Volume 22 November 2012

# 2012 CEMAT Newsletter: Tunisia in Transition

The October 23, 2011 National Constituent Assembly elections marked the first free and fair elections in Tunisia's modern history. Since last fall, Tunisia has been governed by the so-called Troika, a power-sharing agreement amongst the Islamist party *Ennahda* which heads the Prime Ministry, *le Congrès pour la République* for the Presidency, and *Ettakatol* as Speaker of the Legislature. While the transitional government is primarily charged with ensuring the smooth completion of the Constitution drafting process, the tripartite coalition has weathered many escalating political crises in light of growing public scrutiny.

Some of the most critical areas in Tunisia's political transition include: the process of transitional justice and the question of political exclusion for members of the former regime, the definition and guarantee of individual and collective rights in the Constitution, the revitalization of economic development and reducing unemployment, and, most importantly, the capacity to curtail a rise in extremism and violence. Despite these challenges, many observers within and outside of Tunisia remain optimistic. Civil society continues to gain strength in representing citizen needs and demands to governing authorities. Tunisian citizens can express themselves relatively freely, a radical change from the previous regime. And, new interest groups are forming almost daily, both from the grassroots level as well as those created as a result of millions of development dollars pouring into the country to consolidate the democratic transition.

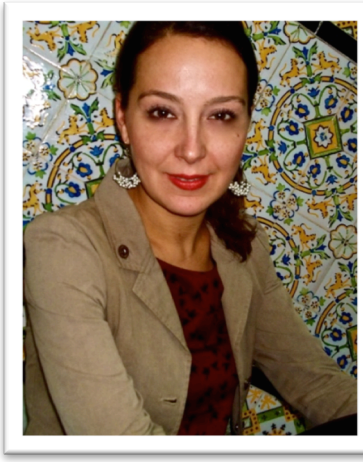
CEMAT has played a prominent role in Tunisia's post-revolutionary environment. As the only American academic institute in Tunisia, we serve as a primary research point for U.S. and Tunisian scholars, policy- professionals, international as well as domestic civil society groups, and journalists. Our academic lectures, thematic conversations and round-table discussions are congruent with the national political dialogue, and buttress larger policy-debates with sound academic analysis. This next year, we will focus on the many debates surrounding transitional justice, bridging policy developments with academic research.

Letter from the Director, Dr. Laryssa Chomiak, and Letter from Associate Director, Riadh Saadaoui — Pages 2-3

Tunisian-American Friendship Concert — Page 11

CEMAT Scholar's Profiles: Professor Asma Nouira and Professor C.K. Lamont — Page 13

## *Letter from CEMAT Director, Dr. Laryssa Chomiak*



The year following the October 23, 2011 National Constituent Assembly Elections in Tunisia has been exciting. CEMAT's scholarly agenda has been dynamic, as have been the scores of scholars coming through to conduct new and original research. Political developments summarized in the beginning of this newsletter have opened new fields of inquiry for scholars of all disciplines, from debates about the Constitution drafting process, transitional justice to questions of political violence and extremism. As you will read in the next few pages, CEMAT has actively followed the Tunisian political transition with a multi-disciplinary lecture series, continued strengthening research on new topics, including Berber studies and public health, and welcomed public policy experts, journalists, as well as government advisors.

Between October 2011 and May 2012, CEMAT organized a five-part lecture series on pressing issues following the country's democratic transition. We invited U.S. experts on issues particular to democratization in the Middle East, including Constitution-drafting, regional politics, political Islam and Democratic consolidation, partnered them with Tunisian scholars in round-table settings, and traveled to universities outside of Tunis for lectures to underserved student communities. For many of our invited U.S. experts, this visit constituted the first to Tunisia, allowing them to meet many of CEMAT's friends and Tunisian public thinkers and intellectuals. In this next year, we are working to expand this lecture series to include social science methodology trainings at Tunisian universities. CEMA in Oran and Algiers will also collaborate and invite our speakers and experts to travel to Algeria to conduct similar trainings and deliver lectures.

Not surprisingly, the majority of scholars-in-residence at CEMAT are working on topics related to the political transition or new political developments in Tunisia. Yet research in other academic areas continues to thrive as well and some of the most interesting research findings have come from projects on informal economic practice, performing arts and theater, art history, public health, Berber studies, urban planning and architecture, women's studies, and Tunisia's philosophical and literary traditions.

Thanks to the hundreds of Tunisian and international visitors passing through CEMAT, we have learned of many new research institutions and organizations and successfully expanded institutional partnerships throughout the country. Most notably, we collaborated with universities in Jendouba, Sfax, Kairouan, and Sousse on various projects. For instance, a colleague at the University of Sfax and I were awarded a grant from the Hollings Center for International Dialogue. The grant allowed us to organize an international conference on Female Voices of Political Islam, inviting women from Egypt and Mauritania and setting up a conference-style dialogue with female elected representatives from the governing *Ennahda* party. Over the last year, I have also conducted several courtesy visits with our representative at the Ministry of Higher Education, continued working with universities in Tunis, primarily *Campus, 9 Avril* and *Manouba*, and collaborated with the Institute for Diplomatic Training as well as the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy.

