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Tunisian-Libyan relations in contemporary sources

"The Djerba meeting is an example"

العلاقات التونسية الليبية في المصادر المعاصرة

"اجتماع جربة مثال على ذلك"

djellaoui said*

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- **Abstract:**

This study deals with the stages of the contemporary history of the states of Tunisia and Libya in their attempt to achieve unity in the first founding meeting held on the Tunisian island of Djerba on January 12, 1974, in circumstances characterized by the rise of the revolutionary Libyan regime ambitious for regional unity under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi,And the emerging Tunisian regime led by Habib Bourguiba, which is searching for a secure position to achieve strategic goals. What are the backgrounds of this project, its political implications, and what are its regional repercussions and repercussions? This is what we will answer in this study.

Keywords:

Tunisia , Libya , Djerba , relations.

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ملخص: تتناول هذه الدراسة مراحل التاريخ المعاصر لدولتي تونس وليبيا في سعيهما لتحقيق الوحدة، وذلك من خلال الاجتماع التأسيسي الأول الذي عُقد في جزيرة جربة التونسية في 12 يناير 1974. وقد اتسمت هذه المرحلة بصعود النظام الليبي الثوري بقيادة معمر القذافي، الطامح إلى الوحدة الإقليمية، والنظام التونسي الناشئ بقيادة الحبيب بورقيبة، الساعي إلى ترسيخ موقعه لتحقيق أهدافه الاستراتيجية. ما هي خلفيات هذا المشروع، وما هي تداعياته السياسية، وما هي آثاره الإقليمية؟ هذا ما ستجيب عنه هذه الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تونس، ليبيا، جربة، العلاقات.

Introduction:

The Maghreb countries and their independence have passed for nearly 60 years are still divided despite the continuous declaration of principles and successive statements confirming adherence to the unitary approach. National states have become entrenched in them with barriers erected to separate their peoples despite the availability of the elements that help unity, such as origin and history. The common religion and the same geographical extension made the Maghreb countries more deserving this unity . They often tried to move in this direction, but they were disappointed because of many factors . Therefore, we decided to choose one of the unitary attempts that brought together Libya, Tunisia and... Known as the "Djerba Project", held on January 12, 1974 on the Island of Djerba.

The Tunisian regime, which was called the "dead newborn," was criticized in circumstances characterized by the rise of the ambitious Libyan revolutionary regime for regional unity led by Mouammar Gaddafi, the Algerian liberal regime led by Houari Boumediene, and the emerging Tunisian regime led by Habib Bourguiba, who is searching for a safe position between these two regimes. What are the backgrounds? This project, its political implications, and what are its regional repercussions? This is what we will answer in this study.

1. Incidents of Tunisian-Libyan bilateral cooperation before the Djerba meeting in 1974:

Tunisia was the first Maghreb country to deal with the Gaddafi regime after the coup of September 1, 1969, in the economic field in particular, and to establish a political dialogue leading to building foreign relations" [(1),] and this was within the framework of its effort to confront the border political ambition of the Libyan regime with this peaceful economic openness.[(2),] Noting that Bourguiba's "cold" positions on the Palestinian issue were harshly criticized by the Libyan leadership, and the best evidence of this is the latter's absence at the Tunisian Victory Day

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[1]- Qlibi Shazly: lights on memory p. 178

[2] - MASMOUDI , (MOHAMED) : « LES ARABES DANS LA TEMPETE » ,OPTIC , P 25.

celebration upon Bourguiba's return from treatment in Europe on June 1, 1970. Bourguiba responded in his speech on June 8, 1970 [3]

Criticizing the Libyan leadership in its new policy, Bourguiba nevertheless showed a serious will to avoid deepening the dispute between the two countries. On August 14, 1970, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Masmoudi, visited Libya, which resulted in the signing of an economic, technical, and cultural cooperation agreement between the two countries. [4]

On the other hand, Gaddafi made two consecutive visits to Tunisia, the first between February 11 and 15, 1971, and the second between December 13 and 17, 1972, which resulted in the signing of several important agreements after talks between the two countries about their bilateral relations and the situation in the world and the Arab world in particular [5]

As a continuation of the path of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Nouira made an official visit to Libya that lasted from January 29 to February 4, 1973 and culminated in a joint statement on matters of mutual diplomatic representation. [6]

Bourguiba also made another visit to Tripoli on August 31, 1973, to participate in celebrations of the fourth anniversary of the Fatih Revolution of September [7] , a visit that recorded Bourguiba's call for Tunisian-Libyan unity.

