognition,

political parties had to uphold the aims of, and work within the constitution.

In July, the National Assembly modified the Press Code, relaxing its repressive tendencies. Under the main provisions of the revised Code, newspapers were given the right to prove the veracity of 'defamatory' claims about members of public institutions (although members of the government and the President still received special protection), and responsibility for the suspension and seizure of newspapers was handed over to the courts, rather than the Minister of the Interior.

Moreover the national holidays associated with former President Bourguiba were removed from the calendar and the Tunisian national anthem was revised to omit any illusions to Bourguiba. Statues of Bourguiba were quietly removed, and suggestions were made that streets and towns named after Bourguiba should be renamed.

The changes, represented more to 'depersonalise' Bourguiba's legacy, built up over 31 years as the Head of the state. Ben Ali wanted the national media to be based on credibility, objectivity and the abandonment of all blemishes of personalisation and flattery.

Thus in brief we can conclude, that when Bourguiba emerged as the President, he brought about changes in the system of government, and many new institutions were brought into existence. When he tried to dominate over those institutions, he only succeeded in erasing his base. When he was removed from office, his institutions were abolished and new institutions came into existence. Changes were brought about in the constitution and ministry. There was also a change from single party system to multi-party system.

Therefore, we analyse, even if a charismatic leader tries to dominate over the institutions created by him, his downfall comes.

Thus we see, that personality, institution and environment are variables totally dependent on one another. When environment changes, new leader emerges, and with that new institutions are brought in that suit the new personality and the changed environment. However, if a personality tries to dominate over those institutions, his downfall comes and thus a new system comes in.

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