Following former CEMAT Director Jim Miller's initiative, we finally created CEMAT's Scientific Council representing the following disciplines: (1) history, (2) political science and law, (3) anthropology, (4) classics and ancient history, (5) public health (6) journalism, (7) English literature, (8) religious studies, and (9) gender studies. The scientific council meets twice a year and functions as a consultative body for CEMAT's academic agenda and pressing concerns. This year, the scientific council advised CEMAT on the new security situation, helped identify local academic needs, and voted on a name for a new CEMAT scholarship fund dedicated to supporting research by Tunisian scholars.

CEMAT's scholarly agenda has flourished in the last year, receiving much attention in the Tunisian media as well as among U.S. policy-makers. Following the violent attacks on the U.S. embassy on September 14,

2012, we opened a temporary annex in Sidi Bou Said because of security concerns at our *Centre Ville* location. While we miss Villa Maria Carlotta, which still holds our CEMAT library, and the bustling atmosphere of downtown Tunis, we have been able to continue with our academic agenda and have already hosted two lectures, a thematic round-table and a scholars' meeting at the temporary location.

Without a doubt, this next year will continue to be challenging as well as rewarding for CEMAT. We welcome all AIMS members and fellow scholars, researchers, and interested parties to visit the Center and participate actively in its many academic and professional activities. Tunisia has never been as inviting and as rich with possibilities for all those engaged in Maghrebi studies. I look forward to welcoming all of you personally.

**CEMAT Colleague and Friend Professor Nabiha Jerad**

Finally, I write this letter with a heavy heart, as we have just learned of the death of Nabiha Jerad, a long-time friend and supporter of CEMAT and stellar scholar in socio-linguistics and anthropology. Nabiha was hit by a car this past summer during a family vacation and was transported to Europe for medical care while in a coma. Nabiha had spent a year in the U.S. on a Fulbright Fellowship at Stanford University, collaborated with many American scholars on publications, conferences, and scores of other initiatives. Most importantly, she was a mentor to dozens of CEMAT scholars, attended our lectures and conferences regularly, and was simply a lovely friend. We dedicate this issue of the newsletter to Professor Nabiha Jerad, who will be deeply missed.

## *Letter from CEMAT Associate Director, Riadh Saadaoui*

### One year after the election: What works?

Sunday, October 23, 2011 was a historical day in the history of modern Tunisia. Tunisians and the world watched as the aftermath of the Jasmine Revolution and collapse of Ben Ali's tyrannical regime brought about the first free and democratic elections.

Throughout the electoral campaign, political parties loftily promised people that they would improve the quality of life and defend the spirit of the revolution: social justice, dignity, employment, and liberty –all liberties. The reality has fallen short, as real policy decisions cannot be achieved with electoral promises.

The Troika has failed to meet people's demands and in doing so has increased the gap between inspirations and reality. Unemployment has increased, regional imbalances are widening, social balance is totally absent, the cost of living is increasingly expensive, and corruption is widespread. Add to all these elements, the absence of security and the rise of violence, and the peaceful process of democratization is severely threatened.

The Troika has failed to respond to these threats and is incapable of taking control of a situation weakened by deep factional divisions. One year after the transitional government, the division and conflict between the Troika and the opposition grows more and more. Now, more than ever, cohabitation and reconciliation between the political rivals is needed to assure the success of this transitional period.

If the Troika tackles these issues seriously and works to bring all parties together to talk and collectively decide the future of this country, despite the absence of democratic institutions that ensure the respect of law, we can hope for a better future for the people of Tunisia.

"I was invited by CEMAT to participate in a series of lectures, discussions, and roundtables in Tunisia in March 2012, as part of a US Embassy/Tunisia-funded grant to invite distinguished American political science scholars to lecture on broad themes of democratization, constitutional engineering, elections, and regional relations, among others, from which Tunisian audiences could learn and apply to the current democratic transition that the country is experiencing. Although I have had long experience in the country and know personally many Tunisians in a variety of formal and informal positions, the CEMAT-arranged lecture tour was especially rewarding in expanding and deepening my relations with Tunisian scholars, political activists, and government officials. My understanding of the experiences of others in this program is that this was an exceptionally successful CEMAT-led effort from which the US Government benefitted, as did all those with whom I was engaged during my visit." - *Dr. John P. Entelis, Fordham University, New York City*

"In a visit to Tunis this past summer, I found a very vibrant intellectual community. While there was a deep sense of apprehension among some I met about the course of post-revolutionary politics, overall I was impressed by the commitment to intellectual exchange across Tunisia's various political camps. CEMAT clearly provides not only a base for visiting researchers but also a resource for Tunisians of various orientations." —*Dr. Nathan Brown, George Washington University*

## CEMAT in Tunisia's New Political Environment

In 2011-2012, CEMAT's academic agenda followed Tunisia's post-electoral politics closely, including lectures and debates about the meaning of founding elections after the breakdown of authoritarianism, political Islam, prospects for democratic consolidation, public opinion polling in new democracies, women and political Islam, Constitution drafting, as well as a lecture series on the Algerian exception just before the May 2012 elections in Algeria. More recently, CEMAT sponsored a number of lectures on transitional justice. Tunisia is the first country in the region to have created a Ministry of Transitional Justice and Human Rights committed to a transparent, legitimate and fair judiciary reform and transitional justice process. In September 2012, Dr. Doris Gray spoke about women in the transitional justice process, including insights from her interview-based research with former female *Ennahda* political prisoners. Rhodes Scholar Monica Marks joined Gray in placing the *Ennahda* discourse of Tunisian women in a comparative perspective. Later, in October, CEMAT hosted a thematic conversation on transitional justice open to the public, in which two U.S. scholars of transitional justice and two Tunisian practitioners of transitional justice debated questions of human rights, political exclusion, gender and political reconciliation.