These visits, which were at the presidential and ministerial levels, allowed for the framework of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, which included almost all fields, including the field of foreign policy, which represents the main focus of disagreement between the two countries due to the strategic difference between the two systems. Gaddafi is trying to unify the Libyan Jamahiriya with its neighbors from the Arab countries. Uniting them into one entity if necessary [8] While Bourguiba calls for getting rid of the sacred concept of unity so that it can be dealt with in an abstract manner, he says: "We must change our perception of unity as a duty that has almost become an obligation of religion and history... We must show the concept of unity." From this sacred anointing.. [9]

He also tries to look at unity realistically, subject to a group of objective factors: "We must not take the principle of Arab unity as a natural fact, that is, it is a historical and preordained inevitability. Although it is true that the trend of peoples today in the world is towards gathering and conglomeration, this does not mean that there is historical determinism." It leads to that.. [10] It also goes beyond the idealistic view of Arab nationalist ideology that says of mechanical determinism [11] and Bourguiba considers unity a means and not an end, that is, a tool and not an ideology" [12]

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[3] - Morocco magazine, p. 40, July, August 197, p. 10.
[4] - Morocco magazine, p. 41, September-October 1970, p. 11
[5] - Morocco magazine, p. 56, January, February, 1973, 59.
[6] - Morocco magazine, p. 56, March, April, 1973, 59
[7] - Morocco magazine, p. 59, September-October 1973, p. 57.
[8] - Idris, (Al-Rasheed): the choice of age, 129
[9] - Bourguiba, Habib: Statement to the Council of Arab Heads of State at its third session in Casablanca, Carthage 11/09/1965: Publication of the Secretariat of State for News and Guidance 21/09/1965: ., p. 51
[10] - Bourguiba, Habib: Statement to the Council of Arab Heads of State at its third session in Casablanca, Carthage 11/09/1965: Publication of the Secretariat of State for News and Guidance 21/09/1965: p. 52
[11] - Al-Hafiz Yassin, in the national democratic issue, Dar Al-Tali'a, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st Edition, 1981, pp.30 and 31
[12] - Bourguiba, beloved, statement to... Ibid., p. 52.

Despite the depth of the strategic disagreement between the two regimes, the two leaderships demonstrated a clear will to overcome the reasons for the disagreement between them and favor the principle of flexibility and cooperation.

Thanks to this cooperation, the idea of unity crystallized and preparations for it between the two countries increased significantly through the marathon visits, especially in the wake of Bourguiba's visit to Libya [13] , where Muhammad Al-Masmoudi made two visits, the first on November 5, 1973 and the second between November 10 and 12. 1973 and the third on December 4, 1973, during which he met with Gaddafi [14] . Tunisian efforts succeeded in putting Gaddafi in charge of the affairs of the Maghreb, away from the influence of the Nasserist nationalist tide, in which Gaddafi failed to achieve Arab unity. And his eastern setback [15] , especially the latter, despite his adherence to his eastern unionist tendencies, the matter does not impede the establishment of Tunisian-Libyan unity. [16]

2. Djerba meeting facts:

On January 12, 1974, the Tunisian and Libyan leaderships met on the Island of Djerba. The Tunisian leadership was composed of Habib Bourguiba, Mohamed Al-Sayyah, Mohamed Al-Masmoudi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Al-Fitouri, the Minister of Finance, Hassan Belkhoja [17] , and the personal secretary of President Bourguiba, "Al-Aouiti." With the Libyan leadership led by Mouammar Gaddafi, and after the meeting, Muhammad Al-Masmoudi announced the official declaration: "The establishment of the Islamic Arab Republic, which will have one constitution, one president, one flag, one army, and the same judicial, legislative and executive powers [18] and a referendum will be held." On January 18, 1974. In terms of structures, they were formed:

- The People's Assembly is represented in the states and governorates by an equal number of members.
- Flag: One that includes the Tunisian star and crescent, white in the middle, then red, then black.
- The winter capital: Tripoli and the summer capital: Carthage.
- Eastern capital: Kairouan.

Ghadames state will include Medenine state.

Ben Guerdane Province: It will include the west of Zuwara Governorate.

As for the government formation, Habib Bourguiba assumed the presidency of the Islamic Arab Republic and was assisted by two deputies, first Muammar Gaddafi and then Hedi Nouira. The government list includes 16 Tunisian ministers and 14 Libyan ministers. The first minister is Abdel Salam Jalloud, and he is assisted by Mohamed Al-Masmoudi as Deputy Prime Minister and

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13 - Maghreb Mashreq magazine, p. 59
14 - Maghreb Mashreq magazine, p.61, January, February, 1974 p. 43.
15 - Maghreb Mashreq magazine, p. 62, March April, 1974, p. 9
16 - Maghreb Mashreq magazine, p. 43, January, February, 1971, p. 8.
17 - Belkhoja, (Taher) ,Habib Bourguiba, biography of a leader, p. 238.
18 - Labor newspaper, Tunisian daily, January 13, 1974, p. 5712.

