Int. J. Middle East Stud. **44** (2012), 755–774
doi:10.1017/S0020743812000852

Burleigh Hendrickson

MARCH 1968: PRACTICING TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM FROM TUNIS TO PARIS

Abstract
This article examines the activism of Tunisian university students in the late 1960s. During the series of events surrounding the student protests of March 1968 at the University of Tunis, political activists across Tunisia and France forged communication networks or drew upon existing ones in order to further their political claims. The objectives of this article are to investigate the historical roots of these transnational networks in the colonial and postcolonial periods as well as to integrate Tunisia within the "global 1968." Through an analysis of student protests and government reactions, I argue that ties with the former metropole shaped students' demands and that a strictly national perspective of events is insufficient. In response to state repression, Tunisian activists shifted their struggle from global anti-imperialism toward the expansion of human rights on the national level. The networks proliferated over the course of 1968 and beyond as concrete realities shaped the direction of new claims.

> In the land of Jasmine, is it not possible for the state to establish certain democratic principles, the respect for which would enhance the prestige and authority of the government . . . and remove the degraded image of the country we want to love and respect?[1]
>
> —Guy Sitbon (1977)

Few could have predicted that the self-immolation of twenty-six-year-old Muhammad al-Buʿazizi[2] on 17 December 2010 would set off the largest social movement in Tunisia since its independence in 1956, ending the twenty-three-year reign of President Zin al-ʿAbidin bin ʿAli and sending shock waves throughout the Arab world. Since al-Buʿazizi's act, intense media focus on the present has served to obscure the past historical context of Tunisian political contestation. Just as Guy Sitbon's commentary cited above on political repression in the Bourguiba era (1957–87) resonates with characterizations of the Bin ʿAli regime in 2011, what the Western media controversially termed the "Jasmine Revolution" for its relatively nonviolent character can be tied to a lesser-known movement in the 1960s. This article builds on the history of political activism in postcolonial Tunisia by drawing attention to the first large-scale call for democratic freedoms by Tunisians in March 1968.

Burleigh Hendrickson is a PhD student in the Department of History at Northeastern University, Boston, Mass.; e-mail: hendrickson.b@husky.neu.edu

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743812000852 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In France, the events of May 1968 are widely documented and even integrated into the broad historical consciousness of the nation. With numerous national exhibits in 1988, 1998, and 2008 devoted to the remembrance of 1968,[3] the waves of student protest and the general workers' strike of what is known simply as "May '68" have been etched into the French collective memory. By contrast, the university protests of "March '68" in Tunisia are omitted from Franco-centric accounts of this period and even overlooked among scholars of Tunisia.[4] According to Marguerite Rollinde, "[i]ndependent Tunisia in the Bourguiba era witnessed only two important uprisings: the strike of January 26, 1978 . . . and the bread riots of January 1984."[5] The "Black Thursday" strikes in January 1978 were novel in that they severed previously existing ties between the Destourian Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Destourien [PSD]) and the General Union of Tunisian Workers (Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail [UGTT]), and the "bread riots" of 1984 contributed to Bin ʿAli's supplanting of Bourguiba in 1987. However, this narrative downplays the catalytic impact of 1968 on Tunisian activism during a turbulent nation-building period that, prior to 1968, lacked a political movement to counter a strong executive branch of government. Outside a few biographies attesting to the profound impact that the events of 1968 in Tunis had on Michel Foucault[6]—who taught in the philosophy department at the University of Tunis from 1966 to 1968—historians have paid little attention to these events and even less to contextualizing them within a global framework.[7]

There is an emerging field of scholarship on what is often referred to as "the global 1968," "the global sixties," or "the long sixties."[8] Yet in spite of this global turn, many of these studies have reproduced Eurocentric narratives by focusing on actions in the transatlantic First World. Popular student and worker movements of the 1960s occurring in the Third World, including North Africa, have received far less attention.[9] Even outside the study of the 1960s, historians have noted the marginality of North Africa in frameworks for conducting world history.[10] Moreover, as the flag bearer for French postcolonial historiography, the Algerian experience has diverted attention from other areas of decolonization within the former French empire.

The following discussion places Tunisia's '68 firmly within a larger global narrative. While certain aspects of the Tunisian movement were specific to the local context, it was also transnational for several reasons: 1) activists identified with international and anticolonial causes such as Palestinian liberation and opposition to the Vietnam War; 2) actors and organizations involved in the protests frequently crossed national borders, especially those of Tunisia and France; and 3) the Tunisian and French states responded to specifically transnational activism with varying degrees of repression. I will attempt to demonstrate that Tunisia's (post)colonial relationship with France established important Franco–Tunisian networks of students and intellectuals that took on new forms during and after the protests of March 1968. Just as imperial knowledge was constructed in a "web of empire" in which the colonies acted as relays of knowledge transmission, transnational circuits of activists emerged in the postcolonial era to constitute "webs of resistance."[11]

In the networks explored in this article, knowledge was exchanged directly between activist organizations in Tunis and Paris while circulating within a broader global activist community. These networks of Tunisians moving between France and Tunisia and of French activists who had ties to Tunisia enabled the transnationalization of political

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activism—and often made it more difficult for states to contain. They provided access to information censored in Tunisia from the comparatively safe distance of the former metropole, and Paris became a meeting place for activists from other former colonies who were sympathetic to the Tunisian cause. The both hostile and friendly ties that linked Tunisians with Paris and the French with Tunis were evidence of a wider global process of building networks of resistance that resonated well beyond the moment of '68 itself. Moreover, Bourguiba's extreme reaction to the 1968 protests contributed to a shift in the nature of protesters' claims, which was eventually manifested in the creation of the Tunisian League for Human Rights (Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme) in 1976 and the establishment of the first Amnesty International section in Tunisia in 1981, in which 68ers played an instrumental role. The state's repression of activists fueled unprecedented human rights activism in the region conducted initially from afar, making 1968 seminal in the development and articulation of opposition to a Tunisian single-party state. Tunisia's place in the "global 1968" thus goes far beyond the fact that it occurred simultaneously with other movements around the world.

Due in large part to the decentralized nature of sources on student groups, as well as to my own linguistic and geographic constraints, this study focuses primarily on postcolonial activist networks between Tunisia and France. Other recent scholars have explored activist networks created in the 1940s by young Algerians who came to Tunis to study at the Zaytuna mosque–university and by Tunisian students who traveled to Damascus and Cairo, particularly for religious studies.[12] These groups established other relay centers of activism outside of Europe and Tunis, especially within the 1980s Harakat al-Ittijah al-Islami (Islamic Tendency Movement), which transformed into al-Nahda in 1989.[13] It is to be hoped that future scholarship will continue to expand the global roadmap of Tunisian transnational activist networks beyond the temporal and geographic foci of this article.

COLONIAL HERITAGE OF FRANCO–TUNISIAN NETWORKS

As subjects of a French protectorate until 1956, Tunisians had a long history of studying in the metropole, especially prior to the creation of the University of Tunis in 1960, and some studied in other French colonies, such as Algeria, where universities were established earlier. In 1952, in response to Bourguiba's arrest by French authorities during the independence movement, Tunisian students clandestinely created the General Union of Tunisian Students (Union Générale des Étudiants de Tunisie [UGET]) and held its first congress in Paris. The organization's founders drew heavily upon the founding Charter of the National Union of French Students (Union Nationale des Étudiants de France [UNEF]), and adapted the bureaucratic structure of their French counterpart, establishing sections in university cities across France. UGET held illegal meetings in Paris until Tunisia's independence in 1956, at which point it moved its headquarters to Tunisia and was formally recognized by the Bourguiba government after the rival Zaytuna organization was subsumed under its umbrella.[14] UGET continued to maintain influential sections in Paris, the French provinces, and Brussels, however, and while UGET and UNEF would take opposing positions on major issues such as Algerian independence,[15] the two organizations were in close contact in the postcolonial era.