## Political Transitions Lecture Series

The 2011-2012 political lecture series was organized thematically along the Tunisian political transition. The goal of the lecture series was to bring U.S. experts of the Middle East and North Africa to Tunis and partner them with Tunisian scholars to foster a discussion on Tunisia in a comparative context. Some of the subjects included Founding Elections after the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes, Inclusion of Islamist Political Parties in the Democratic Political Process, Constitution Drafting, as well as Barriers to and Opportunities for Democratic Consolidation. Each American expert delivered talks at CEMAT, on university campuses across the country, and at institutions and think tanks in Tunis. Based on feed-back from Tunisian colleagues, the lectures helped Tunisian scholars and policy-makers think about Tunisia's transition from a comparative perspective, learn about alternative methods to study various phases of the political transition, and network with U.S. experts.

"In October 2011 I visited Tunisia, for my first time, as a guest of CEMAT. During a weeklong visit, I delivered a series of talks to friendly and inquisitive audiences around Tunis. The comments I received tremendously helped my current research, a comparative project on post-uprising politics in Tunisia and Egypt. Outside of the lectures, Director Chomiak and her staff graciously introduced me to the local sights and cuisine. The highlight of my trip was being in the country as Tunisians voted in free and fair elections for the Constituent Assembly. Although far too brief, my stay was unforgettable and I cannot wait to return to Tunisia. Thank you, CEMAT!" *-Dr. Jason Brownlee, University of Texas at Austin*

"My visit to Tunisia was incredible. CEMAT organized several amazing events, from a panel discussion at the center to a visit to the University of Jendouba. I was absolutely taken with the Tunisian people, and I loved having the opportunity to share my research with them and hear about their views of politics at this truly extraordinary political moment. I particularly cherished the opportunity to engage with students and faculty in Jendouba, where several told me that they had never in their lives imagined having such open and spirited debates about politics in a public setting. Tunisia really captured my heart, and I am already looking for opportunities to return for both research as well as to just visit other parts of the country." *–Dr. Jillian Schwedler, University of Massachusetts*

## Female Voices of Political Islam

Funded by the Hollings Center for International Dialogue, CEMAT partnered with the University of Sfax on April 12, 2012 for a one-day dialogue entitled, *Debating the Politics, Economics, and Gender of Islamism: Female Voices from Ennahda (Tunisia), Freedom & Justice Party (Egypt),* and *Tawassoul Party (Mauritania).* Following the Hollings Center philosophy, the conference was organized as a dialogue, where female members of Islamist political parties from Tunisia, Egypt and Mauritania discussed pressing issues pertaining to the politics, economy, society and culture of their respective countries. The conference organizers conducted surveys among students at three university campuses from which they drew the two main conference themes: (1) "Women & Political Islam: Comparative Experiences of Women's Economic and Political Participation," and (2) "Gender in New Socio-Cultural Contexts: Visions from Egypt, Tunisia and Mauritania." The conference was officially opened by CEMAT Director Laryssa Chomiak, followed by a summary of survey results by Professor Emna Ben Arab from the University of Sfax, a dynamic talk by Mahrizia Laabidi from the *Ennahda* Party in Tunisia and the Vice-Speaker of the Constituent Assembly, and two engaging panels including both panelists and the audience. Sanem Güner, from the Hollings Center in Istanbul, attended the conference, as did major Tunisian civil society leaders and feminists.

*Dr. Jillian Schwedler lectures at the University of Jendouba*

# Language, Symbols and Slogans of the Revolution

*Photo by panel participant Hamideddine Bouali*

On April 5, 2012, CEMAT hosted a conference entitled "Language, Symbols, and Slogans of the Revolution" with the late socio-linguist Nabiha Jerad. The conference sought to fuse the approaches of academicians and practitioners to the revolution. Over thirty guests attended the conference, including three staff members from the U.S. Embassy Tunis/Public Affairs Office. The first presentation, by conference co-organizer Nabiha Jerad explored the role of language in the revolution. Jerad noted the first-time entrance of English into the Tunisian lexicon. Her lecture also explored the role of Facebook and the presence of social media throughout the revolution. Leila Selamni, a graffiti artist at the *Institut Superieur des Beaux Arts de Tunis*, gave a pictorial presentation of her art. Her work deftly depicts pre-revolutionary political figures with pronounced distortions as a political commentary under dictatorship. Selamni spoke about her work with various civil society organizations, in particular ArtSolutions, which introduce youth to public art. Internationally renowned photographer Hamideddine Bouali anchored the triumvirate of presentations. His photographs offered the audience a chronological reference from the revolution to the months prior to the elections. His iconic photographs juxtapose every day activities and poses with the radical change of the revolution. After a lively discussion in English, Arabic, and French, conference attendees were treated to a catered reception and concert by the dynamic duo Kif Kif, with Hatem Karoui on vocals and Sabri Moshab on the guitar. CEMAT's first musical reception was a great success, as guests' laughter and delight filled the villa's garden.