Foreign Minister. And Taher Belkhoja, Minister of Defense, and Gaddafi, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces" [19]

It is clear from this formation a kind of confusion and overlap in responsibility at the level of influence between the Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff, who is at the same time the Vice President of the Republic, and that "the government consists of 36 officers and officials, and it is clear that all the important positions It was assigned to the Libyans." [20] , and Taher Balkhoja, one of the prominent figures in the process, notes that "in the end, he and Habib Al-Shatti copied the text of the unity declaration and the list of members of the new government [21]

Perhaps many of those who listened to the "historic announcement" [22] of the establishment of unity between Tunisia and Libya and the birth of the Islamic Arab Republic "did not believe what was repeated to them when they heard the airwaves from the Island of Djerba, whose name was associated with the greatest event in the contemporary history of this region of the Arab world." African Islamic" [23]

. The repercussions of the meeting on the Tunisian regime

This project was born dead, as once it was announced, it failed to materialize on the ground. Perhaps the dismissal of Al-Masmoudi on January 14, 1974 [24] in the framework of a ministerial reshuffle [25] hastened the death of this initiative, especially since Al-Hadi Nouira was outside the country and found himself faced with a fait accompli, which forced him to hasten to return so that he could persuade Bourguiba to reconsider the Djerba Agreement. [26] It is likely that "Hadi Nouira," who opposed the agreement [27] , was the one who thought that the key to the secret lay with the head of state to convince him. To withdraw and find justifications for that" [28] , so he proceeded to dismiss Muhammad Al-Masmoudi [29]

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19 - Belkhoja, (Tahir): ibid., p. 241.

20 - The testimony of Ahmed Bennour in his interview with Ahmed Mansour in the share of a witness to the era episode 7 Al-Jazeera channel on 23/12/2012).

21 - Belkhoja, (Tahir): ibid.: p. 241.

22 - Action, January 13, 1974.

23 - Editorial of January 13, 1974

24 - Habib Chatti was appointed director of the presidential office to succeed Masmoudi, and Chatti had attended the signing of the declaration of unity as part of the delegation that accompanied Bourguiba to Djerba, see the work of January 13, 1974, as well as the work of January 15, 1974.

25 - appointed at the head of the Ministry of Defense Hadi Khafsha, and appointed Ahmed Benouz Wali Sousse Secretary of State to the Minister of Defense and appointed Abdullah Farhat at the head of the Ministry of Equipment, and Mohamed Nasser at the head of the Ministry of Social Affairs, see work January 15, 1974.

26 - Beji Gaid Essebsi attributes this decline to the shortcomings of the Tunisian presidential system, which concentrates power in the hands of one man who could have been in good health, enjoys popular legitimacy, has sound mental perceptions and has a basis of integrity, the system holds up, and if it is the opposite, everything is disrupted. Bourguiba's age when he signed the agreement was 71 years and he suffers from health problems, see:Caid Essebsi, (Beji): Habib Bourguiba, the Important and the Most Important, p. 183.

27 - In addition to Hadi Nouira, who opposes the agreement, he is joined by: Shadi Ayari, Minister of Economy, Mansour Moalla, Hadi Khafsha, Minister of Defense, an altercation took place between him and Mohamed Masmoudi in the Council of Ministers in the presence of Bourguiba and expressed his displeasure and expressed the method of signing and held Masmoudi the Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for this event.See: Belkhoja, (Taher): In an interview with Ahmed Mansour in the session "Witness to the Era" Al-Jazeera channel on 23/12/2012.

28 - Belkhoja, (Taher): the previous source, p. 245.