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Higher education had been internationalized during the colonial period, and after 1956 the independent Tunisian state enacted policies to lure students back to Tunis. The government instituted radical changes and committed itself to heavy expenditure to modernize the national public education system. National budgetary spending for education climbed from twelve million dinars in 1962 to thirty million in 1968 (about one-third of the annual budget) in spite of the World Bank advising against such expenditure.[16] The investment yielded results, as the number of students enrolled in primary school rose from 213,000 on the eve of independence to over 900,000 by 1969, with the percentage of girls attending schools rising from 29 percent to 38 percent in the same period.[17] The increase in the number of primary- and secondary-educated Tunisians had implications for higher education as well, as more Tunisians gained access and Bourguiba's reforms kept more future nation builders at home. In 1961, over 50 percent of Tunisians pursuing postsecondary education studied at foreign universities (primarily in France); by 1968, only 31 percent studied abroad, though the total number of students abroad (nearly 3,300) remained relatively consistent. Tunisian intellectual communities in university hubs like Paris[18] remained significant, while the number of enrollments at the University of Tunis continued to climb, from 1,908 in 1960 to well over 7,000 by 1968.[19] Bourguiba's policies resulted in an increasingly educated population across all sectors of society, including in the countryside. Student activists such as Ahmed Othmani (Ahmad ʿUthmani) and Chérif Ferjani (Sharif Farjani), both of whom came from rural peasant families, excelled in the Tunisian public education system and then studied in France, returning to Tunisia in the late 1960s and early 1970s, respectively, to carry out political action in opposition to Bourguiba.[20] Tunisians continued to study in France in large numbers, and many returned to higher education at the University of Tunis or to pursue careers back home. This created an international community of intellectuals with organizational poles throughout Europe (particularly France) and Tunisia.

Following its participation in the struggle for Tunisian independence during the Protectorate era, UGET evolved into a recruitment organization for Bourguiba's Socialist Destourian Party (PSD) after 1956. Clement Henry Moore has pointed out that by the 1960s, the once pluralist UGET had become increasingly dominated by the PSD, and "[p]arty control and personal opportunism had discredited the union in the eyes of most students."[21] In October 1963, disenchanted with UGET's lack of autonomy and the difficulty of criticizing the government from within the union, Tunisian students and professors in Paris formed the leftist group Perspectives.[22] Like UGET had done before it, Perspectives expanded from Paris to establish strong sections in Tunis and other Tunisian and European cities with sizable Tunisian student populations; Perspectives had significantly fewer members than UGET, however.[23] Perspectives' inception also coincided with Bourguiba's suppression of the Tunisian Communist Party (Parti Communiste Tunisien [PCT]). In 1963, Bourguiba took advantage of a foiled coup d'état by Yusufists to dismember the PCT in spite of the fact that the PCT denounced the plot.[24] These developments fostered the exportation of political activism to France, where opponents of Bourguiba living in forced or voluntary exile could more freely circulate and articulate oppositional viewpoints. This was certainly not the first time that France provided a space for political contestation of its own policies and practices; since World War I, Paris had served as a base for North Africans and others opposing the colonial order of things. As early as the 1930s, Bourguiba advocated for Tunisian

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independence while abroad; in the 1950s, Algerian resistance groups named France the seventh and final *wilāya*, or province in which Algerians were fighting for independence; and by 1960, French student unions were collaborating with North Africans in support of French withdrawal.[25] France, and more specifically Paris, continued to function as an important center of resistance throughout the postcolonial period. When newly independent governments in Africa or Asia expelled local political undesirables, the latter often sought refuge in the former metropole, where they were relatively free to condemn censorship or the lack of human rights back home. Because of the links established between university-based organizations in France and Tunisia, groups like Perspectives and the PCT were able to publish oppositional literature in France and transport it to Tunisia and to transmit information from the ground in Tunisia to the intellectual immigrant community in Europe.[26]

In the early years of Tunisia's independence, UGET had provided fertile ground for Bourguiba's recruitment of bureaucratic administrators in an expanding quasi-socialist government. Mohammed Dhifallah found that as many as nineteen former UGET leaders held ministerial positions under Bourguiba by the time the PCT was dissolved; yet by 1963, students sensed that the prospects for opportunities in the government were bleak and the student alliance with Bourguiba had already begun to break down.[27] In a sociological study conducted in the summer of 1972 among Tunisian students in Tunis and Paris, John Entelis concluded that the increased frustration of students was directly related to the scarcity of available positions in the public and private sectors.[28] Entelis' data revealed that:

> Socio-economic "pay-offs" in the form of guaranteed high-prestige jobs, once available to almost every university graduate, are now virtually non-existent. The Minister of Planning envisages the economy's incapacity to absorb more than half of the new recruits into the labour force during the next decade, or only about 23,000 of each year's 50,000 additional entrants to the active population. This further weakens the régime's ability to attract and retain its educated young.[29]

In effect, Tunisia's economy could only make room for about half of those emerging from institutions of higher education. The stage had effectively been set for the mobilization of both youth unrest and transnational communication through networks already in place from the colonial period.

MARCH 1968 IN TUNIS AND THE "BEN JENNET AFFAIR"

On 5 June 1967, Muhammad Ben Jennet (bin Jannat) and other Perspectives members organized a protest in Tunis against U.S. and British support of Israel in the Six-Day War. Protesters congregated at the British and American embassies to denounce Western imperialism and to reproach Bourguiba for condoning Anglo–American foreign policy. The protest spilled beyond the immediate proximity of the embassies and into popular quarters of the city, finally degenerating into anti-Semitic vandalism of Jewish shops and synagogues. Though protest organizers from Perspectives spoke out strongly against anti-Semitism, their pleas were not enough to stop the swell of anger at Israeli military initiatives.[30] On 8 June, Bourguiba vowed to "severely punish the troublemakers" who committed injustices against the Jewish population.[31] The state responded with a heavy hand; Ben Jennet was arrested as the ringleader of the movement and sentenced to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743812000852 Published online by Cambridge University Press

twenty years of forced labor. A student at the Zaytuna—the theological school alleged by Bourguiba's regime to harbor Muslim fundamentalists—Ben Jennet became the scapegoat for the regime, which claimed he incited the attacks on Jewish neighborhoods, disrupted the peace, and threatened national security. Ben Jennet's sentencing set off a series of political actions led by the student community, culminating in university-wide protests in March 1968. What began in June 1967 with a focus on international anti-imperialism transformed into calls for human rights and democratic freedoms at the national level.

The build-up to the March 1968 protests, which would occur on the eve of Tunisia's celebration of national independence on 20 March, included a day of solidarity with Vietnam on 17 November 1967 in response to a call by the Soviet-backed International Union of Students, based in Prague.[32] Following the creation of the Grassroots Vietnam Committees (Comités Vietnam de Base) by French activists in late 1966, Dr. Slimane Ben Slimane (Sulayman bin Sulayman)[33] had founded the Tunisian Committee of Solidarity with the Vietnamese People (Comité de Solidarité avec le Peuple Vietnamien) in 1967. The committee helped organize a January 1968 protest of the diplomatic visits of U.S. Vice President Hubert Humphrey—who was on a tour of nine African countries—and South Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Tran Van Do to Tunisia to meet with Bourguiba. Slimane co-signed a letter addressed to Humphrey himself imploring the United States to stop bombing in North Vietnam.[34] Student members of Perspectives and the PCT used the Humphrey and Van Do visit to set aside their ideological differences regarding the finer points of Marxism and called for three days of action in solidarity with Vietnam. Perspectives had historically criticized the PCT for its revisionism and its uncritical support of Economic Minister Ahmad bin Salah's collectivization,[35] and the PCT was known to portray Perspectives as a divider of the Tunisian left. Yet on 10 January, the two groups jointly organized over 1,000 students at the University of Tunis to support the Vietnamese people.[36] Days later, tracts from the Perspectives section in Paris reported highlights of the Humphrey–Van Do protest and called for solidarity with the Vietnamese and the imprisoned Ben Jennet.[37] The Perspectives section in Paris, dating from 1963 and rooted historically in Tunisia's colonial relationship with the French education system, felt compelled to react to events taking place in Tunis, illustrating the role of Paris as a second site of action in the postcolonial web of resistance. Tunisians in Paris participated in transnational communication networks by spreading information and responding to actions conducted by their comrades back home.

