

# **Maturity towards democracy**

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***A people that is ripe for democracy does not take advantage of the crisis to seek the overthrow of the government***

Democracy is not the result of a simple act of will, but of the choice of a country that reached the necessary maturity to establish it. And that has achieved its industrial and capitalist revolution, so that the economic surplus appropriation no longer depends on the State's direct control, because it is conducted on the market.

Egypt does not satisfy these two conditions, but its people wants democracy and tragically fights for it. If this people had achieved the necessary maturity, maybe it could overcome the second restriction and attain its goal. However, this is not what we saw when it went to the streets to overthrow the first democratically elected government.

When, in January 2011, the Egyptian people, encouraged by the example of Tunisia, revolted against the authoritarian and corrupt regime that dominated the country, the Arab Spring began. After the government was overthrown, elections were held and, finally, in June 2012, the country's most powerful Islamic organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, won the elections with only 25% of the votes.

The Brotherhood had no idea about how to rule a country; until recently, it maintained that this was not its intention, given the orthodox Islamism's absurd goal of restoring the Caliphate.

The elected president faced an impossible mission. He should reform the constitution and govern a country plunged in a huge economic crisis, whose economic and military elites were involved with the ancient regime.

The crisis started already in the reform of the constitution; it did not satisfy the liberal secularists, who until recently were involved with the ancient regime, nor the Islamists who wished the integration between State and religion. It became worse given the government's inaction against the attacks and murders committed by radical Islamic groups.

But the definite indication came two months ago, when Tahrir square was once again filled with activists demanding the fall of the government. Their wishes were granted, and a coup returned the power to the military. From then on, Egypt experiences a deep crisis, the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood protesting and being slaughtered by the forces of order.

In many poor countries, the opposition profits from the first crisis that arises to demand the fall of the democratically elected government. A people that is ripe for democracy does not do this. It criticizes, protests, manifests, but does not demand a coup. This people knows that politics is the art of compromise. Of compromises that must be done day by day, not only by the politicians, but also by the citizens.

I have always known that politics is the art of compromise, of making concessions to reach the majority. But only a few years ago it became clear to me that compromises made by the citizens are also important. Talking with a Swiss doctor, when I mentioned the solidity of her country's State and democracy, she said: "it is true, but you cannot imagine how many compromises we have to do every day to achieve that".

I know that it is not reasonable to expect that Egyptians and Swiss behave the same way. Egypt is a poor country that has not yet achieved its capitalist revolution, but its fight for democracy will only be successful when it learns to compromise.