29 - The agreement constituted another indication of the contradictions of the team that erected after the October 1971 conference, after the exclusion of Behi Al-Adgham and Ahmed Mestiri, there was nothing left of the famous quartet except Hadi Nouira and Mohamed Masmoudi, and both of them claimed a special relationship with Bourguiba, but their personal relations and not their political choices and methods of work inspire them to achieve success in a

According to Mr. Mohamed Al-Issawi Al-Shatti, an advisor to the Libyan People's Inspection and Oversight Service, he confirms, "that Bourguiba's ministers and politicians close to him, especially Habib Al-Shatti, were the ones who caused the failure of the unity efforts and made Bourguiba change his decision to accept it and form the Islamic Arab Republic. (30)

The government of Hadi Nouira stood with full force against the project announced in Djerba (31), and was keen to circumvent every attempt to make Bourguiba adhere to his arrest, including Nouira and Tahar Belkhoja going to meet Bourguiba on February 9, 1974 (32) , and the opposing party succeeded. The agreement was intended to force Bourguiba to abandon the Djerba project since the meeting of the Council of the Republic on January 13, 1974, considering that the project "threatens the extinction of the Tunisian homeland and the elimination of the Tunisian nation." Beji Caid Essebsi also considered the agreement "an absurdity in the custom of Bourguiba's politics and a political loophole that allowed Gaddafi Significant interference in Tunisia's internal affairs (33)

It was clear that the government of Hadi Nouira, after learning the reactions of his Moroccan neighbors, led by Algeria, Bourguiba, on the eve of the signing of the declaration, came to the conclusion that the declaration was hasty, and quickly began talking about delaying the referendum until March 20 and "achieving unity in stages." Since tomorrow, that is, since January 13, 1974, Tunisian Radio has stopped calling itself Radio of the Islamic Arab Republic. This is the same day that recorded Bourguiba's reception of the ambassadors of the United States of America and France, and the announcement of what was described as technical modification within the government, which is The modification that affected the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs!

As part of its efforts to circumvent the Djerba project, the government of Hadi Nouira quickly issued, on January 15, a statement in which it emphasized the following points:

- Tunisia's constant adherence to the principle of unity.
- The necessity of consolidating this unit to ensure the preservation of its goals.
- Amending the constitution as soon as possible to allow the holding of a referendum.
- Entering into negotiations with Libya to control the content of unity and the stages of achieving it.
- Conducting the necessary contacts and consultations with the countries of the Maghreb (34) . Since this date, the Tunisian leadership has adhered to this statement with its permanent commitment to the principle of unity, and the realization of the content of the Djerba Declaration is only a matter of time (35) , and it began strangely - Inevitably - this unitary project will be rejected

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strategy with the spirit of Bourguibism. Their quarrels and conflicts amounted to grudges between them.See: Beji Caid Essebsi, source Ibid., p. 181.

30 - Al-Sabah newspaper, Tunisian daily, dated 20/12/2009.

31 - by Oraibi Abdelkader: Tunisia's relations with the countries of the Maghreb, p. 508)

32 - Bourguiba's stay in Switzerland lasted from January 19 to February 23, 1974, see: Maghreb Mashreq magazine, p. 62, March, April, 1974, p. 45.

33 - aid Essebsi (Beji): previous source, p. 181.

34 - Action, January 16, 1974. The press conference held by Habib Shatti, Minister of Foreign Affairs, considered the work on January 17, 1974.

35 - See in this regard the intervention of Ferjani Belhaj Ammar, in the work 6 February 1974.

in the name of "the unity of the Arab Maghreb" and Arab unity" [36] , as Al-Hadi Nouira stressed in his speech before the National Assembly on February 1, 1974 on the occasion of presenting the draft constitutional amendment, the necessity of preserving "that there should be no unity between Tunisia." Libya is distinct within the framework of the Arab Maghreb [37] , as if there was a conflict between the project of bilateral unity (the Tunisian-Libyan unity project in the present case) and the project of regional unity (at the level of the Maghreb countries) or nationalism at the level of all Arab countries.

However, this position was consistent with the nature of the Qatari logic that governs the behavior of the Tunisian leadership towards unity projects. The truth is that this leadership has always dealt with the principle of unity opportunistically, as it justified the necessity of strengthening bilateral ties in rejecting regional and national unity projects, and the necessity of regional construction and Nationalist in rejecting bilateral integration projects.

Perhaps this fear for Tunisian social gains is what prompted the Tunisian General Labor Union to adopt the government's position. Habib Ashour, Secretary of the General Union - in his capacity as a member of the National Assembly - stated, "I am pleased with the development this event has taken and I am pleased with the unity that I sensed among all the representatives regarding the positions of the party and the government, and that this position is the position of the General Labor Union. On January 12, the National Council of the Union was meeting in Amalkar and we were surprised by this statement. I did not believe at the time that unity would be achieved in a few minutes during a meeting between Presidents Bourguiba and Gaddafi [38] We wanted the unity to be deliberate and for the two peoples to be brothers in the fullest sense of the word, without divisions or bad intentions.