In the context of a global 1968, the presence of First World political leaders and imperialist symbols such as Humphrey in a former French colony elicited a strong local response. Likewise, activists located in the West protested the appearance of Third World dictators in the First World. Timothy S. Brown has noted that, in West Germany, the diplomatic visits of Congolese Moise Tshombe (1964) and Iranian Shah Riza Pahlavi (1967) aroused the ire of students.[38] West Germans responded with indignation to the physical presence of American imperialism in their midst, much as Tunisians had done in response to the visit of Humphrey and Van Do to Tunis: "the Third World did not make its appearance in the West German '68 in the form of fantasy-borne posters of Mao Zedong . . . or the other cliché images of young protesters disconnected from reality and blind to the authoritarian realities of Third World nationalist movements."[39] Engaging in transnational action, West German students, alongside foreign student activists, protested

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the very real presence of Third World authoritarians visiting Europe. This physical appearance was often bidirectional, as in the Tunisian case. In one direction, First World imperialism was represented in the Third World in the bodies of Humphrey and Van Do (considered a First World conspirator) or that of U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers, author of the controversial "Rogers' Plan" to end the Arab–Israeli conflict who came to Tunis in February 1970. Indeed, cries of protest against Rogers' visit could be heard from Tunis to Paris, as a Perspectives' motion denouncing Rogers circulated in France's capital.[40] In the other direction, French and Tunisian activists protested against Bourguiba's June 1972 visit to Paris.[41] In all of these cases, the international travel of diplomats symbolized collaboration with First World imperialism, whether Third World figures appeared in the First World or vice versa. Their unwanted presence precipitated transnational organization in which acts of contestation occurred in both Tunis and Paris regardless of the diplomatic destination.

The January 1968 protests of Humphrey and Van Do's visit set the stage for the March events. While many Tunisians around the country were preparing celebrations to commemorate independence, the Committee in Support of the Liberation of Ben Jennet swung into action. Activists in Tunis gathered 1,300 signatures in a petition to Bourguiba condemning the president's "arbitrary victimization" of Ben Jennet and demanding his release.[42] Perspectives members distributed tracts at university buildings, on city buses, and in popular quarters of the city. By 15 March, at the University of Tunis's Faculté des Lettres, a crowd of over 2,000 Tunisian students gathered in response to Perspectives' publicity campaign.[43] The movement spread to the Faculté de Science and to neighboring technical and high schools, where students held a series of free general assemblies. Student activist Brahim Razgallah (Ibrahim Razq Allah) declared solidarity with Ben Jennet before a large audience. Cheers roared as he accused the leadership of UGET of being apologists for U.S. imperialism and called for a general strike of classes in protest of Bourguiba's repressive dictatorship.[44] The students linked U.S. imperialism to oppression in the Tunisian government while calling for reform in the students' national representative body. The mobilization on the local level for what came to be known as the "Ben Jennet Affair" thus contained claims on a series of other levels. Ben Jennet's original goal—to denounce Tunisian state support of oppressors in Vietnam and Palestine—fit into the broader context of the 1960s anti-imperialist movement. However, Bourguiba's repressive response to June 1967 and March 1968 led to calls for democratic reform at the national level that were not present at the outset.

Authorities responded with force to student and faculty organizers as police interrogated hundreds of Tunisians and eventually made over 200 arrests following the March demonstrations.[45] No fewer than eighty-one were incarcerated, most of whom were categorized by the state as either Communists, Perspectivists, or Baʿthists.[46] Many were held without trial until September 1968, and reports of torture included acid burns on the feet, ripping off fingernails, leaving infectious wounds by burning the skin with ether, electroshock, and cigarette burns on the skin and breasts.[47] Perspectives members Ahmed Othmani, Gilbert Naccache (Jilbar Naqqash), Noureddine Ben Khader (Nur al-Din bin Khadr), Brahim Razgallah, and Abdelaziz Krichen (ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Krishan) received sentences of up to sixteen years for participation in an illegal organization and attempted subversion against the state.[48] Some were charged with the crime of offending a head of state for insulting Humphrey and Van Do during the January protest. One Perspectives

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member was even indicted for distorting Bourguiba's self-promoting nomenclature "the supreme combatant" (le combattant suprême) into "the supreme hypocrite" (le comédien suprême).[49] Many of the defendants in Bourguiba's Special Court, created by the law of 2 July 1968 to deal specifically with March 68ers, did not have access to defense attorneys or to evidence that might support their cases.[50] Even though the events in March were produced out of a local context (Ben Jennet's sentencing), Bourguiba's reaction was influenced by fears of international revolution as events in France unfolded during his visit to Europe in May 1968.[51] Because the regime delayed the trials for political dissidents in Tunisia until September 1968, the events of the French May '68 augmented the level of repression and heavy sentences experienced by Tunisia's March 68ers. The Tunisian '68, though originating locally, resonated with other '68s and spilled across national borders into action in Paris. Even Bourguiba's repression of activists was shaped by events in Paris, and activism was realized both locally and abroad.

In many areas of the Franchophone world, such as Paris and Dakar, student strikes in 1968 received the backing and support of workers and national labor unions.[52] However, the lone national labor union in Tunisia, the UGTT, did not challenge the Bourguiba regime until 1978 and actually denounced the March '68 student movement. Efforts by Tunisian intellectuals to recruit workers into the resistance movements initially failed,[53] and the UGTT was allied in many ways with the Bourguiba regime in this period. The Tunisian '68 was thus confined primarily to the university milieu. Calls to liberate Ben Jennet at the University of Tunis certainly symbolized the Tunisian students' desire for democratic freedoms, but they also represented resistance to Tunisia's complicity with U.S. imperialism in Vietnam as well as its soft position on Israel. The Ben Jennet Affair can be seen as the intersection of an international anti-imperialist movement and a national cry for freedoms of expression and association. Like many anti-imperialist movements around the globe at this time, Tunisian activists primarily focused on Vietnamese and Palestinian liberation. However, the state's repressive response to youth protest caused a shift in the nature of students' claims in a very local context. After Ben Jennet's arrest, students not only denounced Bourguiba's pro-Israel and pro-U.S. stance but also called for the liberation of Tunisia's political prisoners and for rights to free speech and assembly. In countering the repression, students and professors organized an international network of support around the "Ben Jennet Affair" and created a transnational discursive battle over the affair's meaning and the response to it. In fact, the Ben Jennet Affair spurred activism from an international community already in place, particularly strong between the French and Tunisian left, that fought against government repression of human rights.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

Following Ben Jennet's arrest in June 1967, Paris was reactivated as a hub for transnational action. Tunisian students held an information session in Paris in November 1967, where they were shown support by union representatives from Morocco and Algeria as well as by the principal organization of African students in France (La Fédération des Étudiants de l'Afrique Noire) and the Association of Muslim North African Students in France (Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains en France).[54] Paris constituted a central gathering point for activists from various former colonies who were

