

The Early Stage of the Revolution

1 THE REVOLUTIONS BEFORE THIS REVOLUTION

The revolution that began in Egypt in January 2011 was by no means the first liberal/nationalistic/pro-democracy movement to disrupt the status quo of the regime in power at the time. Egypt's history includes several political uprisings stemming from the people's demands for freedom and justice, even though these revolts were not connected by any ideology or political pursuit.¹ No one has ever proven the theory of historical continuity in Egypt, but I see a link, no matter how intangible or scientifically difficult to establish. Mine may be a sentimental or romantic vision of Egypt's history. But anyone who shares the notion of Egyptianhood, *al-muwatana al-Masriyya*, which I discussed in the Introduction (with some poetic license), can identify a historic link that most Egyptians feel. The various revolts, upheavals, and revolutions from 1798 to 2011 are somehow connected, if only because each was an instance of Egyptians rebelling *against* injustice and *for* freedom. The 2011 Revolution is one link in that national chain.

¹ According to some accounts of history, Egyptian peasants started revolting against the Turkish Sultan, his appointed Khedives, and the foreign profiteers as early as 1822. These revolts were against oppression and exploitation and were not based on any specific political ideology. But the 1919 Revolution was a liberal, nationalistic movement largely inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution of 1789 and the embodiment of these ideas in the French democracy movement as it evolved through World War I. The French intellectual influence on the Egyptian intellectual elite was dominant, if nothing else because the Egyptian elite favored a French education as a way of counteracting British colonialism. France contributed heavily to support its educational presence in Egypt and offered many opportunities for Egyptian university graduates to pursue their education in French universities; in fact, Egyptian universities commonly sent their graduates to study in France until the 1970s. Egyptians have attended British universities since the early 1900s, but their numbers are significantly smaller than those of Egyptians who studied in to France. After the 1970s, Egyptian students' interest shifted toward the United States. But between 1882 and 1952, Egyptian intellectuals and political leaders were most influenced by the liberal, democratic, and nationalistic views of France and, through that, of Western Europe.

In the 1800s, the Khedives who administered Egypt on behalf of the Turkish Ottoman Sultans were not only despotic but ruthless.² They used Egyptian peasants, *fallahīn*, just as European feudal regimes in the Middle Ages exploited farmers as serfs. They excessively taxed the peasants and frequently used them as forced labor for their own projects. The *khedives* also used non-Egyptians – Turks, Circassians (mostly Sunni Muslim people of the northwest Caucasus), and others who had settled in the country – to exploit the indigenous population, mostly the peasants in what was a poor, agrarian society. This led to a number of popular uprisings: the first recorded one was in upper Egypt in 1822, then in the delta in 1844, and then throughout Egypt in 1863 and 1879. Egyptians also revolted against Napoleon in 1798 when French forces under his command occupied Egypt until 1801, when what remained of them were forced to leave.³

In all these uprisings, peasants rebelled against the crushing economic burdens of their rulers' injustices. But could a sense of nationalism have also motivated these peasants? The uprising of 1798, clearly was a rebellion against a foreign occupier, even if at the time the Egyptian Beys, who controlled the country, were the oppressive rulers. How does one distinguish between oppressive rulers who are indigenous and those who are foreigners? Perhaps there is no line, and the motivation for rebellious Egyptians is to end the oppression – and in the process recover their national identity and dignity. Maybe it is in the nationalistic motivation that permeated many rebellious Egyptians.

All this is part of the historical baggage of the most significant nationalistic expression: the 1919 Revolution against the British foreign occupier. Ideologically, that revolution stemmed from Egypt's first liberal nationalistic movement, which began in 1875 when Mahmoud Sami el-Baroudi Pacha and other prominent Egyptians rose up to oppose the Turks, Circassians, and other foreigners who had been settled in Egypt by the Turkish Ottoman Empire and who exploited the country and its people. These upper-class nationalists were

² *Khedive* means Viceroy of Egypt under what was called the Suzerainty of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. See e.g., Hanioglu, M. Sükrü, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2008); Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Empire* (London: Folio Society 2003); Quataert, Donald, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (2nd edn., New York: Cambridge University Press 2013).

³ See Cole, Juan, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East, 202–221* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2013); Mackesy, Piers, *British Victory in Egypt, 1801: The End of Napoleon's Conquest* (London: I.B. Tauris 2013); Strathern, Paul, *Napoleon in Egypt* (New York: Bantam 2007); al-Jabarti, Abd al-Rahman, *Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the French Occupation, 1798* (Shmuel Moreh trans., expanded edn., Princeton: Markus Wiener 2004) (1993) (al-Jabarti was a well-known Arab historian of the time); Turc, Nicolas, *Chronique d'Égypte 1798–1804* (Gaston Wiet trans., Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale 1950).

joined in 1879 by Colonel Ahmad ʿUrabi, who had previously challenged the khedive and rose to become one of the nationalist leaders. At that time, he was serving as Minister of War and had been elevated to the rank of pacha (an honorary title equivalent to the highest rank of nobility the country offered). After the British invasion of 1882 and the defeat of the fledgling Egyptian Army that opposed it, ʿUrabi, the nationalist hero, was falsely charged with treason and turned over by the British to Khedive Tawfiq for trial.⁴ Tawfiq, then the ruler of Egypt, had come to power in 1879 by the Turkish Sultan's appointment. Tawfiq's reign (1879–1892) followed that of Khedive Ismail (1863–1879), a tyrannical, profligate monarch also appointed by the Turkish Ottoman Sultan, whom the Nationalist movement also opposed.⁵

During this time, Egypt's massive debts, occasioned by the concessions Khedive Tawfiq gave to the Suez Canal Company and by the expenditures of Khedive Ismail on the ceremonies celebrating the canal's opening, led to British and French oversight of Egypt's finances.⁶ Egyptian nationalist forces

⁴ ʿUrabi pleaded guilty to a charge of rebellion and was exiled to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) for twenty years. He then returned to Egypt and spent his remaining years trying to regain his forfeited property. The Blackstone government in London orchestrated this arrangement while the Khedive wanted to execute ʿUrabi. Probably the most insightful publication on this period of history is the memoirs of an active participant of the time. See Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen, *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt – Being a Personal Narrative of Events* (reprint to order by Emero Publishing) (2nd edn., New York: Knopf 1922); Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (2 vols., Charleston: Nabu Press 2010)(1916).

⁵ On Egypt's history during the fateful reign of Khedive Ismail, see el-Ayyoubi, Elias, *Tarikh Misr fi-ʿAhd al-Khedive Ismail Pacha: 1863–1879* (2 vols., Cairo: Madbouli Publishers 1997).