He addressed the issue of forming a unity state government, stressing that "it is unreasonable for ministerial positions to be assigned on a certain basis and if the referendum becomes a response to a certain measure, and that the Union declares it explicitly that it stands against any government that denounces military management..." [39] , stressing that Libya's acquisition of the Ministries of Defense and Finance expresses the expansionist will of Colonel Gaddafi, and is not, on this basis, consistent with Tunisia's independence and dignity [40]

In addition to all of this, Bourguiba's position upon his return from Switzerland at the end of February 1974 completely undermined the project of complete and immediate Tunisian-Libyan unity. At a meeting of state officials at the Crescent Palace on March 2, 1974 to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Constitutional Socialist Party, Bourguiba ended his impromptu speech by reading a written text that stated: In particular, "If the unity that we want to establish within the framework of the Arab nation is a goal that we believe in, we do not believe that it is possible in the near future... This is what we believe Algeria is thinking about, and this is our conviction that we hope the Libyan government will share with us [41]

..Regional and international reactions.

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36 - Action, February 3, 1974.
37 - Oraibi Abdul Qadir: previous reference, p. 517
38 - See the intervention of Habib Ashour in the National Assembly on February 5, 1974, in the work of February 6, 1974.
39 - Oraibi Abdul Qadir: previous reference, p. 517
40 - Action, 24 January 1974.
41 - Le Monde du 5 March 1974

(A). Reactions of the Maghreb countries.

The rest of the Maghreb countries opposed this unity, despite Bourguiba's keenness to confirm the Maghreb content of the Tunisian-Libyan unity through his invitation to the rest of the Moroccan parties to join it (42) , expressing his hope to annex Algeria, Mauritania, and Morocco to Libya and Tunisia (43) , as after hours of Signing the Djerba Declaration, Bourguiba contacted Mauritanian President Ould Daddah, King of Morocco Hassan II, and Algerian Presidents Houari and Boumediene, calling on them to join the new state project (44).

But it was rejected, which is not surprising if we consider the previous irredentist experiences that the Arab region experienced, because the national defense priorities that govern the behavior of most Arab regimes do not move except when the "irredentist threat" becomes present at their border lines, which will be proven by the nature of the reactions. Maghreb capitals from this project. What are the justifications for these countries' rejection and its repercussions on Tunisia's Maghreb relations?

In Algeria, the Al-Mujahid newspaper, the mouthpiece of the National Liberation Front, published on its first page, "The fleeting artificial unions and artificial buildings do not change the course of history, but the basis for that is the solidarity of peoples with each other to prepare for changes." In the same context, the Algerian Revolutionary Council announced that "this union has no future." For him, geopolitical adjustments in the region cannot do without the necessary prior, frank and honest consultations between neighboring countries (45) , in the words of one of the Algerian political leaders.

"We did not pay any attention to this unit, because it was characterized by improvisation" (46). This improvisation and haste is what Boumediene confirmed in his response in a phone call to Bourguiba when he was offered to join this unit. He said: "Algeria does not board the train after it sets off." (47) The project encountered strong opposition from the Algerian leadership in an official statement denouncing this improvised, hasty, and artificial unity.

From the beginning, Houari Boumediene took a hostile stance towards the project announced in Djerba, and on this basis, on January 13, 1974, he refused to receive Habib Chatt, Director of the Presidential Office, and Taher Belkhouja, Minister of the Interior (48), who were content with meeting with Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Ahmed Medghari. "(49), the Algerian rejection of the Tunisian-Libyan unity project announced in Djerba was clear and strong, something

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42 - Private interview with Taher Belkhoja on 20/05/2015 at his private house located on Eliane Safari Street in Belfidar in Tunis

43 - Oraibi Abdul Qadir: previous reference, p. 524

44 - Belkhoja, (Tahir): the previous source, pp. 246-247

45 - Ahmed Talib, (Ibrahimi): Algerian Memoirs, part 2, Dar Kasbah for Publishing, Algeria 2008, p. 406.

46 - Ibid., p. 406.

47 - Private interview with Ahmed Mestiri. On 14/11/2014 at his private house No. 31 Avenue Habib Bourguiba in La Marsa in Tunis

48 - Stemer . (Elisabeth) : la tentative de fusion tuniso-libyenne Op.cit.P13.