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sympathetic to the Tunisian cause and who transmitted information from the metropole back to student unions in their mother countries.[55] The mass arrests and lack of due process for Ben Jennet's March '68 supporters initiated further transnational action. On 27 March 1968—the day that the University Council in Tunis broke with legal precedent to definitively expel five Perspectives activists[56]—the International Association of Democratic Lawyers requested that national organizations of lawyers work toward obtaining the release of Ben Jennet and of Tunisian university students and attorneys who had been detained in March.[57]

Though the majority of the core members of Perspectives—who had returned to the University of Tunis in 1964 following study abroad in France—were arrested during the March events, a number of second-tier members were still active in France. They were instrumental in disseminating information on the Tunisian movement to the French community. Though there is little evidence that the Tunisian March '68 ignited activism during the French May '68, Tunisian students in Paris certainly expressed their support for the French movement and linked the two as part of a global revolution: "Comrades, French students, our struggle, whether it be in France, Tunisia, Spain or elsewhere is absolutely the same. Our respective struggles are inscribed in historical terms, that is to say in terms of the march of humanity toward socialism."[58] Tunisian students also received invitations to the World Youth and Student Festival held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in the summer of 1968. In spite of the Tunisian media's claims that only PSD-dominated UGET delegations went to Sofia, student members from Perspectives also participated. A Perspectives tract calling for the liberation of Ben Jennet and the March 68ers was signed by over forty delegations, the largest number based in France.[59] Among the signatories were national student unions of the former French colonies Morocco, Algeria, and Senegal as well as the Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-africains en France. The French National Student Union (UNEF) refrained from signing the tract, which may have been due to the fact that members of the UNEF delegation were unable to participate after being hassled when passing the Bulgarian border and expelled in the midst of the festival's proceedings.[60]

UNEF had a history of working with UGET dating to the 1950s, but this did not prevent the French student organization from contacting more radical groups like Perspectives, which was invited to UNEF's International Congress in Marseilles in December 1968. Presenting before the congress, the Perspectives delegation provided an account of the protests against Humphrey and Van Do and of the severe court sentences following the March '68 movement: "Because our struggle is linked to the struggle of all progressive students of the world, we pay tribute to the students who fight alongside their people against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and reaction . . . particularly in the righteous struggles of the people of Vietnam, Palestine, Greece, Latin America, and Europe."[61] The primary goal of the delegation members was to inform the global student community of their own national struggle in Tunisia, which they charged was overlooked in French media; however, they also joined the global movement by referencing international struggles in distant lands. Tunisian students invited UNEF representatives to student activist meetings in Paris held at the Maison de la Tunisie,[62] where UNEF expressed solidarity with the March detainees. Tunisians thus networked with other students from abroad in order to gain international support and used international student congresses as a forum to spread news from the ground in Tunisia. These

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delegations acted as conduits of information that was repressed in Tunisia or ignored by the international press. At the same time, they articulated an internationalist position vis-à-vis popular global movements such as those for Vietnamese and Palestinian liberation, a position that cost the imprisoned Tunisians of March '68 dearly.

One of the future leaders of May '68 in France, Alain Geismar, was present in Tunisia following the events in March. Geismar, general secretary of France's National Union of Higher Education (Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur [SNESup]), was invited to Tunis by a number of French *coopérants*[63]—who belonged to the French Federation of National Education (Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale [FEN])—in order to help gain the release of detained students and colleagues.[64] Geismar and a number of other French professors and teachers working in Tunis were advised by the French ambassador, Jean Sauvagnargues, not to meddle in local politics because French educators in Tunis were not covered under the same legal rights to strike as those in France.[65] Unable to participate in the strikes, many of the French educators passively resisted by holding vapid classroom sessions in which they did not advance the curriculum so that detained and striking students would not be punished by missing out on crucial coursework.[66]

Others, such as Michel Foucault, who was a faculty member at the University of Tunis in 1968, resisted more actively. Foucault allowed students to draft tracts from his home in Sidi Bou Said, gave sanctuary to student leader Ahmed Othmani while authorities sought his arrest following the protest of the visits of Humphrey and Van Do, and provided deposition testimony at Othmani's September hearing.[67] Often criticized for his lack of engagement in politics, Foucault stated, "That is what Tunisia was for me: I was forced to enter into the political debate. It wasn't May of '68 in France that changed me; it was March of '68, in a Third World country."[68] Following his return to France, Foucault continued to support Othmani's liberation—signing hunger strike petitions and requesting testimony from Othmani's former French professors[69]—and later engaged in the causes of North African immigrants in Paris.[70]

The involvement of FEN affiliates such as Geismar and Foucault in the March events suggests that while the events themselves were organized on a local level concerning politics on an international scale, the Tunisian government's response to March '68 fueled an organized, transnational network of resistance. Geismar's visit to Tunis was no accident; his presence was requested by concerned members of FEN who were stationed in Tunis and had witnessed the government's use of repression. The efforts of Geismar prompted James Marangé, general secretary of FEN, to obtain a meeting with Bourguiba in order to pressure the latter to look into the accusations of torture and to liberate the detainees.[71] This transnational network of political pressure contributed to the provisional release of a number of the detainees in January 1970, though many were kept under surveillance and later rearrested.[72]

FEN's actions were bolstered by forty-four university professors and intellectuals in France who also showed their support of the Tunisian students. In a telegram addressed to Bourguiba on 31 May 1968, French intellectuals—including Franco-Tunisian writer Albert Memmi, French Communist Party member and historian Albert Soboul, and philosopher Jean Wahl—noted that many of the detainees were either their friends or former students at French universities and demanded their release and reintegration into the university system.[73] The timing of the telegram is worth noting; it coincides with the

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events of May '68 in France, just after de Gaulle had issued a national radio broadcast calling for order to be restored following the "intoxication and the tyranny" of the students in France.[74] The day of de Gaulle's speech (30 May), 400,000 Gaullist supporters gathered in Paris to give voice to the "silent majority" who denounced the youth movement in France.[75] Thus, at the height of political activity on the French national level by Gaullists, union activists, and students, a group of intellectuals turned their attention across the Mediterranean to implore Bourguiba to liberate detained Tunisians. Yet not all of the transnational activism supported the student movements; at the same time the French intellectuals were reaching out to Tunisian students, a group of *coopérants* from Alsace working in the textile industry in Tunis asked the French ambassador to send a letter of solidarity to de Gaulle in denunciation of the youth movement.[76]

As the September trial date approached, the movement to free the Tunisian 68ers led to the creation in Paris of the first Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Tunisia (Comité International pour le Sauvegarde des Droits de l'Homme en Tunisie [CISDHT]). What began as a cause to liberate Ben Jennet had expanded into a demand for the generalized protection of human rights. The group enlisted members in both France and Tunisia, including the famous Martinican attorney Marcel Manville. Manville, who had defended Algerian activists in the 1950s, was unable to defend the Tunisian detainees after being expelled from Tunis before meeting with his clients.[77] One of CISDHT's most active members, Simone Lellouche, was the fiancé of one of the Perspectives detainees, Ahmed Othmani. Born on Tunisian soil, Lellouche held French citizenship through her father, and following her arrest in Tunis in April 1968, she was expelled to France.[78]

While this was surely a government tactic to rid the country of another nuisance, what resulted was the exportation of a tireless activist who continued her cause from France. Using her intimate knowledge of Perspectives circles and of the prison conditions of her husband and other inmates, Lellouche acted as a crucial contact point within the resistance network. In preparation for the September trials, she wrote numerous letters to French university professors requesting testimony in support of the moral character of her fiancé and other detainees. She even contacted professors in the ex-colonies, such as Jean-Maurice Verdier of the University of Algiers, who wrote on behalf of Mohamed Charfi (Muhammad Sharfi).[79] Information gathered from prisoners and their families regarding their academic histories enabled Lellouche to locate prominent figures who could write on their behalf. She provided them with the address of the president of the Special Court and recommended that they send copies to foreign attorneys and observers. Upon hearing the reports from the international observers, the International Federation of the League of Human Rights (Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme [FIDH]) joined Lellouche's efforts by applying legal pressure from afar. FIDH wrote a letter to Bourguiba in September 1968 denouncing the torture of prisoners and warning that Bourguiba risked "transforming [his] historical image of liberator of Tunisia into that of oppressor."[80]