⁶ In 1858 Egypt purchased 44 percent of the initial 200 million gold francs offering of Suez Canal Company stock. Two years later, the company was almost bankrupt and Egypt had to come up with a further investment of thirty-two million gold francs. That brought Egypt's financial contribution to some 120 million gold francs; however, because of financial manipulations, Egypt wound up with less than 30 percent of the shares. Egypt then contributed 120,000 forced laborers to dig the Suez Canal and to dig a freshwater canal from the Nile to Ismailia. An estimated forty thousand laborers died of heat, exhaustion, malnutrition, and sickness. Then the government was induced to buy back land that it had previously given to the Suez Canal Company for a further 84 million gold francs. In 1875, as a result of Khedive Ismail's extravagant expenditures on the canal's opening, which included the commissioning of Giuseppe Verdi to write the opera *Aida*, he had to sell 166,602 shares to England for a cash advance of £4 million, which was about one-fourth of what Egypt had originally paid for these shares. Furthermore, the advance of the £4 million also generated £4 million in interest, while England, between 1875 and 1882, made £38.6 million in income from these same Suez Canal Company shares. The financial saga continued until 1922, well after Egypt had been occupied in 1882, on the excuse that Egypt had to repay millions of pounds to the Rothschild banks of England and France for financial deals that it had been forced into. England controlled Egypt's Ministry of Finance from 1882 to 1922, and no expenditure could be made without England's permission. England's financial administrators lived in Egypt and directed its finances, both income and expenditures. Between these exploitative practices and the goods and services

challenged that arrangement. Britain, in 1882, invaded and occupied Egypt, with French support and with the approval of the Turkish Sultan, as well as with the collusion of the Sultan's appointed Khedive Tawfiq. Colonel 'Urabi led Egyptian forces to oppose the British invasion, but they were routed at the Battle of Tel el-Kebir in the Nile Delta close to the Suez Canal.⁷

The 1875–1882 liberal nationalistic movement was crushed by the British invasion and subsequent repression at the hands of Khedive Tawfiq. His successors were lackluster and inefficient, but less despotic. The successive uprisings from 1822 to 1882, along with a combination of many other factors, including the rise of nationalistic liberal feelings across the Egyptian population, brought about the 1919 Revolution, which led to Egypt's nominal independence in 1922.⁸

obtained from Egypt during World War I and World War II, by 1956, England owed Egypt more than £450 million, which it never repaid. See Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *The Nationalization of the Suez Canal and the Illicit Act in International Law*, 14 DePaul Law Review 258, 269–288 (1965) (this article defends Egypt's right to nationalize the Suez Canal and documents how much it contributed to its building and to the Suez Canal Company generally).

⁷ Mohammad Khattab, a lawyer from an aristocratic family, was a supporter of Orabi. He raised funds for his efforts from nationalistic wealthy peers and is believed to have been with Orabi at the time of the Battle of Tel el-Kebir. He was my maternal grandfather.

⁸ Between 1882 and 1914, the Ottoman Khedive was propped up by the British and the French militaries in what has come to be called the “veiled protectorate.” Then in 1914, as a result of the British declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire, Egypt was deemed an actual British protectorate, a euphemistic term for colonial occupation. After 1922, Britain unilaterally ended the Protectorate but kept British troops in Egypt, mainly in the Suez Canal area and in Cairo. In 1936, an agreement was entered that legitimized Britain's position. In 1954, Egypt under Nasser ended these privileges, though allowing Britain to maintain one military base in Ismailia, ostensibly for the storage of military equipment only. This arrangement ended with the 1956 Suez War.

The British interest in occupying Egypt was more than financial. It was about Egypt's strategic location (see Chapter 13), and in part about the Suez Canal, which linked Great Britain with its Asian colonies, especially India. During World War I and World War II, Egypt was an important base for the Allies, particularly for the British. The World War I campaign against the Turkish Ottoman Empire forces in Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and what is now Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq started out of Egypt (see Lawrence, T.E., *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (repr. London: Penguin 2000) [1922]). During World War II, not only British troops but American, Australian, Indian, New Zealander, and South African troops were in Egypt, along with contingents from other European occupied countries, such as France and Poland. By July 1942 Field Marshal Erwin Rommel led his famed *Afrika Korps* all the way to El Alamein, where the North African Campaign of World War II, as it was called, reached a decisive point. El Alamein, which, ironically, means “the two worlds” and in fact was where two worlds collided, is only 70 kilometers from Alexandria. Had Rommel broken through the Allied lines there, then commanded by General (later Field Marshal) Bernard Law Montgomery, there would have been nothing to stop the German–Italian forces from reaching the Suez Canal and crossing into the Sinai and Palestine. The seizure of the Suez Canal would have been a devastating blow to the Allies, and would have severed Britain's link to India. See Moorehead, Alan, *The Desert War: The Classic Trilogy on the North Africa Campaign 1940–1943*

The 1919 Revolution against British occupation was a popular uprising led by prominent lawyers, landowners, and intellectuals who had the support of the middle class and farmers. The former demonstrated and protested in the streets of Cairo, while in Upper Egypt (from the south of Cairo to Aswan to the Sudanese border), farmers attacked British garrisons.⁹ This nationalistic movement was also a secular pro-democracy movement involving Muslims and Christians alike.¹⁰

(New York: Penguin Books 2009) (1965); Barr, Niall, *Pendulum of War: The Three Battles of El Alamein* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press 2005); Montgomery, Bernard Law, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Books 2012) (1958); Rommel, Erwin *The Rommel Papers* (B. H. Liddell Hart ed., New York: Da Capo 1953); Patton, George S., Jr., *War As I Knew It* (Novato, CA: Presidio 2003) (1947).

⁹ The overall leader of the 1919 Revolution was Saad Zaghloul, who took a delegation of prominent Egyptians to the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris to argue for Egypt's independence. But British colonialism prevailed, and Egypt was declared a British protectorate, triggering the 1919 Revolution. Saad Zaghloul was exiled by the British, first to Malta in 1921, then to the Seychelles in 1922, and released in 1923 after the British Protectorate status was removed. Others were imprisoned on Malta Island, then under British Control. Mahmoud Bassiouni, my paternal grandfather who led the Upper Egypt part of the Revolution, was tried by a British military court and sentenced to death. While his conviction was appealed and ultimately reversed by the Privy Council, he was confined to a western desert oasis. After his release, he was elected in 1923 to Egypt's first Senate, where he served until 1946. He was also its president. The only leader of that Revolution who remained free and served as leader of the Wafd Party and prime minister for years to come was Moustafa el-Nahas. The Wafd Party still exists. It should be noted that during the period 1882 to 1919 the liberal/nationalistic/pro-democracy flame was kept alive by a number of French educated jurists turned political activists. Their principal leaders, after whom two main squares (actually circles) in Cairo are named are Moustafa Kamel Pasha and Mohamed Farid Bey. They founded a political movement that had pan-Arab dimensions and the first newspaper, *Al-Lewa'*, that was clearly against British colonialism. See Hussein, Ahmad, *Tarikh Masr [Egypt's History]* (5 vols., Cairo: Mo'assasat Dar El-Sha'b 1977–1980) (chronicling Egypt's history from 1907 to 1929). See also Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2004) (1963).