49 - Ahmed Madghari :(1934/1974) was an Algerian politician born in Saida who joined the revolution in the fifth province of Oujda and held several positions after independence, including member of the Revolution Council from 1956 to 1974, Minister of Finance from 1969 to 1970 and Minister of the Interior from 1962 to 1974.

that Algeria expressed officially, then the decision of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Algerian Council of Ministers issued on January 14, 1974, which focused on the necessity of "considering the objective reality of the peoples and States alike in any move towards the unity of the Arab Maghreb until it is possible and credible" [50]

As for the Kingdom of Morocco, it considered that the event was characterized by a kind of haste and improvisation that might deprive the desired unity of the chances of success, and even feared that it would lead to certain failure. [51] On the other hand, Al-Aqsa Morocco during this period was mainly preoccupied with the interactions of the Western Sahara issue, which occupied the first place. It raises the interests of the Moroccan state, and it is an issue that is not strange to Gaddafi, who stood behind the birth of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia El Hamra and Wadi al-Dahab (Polisario).

The Tunisian leadership was also keen to convince Morocco through the visit of Foreign Minister Habib Chatt to Al-Aqsa Morocco, where he met with Hassan II "to discuss the situation in Tunisia after the announcement of January 12, 1974" [52], and he declared after his return to Tunisia "It is known that the Djerba Agreement caused some doubts among our brothers in Algeria and Morocco because they were surprised by it, so their reaction at first was characterized by suspicion and doubt, to say the least, and it was necessary to clarify matters and remove the ambiguities.

While the Moroccan opposition considered this project do not to represent a direct threat to the Moroccan regime as a result of the thousands of kilometers that separate Al-Aqsa Morocco from this new republic, especially since Hassan II believed in the role of geography in directing historical events [53], and perhaps he saw Al-Aqsa Morocco as the birth of the Arab Republic. The possibility of curbing the policy of regional hegemony practiced by Algeria [54] and establishing stronger geo-strategic stability within the region between political units that are almost equal in terms of capabilities and geographical vastness, especially since the Far Maghreb was - like the rest of the Maghreb regimes - suspicious of The call of the "Morocco of the Peoples" whose history began in Algeria [55]

Indeed, Tunisian-Libyan unity collided with the opposition of Al-Aqsa Morocco as well, which affirmed that although it supports unity in principle, it does not accept that it is "at any price and with whoever, so you cannot expect anything from the Libyan colonel" [56], describing this unity as "hasty." And the improvised one, "Al-Aqsa Morocco was very suspicious of Gaddafi's politics as he was a volatile person who was "impossible to monitor and control, and until the beginning of the eighties he seemed very annoying" [57] and, like the rest of the regimes in the region, he feared for his stability from the unitary model that he was promoting his Libyan leader [58]

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50 - Oraibi: op. cit., p. 524.
51 - Belkhoja, (Tahir): previous source, p. 248.
52 - Action, 31 January 1974
53 - See his explanation of the failure of mutual attempts altered by the two seductive regimes.
54 - Oraibi: op. cit., p. 532.
55 - Same: p. 530
56 - Same: p. 530
57 - Hassan II, Memory of the King, p. 85
58 - Hassan II, Memory of the King, p. 87.

As for Mauritania, it was conservative, even though Bourguiba was keen to invite it to join the new unity project on the day it was announced on January 12, 1974. Mauritanian President Mokhtar Ould Daddah confirmed this in regard when Bourguiba offered him integration into the new unity, and that "his government is now studying this proposal." But it has not yet taken a final decision" [59]. Perhaps this is because Nawaqshet was first keen to follow the development of the Algerian position and discuss with the Algerian leadership during his official visit to Algeria on January 23 and 24, 1974. [60]

(b) The reactions of the Arab Levant countries.

It was clear, and perhaps expected, that the Tunisian-Libyan union project would meet with reservations, if not opposition, from some Arab capitals in the east, such as Cairo, Damascus, and Khartoum, which are linked, or have previously been linked, to unity agreements with Tripoli, but the capitals of the Arab Levant in general supported the project. In moderation [61], including Cairo, which is linked with Tripoli by a unity agreement with the accompanying political entitlements, and especially in this circumstance that was characterized by tension in relations between the two parties, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat declared: "Egypt supports every unity between Arabic countries." Adding that "the time has not yet come to say whether the unity project between Tunisia and Libya exposes the federalism project between Egypt and Libya to danger or not" [62]

Thus, this Tunisian-Libyan unionist project - from the perspective of the capitals of the Arab Levant - meant the Maghreb region first, and in a sense to exclude the political dangers that were led by the Libyan unionist preacher Muammar Gaddafi. Whatever the case, it did not take a hostile stance towards the Tunisian-Libyan union project.

(c) Responses of Western countries.

However, this project collided with the opposition of some Western powers, most notably France and the United States of America, as they are the two main foreign powers concerned with the fate of the region, but none of the Western capitals took an openly hostile stance against it, including Paris and Washington.