In addition to orchestrating legal counsel and international observation during the September trials, CISDHT also sought to sway public opinion. It organized meetings at the Mutualité in Paris, giving updates on the trials and discussing strategies for action. CISDHT invited Jean-Paul Chabert, a French engineer who held work contracts in Tunis, to share his experiences in Tunisian prisons. Like Manville, Chabert had been

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politically engaged long before March 1968. Chabert's political education began in his teenage years, as he processed French defeat to the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, and later, as a member of UNEF, he supported independence in Algeria.[81] As early as 1964, Chabert was involved in Perspectives circles, and he was the only French citizen to be tortured for alleged involvement in the March events; he was finally given special clemency by Bourguiba in March 1969.[82] Others, such as French professor and activist Jean Gattégno, carried out a campaign of letter writing to dailies, including France's widely circulated *Le Monde*, in an effort to arouse French public sympathy for the political prisoners.[83] These networks of activism, created out of the aftermath of the Ben Jennet Affair, laid the foundation for the continued support of activists detained in a related movement in February 1972 at the University of Tunis.[84]

THE TRANSNATIONAL BATTLE OVER MARCH '68

Because the PSD held a virtual monopoly on access to Tunisian media—controlling the content of the daily *L'Action* and frequently seizing international papers like *Le Monde*—one of the most important tasks for organizations such as CISDHT and Perspectives was to act as alternative sources of information. The PSD reported on the March events in a pamphlet, "La vérité sur la subversion à l'université de Tunis" (The Truth about the Subversion at the University of Tunis), widely referred to as the *livre blanc*, which *L'Action* published as a full-page article in August 1968, just in time to influence public opinion before the September trials.[85]

As the March events unfolded, Bourguiba was preparing for the highly anticipated visit of Ivoirian leader Félix Houphouët-Boigny, hoping to quiet the storm of activism and to preserve his reputation in the international community. On 20 March 1968, the day of the visit, the head of national education announced early spring vacation for students, and the universities were cordoned off from the rest of the city.[86] Instead of reporting on the student strikes, *L'Action* noted that the Maison de la Tunisie in Paris celebrated Tunisian independence by expressing "unwavering attachment to the figure of President Bourguiba, artisan of independence."[87] Much was made of the presidential visit and the commemoration of national independence, while the university strikes and police crackdown were not reported until twelve days later. On 27 and 28 March, *L'Action* published commentary from Defense Minister al-Bahi al-Adgham deploring the recruitment of high school students into the movement and claiming that violence had been limited to student on student acts.[88]

To counter the PSD's narrative of events, the CISDHT, with the help of left-wing French publisher François Maspero, released "Liberté pour les condamnés de Tunis: La vérité sur la répression en Tunisie" (Liberty for the Convicted of Tunis: The Truth about Repression in Tunisia).[89] Jean-Marie Domenach, editor of the political journal *Esprit*, penned the introduction, evoking his anticolonialist struggles alongside Tunisian leaders such as Ahmad bin Salah in the 1950s in order to hold the country's new leaders accountable to democracy.

> In Ahmad bin Salah's admirable *Esprit* article of June 1957, he wrote that decolonization, like political revolution, "must avoid substituting the foreign minority with a national minority . . . To

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be constructive, it must translate into democratization and the reform of the nation's economic structures."

> My anticolonialist past does not grant me any right to intervene in Tunisian affairs. But for the same reasons that I was anticolonialist then, today I must give the same assistance to those who suffer for their people that we gave to the nationalist activists who have since become their persecutors. But first I must give them the voice they are refused in Tunisia . . . It is not because [Tunisian leaders] became ministers, ambassadors or government officials that we call them out. But it is our duty to insist that they answer us by refuting us, or by re-establishing human rights. Until now they have not spoken; we will not be silent.[90]

Much like the FIDH had claimed that Bourguiba's Special Court risked transforming his image from liberator to oppressor, Domenach called upon Tunisia's nationalist leadership to make good on its 1950s rhetoric of independence. He also described activists living in France in 1968 as messengers, suggesting that though Tunisians were intellectually capable of speaking for themselves, they faced severe consequences in their homeland for criticizing the government, which incarcerated them and judged them guilty a priori. The spreading of suppressed information, often conducted from France, became an integral part of the movement. Even the act of free speech had become revolutionary.

The rest of the pamphlet recounts the Ben Jennet Affair and the subsequent March movement from the activists' perspective. It includes letters from Tunis written to the CISDHT in Paris detailing prison conditions as well as excerpts from the September hearings that record descriptions of torture and the lack of due process at trial. These portions of testimony illustrate the contradiction of the court's position: defendants were accused of supporting a "fanatical Muslim" (Ben Jennet) who allegedly pillaged a Jewish neighborhood, while they were simultaneously cast as consorting with Jews and questioned regarding their Muslim faith.[91] The information provided by the CISDHT countered claims in *L'Action* that "taking up the 5 June cause of Ben Jennet, who had incited fanatical gangs to burn and pillage in excited racist passion, would constitute a grave offense against civil rights."[92] According to *L'Action*, Tunisian activists were "maniacs under the influence of lying propaganda [and] following orders from abroad."[93] The CISDHT pamphlet published in Paris presented an alternative truth to the PSD narrative, one that would have been extremely difficult to articulate from Tunis.

The PSD went to great lengths to argue that the activists were influenced from afar, whether by Maoists, Jews, French imperialists, or Baʿthists. The fact that the March '68 movement was launched by pro-Palestinian activists in June 1967 did not stop the Special Court or the PSD-dominated media from casting its members as both Zionists and fanatical Muslims when convenient. The *livre blanc* claimed that dissidence stemmed from three major foreign sources: Baʿthists took orders from extremists in Damascus and Beirut; Perspectivists were "zealots of Mao Zedong"; and Tunisian Communists were puppets of the French Communist Party.[94] The PSD falsely linked the Tunisian movement to French riots in May 1968 as part of a foreign-led plan in which French activist Geismar "traveled to Tunis, where he was able to contact Maoists."[95] By creating a three-headed monster, the PSD laid the ground for the September show trials, putting itself and the Special Court in position to condemn diverse members of the political opposition by labeling them all anti-Tunisian (i.e., foreign). French authorities employed

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similar strategies when identifying May 68ers such as the German-born Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Senegalese Omar Blondin-Diop—both of whom were expelled from the country—as anti-French subversive agitators.