¹⁰ Probably one of the most descriptively moving books on the Egyptian Delegation and on the people's nationalistic feelings was written by Mahmoud Aboul-Fath, who was the secretary of the Egyptian delegation to the Paris Peace conference after World War I when the League of Nations, predecessor to the United Nations, was established. Since "delegation" in Arabic is *al-Wafd*, the party that grew out of this initiative became the Wafd Party. Aboul-Fath, who later founded *al-Mussawar*, a weekly equivalent of *Time* magazine, was a prominent Wafdist for years. But in 1919, he was the secretary of the delegation, which he describes in his book, *Ma'a al-Wafd al-Masry (With the Egyptian Delegation)*. He describes how the delegates met at the Cairo rail station heading to Alexandria to board a ship to Marseilles, France, and then went by train to Paris, to argue for Egypt's independence. At the Cairo railroad station, the delegation was met by throngs of well-wishers from all walks of life. Then, as the train proceeded, at every station on the way to Alexandria, for 220 kilometers, more throngs of people, mostly farmers, stood on the rails to stop the train, and in stations, to cheer and encourage the members of the *Wafd* (the Delegation). "Bring back independence!" they shouted. They were Muslims and Copts, young and old, rich and poor, united by their nationalistic feeling – as were those in Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011, though by 2011 the secularists had receded in political influence while nationalistic/

The Egyptian delegation to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference failed to gain recognition for Egypt's independence from the countries represented at the conference. But its efforts and the 1919 Revolution resulted in Egypt's nominal independence, gained in 1922 from the British Protectorate, which had been unilaterally established in 1914, though Britain had *de facto* occupied Egypt since 1882.¹¹ Egypt's independence also brought about the 1923 Constitution, under which the monarchy was constitutional and the legislative and judicial branches were independent.¹²

The 1919 nationalist/secular/liberal/pro-democracy movement remained active in Egypt through a number of political parties. But by 1951, these parties and the Parliament had become dysfunctional, as had the then leading al-Wafd Party.¹³ This political dysfunction precipitated the military coup of July 23, 1952 – a takeover that had been brewing since Egypt's first war with Israel in 1948.

After the fall of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in 1918, and particularly after the deceptive promises of the League of Nations based on President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" plan that the people's right to self-determination was to be recognized, pan-Arabism became associated with national independence movements in several Arab states.¹⁴ Egyptian Nationalism became part of Arab Nationalism, whose remnants are noticeable in the Arab Spring movement that started in 2010.¹⁵

pro-democracy feelings were endorsed by many Islamists. But while the Islamists moved in that direction, the nationalistic/pro-democracy movement also moved toward embracing more Islamist values and tendencies. See Chapter 6.

¹¹ On February 28, 1922, Britain unilaterally declared Egyptian independence without any negotiations with Egypt. Four matters were "absolutely reserved to the discretion" of the British government until agreements concerning them could be negotiated: the security of communications of the British Empire in Egypt; the defense of Egypt against all foreign aggressors or interference, direct or indirect; the protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities; and Sudan. Sultan Ahmad Fuad became King Fuad I, and his son, Farouk, was named his heir. On April 19, a new Constitution was approved. Also that month, an electoral law was issued that ushered in a new phase in Egypt's political development: parliamentary elections that took place in 1923. See Fay, Mary Ann, *Historical Setting, in Egypt: A Country Study*, 46–49 (Helen Chapin Metz ed., 5th edn., Washington D.C.: Library of Congress 1991).

¹² See Chapter 11. ¹³ See Fay, *supra* note 11 at 49–52.

¹⁴ See Buchanan, Allen, *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination: Moral Foundations for International Law* (New York: Oxford University Press 2007); Friedlander, Robert A., *Self-Determination: A Legal-Political Enquiry*, 1 *Detroit College of Law Review* 71 (1975); Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *The Legal Effects of Wars of National Liberation*, 65 *American Journal of International Law* 172 (1971).

¹⁵ See Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *Egypt's Unfinished Revolution*, in *Civil Resistance in the Arab Spring: Triumphs and Disasters* (Adam Roberts et al. eds., Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press 2015); Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *Egypt in Transition: The Third Republic*, 4 *PRISM* 3 (2014); al-Amin, Esam, *The Arab Awakening Unveiled: Understanding Transformations and Revolutions in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Trust 2013);

Today, however, not much is left of the highly motivated popular efforts of the early 2010s: Syria and Yemen are in the throes of a bloody civil war, and Libya is a failed state. Egypt is in a period of transition after avoiding a theocracy and perhaps civil war, but the country is struggling toward progress under a well-intentioned regime whose hallmarks to date are repression and a lack of vision for Egypt's future.¹⁶ Tunisia is the only Arab Spring country that has transcended its 2010 revolutionary stage and moved in the direction of a somewhat stable government with democratic elements, though it is still struggling with corruption and abuses of power.¹⁷

Between 1923 and 1952, Egypt had two kings, Fuad and Farouk, as well as more than fifteen prime ministers and cabinets. The nation suffered through numerous political struggles between the monarchy and its supporters and the liberal/nationalist/pro-democracy movement.¹⁸ The latter also had to fight against British occupation, during times when Egypt was a live theater of military operations in the first and second world wars.¹⁹ This was followed by a disastrous military confrontation with the fledgling state of Israel in 1948.

Between 1948 and 1951, the progressive youth wing of the al-Wafd Party and others organized commando raids against British military installations near the Suez Canal, reigniting a nationalistic spark among the people. A few young Army officers surreptitiously supported the progressive nationalist youth and eventually formed a secret organization within the military called the Free Officers, *al-dhubhatt al-Ahrār*, who carried out the 1952 Revolution that toppled the monarchy. The Free Officers, led by a young Lieutenant Colonel from Assiut, Upper Egypt, named Gamal Abdel Nasser, seized power

Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *The "Arab Revolution" and Transitions in the Wake of the "Arab Spring,"* 17 *UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* 133 (2013); Lynch, Marc, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* (New York: Public Affairs 2012).

¹⁶ See Chapter 5 and Chapter 8.