## CEMAT Lectures 2011-2012

- Jason Brownlee, "Founding Elections: Lessons and Models from Developing Countries During the Third Wave of Democratization and After." (October 18, 19, 20 2011) in English and Arabic.
- Asma Nouira, "Elections and the Tunisian Political Transition," (October 18, 2011).
- Teije Hidde Donker, "Islamism in Tunisia: Beyond Revolution and Elections" (November 10, 2011).
- Jillian Schwedler, "Comparative Perspectives on the Participation of Islamist Political Parties: Insights from Jordan and Yemen." (January 10, 11, 12, 2012).
- Mohamed Kerrou, "Islamism in Tunisia,"(January 10, 2012).
- Sam Liebhaber, "South Arabia and the Amazigh Imaginary," (March 6, 2012) in Arabic.
- Ms. Khadija Ben Saidane, "L'amazighité au Coeur des Changements Démocratique," (March 6, 2012) in Arabic and French.
- Mr. Waleed Ben Omrane, "La Communauté Amazighophone de Jerba et les Révolutions au Maghreb," (March 6, 2012) in French.
- John P. Entelis,"The Democratic Wave in the Maghreb: Is Algeria Next?," (March 12 & 14, 2012) in English and French.
- Hamadi Redissi, "Prospects for Democracy in Tunisia," (March 12, 2012).
- John P. Entelis,"American Public View of the Arab Spring," (March 13, 2012).
- John P. Entelis, "The Future of Democracy in the Maghreb: Algeria in Comparative Perspective," (March 13, 2012).
- Nabiha Jerad, "Language, Symbols and Slogans of the Revolution," (April 5, 2012) in English.
- Hamideddine Bouali, "Language, Symbols and Slogans of the Revolution," (April 5, 2012) in French.
- Leila Selamni, "Language, Symbols and Slogans of the Revolution," (April 5, 2012) in French.
- "Debating the Politics, Economy, and Gender of Islamists: Female Voice of Political Islam, with Rafiaa Ben Mohamed (Member, *Ennahda* Party Tunisia), Yaye Nadaw Coulibaly (Member, *Tawassoul* Party Mauritania), Mahrizia Laabidi (Member, *Ennahda* Party Tunisia), and Nermeen Mohamed (Member, *Freedom and Justice Part* Egypt) (April 12, 2012).
- Juan Cole, "Iran and the Arab Spring" (May 8, 2012) in Arabic.
- Juan Cole, "How Likely is a Democratic Future for the Ex-Dictatorship?" (May 8 & 9, 2012).
- Hamadi Redissi, "Democratic Consolidation in Tunisia" (May 8, 2012).
- Benjamin Brower, "Le Hajj Colonisé: L'Algérie, 1830-1962," (May 22, 2012).
- Nathan Brown, "Constitution Drafting in the Arab World: Lessons and Landmines" (May 23 & 25, 2012).
- Nathan Brown, "Islamist Movements in Arab Politics: From Opposition to Governing" (May 24, 2012).
- Asma Nouira, "Official Religious Institutions Under Bourgiba and Ben Ali," (June 26, 2012).
- Laryssa Chomiak "Post-Revolutionary Civil Society Developments," (June 26, 2012).
- Dalenda Larguèche, "CREDIF and Women in Politics," (June 27, 2012).
- Oumezzine Khelifa "Ettakatol Party and Youth," (June 28, 2012).
- Mohammed Kerrou, "The History of Kairouan," (June 28, 2012).
- Monica Marks, "Women and Political Islam in Tunisia," (July 2, 2012).
- Doris Gray, "Silence Kills! Women and the Transitional Justice Process in Tunisia," (September 4, 2012).
- Monica Marks, "Comparative Perspectives on Nahda Women's Discourse," (September 4, 2012).
- Angel Foster, "Expanding Access to Emergency Contraception in the Arab World: Lessons Learned in Tunisia," (October 11, 2012).
- Sarah Feuer, "Zitouna and the Battle Over Religious Education in Post-Revolution Tunisia" (October 17, 2012).
- C.K. Lamont, "Transitional Justice in Comparative Perspective," (October 24, 2012).
- Corinna Mullin, "Transitional Justice and International Human Rights Discourses," (October 24, 2012).
- Houda Cherif, "Transitional Justice and Draft Law Procedures," (October 24, 2012).
- Hela Boujneh, "Transitional Justice and Politics of Exclusion," (October 24, 2012).
- Melani Cammett, "Political Inclusion and Development in the Middle East," (November 1, 2012).

### Berber Symposium: Language, Culture, and Society in Tunisia and Beyond

On March 6, 2012, CEMAT organized a conference with Professor Sam Liebhaber of Middlebury College (*"South Arabia and the Amazigh Imaginary"*), Ms. Khadija Ben Saidane of the Tunisian Amazigh Culture Association (*"L'amazighité au Coeur des Changements Démocratique"*), and Mr. Waleed Ben Omrane at the Université de Paris VIII (*"La Communauté Amazighophone de Jerba et les Révolutions au Maghreb"*). The event attracted a full audience with lively debate, followed by media attention in the Tunisian English and French-language Press.