Habib Al-Shatti stated in this regard, "Everyone is wondering about the Djerba Agreement, and I recently met with Mr. Michel Joubard and explained this matter to him. Tunisia, for its part, was keen to reassure its Western allies. He received Bourguiba on January 13, 1974, that is, the day after the announcement. Djerba, the ambassadors of France and the United States of America, to put them in the picture of the development of the situation in light of the Djerba Declaration, while the French newspaper Libération reported the following: The January 12 agreement announces the beginning of the post-Bourguiba period.

As for Geneva, Switzerland, it commented that the Djerba Agreement was an attempt to impose spirit on matter, and the temptation was astonishing to attract Libyan energy, as if others

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59 - Ould Dada made this statement on January 23, 1974, see work, January 24, 1974.
60 - Maghreb Mashreq magazine, p. 62 March April, 1974, p. 41.
61 - Oraibi: the previous reference: p. 535.
62 - Oraibi Abdul Qadir: previous reference, p. 522.

would attract a thunderbolt to change the status quo. The French newspaper Les Echos, in turn, wrote, "The merger between the two countries is not an unusual event, as it brings together... An oil producer with abundant resources, lacking in men and land, and in a fertile, densely populated country with a well-formed elite." The British newspaper Le Gardienne described the union as "reasonable from an economic standpoint because Tunisia will be a less heavy economic burden." As for the New York Times' point of view The American "Union is considered an economic integration that avoids tensions and conflicts across the Arab world." [63]

Conclusion:

Through our treatment of this study, we reached the following conclusions:

- The unified "Djerba" project between Libya and Tunisia was aborted in its infancy and was not destined for success. It was called the "dead birth."

-The project carried within it the seeds of its demise, as it came hastily and neither politically, nor the media, nor the Maghreb, nor the people had paved the way for it. Everything happened in a record time, not more than an hour.

- The fears of the Tunisians contributed more to its failure, as they considered it political and diplomatic futility between the two countries.

The difference in orientations, goals and intentions between the two regimes contributed to the failure of the project, since the Tunisian regime aims to achieve economic gains and the Libyan regime aims for expansionary gains.

- In terms of reactions and positions, most Arab countries are between opposition and reservation, with the exception of some of them that are linked to Libya by the unity agreement, such as Cairo, Khartoum, and Damascus.

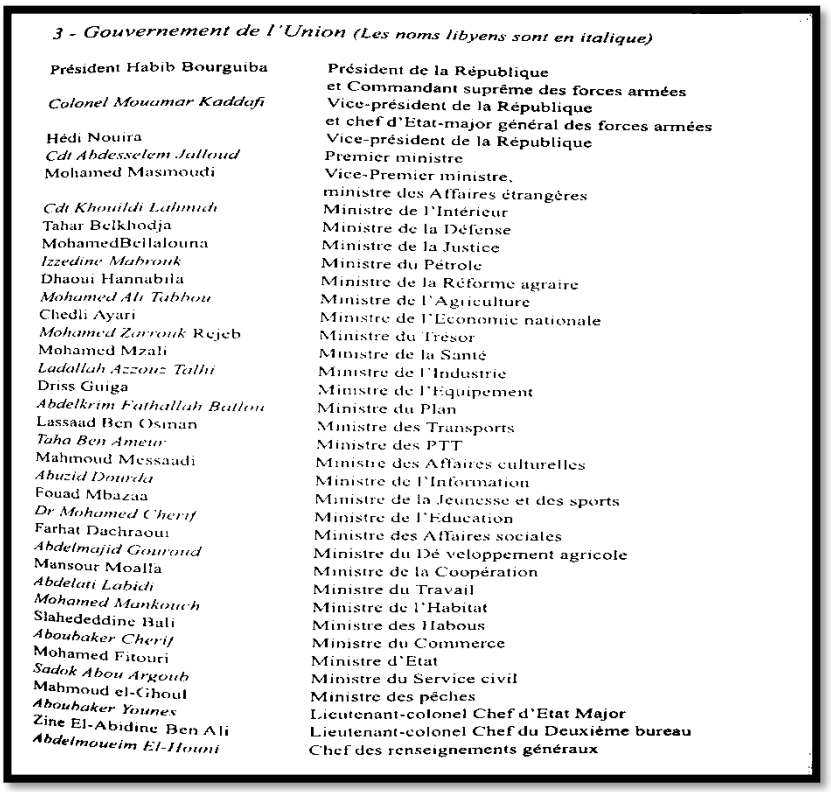
- Some Western powers, led by France and the United States of America, opposed the project as they were the two main foreign powers concerned with the fate of the region.