¹⁷ See Chrisafis, Angélique & Ian Black, *Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali Forced to Flee Tunisia As Protesters Claim Victory*, *Guardian* (January 14, 2011), www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/14/tunisian-president-flees-country-protests; Kirkpatrick, David D., *Tunisians Vote in a Milestone of Arab Change*, *New York Times* (October 23, 2011), www.nytimes.com/2011/10/24/world/africa/tunisians-cast-historic-votes-in-peace-and-hope.html?_r=0; *Tunisia Assembly Passes New Constitution*, *BBC* (January 27, 2014), www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25908340; Markey, Patrick & Tarek Amara, *Veteran Essebsi Wins Tunisia's First Free Presidential Election*, *Reuters* (December 22, 2014), www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/22/us-tunisia-election-idUSKBN0JZ04F20141222#vOrtiwycXaTf5BxS.97; Mofteh, Lora, *Who Is Habib Essid? Tunisia's Prime Minister Candidate Was a Former Ben Ali Interior Minister*, *International Business Times* (January 5, 2015), www.ibtimes.com/who-habib-essid-tunisias-prime-minister-candidate-was-former-ben-ali-interior-1773208.

¹⁸ King Farouk on occasion manifested his support of the nationalist movement, which fought against British colonialism. But more often than not, he gave in to British pressures.

¹⁹ See Rommel, *supra* note 8; Moorehead, *supra* note 8.

on July 23 and selected Major-General Muhammad Naguib as their titular leader.

Naguib, a military hero, had fought in the 1948 war against Israel and was wounded twice in combat. In 1951, he opposed King Farouk's faction in the military and ran for president of the Officer's Club, which was quite daring at the time. Nasser positioned Naguib as Egypt's first president, and then, in 1954, ruthlessly arrested him and held him under house arrest, where he remained almost until his death in 1984. General Naguib was a decent, upright, and wise man, all of which stood in the way of Nasser's revolutionary fervor, unbridled ambition, and ego.²⁰

The Egyptian 1952 Revolution took on the mantle of pan-Arabism and promoted uprisings in other Arab countries. Egypt's General Intelligence Agency (GIA) and Military Intelligence fomented opposition to monarchies in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and the Gulf states, which were supported by the West in general and by the United States in particular.

The turning point came in July 1956, when President Nasser was faced with the United States's political and ideological opposition to Egypt's and the Arab World's nationalistic pan-Arab movement, which the United States demonstrated by blocking the World Bank's funding for the building of the vital Aswan High Dam. This proved to be John Foster Dulles' folly: Nasser responded by nationalizing the Suez Canal Company²¹, and Britain, France, and Israel attacked Egypt in response.²² Nothing could have galvanized the Egyptian and Arab Nationalist movements more than this resurgence of Western imperialism working hand-in-hand with Israel.²³

²⁰ To date, the story of Naguib's house arrest has not been fully told, and General Naguib has not been historically rehabilitated. Egypt's first President of the Republic, established in 1953, was not Nasser but Major-General Muhammad Naguib. Nasser was Egypt's second president, but one can hardly find any reference to that fact in Egyptian history books or textbooks – revisionist history remains dominant. See Mansour, Anis, *Abdel Nasser: Al-Muftari 'Alihi wal Muftari 'Alaina [Abdel Nasser: The One Who was Abused and the One Who Abused Us]* (3rd edn., Cairo: Nahdet Masr 1991).

²¹ See Bassiouni, *supra* note 6.

²² See Turner, Barry, *Suez 1956: The Inside Story of the First Oil War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton 2006); *Suez 1956* (William Roger Louis and Roger Owen eds., New York: Oxford University Press 1989); *Egypt and Nasser 1952–1956*, Vol. 1. (Dan Hofstadter ed., New York: Facts on File 1973); Nutting, Anthony, *No End of a Lesson: Story of Suez* (London: Constable 1996) (1967).

²³ Its origins are in the writings of Syrian intellectuals of the 1920s, which gave rise to the Baath Party in Syria and its offspring in Iraq. See e.g., Choueiri, Youssef, *Arab Nationalism: A History: Nation and State in the Arab World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2000); Devlin, John, *The Baath Party: A History From Its Origins to 1966* (2nd edn., Stanford: Hoover Institution Press 1975).

Nasser's revolutionary regime remained in power from July 23, 1952, until his death on September 28, 1970. Anwar Sadat took over on October 15, 1970, and remained in power until his death on October 6, 1981. Thereafter, Mubarak presided from October 14, 1981, to February 11, 2011. All these leaders were from the military.

Nasser was a charismatic, popular, and fiery revolutionary leader whose impact in Egypt and in the Arab world was inspirational. Notwithstanding his failures and abuses, Nasser's regime was not as corrupt as those of his successors. It was, however, particularly abusive and repressive, with an unprecedented number of arbitrary arrests, detentions, disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and acts of torture.

From 1954 to 1970, Nasser pursued a socialist economic policy, which was largely a failure. It started with agrarian reform, a necessity designed to redistribute the land: at the time, 10 percent of the people owned 90 percent of all agricultural land, a legacy of the feudal land ownership system that had existed in Egypt for centuries. But this laudable goal of redistributing land resulted in the division of large but economically productive land units into small fragments, and agricultural production started falling.

This is not the only example of a social experiment gone wrong. The years following 1957 saw worse: the first wave of nationalizations of private-sector industries, financial institutions, and other business enterprises. Agrarian reform and nationalization of the private sector came at the same time as large-scale state-owned projects, a socialist approach that created a large, bureaucratic, state-owned and state-operated economy that was not cost-efficient. Above all, it became a place where loyal military officers, with or without any business skills, were rewarded with second-career management opportunities.

All this eventually combined to destroy the private sector and weaken the economy, providing the means for corrupt individuals who were close to those in power to advance opportunistic interests.²⁴ But it also showed that Egypt could undertake major construction projects, such as the building of the Aswan Dam, as well as establish industries to supply iron and steel, cement, and automobiles.

²⁴ Sadat reversed that course and liberalized the economy, opening a path for the private sector, which turned into an exploitative form of uncontrolled capitalism. Mubarak enhanced this system, adding to it widespread nepotism based on political loyalty. Under both rulers, public-sector industries and financial institutions were sold at low prices to oligarchs. This was one of the most blatant manifestations of institutionalized corruption, during which the nation's wealth was transferred to people who profited from that wealth and transferred most of it abroad, much to the detriment of the country. As described in this book, these corrupt individuals simply got away with it.

Perhaps because of such visible accomplishments, the early Nasser period from 1952 to 1957 was mostly uplifting for the Egyptian people, as Nasser tapped into an immense reservoir of nationalist sentiment that has always been part of that intangible spirit of Egyptianhood.

Nasser expanded that sentiment into Arab nationalism, which he spread throughout the region with much popular enthusiasm.²⁵ One of Nasser's political accomplishments was the 1954 Evacuation Agreement with Britain, resulting in the removal of British forces, which had been in Egypt since 1882.²⁶

When, two years later, in 1956, Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt and occupied portions of the Canal Zone and the Sinai,²⁷ the Egyptian people rose once again in defense of their country. In a unique manifestation of cooperation in that era between the United States and the USSR, the General Assembly of the United Nations ordered a cease-fire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces.²⁸ The British and the French withdrew in December 1956, and the Israelis withdrew in March 1957.