### Papyrology Conference, March 28-31

The fifth conference of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology (ISAP) convened in Tunis March 28-31, 2012. Almost forty academic research papers were presented by scholars from around the world. The presentations took place at several venues in Tunisia: *Beït al-Hikma* in Carthage, the National Library of Tunisia in Tunis, and the Museum of Islamic Arts in Raqqada. The sponsors of the conference were Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo), CEMAT (Tunis), the Netherlands Embassy in Tunisia, the Juynboll Foundation (Leiden, Netherlands), and Auburn University (USA).

## Public Opinion Polling and Research

Since the January 14, 2011 Tunisian Revolution, both Tunisian and U.S. scholars and policy-practitioners have identified the need to introduce methodological political polling to Tunisia. CEMAT has formed new partnerships with the *Ecole Supérieure de la Statistique et de l'Analyse de l'Information* in Tunis as well as individual Tunisian scholars interested in political public opinion polling. A number of U.S. universities have explored new partnerships with Tunisian scholars and institutes, laying the groundwork for effective and methodologically sound research teams.

In conjunction with Search for Common Ground and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, CEMAT hosted a roundtable discussion with renowned pollster, Dr. John Zogby. Zogby spoke to an audience of academics, statisticians, journalists, and pollsters about the future of political polling in Tunisia. The discussion elaborated on the ethical duty of polling in democratic countries. A lively debate followed Dr. Zogby's talk, where participants were particularly keen to discuss lessons learned during the political polling of the 2011 Tunisian elections.

## Critical Language Scholarship Program

The summer intensive Arabic program, known as the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) funded by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs took place in June and July of 2012. Forty-two students completed an intensive summer Arabic program in Tunis, directed and organized by Jason Vivrette, Khalil Masmoudi, Riadh Saadaoui as well as Elizabeth Saylor. Designed by Professor Sonia Shiri, CLS/Tunis provided students a unique fusion of Modern Standard Arabic, Tunisian dialect, cultural clubs and lectures by Tunisian experts. Students also enjoyed weekly, culturally focused activities and excursions, held both in Tunis and outside of the capital. Students resided with Tunisian host families, enhancing their linguistic as well as cultural acclimation. The Tunis program was an astounding success both academically and socially. We would like to thank all the people who participated in the success of the program. Special thanks go to the teachers, tutors, language partners and club leaders for their commitment and hard work in the last seven years of CLS/Tunis!

# Outreach and New Partnerships

Our partnerships in Tunisia and the United States are at the core of our activities. We consistently seek to expand our relationships with academic institutions, thinks tanks and other key partners.

- Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education
- Council of American Overseas Research Center
- U.S. Embassy Tunis/Public Affairs Office
- Tunisian National Archives
- Institute Supérieur des Sciences Humaines de Tunis
- Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales de Tunis
- Manouba University
- Tunis El-Manar University
- Jendouba University
- Sfax University
- Kairouan University
- Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy/Tunis (CSID)
- Tunisian Institute for Diplomatic Training (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Institut National du Patrimoine (INP)
- Fondation Temimi pour la Recherché Scientifique et l'Information
- Observatoire Tunisien de la Transition Démocratique
- Institut pour le Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain (IRMC)
- School of Advanced International Studies at John's Hopkins University (Dr. I. William Zartman)
- L'Observatoire Arabe des Religions et des Libertés

## CEMAT Partnership Highlight

From January 22-28, 2012 CEMAT hosted and organized the JHU School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) intensive study workshop in Tunis, led by CEMAT founder I. William Zartman. Dr. Zartman traveled with 18 SAIS students to Tunisia for a crash course in Tunisian politics. Speakers included political elites from the Bourguiba and Ben Ali era, new elected officials, activists, journalists, civil society leaders, and CEMAT Director Laryssa Chomiak.

## CEMAT's New Scientific Council

CEMAT's Scientific Council was established as a local advisory body for CEMAT's academic agenda. Its members often assist with the research of CEMAT-affiliated scholars.

## Council Members

- Laryssa Chomiak, CEMAT Director and Director of Council
- Dalenda Largueche, Directrice Générale du Centres de Recherches, d'Etudes, de documentation et d'Information sur la Femme (CREDIF) (History)
- Asma Nouira, Professor (Political Science)
- Mohamed Kerrou, Professor (Anthropology, Sociology)
- Mohammed Haddad, Professor (Comparative Religion)
- Mounir Khelifa, Professor (English Literature)
- Hamadi Redissi, Professor (Political Science and Law)
- Nejib Ben Lazreg, Institute of National Patrimony (Archeology and Ancient History)
- Zied Mhirsi, Co-founder Tunisia Live (Public Health and Journalism)

**American Institute for Maghrib Studies Grantee**

Sarah Feuer, a Ph.D. Candidate at Brandeis University in Boston, MA, decided to stay in Tunisia post-September 14, 2012 and continue her field-based doctoral dissertation research. In October 2012, Sarah delivered a lecture entitled "Zitouna and the Battle Over Religious Education in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia," at a CEMAT scholars' meeting. CEMAT looks forward to welcoming a number of other AIMS Grantees throughout this academic year.

## Strengthening U.S.-Tunisian Relations

In the wake of recent attacks on the U.S. embassy in Tunis, CEMAT has worked tirelessly to galvanize U.S.-Tunisian relations on the ground. As most American officials and their families, all Fulbright students, Peace Corps and other study-abroad and language exchange programs have left Tunisia, CEMAT staff remains in country and continues to run programs benefiting both Tunisian and American scholars.