In December 1968, Perspectives pointed out the anachronism of the PSD's charge that Geismar and other French May '68 agitators had infiltrated and influenced the Tunisian March '68 movement, which actually preceded both Geismar's April arrival in Tunis and the events of May in France.[96] In August, *Le Monde* published an article revising the *livre blanc* narrative in which James Marangé, general secretary of FEN, asserted Geismar's role as SNESup representative rather than Maoist zealot.[97] The discursive battle between *L'Action* and the PSD from Tunis, on the one hand, and various Franco–Tunisian and French sources from Paris, on the other, took on a transnational dimension in which the battleground over narratives of the Tunisian movement had spread to France in much the same way that the March '68 protests had resonated across the Mediterranean. The communication networks between human rights groups like the CISDHT and the FIDH, and intellectual–political organizations like Perspectives, enabled activists who had escaped detention to tell the stories of the March events. Observers at the September hearings were able to record details of the trials, and family members and foreign attorneys released information on prison conditions. The contact between activists in France and Tunisia created a web of resistance and information flow that contributed to the international front against Bourguiba's repression.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON POSTCOLONIAL TRANSNATIONALISM

By drawing historical connections between March '68 and Tunisia's colonial past, and tracing transnational networks in the postcolonial period, I have demonstrated that, in some ways, the process of decolonization strengthened certain Franco–Tunisian bonds, at least in the realm of activism.[98] In order to successfully articulate a position outside the menacing controls of authoritative governance, activists turned to the former metropole as an information relay center and a hub of political activity. Expulsions of French *coopérants* and Tunisian activists holding French citizenship did not quash activism; rather, they often led to the exportation of activism to the relative safety of Paris, where it could be carried out in ways that were not possible in Tunis. In addition, the presence of Tunisian students at international gatherings such as the Sofia Congress and UNEF's Marseilles Congress in 1968 provided opportunities for young activists to garner support for local initiatives as well as to express solidarity with the global anti-imperialist movement. And while Tunisian workers and intellectuals did not join forces in activism until the 1970s, Bourguiba's national education campaign leveled some class disparity as an increasing number of rural Tunisians earned university scholarships. Because of the reforms, coupled with Tunisia's colonial ties to the French education system, the university became a space for both trans-class and transnational interaction through established organizational structures and proliferating networks of communication that facilitated activism against the repression of the March '68 movement.

If the "Ben Jennet Affair" and its subsequent events can be classified as a "postcolonial situation," it is not because, as the famous French anthropologist Georges Balandier has claimed, "we are all, in some form or another, living in a postcolonial situation."[99] Rather,

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it is more localizable and less abstract than that. And unlike histories that focus on a global "spirit of '68,"[100] this article has argued that the Tunisian movement transcended national boundaries in very concrete ways, from the physical presence of Humphrey and Van Do in Tunis to the letters written from Simone Lellouche Othmani in Paris to the French ambassador in Tunis. Bourguiba's educational policies contributed to the expansion of the ranks of a class of educated Tunisians with scarce employment opportunities but with ongoing intellectual connections in France. Moreover, repression of international anti-imperialist movements at the local level in Tunis led to the exportation of the movement to France and to the merging of its goals with calls for democratic freedoms and human rights. In some ways, as the practice of the movement became more international, its actual political goals became narrower. Members of the CISDHT, which was born out of March '68, would play instrumental roles in the creation of human rights organizations for penal reform and freedom of expression in the 1970s and beyond.[101] The response to Bourguibist repression would not have been possible without vast networks in which Tunisians on the ground filtered information to Paris that often made its way back to Tunis.

Democratic freedoms, along with economic opportunity, were at the core of Tunisian protesters' demands in 2011. We should all be watching with great curiosity as the current government reintegrates political parties that are vestiges of the targeted groups from the March '68 movement.[102]

NOTES

Author's note: This study was made possible by the Social Science Research Council's International Dissertation Research Fellowship, with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Fulbright–Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad award, and Northeastern University. I also thank the IJMES editors and anonymous peer reviewers as well as Laura Frader, Tom DeGeorges, Rachel Gillett, Stacy Fahrenthold, and Stephanie Boyle for their helpful comments and suggestions in the drafting of this article. Finally, I thank Simone Lellouche Othmani for making her private archive available to me while it was being classified for public use at the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine in Nanterre, France. All errors are mine.

[1]Guy Sitbon, "Répression: Sur la terre du jasmin," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 24–30 October 1977.

[2]Al-Buʿazizi was a street vendor from Sidi Bouzid whose illegal fruit stand was humiliatingly confiscated by authorities for lack of permits, precipitating his desperate act.

[3]For example, in 1988 the Museum of Contemporary History in Nanterre held an exhibition entitled *May '68*, and several books addressing May '68 were issued by French publishers. In 1998, the Institut CGT d'Histoire Sociale memorialized May '68 with a series of exhibits focusing on the provinces outside Paris, and French publishers issued another wave of literature on '68. In 2008 the Bibliothèque Nationale de France held the exhibition *Esprit(s) de mai*, and similar exhibits were held in the provinces by organizations such as the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyons and the city of Montpellier.

[4]This dearth of historical accounts of Tunisian actions against the state can be attributed in part to the stability and longevity of two dictatorships (Bourguiba from 1957–87 and Bin ʿAli from 1987–2011), which enforced strict media regulations and the suppression of opposition parties. While the Tunisian '68 remains largely under studied, John Entelis has highlighted growing youth discontent in the related university strikes of February 1972, while Mohamed Dhifallah locates a rupture between Bourguiba and university students following a 1971 student congress. See John P. Entelis, "Ideological Change and an Emerging Counter-Culture in Tunisian Politics," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12 (1974): 543–68; and Mohamed Dhifallah, "Bourguiba et les étudiants: Stratégie en mutation (1956–1971)," in *Habib Bourguiba: La trace et l'héritage*, ed. Michel Camau and Vincent Geisser (Paris: Editions Karthala, 2004).

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[5]Marguerite Rollinde, "Les émeutes en Tunisie: Un défi à l'État?," in *Émeutes et mouvements sociaux au Maghreb: Perspective comparée*, ed. Didier le Saout and Marguerite Rollinde (Paris: Karthala, 1999), 111.

[6]See David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 203–205; and Mark G. E. Kelly, *The Political Philosophy of Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 17.

[7]Certain prominent Tunisan activists have published autobiographical accounts that treat the events of March '68. However, historians have remained largely silent on the events. See Mohamed Charfi, *Mon combat pour les lumières* (Léchelle, France: Zellige, 2009); Gilbert Naccache, *Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse? Itinéraire d'un opposant au régime de Bourguiba (1954–1979)*, followed by *Récits de prison* (Tunis and Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2009); Ahmed Othmani with Sophie Bessis, *Beyond Prison: The Fight to Reform Prison Systems around the World*, trans. Marguerite Garling (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008 [2002]). All of these memoirs were published either outside Tunisia or long after Bourguiba's removal from power in 1987. ʿAbd al-Jalil Buqura has also given an overview of Perspectives' activities in *Harakat Afaq min Tarikh al-Yasar al-Tunisi* (Tunis: CERES, 1993). Michaël Béchir Ayari, in "S'engager en régime autoritaire, gauchistes et islamistes dans la Tunisie indépendantiste" (PhD diss., Université Paul Cézanne, Aix-Marseille-III, 2009), points out how the crackdown on leftists in 1968 created political space for Islamists in the 1970s.

[8]In French historiography these are also known as "les années 68" (the years of 1968). For global perspectives on 1968, see George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1987); Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jeremy Varon, *Bringing Home the War: The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2004); and Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also the special two-part forum devoted to the global 1968 in *American Historical Review* 114–15 (2009).

[9]This lacuna is addressed in Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, eds., *The Third World in the Global 1960s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). While a significant contribution to the field for its focus on the Third World, this volume does not include North Africa or the Arab world more generally. For a rare and outdated exception dealing specifically with Tunisian activism in this period, see Clement H. Moore and Arlie R. Hochschild, "Student Unions in North African Politics," *Daedalus* 97 (1968): 21–50.

[10]For example, Julia Clancy-Smith has commented on the absence of the "people located on the margins of non-Western states" in Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory. See Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, and Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800–1904)* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1997), 2.

[11]The notion of "webs of empire" is borrowed from Tony Ballantyne's discussion of transcolonial information exchange in the British empire, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). For another groundbreaking work on transnational migration networks, see Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, and Hawaii 1900–1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[12]See James McDougall, "Dream of Exile, Promise of Home: Language, Education, and Arabism in Algeria," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011): 253; and Ayari, "S'engager en régime autoritaire, gauchistes et islamistes dans la Tunisie indépendantiste," 12.