The 1956 war highlighted in Egypt certain domestic abuses and failures of foreign military and political ventures. Then came the devastating 1967 defeat of the military at the hands of Israel followed by the War of Attrition. From there it was all downhill for the Nasser regime, until he died from natural causes, after erratic years because of uncontrolled diabetes, in 1970. During his last years, many around him took advantage of his poor health and abused their authority and power. Egypt's situation was worsening significantly, and the people felt it.

Nasser and his senior collaborators initially considered Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, to be unremarkable, but Sadat turned out to be the leader who

²⁵ In early 1957, Israeli forces withdrew from the Sinai, after the British and the French had departed in December 1956.

²⁶ The US Ambassador to Egypt, Jefferson McCaffery, had a positive role in the negotiations in Cairo with the British, led by their ambassador to Egypt, Sir Ralph Stevenson, who also played a positive role. My father, the late Ambassador Ibrahim Bassiouni, was on the unofficial Egyptian Foreign Ministry team, whose role was not visible to the public. When these unofficial discussions reached agreement, the process became official and all the credit went to Nasser.

²⁷ During that war, I served in the National Guard as an acting Second Lieutenant and was awarded *Nout al-Gadara al-Askaria*, the Medal of Military Merit. Later, in 1984, I was awarded the Medal of Scientific Merit (First Class).

²⁸ See G. A. Res. 997 (November 2, 1956) (calling invasion of Egypt a violation of the General Armistice Agreement); G. A. Res. 998 (November 4, 1956) (requesting the establishment of an Emergency International United Nations Force); G. A. Res. 999 (November 4, 1956) (calling for a cease-fire). See generally 1 *Documents on the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Emergence of Conflict in Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Wars and Peace Process* (M. Cherif Bassiouni ed., Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers 2005).

won Egypt's only military confrontation with Israel at the beginning of the 1973 War.²⁹ He also dared to travel to Israel in 1977 to call for "a just and lasting peace." In meetings arranged by US President Jimmy Carter, Sadat successfully negotiated the 1978 Camp David Accords and the 1979 Peace Treaty with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.³⁰ Though Sadat got the lion's share of the credit in the West for these two agreements, the credit really goes to Jimmy Carter. As surprising as it may appear to the western reader, these outcomes were perceived negatively by most Arabs and many Egyptians. Peace with Israel with justice for the Palestinians was simply unacceptable to most Arabs.

Domestically, Sadat started to liberalize Egypt's economy in 1973 and expanded it after 1979 and his return from the United States, where he had signed the peace treaty with Israel on the White House lawn. By then, however, Sadat had turned his back on the demands of the liberal/nationalistic/pro-democracy movement, and in September 1981, he ordered the arrest of some 1,300 political leaders and pro-democracy intellectuals. In another attempt to fend off pro-democracy efforts, Sadat allowed the Muslim Brotherhood a public political space in which they could proselytize (*da'awa*). That became the basis of the Brotherhood's social organizational work, which even before 2011 had become strong enough to be converted into an effective political machine, winning them the 2012 legislative presidential elections.³¹

Despite his accomplishments and accommodations, Sadat was not well liked by Egyptians, and on October 6, 1981, while reviewing a parade commemorating the military victory of 1973, he was assassinated by a member (or sympathizer) of the Brotherhood whose brother, a member of the Brotherhood, had been tortured to death by police. There were seven persons seated near Sadat at the time of his assassination who also were killed, and eight others were injured. The assassin, First Lieutenant Khalid Islambouli, was eventually convicted and executed.

Although Sadat had opened the political door to the Brotherhood, its members still opposed him, in part for the repression carried out against

²⁹ Both President Sadat and the military Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Saad el-Shazly, claimed to be the driving force behind Egypt's victory in the 1973 war. See El Shazly, Lt. General Saad, *The Crossing of the Suez* (rev. ed., San Francisco: American Mideast Research 2003) (1980) and el-Sadat, Anwar, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Row 1978).

³⁰ See Wright, Lawrence, *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David* (New York: Knopf 2014); Kamel, Mohamed Ibrahim, *The Camp David Accords: A Testimony by Sadat's Foreign Minister* (London: Kegen Paul International 1986); Dayan, Moshe, *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations* (New York: Knopf 1981).

³¹ See Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

them by the police. After Sadat's assassination, members of the Brotherhood were hounded even more fiercely by the State Security Investigations (SSI) of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI). But it is important to remember that it was Sadat who bestowed political acceptability on the Brotherhood (as well as on the Salafists, whose capacity for undermining Egyptian society has proved to be far greater than the Brotherhood's).

Today, Sadat's legacy is greater abroad, in part because he became a darling of the American media, portrayed by it as a dashing figure who was the first Arab leader to make peace with Israel. But he was also the first leader whom many Arabs believe abandoned the Palestinians in their struggle with Israel. Under Sadat, a new oligarchy began, one that flourished under Mubarak.

Mubarak, Sadat's lackluster successor, was not a charismatic leader. He faithfully executed the 1979 Peace Treaty with Israel, bringing political stability to the country and promoting economic development. But, in time, corruption grew. Mubarak tolerated a certain margin of freedom of speech, which had not existed under his predecessors, and in the 2005 elections he even allowed the Brotherhood to have eighty-eight seats in Parliament. He was careful to satisfy the United States and Israel, and to keep on their good side. History is likely to credit Mubarak with sparing the country from civil war by peacefully renouncing power on February 11, 2011. For that, and because of his past service as chief of staff of the Air Force, Egypt's Military Institution protected him and his family after he renounced power. By 2015, Mubarak and his two sons were free and all convictions against them had been reversed, except for one corruption charge, for which they were sentenced to time served, making their trials were essentially a charade.

Like Sadat, Mubarak was not a popular figure at home, where many Egyptian people saw both leaders as mediocre, corrupt, and subservient to the United States and Israel. Given this, it is not surprising that the liberal/nationalistic/pro-democracy forces of 2011 and the Brotherhood found some common cause against the Mubarak regime, if only for a short time. But that should not obscure the fact that the Brotherhood had always sought power to achieve its own theocratic goals, which include the transformation of Egypt into an Islamic state. Ultimately, however, Egypt's greatest danger comes from the Salafists, who want to make the country part of an Islamic Caliphate that incorporates a number of other Muslim states and is based on a sociopolitical model that is almost fourteen centuries old and characterized by tyranny and intolerance.³²

³² In this respect the so-called Islamic State (IS) is very much in line with the Salafist and Wahhabist teachings and beliefs. See Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *Misunderstanding Islam on the Use of Violence*, 37 *Houston Journal of International Law* 643 (2015). See, e.g., *Jihad*:

2 THE WINDS OF CHANGE

By 2011, the struggle for freedom, justice, and human dignity had been long brewing. Most Egyptians could no longer tolerate the repressive and abusive practices of the police and the country's security agencies or the corruption of the Mubarak regime's oligarchy, which included extrajudicial executions; torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment in prisons, police facilities, and public places; and the disappearances of many individuals. These abuses were too numerous and too visible and had gone on for far too long. To make matters worse, there was no accountability for these actions, which violated the law in both letter and spirit. Prosecutors had become tools of the executive, and the judiciary was no longer a reliable avenue of redress for the many victims, who numbered in the tens of thousands (see Chapters 8, 9, and 10).