## American Studies Grantees

Since 2010, CEMAT has administered 18 American Studies Grants, sending Tunisian Ph.D. candidates and professors to universities across the United States. The grantees conduct research for books, articles, doctoral dissertation chapters or to develop new curricula and syllabi for their courses back in Tunisia. This program has an important impact on the careers of Tunisian scholars: it allows for a U.S. campus experience that is significantly more pluralistic and participatory than many programs in Tunisia. Grantees experience first-hand U.S. campus life, academic exchanges and mentorship, and have the opportunity to use valuable resources in libraries and collections. In 2012-2013, we are excited to fund eight American Studies Grantees who will be working on topics from American literature to NGO management and public law.

## Reflections from Nura Suleiman, CEMAT Program Coordinator

Mohammed Bouazizi was just 26 years old when he self-immolated. In Bahrain, uprisings rose out of 21-year-old Ali Mushaima's tragic death and reverberated through the voices of bloggers and protesters. Yemenis found strength and leadership in 33-year-old activist Tawakkol Karman, the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate. In Morocco, the 20 February Youth Movement inspired protests countrywide to enact constitutional change.

Like most of the Arab world, 27% of Tunisia's population is between the ages of 15 and 29. For a generation whose formative political memory stems from Ben Ali's dictatorship, Tunisian youths' unwavering dedication to the opening of communication will be their contribution to a burgeoning civil society. Organizations such as *Nawaat*, hunger strikes like those endured by journalists at Dar Essabah, bloggers including Slim Amamou and Lina Ben Mhenni, and new initiatives like TEDx, remind Tunisians of all ages of the power and investment of this generation to a free Tunisia. Although unemployment figures grow, so too do the number of registered civil society organizations seeking to eradicate joblessness and ameliorate the lives of young people. Some estimate that as many as 14,000 new civil society organizations emerged in the post-revolutionary period.

These moments of political change are thanks to courageous youth all over the Arab world. While they grew up under regimes that sought to stifle freedom of communication, their lives have also been shaped by an age of rapid communication. These revolutions are the ultimate expression of free communication, of bringing about change by taking control of a medium that is available to all. The real revolution comes next: To establish a society that cherishes the values Tunisians were deprived of under Ben Ali, Tunisians must transform connectivity from a tool of resistance to a tool for building and must build a government rather than take one down. Ben M'hidi said it best, "It's hard to start a revolution. Even harder to continue it. And hardest of all to win it. But, it's only afterwards, when we have won, that the true difficulties begin. In short, Ali, there's still much to do."

# Tunisian-American Friendship Concert October 12-13, 2012

In the Gulf of Gabes lies North Africa's largest island, Djerba. Once home to Odysseus' legendary Lotus Eaters, Djerba straddles the brilliant line of remote oasis and vibrant cultural microcosm. Djerba is home to Tunisia's largest Jewish population, a Maltese Catholic community, Berbers, Ibadi Muslims, and a healthy dose of sunburned European tourists.

The Tunisian-American Friendship Concert was born out of the tragedy of the attacks on the U.S. Embassy. The weekend, held aptly at the confluence of Tunisian diversity, was a firm reminder of the beauty that still remains in Tunisia.

Thanks to generous donations from the American Institute for Maghrib Studies, Fordham University, the School for International Training in Tunisia, Kerim Boucherara, Renata Holod, Jonathan Shannon, Mary Lewis, Angel Foster, and Debbie Barnard, the two-day concert held at Dar Cherif was a wonderful success.

The evenings brought together American-Tibetan-Danish musician Kesang Marstrand and Aymen Attia, Nafae Allem, and Hamza Zeramdini from the Tunis Jazz Club. As the weekend came to a close, Kesang finished with the perfect melding of sounds: a beautiful folk version of the Tunisian national anthem. Thank you again for your support!

*Upper L-R: Dr. Chomiak and Nura Suleiman; Kesang Marstrand; and* Aymen Attia, Nafae Allem, and Hamza Zeramdini from the Tunis Jazz Club

# Recent Scholarly Publications on Tunisia

Laryssa Chomiak and John P. Entelis. "Contesting Order in Tunisia: Crafting Political Identity," in Francesco Cavatorta, ed. *Civil Society Activism under Authoritarian Rule: A Comparative Perspective.* Routledge (2013).

Laryssa Chomiak. "The Making of a Revolution in Tunisia," *Middle East Law and Governance,* 3:1 (2011).

Angel M. Foster. "Tunisia: A Global Leader in Reproductive Health and Rights," in Angel M. Foster and L.L. Wynn, eds. *Emergency Contraception: The Story of a Global Reproductive Health Technology.* Palgrave Macmillan (2012).

Emily Benichou Gottreich and Daniel J. Schroeter, eds. *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa.* Indiana University Press (2011).

Doris H. Gray. *Beyond Feminism and Islamism: Gender and Equality in North Africa.* I.B. Tauris (2013).

Marc Lynch, ed. *Revolution in the Arab World: Tunisia, Egypt, and the Unmaking of an Era.* Special Report from Foreign Policy Contributors (2011).

Duncan Pickard. "Challenges to legitimate governance in post-revolution Tunisia," *The Journal of North African Studies,* 16:4 (2011).

Alfred Stepan. "Tunisia's Transition and the Twin Tolerations," *Journal of Democracy*, 23:2 (2012).