[13]Afef Ben Rouina, "Islamisme et démocratie: Le cas de la Tunisie, 1970–1990" (master's thesis, Université de Tunis, 2000).

[14]Dhifallah, "Bourguiba et les étudiants," 316.

[15]UNEF has a complex history of vacillating between positions on both the Algerian revolution and Palestinian liberation. In 1960 it finally called for peace in Algeria, for which it was lauded by UGET. See telegram from UGET in Tunis to UNEF, 27 October 1960, in Archives d'Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 130, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.

[16]Kamel Chenoufi and Gilles Gallo, *La Tunisie en décolonisation (1957–1972): Genèse des structures de développement et des structures de la République* (Le Pradet, France: Éditions LAU, 2003), 201.

[17]See Table 18, "Effectifs (élèves) de l'enseignement primaire (secteur public)," in Abdeljabbar Bsais and Christian Morrisson, "Les coûts de l'éducation en Tunisie," *Cahiers du C.E.R.E.S.*, Série Economie 3 (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1970), 76.

[18]I was unable to locate figures for all locations where Tunisian students attended universities abroad in this period, but one study for the academic year of 1965 and 1966 lists approximately 500 Tunisians at

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universities in Paris. "Recensement des effectifs universitaires au 30 juin 1966 et analyse démographiques pour l'année 1965–1966," in Éducation Nationale: Direction Coopération, AN-19771275, Article 28, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.

[19]See Table 20, "Effectifs de l'enseignement supérieur," in Bsais and Morrisson, *Cahiers du C.E.R.E.S.*, 83.

[20]Interview with Chérif Ferjani, Lyons, 2010.

[21]Clement Henry Moore, *Politics in North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 171.

[22]Also known as the Groupe d'Études et d'Action Socialiste Tunisienne (GEAST), the organization was often referred to by the name of its theoretical journal, *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, which was eventually shortened to "Perspectives" to describe the group. Perspectives formed in Paris as a splinter group of Marxists, Trotskyists, and Maoists (both students and professors) who sought an alternative to the PSD-dominated UGET.

[23]About 30 percent of Tunisian students, or 3,000 in total, were card-carrying members of UGET. Perspectives was much more loosely organized and did not keep official records, though some members estimate that there were 200 to 500 members internationally. Clement Henry Moore, *Politics in North Africa*, 170; and interview with "Jamil," Tunis, 2011.

[24]Yusufists were supporters of Salih bin Yusuf, Bourguiba's rival within the Neo-Destour who represented a more isolationist approach to governance and advocated a sharper rift with France. He was condemned to death for treason because of his open opposition to Bourguiba and was assassinated in exile in 1961 at a hotel in Frankfurt; his supporters continued to identify as Yusufists after his death.

[25]The other six *wilāyāt* were located in Algeria proper. See Ali Haroun, *La septième wilaya: La guerre du FLN en France, 1954–1962* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1986). On student cooperation, see "Motion UNEF-UGEMA du IVe Congrès à Tunis," July 1960, in Archives d'Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 128, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.

[26]There were approximately 75,000 Tunisians in France at the time of the March 1968 protests, the majority of whom were workers and likely not heavily involved in activist communication networks until the immigrant-worker strikes of the 1970s.

[27]See Dhifallah, "Bourguiba et les étudiants," 318.

[28]Entelis, "Ideological Change and an Emerging Counter-Culture in Tunisian Politics," 543–68.

[29]Ibid., 550–51.

[30]Many Perspectives participants in the events claimed that police officers, under instruction of the PSD, in fact sanctioned the violence against the Jewish community. Interviews with Simone Lellouche Othmani, Paris, 2010, and "Jamil," Tunis, 2011.

[31]*L'Action*, 8 June 1967.

[32]"Mémoires de militants," *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, brochure no. 3 (December 1968).

[33]A former member of the Neo-Destourian Party, Slimane became an anti-Bourguibist and co-founded the PCT's journal *Tribune du Progrès*, which was banned along with the PCT under Bourguiba in 1963, following Slimane's increasingly scathing critiques of the government.

[34]"Lettre rédigée signée par les membres du Comité de Solidarité avec le peuple vietnamien et remise à l'ambassade des U.S.A. pour le vice-président Humphrey," 7 January 1968, in Fonds Simone Lellouche et Ahmed Othmani (Fonds Othmani), SOL 28 bis, Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (hereafter BDIC), Nanterre.

[35]From 1964 to 1969, Bin Salah implemented a socialist plan to nationalize agricultural land into a series of collectives. The plan was largely unpopular with peasants, many of whom battled government corruption and lost their private holdings of small plots.

[36]"La lutte des étudiants en Tunisie . . . et dans le monde," *Tribune Progressiste* 1 (1968).

[37]See "Appel du Comité pour la libération de Ben Jennet et des autres militants anti-impérialistes," undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.

[38]See Timothy S. Brown, "'1968' East and West: Divided Germany as a Case Study in Transnational History," in special forum on "International 1968," *American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 69–96.

[39]Brown, "'1968' East and West," 75.

[40]"Motion sur la Tunisie adoptée à l'unanimité par les participants à la journée internationale de solidarité anti-impérialiste du 21 février 1970," in Fonds Othmani, SOL 3, BDIC, Nanterre.

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[41]Perspectives members in Paris solicited the help of French activists in protesting Bourguiba's diplomatic visit with French President Georges Pompidou. See "Un seul combattant: le peuple!," 24 June 1972, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 2; and "Tunisie: La curé néo-colonialiste," *Politique Hebdo* 35, nouvelle série (29 June 1972).

[42]"Tunisie: Le divorce étudiant," *Jeune Afrique* 377, 25–31 March 1968.

[43]"Communiqué de Presse," dated 25 March 1968 and signed Le Comité pour la libération de Ben Jennet et des autres militants anti-impérialistes, Paris, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.

[44]"Sur les journées de solidarité avec Mohamed Ben Jennet," *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, review, numéro spécial, no. 18 (18 June 1968): 3. Razgallah accused UGET of representing the PSD's desires regarding student demands.

[45]Naccache, *Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?*, 97.

[46]Mohamed Dhifallah, "Bourguiba et les étudiants: stratégie en mutation (1956–1971)," 321.

[47]See Othmani, *Beyond Prison*, 11; *Tribune Progréssiste* 3 (1968): 1; *Jeunesse Démocratique* (1976): 25–26; and Naccache, *Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?*, 136, 160. According to Naccache, women activists such as ʿA'isha bin ʿAbid were not spared torture; her breasts were scarred from cigarette burns while she was detained.

[48]See "À la lumière du procès G.E.A.S.T.: Les acquis et les perspectives de la lutte révolutionnaire en Tunisie," *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, brochure no. 4 (1969); and Naccache, *Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?*, 101.

[49]"Mémoires de militants," *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, brochure no. 3 (1968): 9. The law protecting the images of "heads of state" dates back to the colonial period, when it was applied to protect powerful beylical families from public criticism.

[50]Cited in ibid., 4.

[51]Gilbert Naccache notes that the May '68 events in France made a deep impression on Bourguiba while he was visiting Spain and that his advisers confirmed Tunisian opposition leaders had been influenced by French "subversives." See Naccache, *Qu'as-tu fait de ta jeunesse?*, 99.

[52]See Abdoulaye Bathily, *Mai 68 à Dakar: Ou la révolte universitaire et la démocratie* (Paris: Éditions Chaka, 1992); and Boris Gobille, *Mai 68* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008).

[53]In an effort to reach working-class Tunisians in the early 1970s, activists in Paris published the bilingual journal *al-ʿAmil al-Tunsi* (*Le travailleur tunisien*). It primarily targeted Tunisian immigrants in France and had minor clandestine distribution in Tunis but did not make significant inroads into these communities. More successful were groups jointly founded by intellectuals and immigrant workers such as Le Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes, which emerged in the early 1970s and included a number of Tunisians (and other North Africans) residing in France.