Corruption extended to pillaging of the national economy, and as with the human rights abuses there was no accountability for the abusers or redress for their victims. All governmental institutions, including Parliament, served the oligarchy, which at the time consisted of some two hundred families in a country of 85 million people, nearly a quarter of whom lived in poverty.³³

Statistics from this time paint a dire portrait of Egypt. For example:

- Fifty percent of Egypt's population was under the age of 30. Among that group there was 60 percent unemployment, largely owing to the fact that the under-30 group statistically included those under 18. In Egypt, however, child labor is notoriously high and could even exceed 50 percent of those between ages 12 and 16, particularly in rural areas.
- Experts estimate that 45 million to 50 million Egyptians, or almost 50 percent of the population, lived at the poverty level and that 20 million were below that, with 2.5 million to 3 million in "extreme poverty," earning an income of between US\$2 and \$5 per day.
- About 12 million people, or about one-tenth of all Egyptians, were believed to have no shelter, while more than 15 million lived in shantytowns that lacked electricity, water, and sanitation.

Challenges to International and Domestic Law (M. Cherif Bassiouni and Amna Guellali eds., The Hague: Hague Academic Press 2010); Bassiouni, M. Cherif, *Evolving Approaches to Jihad: From Self-Defense to Revolutionary and Regime-Change Political Violence*, 8 *Chicago Journal of International Law* 119 (2007).

³³ See Chapter 12.

- The country was ranked at 115 out of 139 countries in the Corruption Index of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, which charts countries' average achievement in key dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, and having a decent standard of living.
- Egypt had one of the world's highest birth rates and child mortality rates; 50 of every 1,000 newborns died; half of children under the age of 18 were considered anemic.
- The health care system delivered poor services and was probably one of the most dysfunctional and corrupt of all the public sectors, though the education system was not far behind.³⁴ Because few public health care facilities existed, most people had no easy access to services. And the facilities that did exist were for the most part below any acceptable medical and health standards. Roughly 8 million citizens had hepatitis, and each year more than one hundred thousand were reported to have been diagnosed with cancer, primarily due to the accumulated effects of air and water pollution and toxic, carcinogenic substances in food and drinks.³⁵
- Egypt ranked sixth in the global "misery index," which bases its rankings on unemployment levels, lending rates, inflation, and GDP growth. The report left out several important countries, such as Syria, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.³⁶

There was no other means to redress these wrongs other than to take to the streets. And so came the call for the 2011 Revolution, both an outburst of despair and an expression of hope.³⁷

While these sentiments moved certain segments of the masses to take action a few days after the 2011 Revolution began, violence soon followed, as

³⁴ The Times Higher Education Snapshot Review of the thirty top African Universities, published by the Times Higher Education weekly magazine, shows that Egyptian universities, which were once at the top of list, have gone down significantly. With the exception of Suez University, which ranks 14 out of 30, the other five Egyptian Universities to make the list all fall in the bottom eight. The once famed University of Cairo is not even on the list. See Bothwell, Ellie, *Top 30 African Universities: Times Higher Education Reveals Snapshot University Ranking*, Times Higher Education (July 31, 2015), www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/top-30-african-universities-times-higher-education-reveals-snapshot-university-ranking.

³⁵ All of this is to be contrasted for example, with the world-class medical and health facilities available for the rich and powerful in Egypt's private sector. The military, particularly officers, and the police enjoyed their own first-class facilities.

³⁶ See Hanke, Steve, *Measuring Misery Around the World*, The Cato Institute (May 2014), www.cato.org/publications/commentary/measuring-misery-around-world

³⁷ See Chapter 12.

described below and in Chapter 8. Such violence, which included looting and destruction, often at the hands of “hooligans” (*baltagiya*), as they called them, was new to Egypt. It was surely a consequence of the shift away from *Qiyam al-reef*, the “values of the countryside,” in the preceding decades. What was emerging in 2011 was something different and unexpected, and how to restore traditional social values to a society in crisis probably will be one of the most challenging issues for Egypt in the years to come.³⁸

3 THE 2011 REVOLUTION BEGINS

The events from January 25 to February 11, 2011, when Mubarak relinquished the presidency to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), as described in Chapter 2, were nothing short of extraordinary: a spontaneous, popular, and peaceful revolution springing out of civil society, without a charismatic leader and without centralized direction succeeded. If not for the violence initiated by the police on January 28,³⁹ the 2011 Revolution would have been one of the most significant, peaceful revolutions in the modern history of a people’s desire for change. In the beginning, demonstrators were calling only for the removal of Habib el-Adly, the abusive Minister of the Interior, and for a number of reforms. But after the violent response by Habib el-Adly’s police, the demonstrators went from being peaceful, *Selmiya*, to violent (see Chapter 8.2) and from demanding reforms to demanding regime change. The demonstrators’ chants became “Hosni Mubarak has to go.”

3.1 The Symbolism of Tahrir Square

The first few days in Tahrir Square (which is actually a circle, referred to in Arabic as *Midan*) saw gatherings of hundreds of thousands of people, reminiscent of the Indian nonviolent independence movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, the American civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr., and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa led by Nelson Mandela.

³⁸ Few have fully understood this decay in social values, what processes may have led to it, or who the protagonists were. The Brotherhood, more than any other group, did recognize the effects that private and public corruption were having on social values. It crafted a simple, compelling political theme designed to capture the sentiment surrounding this decay: *Al-Islam howa al-Hal* (Islam is the solution), which it used during the 2005 elections and won eighty-eight Parliamentary seats. The Brotherhood achieved even greater success in 2012.

³⁹ See Chapter 8.

Tahrir Square, as the Western media calls it, is a large circle connected to another smaller circle and accessed by a number of major Cairo arteries and streets. Some of these streets lead to the Parliament, the prime minister's offices, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the State Security Investigations (police) headquarters, and archives full of books on Egyptian and Islamic history (which subsequently burned, along with their irreplaceable historical books and records). These locations were all within a one-mile radius of the southeastern part of *Mīdān al-Taḥrīr* (Liberation Square). Tahrir Square's original name was Ismailia Square, after the Khedive Ismail, who revived downtown Cairo for the opening of the Suez Canal in August of 1869. (Ironically, it was the excessive concessions made by the Khedive Ismail to the Suez Canal Company and his lavish spending on the elaborate festivities for its inauguration that led to Egypt's financial collapse, bringing about British occupation in 1882.⁴⁰)

Ismailia Square was where Egypt's first popular revolution started in 1919. The word *Tahrīr* means liberation; although the square was not officially renamed until after the 1952 Revolution. From 1919 on it was known as *Mīdān al-Taḥrīr*, or Liberation Circle, but it was officially renamed Liberation Square after 1956. Between 1952 and 1956 it was referred to as *Mīdān al-Thawra*, or Revolution Square.