Mark W. Willis. "Undermining self-determination: Robert Murphy and the Atlantic Charter in Tunisia, 1943," *The Journal of North African Studies,* 17:4 (2012).

Michael J. Willis. *Politics and Power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from Independence to the Arab Spring.* Hurst (2012).

## CEMAT in the News

# CEMAT Scholars' Profiles

## PROFESSOR ASMA NOUIRA

Asma Nouira is a professor of Political Science and Law at the University of El-Manar, and an expert on official religious institutions in Tunisia. She was appointed as one of the original members of the Committee of Experts to the Ben Achour Reform Commission where she worked on different projects of law concerning the democratic transition such as the electoral code and press code. As a long-standing friend and supporter of CEMAT, Asma represents research on political science, law and religious institutions on CEMAT's Scientific Council. She regularly meets with CEMAT scholars, participated in our democratic transitions lecture series, and helps identify scholars and experts for our other lecture series. Last year, Asma was awarded the prestigious Aramex Grant to attend the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Washington, DC, where she presented on post-revolutionary protests and space on a panel entitled "Tunis Metropolitan." Her presentation identified early Islamists movements immediately following the January 14th Tunisian revolution. Asma, however, is a lot more than an outstanding scholar, colleague and friend. Recently, she created an academic publishing house, co-founded the Observatory for Democratic Transitions, and finds time to paint as a pastime. Thank you Asma, for all of your support to CEMAT and our academic community.

## PROFESSOR C.K. LAMONT

Within the context of rapid political change in the Middle East and North Africa there has been a proliferation of transitional justice demands across the Maghreb. In Tunisia, this resulted in the rapid pursuit of a diverse array of transitional justice initiatives that ranged from state commissions, established only a month after the January 14 revolution, tasked with investigating past acts of corruption and human rights abuses, criminal trials of members of the Ben Ali family, and the establishment of Tunisia's Ministry of Human Rights and Transitional Justice in January 2012. In April 2012, the Ministry of Human Rights and Transitional Justice launched a national dialogue on transitional justice to bring coherence to a myriad of transitional justice demands and define transitional justice policy in post-Ben Ali Tunisia. Ennahdha's Minister of Human Rights and Transitional Justice, Samir Dilou, established two principal institutions to facilitate a national consultation on transitional justice: a technical commission, which was intended to act as an independent expert body to guide the consultative process and propose transitional justice legislation, and regional consultative commissions, which carried out Tunisia's national consultation on transitional justice. The Ministry's lead role in Tunisia's transitional justice process makes Tunisia unique among states that have pursued transitional justice policies as Tunisia is the only state with a dedicated ministry of transitional justice. While heralded as an unprecedented consultative initiative to transmit transitional justice demands from below into transitional justice policy, the transitional justice consultation has occurred within an increasingly polarized political environment with secular opposition parties seeing the consultation as opaque and questioning the inclusiveness of the process.

# 2011-2012 CEMAT Scholars

Christina Ashjian, Independent Researcher, "Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter in Tunisia 1904-1905."

Alysha Bedig, Tufts University, "Re-Integration/Exclusion of the Old Regime in Tunisia and Egypt, and its Impact on Democratic Transition."

Lindsay Benstead, Portland State University, "Quantitative Study on the Democratic Process."

Elizabeth Buckner, (AIMS Grantee), Stanford University, "The Policies and Politics of Privatization: Higher Educational Reform in Tunisia."

Matthew Buehler, University of Texas at Austin, "Islamic Parties in Morocco and Tunisia."

Benjamin Brower, University of Texas at Austin, "The Mediterranean Hajj under French Rule: 1798-1962."

Melani Cammett, (AIMS Grantee), Brown University, "The emergence and Evolution of Welfare Regimes in Middle East: the Case of Tunisia."

Janine A. Clark, University of Guelph, "Local Politics and Development Projects at the Municipal Level."

Rodney Collins, (AIMS Grantee), Georgetown University, "Codifying Tunisian Sign Language: A Collaborative Ethnographic Study of Language and Identity of the Deaf Community in Tunisia."

Emily Dabney, (AIMS Grantee) Clark University, "Forced Labor in the Maghreb."

Rahel Dette, Brown University, "Alternative Tourism in Post Revolutionary Tunisia."

David Duke, Portland State University, "Prospects for Democratic Transition in Tunisia: An Examination of Tolerance in Civil Society."

Jan Feldman, University of Vermont, "Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution: Will Democracy Betray Women?"

Sarah Feuer, (AIMS Grantee), Brandeis University, "Negotiating the Nation-State: The Politics of Religious Education in Morocco and Tunisia, 1956-2010."

Andrea Flores Khalil, (Fulbright Scholar), Queens College NY, "From the Crowd to Democracy: Political Crowds in North Africa."

John Gresham, Independent Researcher, "Economic Integration and Rural Impact in Tunisia."

Timothy Hazen, Loyola University Chicago, "Security Apparatuses in the Arab Spring: Comparative Analysis of Tunisia and Egypt."

Katherine Hoffman, (AIMS Grantee), Northwestern University, "Revolution's Refugees: Displaced Libyans in Tunisia and the Formation of Cross-Border Amazigh (Berber) Networks."

Tejie Hidde Donker, European University Institute, "Interrelations between Political Science and Islamic Social Movement Mobilization."

