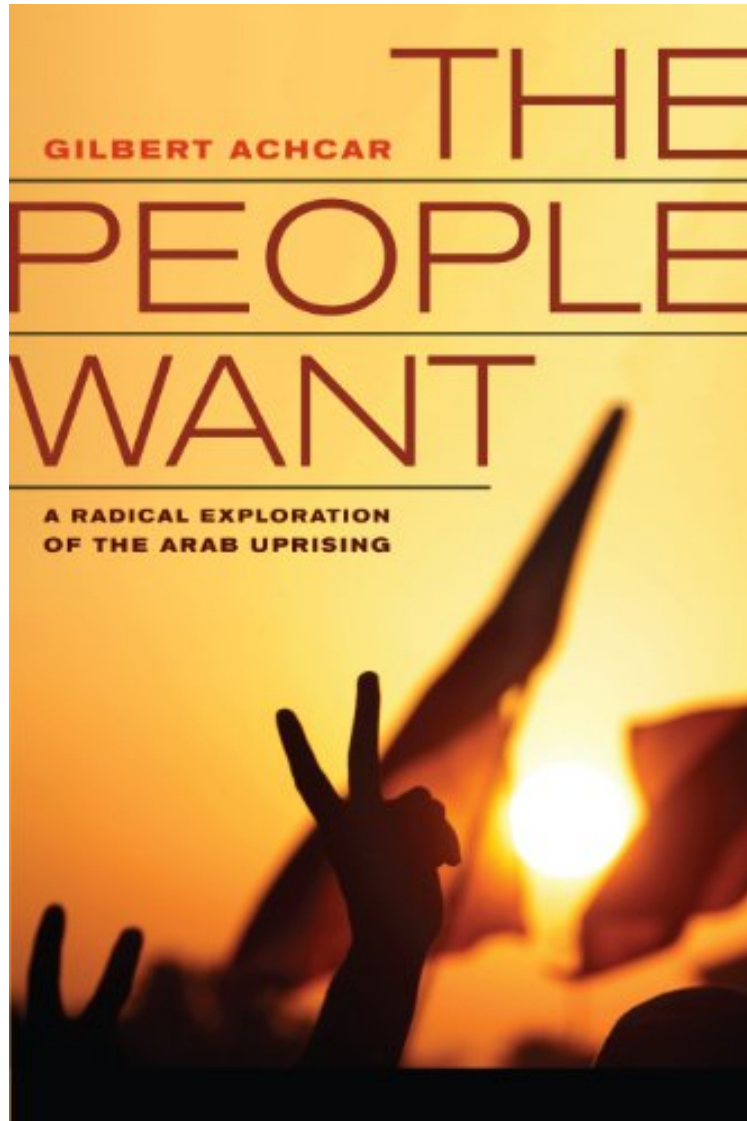


(Download) The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising

The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising

Gilbert Achcar

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Gilbert Achcar : The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What do people want today?By Aimee BrantThe author's rhetoric is out of date--too much like old-line commy-write.0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Tough readBy Papa JeffTough read, requires a lot of concentration to work through the pages.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Deeper roots of Arab uprisingsBy RaaminGilbert Achcar through his book looks at the causes behind the uprisings engulfed Arabic countries since 2011. Achcar initially starts with bringing in some social and economic

data pointing out that how development in the Middle East and North African countries (MENA) has been hampered by the wave of so called Neoliberal reforms since 80's. Achcar shows that the Neoliberal structural adjustments in this region have resulted in a fall in economic growth, investment and high unemployment especially among youth and graduates. He argues that the weakening economy, high unemployment and disintegration of social services state used to provide have contributed to the emergence of mass discontents which have prepared the ground for the uprisings. In the following chapters Achcar seeks the reasons behind such a downturn. He identifies two main characteristics of MENA region responsible for failure of Neoliberalism in promoting growth including the existence of Rentier States and Patrimonial political structures. Achcar argues that in MENA region in contrast to east and south east Asia the Neoliberal reforms have not promoted growth through the emergence of what he calls "market bourgeoisierdquo;, Instead massive privatization programs have resulted in the emergence of "state bourgeoisie" (oligarchs from within the state or with strong connection to it). The state bourgeoisie due to its ties to the rentier state and easy profit it earns through the rent money does not have much incentive for investment and the result has been a steady fall in investment, growth and employment. Achcar's book offers fresh and original insights to the Arab uprising very different from mainstream clichacute; type analyses which simplifies everything to people vs. despotic rulers and demand for democracy.

"The people want . . .": This first half of slogans chanted by millions of Arab protesters since 2011 revealed a long-repressed craving for democracy. But huge social and economic problems were also laid bare by the protestors' demands. Simplistic interpretations of the uprising that has been shaking the Arab world since a young street vendor set himself on fire in Central Tunisia, on 17 December 2010, seek to portray it as purely political, or explain it by culture, age, religion, if not conspiracy theories. Instead, Gilbert Achcar locates the deep roots of the upheaval in the specific economic features that hamper the region's development and lead to dramatic social consequences, including massive youth unemployment. Intertwined with despotism, nepotism, and corruption, these features, produced an explosive situation that was aggravated by post-9/11 U.S. policies. The sponsoring of the Muslim Brotherhood by the Emirate of Qatar and its influential satellite channel, Al Jazeera, contributed to shaping the prelude to the uprising. But the explosion's deep roots, asserts Achcar, mean that what happened until now is but the beginning of a revolutionary process likely to extend for many more years to come. The author identifies the actors and dynamics of the revolutionary process: the role of various social and political movements, the emergence of young actors making intensive use of new information and communication technologies, and the nature of power elites and existing state apparatuses that determine different conditions for regime overthrow in each case. Drawing a balance-sheet of the uprising in the countries that have been most affected by it until now, i.e. Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Syria, Achcar sheds special light on the nature and role of the movements that use Islam as a political banner. He scrutinizes attempts at co-opting the uprising by these movements and by the oil monarchies that sponsor them, as well as by the protector of these same monarchies: the U.S. government. Underlining the limitations of the "Islamic Tsunami" that some have used as a pretext to denigrate the whole uprising, Gilbert Achcar points to the requirements for a lasting solution to the social crisis and the contours of a progressive political alternative.

"How does one tell the story of a revolutionary moment when the cataclysmic events are still underway, when the future remains remarkably uncertain, and where upheavals continue to characterise the day-to-day conduct of politics? Gilbert Achcar's *The People Want* provides a felicitous response to this question. . . . Any reader who would like a clear-eyed, theoretically grounded, and lucid assessment of what the Arab uprisings have wrought so far would benefit from this book."