On the circle's northeast side stands a statue of Omar Makram, a celebrated hero of the resistance against Napoleon's invasion of 1798. On the opposite side, a street runs in front of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities and leads to a number of major arteries downtown. On this street, considered an extension of Tahrir Circle, is a widening where a statue of the late Lieutenant General Mohammad Abdel Moneim Riad has been placed.⁴¹ He was chief of staff of the Army and the strategist of the reorganization of the armed forces after the 1967 defeat in the war against Israel. General Riad, who was killed by Israeli armed forces in 1969 while he was inspecting the frontlines on the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal, is credited with being the strategist of the 1973 war against Israel. His statue's right hand stretches out in front of the body, fist closed and index finger pointing to what the sculptor must have imagined to be the other side of the canal, which at the time of General Riad's death was occupied by Israel. As it happens, General Riad is pointing to Mahmoud Bassiouni Street, which leads from his statue to another circle in the center of Cairo. That street is named after my grandfather, who led Egypt's 1919 revolution in Upper Egypt against British occupation.⁴²

⁴⁰ See Chapter 1.1. ⁴¹ General Riad was my second cousin.

⁴² Mahmoud Bassiouni was tried by a British military court and sentenced to death. In 1921, the British Privy Council reversed his conviction, and he was freed from the desert oasis *al-Kharja*,

Mīdān al-Taḥrīr saw many demonstrations from 1919 to 2013. Some were against British occupation, others against the corrupt monarchy. In 2011, demonstrators railed against a corrupt military dictatorship; in 2013, they protested against the Morsi presidency (see Chapter 4). Tahrir Square, which remains a symbol of Egypt's popular nationalistic movement, was the scene of one of the last major demonstrations against British colonialism in 1946. Crowds came to it from Kasr-el-Eini Street, on the southeastern side of Tahrir Square, where they were met by British forces whose barracks occupied most of one side of the square.⁴³ The British came out of their barracks with tanks, armored personnel carriers, and infantry and opened fire on the crowd of unarmed civilian demonstrators.⁴⁴ Then, as in 2011, peaceful demonstrators died for freedom at the hands of their oppressors, first foreigners and then local dictators.

From the post-Arab Spring experiences,⁴⁵ the Egyptian people – and for that matter the Arab people – have learned that gaining freedom from foreign occupation is not as difficult as gaining freedom from internal tyranny.

where he had been detained. In 1923, he was elected to Egypt's first Senate, where he served for more than twenty years and several times as its president.

⁴³ They stretched from the banks of the Nile up to the actual Square. They were the second-largest British barracks in Egypt, after those of Heliopolis.

⁴⁴ On February 9, 1946, students at Giza University organized a march to call for the end to British occupation of Egypt. While the protesters were on the Abbas Bridge over the Nile, police raised the bridge on the orders of Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmy el-Nokrashi, leading to more than 20 deaths and 84 serious injuries. On February 17, the prime minister was replaced by Isma'il Sidqi, who was committed to a renegotiation of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. The next day, more than fifty thousand demonstrators came together in Cairo to distribute pamphlets calling for an end to British occupation and formed the National Committee of Workers and Students (NCWS). The newly formed NCWS promptly called for a general strike and demonstrations on February 21. The strike and demonstration began peacefully that day, but escalated when British military vehicles began driving through the demonstration, and the British opened fire on the demonstrators. The protesters retaliated by setting fire to the military barracks and attacking other British-owned properties. At the end of the day, forty-eight Egyptians had been killed and 386 had been injured, while the British lost came to two dead and four injured. See Tarek, Sherif, *Egypt Students Mark '46 Workers and Students Anti-British Uprising With Anti-SCAF Marches, Protests*, Ahram Online (February 21, 2012), <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/35051/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-students-mark-workers-and-students-antiBrit.aspx>; Botman, Selma, *Egypt From Independence to Revolution, 1919–1952* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1991); Ismael, Tareq Y. and Rifa'at el-Sa'id, *The Communist Movement in Egypt: 1920–1988* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1990); Botman, Selma, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939–1970* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1988).

⁴⁵ See Roberts, Adam et al., *Civil Resistance in the Arab Spring: Triumphs and Disasters* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press 2016).

3.2 The Goals of the Revolution

Four popular terms have been used from the 1919 Revolution onward, and more particularly since the 1952 Revolution. They were also heralded in Nasser's famed book *Falsafat al-Thawra (The Philosophy of the Revolution)*, namely: *al-Qawmia al-Masriya* (Egyptian Nationalism), *Misr al-Watan* (Egypt Patria/Our Nation), *al-Ummah al-Masriya* (The Egyptian Nation), and *al-Shaab al-Misri* (The Egyptian People).⁴⁶ These phrases, often repeated by people in everyday communications, were also contained in public speeches, newspaper articles, radio and television broadcasts, they were part of the curriculum in civic education, as well as part of the literary discourse at all levels, including humor. These were not slogans that were indoctrinated in the people – rather, they were expressions of popular identity and popular aspiration for the implicit meanings that these words reflected, namely: the dignity, pride, and self-identification of every Egyptian and of all Egyptians. This is what was echoed in Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011.

The initial goals of the 2011 Revolution were reforms that would curtail corruption, bring social and economic justice, and grant more political freedom to the people. But after the violence of January 28, the goal became regime change, which also meant reform, and the ideals represented by freedom and justice found support among most segments of the population. For the liberal/nationalistic/pro-democracy activists, whether secularists or pro-Islamists, these goals aligned with their values. For the Islamists, these ideals derived from Islam. Sunni constitute 88% of the Egyptian population, while Christians constitute the remaining 12%.

That a segment of Egyptian society was able to cut across generational, religious, gender, and economic lines; organize at the grassroots level; and act steadfastly in the face of a strong regime, even without a charismatic leader, is evidence of true people power. In Tahrir Square, so many stood side by side: young and old men, women with and without *hijab*, intellectuals and blue-collar workers, rich and poor, Muslims and Christians, urban and rural – all standing up for the same values and principles that people were seeking in other parts of the Arab world. Just as it was in 1919, with the demonstrations leading to Egypt's independence in 1922 and the transformation of an absolute monarchy into a constitutional one, the crowds in Tahrir Square in 2011 were all about Egypt.

⁴⁶ Nasser, Gamal Abdel, *Falsafat al-Thawra (The Philosophy of the Revolution)* (Cairo: Da al-Ma'arif 1954).