Maghreb countries such as Algeria and Morocco opposed the project because it was characterized by speed, improvisation, ill-considered and not comprehensive.

- One of the repercussions of the failure of the project was the deterioration of Tunisian relations with its neighbours. The response was the implementation of the Gafsa coup against the Bourguiba regime on January 27, 1980.

Supplements

[63] - Belkhoja, (Tahir): the source Al-Saiq pp. 246-2



3 - Gouvernement de l'Union (Les noms libyens sont en italique)

Président Habib Bourguiba	Président de la République et Commandant suprême des forces armées
Colonel Mouamar Kaddafi	Vice-président de la République et chef d'Etat-major général des forces armées
Hédi Nouira	Vice-président de la République
Cdt Abdesselem Jalloud	Premier ministre
Mohamed Masmoudi	Vice-Premier ministre, ministre des Affaires étrangères
Cdt Khouildi Lahmidi	Ministre de l'Intérieur
Tahar Belkhodja	Ministre de la Défense
MohamedBellalouna	Ministre de la Justice
Izzedine Mabrouk	Ministre du Pétrole
Dhaoui Hannabila	Ministre de la Réforme agraire
Mohamed Ali Tabbou	Ministre de l'Agriculture
Chedli Ayari	Ministre de l'Economie nationale
Mohamed Zarrouk Rejeb	Ministre du Trésor
Mohamed Mzali	Ministre de la Santé
Ladallah Azzouz Talhi	Ministre de l'Industrie
Driss Guiga	Ministre de l'Equipement
Abdelkrim Fathallah Batlou	Ministre du Plan
Lassaad Ben Osman	Ministre des Transports
Taha Ben Ameur	Ministre des PTT
Mahmoud Messaadi	Ministre des Affaires culturelles
Abuzid Dourda	Ministre de l'Information
Fouad Mbazaa	Ministre de la Jeunesse et des sports
Dr Mohamed Cherif	Ministre de l'Education
Farhat Dachraoui	Ministre des Affaires sociales
Abdelmajid Gouroud	Ministre du Dé veloppement agricole
Mansour Moalla	Ministre de la Coopération
Abdelati Labidi	Ministre du Travail
Mohamed Mankouch	Ministre de l'Habitat
Slahededdine Bali	Ministre des Habous
Aboubaker Cherif	Ministre du Commerce
Mohamed Fitouri	Ministre d'Etat
Sadok Abou Argoub	Ministre du Service civil
Mahmoud el-Ghoul	Ministre des pêches
Abouhaker Younes	Lieutenant-colonel Chef d'Etat Major
Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali	Lieutenant-colonel Chef du Deuxième bureau
Abdelmoueim El-Houni	Chef des renseignements généraux

List of members of the Tunisian-Libyan unity government according to the 1974 Djerba Agreement
Source: Tahar,(belkhoudja) : les trois décennies

Déclaration de Djerba

Au nom de Dieu clément et miséricordieux.

A une heure décisive, à un moment où les défis se multiplient, en un jour dont le souvenir sera impérissable, conscient du poids des responsabilités historiques qui lui incombent, le Combattant suprême, répondant à l'appel en faveur de la lutte pour la libération des territoires arabes et islamiques, a signé avec le colonel Mouamar Kaddafi la proclamation de l'union de la Tunisie et de la Libye arabes sur la base des principes constitutionnels en vigueur dans chacun des deux pays.

Les deux pays constitueront une seule République qui prendra le nom de République arabe islamique.

Elle aura une seule constitution, un seul drapeau, un seul président, une seule armée, les mêmes pouvoirs législatif, exécutif et judiciaire.

Un référendum sera organisé à cet effet le 18 janvier 1974.

Signé :
Habib BOURGUIBA

signé :
Mouamar KADDAFI

2 - Organes de l'Union

1. **Conseil du peuple : où seront représentés les gouvernorats des deux pays par un nombre égal de représentants.**
2. **Drapeau : l'étoile et le croissant tunisiens au milieu du blanc, puis le rouge et le noir.**
3. **Capitale : la capitale d'hiver : Tripoli, d'été : Carthage. L'Etat aura également une capitale honorifique : Kairouan.**

- Gouvernorat de Gadamès : comprendra le sud du gouvernorat de Médenine.

- Gouvernorat de Bengardane : comprendra l'ouest du gouvernorat de Zouara.

Signé :
Habib BOURGUIBA

Signé :
Mouamar KADDAFI

Declaration of Tunisian-Libyan unity on 18/01/1974
Source : Jeune Afrique n° 693 . Avril 1974