[54]*Perspectives Tunisiennes* 16 (December 1967).

[55]For examples of correspondence between Perspectives and UGET sections in Paris and Tunis, see Fonds de la Fédération des Tunisiens pour une citoyenneté des deux rives, Carton G2/2 (1), UGET Paris, Génériques, Paris.

[56]An attorney anonymously interviewed by Tunisian Communist students regarding the legality of the university's actions stated that the Tunisian National Assembly should have been consulted first and that such decisions could normally be made only in the presence of a delegation of students and professors. In addition, the attorney cited a breach of Article 35, decree no. 60–98 of 31 March 1960, which—like the laws protecting the premises of the Sorbonne that were broken by Parisian police in May '68—required special permission from the attorney general before state authorities could access university grounds. See *Tribune Progressiste* 3 (1968): 4; and *L'Action*, 28 March 1968.

[57]"Sur les journées de solidarité avec Mohamed Ben Jennet," 12.

[58]"Solidarité des étudiants tunisiens avec leurs camarades français: Vive la lutte juste des étudiants français et tunisiens," 14 May 1968, in Fonds Mai 68, Carton 8: dossier 14, Centre d'Histoire Sociale du Vingtième Siècle (hereafter CHS), Paris.

[59]See *Tribune Progressiste* 5 (1968): 30–35.

[60]Letter from UNEF to the Comité National Bulgare pour le festival, 30 June 1968, in Archives d'Association: UNEF, AN-19870110, Article 107, Archives Nationales, Fontainebleau.

[61]"Intervention de la section étudiante de Paris du GEAST au Congrès de l'UNEF de Marseille," undated, in Fonds Mai 68, Carton 8: dossier 14, CHS, Paris.

[62]The majority of Tunisian students in Paris resided at the Maison de la Tunisie, which became a site for political meetings. *Tribune Progressiste* 5 (1968): 25.

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[63]In lieu of mandatory military service, many French youth opted to serve as *coopérants*, meaning they would work abroad, often as teachers or in some other development capacity.

[64]Othmani, *Beyond Prison*, 17. Geismar confirmed this in email correspondence, January 2011.

[65]Interview with Raymond Beltran, Carcassonne, 2010. In 1968, Beltran was a representative of FEN in Tunis, of which SNESup was an affiliate.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Othmani, *Beyond Prison*, 8.

[68]See D. Trombadori's interview of Foucault, Paris, 1978, published in "Le rôle politique et culturel de Perspectives et des Perspectivistes dans la Tunisie indépendante," *Mouvements nationaux tunisiens et maghrébins*, series 3, 17 (2008): 50.

[69]See petition of the CISDHT regarding a 4 December 1972 hunger strike signed by Foucault and a letter from Professor Paul Kraugi to Simone Othmani, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28 bis, BDIC, Nanterre.

[70]Foucault joined intellectuals such as Gilles Deleuze and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as French and Arab students from Comités Palestine, to protest the racist killing of an Algerian adolescent in a Parisian immigrant neighborhood, the Goutte d'Or, in October 1971. See Abdellali Hajjat, "Alliances inattendues à la Goutte d'Or," in *68: Une histoire collective*, 521–27. CISDHT also linked the Jalali affair to the long-term imprisonment of Foucault's former student Ahmed Othmani. See "On réprime ici [Paris], on réprime là-bas [Tunis]," undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28 bis, BDIC, Nanterre.

[71]In April 1968, Bourguiba purportedly assured Marangé that he would investigate the torture accusations and liberate any detainee who had been wrongly imprisoned. *Le Monde*, 16 August 1968; interview with Raymond Beltran, Carcassonne, 2010.

[72]On the day of Tunisia's commemoration of armed resistance, Bourguiba announced that it was time "to turn the page" by releasing many of the condemned students. *Presse de la Tunisie*, 17 January 1970.

[73]"Sur les journées de solidarité avec Mohamed Ben Jennet," 12.

[74]From *Discours: Général Charles de Gaulle,* transcription by the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (Paris: CLT, 30 May 1968).

[75]Gobille, *Mai 68*, 88.

[76]Maurice Vaïsse, ed., *Mai 68 vu de l'étranger* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008), 93.

[77]See *Tribune Progressiste* 5 (1968): 24.

[78]See letter from Simone Lellouche to the French embassy in Tunis, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.

[79]Letter of support from Jean-Maurice Verdier to Mohamed Charfi, undated, in ibid.

[80]"Lettre ouverte de la Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme au Président Bourguiba," signed and dated by General Secretary Suzanne Collette-Kahn, Paris, 13 September 1968, published in *Tribune Progressiste* 5 (1968).

[81]See Chabert interview with Michaël Béchir Ayari, Bourgoin Jailleux, 2005, in *Parcours et discours après l'indépendance,* ed. Michaël Béchir Ayari and Sami Bargaoui (Tunis: Éditions DIRASET, 2011).

[82]*The Observer*, 22 June 1969; and *CISDHT*, Bulletin no. 1, undated, in Fonds Othmani, SOL 28 bis, BDIC, Nanterre.

[83]Gattégno wrote a series of letters to *Le Monde* from April to September 1968. *Le Monde*'s editorial staff responded by noting the censorship of *Le Monde* in Tunisia. See Fonds Othmani, SOL 28, BDIC, Nanterre.

[84]The webs created out of the March events also proved vital to a series of demonstrations in February 1972, set off by the sentencing of Simone Lellouche Othmani for her involvement in March '68.

[85]Parti Socialiste Destourien, *La vérité sur la subversion à l'université de Tunis* (Tunis: Parti Socialiste Destourien, 1968); *L'Action*, 4 August 1968.

[86]"Tunisie: Le divorce étudiant."

[87]*L'Action*, 21 March 1968.

[88]*L'Action*, 27 March 1968 and 28 March 1968.

[89]*Liberté pour les condamnés de Tunis: La vérité sur la répression en Tunisie* (Paris: Maspero, 1969). Maspero also published a series of Perspectives brochures from 1967 to 1972.

[90]Ibid., 3–4.

[91]Ibid, 36–40.

[92]*L'Action*, 6 April 1968.

[93]Ibid.

[94]*La vérité sur la subversion à l'université de Tunis*.

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[95]Ibid, 43.

[96]"Mémoires de militants," *Perspectives Tunisiennes*, brochure no. 3 (1968): 14.

[97]*Le Monde*, 16 August 1968.

[98]For further discussion on the question of ruptures between historical periods, see Julia A. Clancy-Smith, "Ruptures? Governance in Husaynid-Colonial Tunisia, c. 1870–1914," in *Colonial and Post-Colonial Governance of Islam*, ed. Marcel Maussen, Veit Bader, and Annelies Moors (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 65–88.

[99]See Balandier's preface in *La situation postcoloniale*, ed. Marie-Claude Smouts (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007), 24.

[100]Horn, *The Spirit of '68*.

[101]The Tunisian League for Human Rights, created in 1977, is still in existence, as is the Tunisian section of Amnesty International in 1981, both of which included former members of the CISDHT.

[102]After recent reintegration as a legal political party in 2011, al-Nahda has emerged as a dominant force in post-Bin ʿAli Tunisia. The two-decade interdiction of its leader, Rashid al-Ghanushi, who recently returned from exile in London, echoes the suppression of "fanatical Muslims" in the '68 *livre blanc*. The Tunisian Workers' Communist Party has also been legalized under the new government; it is headed by former Perspectives member Hama al-Hamami, who was imprisoned after having spoken to French media during the 2011 revolution and later released.

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