# 2011-2012 CEMAT Scholars Continued

Tavis D. Jules, Loyola University of Chicago, "Educational Careers: Unwrapping the Post-Revolutionary Reform Package and Discourse in Tunisia."

C.K. Lamont, (AIMS Grantee), University of Groningen, "Law and Justice after Ben Ali: Charting Transitional Justice in Tunisia."

Katie Larson, (Fulbright Fellow), "An Examination of Gender in Arabic Children's Literature."

Jeremy Ledger, (AIMS Grantee), University of Michigan, "Mapping Arab Geographical: geographical Knowledge and Cartography in the Maghrib, 1300-1600."

Samuel Liebhaber, Middlebury College, "The Berber-Mahri Imaginary in Arabic Socio=Linguistics and Historiography."

Kyle Liston, Indiana University Bloomington, "Tunisian-Italian interaction during the French Protectorate Period."

Sherry Lowrance, (AIMS Grantee), University of Georgia, "High-Risk Political Mobilization in Libya and Tunisia."

Ellen Lust, Yale University, "Quantitative Study on the Democratic Process."

Monica Marks, University of Oxford, "Comparative Perspectives on Nahda Women's Discourses."

Sylvia Marsans-Sakly, Independent Scholar, The People Want: Shaping the Tunisian National Imaginary from Ben Ghadhaham (1864) to Bouazizi (2011)."

Merouan Mekouar, McGill University, "The Micro-Dynamics of Information Cascades: Algeria and Tunisia."

Larry Michalak, Independent Scholar, "The Changing Weekly Markets of Tunisia."

Corinna Mullin, School of Oriental and African Studies, "Post-revolution Developments in Tunisia's International, Regional, and State-Society Relations."

Richard Parks, University of Minnesota, "Tunis: Colonial Urban Planning and Public Health Reforms."

Chris Rominger, City University of New York, "The National Movement and the Role of Intellectuals and Media in the Twentieth Century."

Amanda Rogers, (AIMS Scholar), Emory University, "Art and Religious Authority: Henna Adornment in North Africa."

Lena Salaymeh, University of California Berkeley, "Legal History of Islamic Jurisprudence."

Alyssa Strunk, Indiana State University, "Tunisian Politics: A Model for Emerging Arab Democracies?"

Laura Thompson, Harvard University, "Women, Islam and the Public Sphere in Tunisia."

George R. Trumbull, Dartmouth College, "History of Water in the Sahara: 1830-1950."

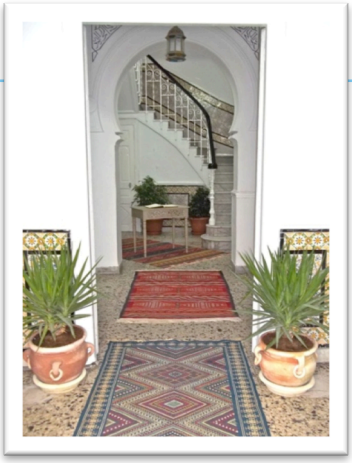
Erin Twohig, Columbia University, "Contesting the Classroom: Literary Depictions of Education in Post-Colonial Maghrebi Literature."

Mohammed Yaghi, University of Guelph, "Student Activism in Arab Revolutions."

# CEMAT

CEMAT, the Center for Maghrib Studies in Tunis, is a non-governmental American academic research institute established in 1985 to facilitate research on Tunisia and North Africa across all academic disciplines. CEMAT is the overseas office of the American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS), a professional organization fostering scholarly expertise on North Africa. We facilitate academic exchanges between U.S., Tunisian and North African scholars via different fellowship programs, conferences, lectures and scholarly meetings. CEMAT operates under an agreement with the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and has close working relationships with universities and research institutes across Tunisia. Since the January 14, 2011 revolution that sparked the Arab Spring, CEMAT has played a central role among the Tunisian and U.S. scholarly communities as well as civil society by hosting original and policy-relevant events relating to the Tunisian Revolution, the October 23, 2011 Constituent Assembly elections and the post-election political transition. In Tunisia's post-revolutionary environment, CEMAT's reach has expanded among visiting scholars, civil society leaders, development professionals, and journalists calling on CEMAT's multi-disciplinary expertise as well as its long-standing presence in the country.

*CEMAT's Temporary Annex in Sidi Bou Said*



CEMAT Foyer of *Villa Maria Carlotta*

CEMAT is the American Research Center in Tunis www.cematmaghrib.org.
CEMAT is the overseas Research Center of AIMS, the American Institute for Maghrib Studies www.aimnorthafrica.org
CEMAT is a member of the council of American Overseas Research Centers, www.caorc.org

**CEMAT Staff:**
Dr. Laryssa Chomiak, Director
cemat@aimsnorthafrica.org
Mr. Riadh Saadaoui, Associate Director
cemat2@aimsnorthafrica.org
Mr. Faouzi Mahbouli, General Assistant
Ms. Nura Suleiman, Program Coordinator
**Phone**: +216.71.326.219

**Address:**
Impasse Menabrea, 19 bis, Rue d'Angleterre
Tunis, Tunisia
**Mail:**
B.P. 404, 1049 Tunis–Hached
**Facebook:**
www.facebook.com/cematmaghrib
**Fax**: +216.71.328.378