In many respects, the outcome of the 2011 Revolution was as remarkable as its demonstrators when, three weeks after crowds first gathered, Hosni Mubarak relinquished power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, or SCAF, which became the transitional power until legislative and presidential elections in 2012 brought the Brotherhood to power.⁴⁷ The Brotherhood, though, would be removed from power only a year later, on July 3, 2013, by a popularly backed military coup.⁴⁸ In June 2014, Field Marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the head of the armed forces, became the elected president.⁴⁹

Today Egypt's 2011 Revolution, as well as uprisings throughout other Arab countries, is part of the bigger picture referred to as "The Arab Revolution,"⁵⁰ the continuation of the anti-colonial revolutionary change that the Arab people, regardless of ideology, have brought about to liberate themselves from colonial occupation and transform their societies into modern democracies with social justice for all. To do this in Egypt, however, first required breaking through a barrier of fear erected by three despotic military regimes.

3.3 *Breaking the Wall of Fear and Going Beyond It*

For almost sixty years, since the Nasser military coup in 1952, Egyptians lived behind a wall of fear built by military dictatorships whose levels of repression varied, but which consistently denied freedom, democracy, and social justice to the people. Then, as is the case with all revolutions, people rose up to break down the wall of fear.

This is what happened on January 25, 2011, the date selected for a massive, peaceful demonstration at Tahrir Square. It was National Police Day, and only a few months since a young man named Khaled Said had been viciously beaten to death by two police officers on June 6, 2010, in Alexandria. Said died after he was dragged out of an internet café and set upon by two state security police officers, Awad Suleiman and Mahmoud Salah, in Alexandria in June 2010, reportedly after he had posted a video online that showed officers handling illegal drugs. An initial post-mortem and police investigation concluded that he had died of suffocation after trying to swallow a packet of drugs that he had been carrying, but witnesses described a brutal beating, and photos of Said's battered and bloody face, taken by his brother on a cell phone in the morgue and leaked to the media, left no doubt that beatings had caused his

⁴⁷ See Chapter 2. ⁴⁸ See Chapter 4. ⁴⁹ See Chapter 5.

⁵⁰ See Fisher, Eugene M. and M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Storm Over the Arab World: A People in Revolution* (Chicago: Follet 1972).

death. Doubt was cast on the official explanation, which like so many others was so transparent.⁵¹ Khaled Said's image became the face that launched the 2011 Revolution. Young people adopted the slogan *Kulluna Khaled Saïd*, or "We are all Khaled Said."

Said's death was the proverbial last straw on the camel's back: thousands like him had met the same fate during the six decades of dictatorial military rule since the July 23, 1952, Nasser-era military coup. Neither the Military Institution, *Al-Mu'assassa al-Askaria* (see Chapter 7), nor the police were ever held accountable for the various abuses carried out at their behest during these decades.⁵² Police then, as they do now, tortured people with blatant impunity, and the people became fed up with these abuses of power. The law and the legal establishment served those in power, as had similar institutions that served the pharaohs and monarchs of seven thousand years of Egypt's history. In this respect, things had not changed by 2011.⁵³

From January 25 to February 11, 2011, with no plan or even any clear expectation of what they would have to do to survive, the pro-democracy demonstrators in Tahrir Square, broke the wall of fear. When they first arrived in the square, they had to fight police who used tear gas, shotguns, and other lethal weapons to subdue them. Over eighteen days, police killed an estimated 850 civilians whose only weapons were stones and makeshift Molotov cocktails.

The demonstrators in Tahrir Square turned their collective energy toward working together as a micro-society. People of divergent political, social, and religious views found a way to co-exist, unafraid to express their views, hopes, and visions of the future. They learned how to live together as a community, sharing tasks, food, and resources. As one eyewitness described it:

Tahrir Square became more than a place or location. It is the repository of so many different events, activities, and groups. Its sum was bigger than its parts. Another way of describing it: Tahrir became a revolutionary organism unto itself, bigger than any one citizen or political factor.⁵⁴

In this micro-society of Tahrir Square in early 2011, no orders came from the top, and no one sought control. It was all about collective cooperation,

⁵¹ There was no accountability for these two police officers. To date, no reason has been given, officially or unofficially, for the lack of charges placed against them. For more on the phenomenon of official impunity in Egypt, see Chapter 8, Chapter 9, and Chapter 10.

⁵² See Chapter 8 and Chapter 9. ⁵³ See Chapter 9.

⁵⁴ Khalil, Ashraf, *Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation* 5 (New York: St. Martin's Press 2011).

expressed through personal initiative, natural leadership, and collective resourcefulness. This was Egyptianhood at its best.

The pro-democracy demonstrators who gathered in Tahrir Square forged ahead with only vague political plans. They included the 6th of April Movement, *Kefaya*, *Kulluna Khaled Saïd*, or “We are all Khaled Said,” and the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, which was formed after January 21. The latter was a focal point for various political groups represented there, except for the Brotherhood, whose members observed but stayed away from events in Tahrir Square. The early political activists were individuals who wanted to change Egypt – to transform it into a better society with a democratic government that represented society’s expectations for freedom and justice. Granted, they didn’t really know what they were doing, in the political sense; rather, they were groping for ways and means to achieve laudable goals. They were idealists, as most revolutionaries are. Though surely not all of them were motivated by the desire for freedom, democracy, and social justice, they all shared some of these goals. What they lacked, however, was a common political platform, a common political program or agenda, and even common methods or means for expressing their views.

The revolutionaries who amassed in Tahrir Square knew that sixty years of military dictatorship were not likely to disappear. They also had to know there was a risk that Egypt could be transformed into a theocracy under the Islamists, particularly the Brotherhood. But the early pro-democracy activists were optimistic, if naïve, about the success of their revolution.⁵⁵

The first group of people to arrive in Tahrir Square were Egyptians from all walks of life. Their initial slogans were about justice (*ʿadala*), freedom (*horiya*), and human dignity (*karama*), including economic justice for the many Egyptians for whom earning a daily living was not just a challenge but an impossibility. Although the majority of the demonstrators were peaceful, the police overreacted, resorting to violence to quash the demonstrators, whose number had grown exponentially thanks in part to social media. As the crowds grew, other groups and individuals joined the demonstrators, some of whom engaged in violence in response to the police force. These acts brought about more violent responses by the police, and a vicious circle ensued.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., *id.*; Cambanis, Thanassis, *Once Upon a Revolution: An Egyptian Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster 2015); Iskander, Adel, *Egypt in Flux: Essays on an Unfinished Revolution* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press 2013); Ghonim, Wael, *Revolution 2.0: The Power of the People Is Greater Than the People in Power: A Memoir* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2012); Cook, Steven A., *The Struggle for Egypt: From Nasser to Tahrir Square* (New York: Oxford University Press 2011).

Much remains unknown about these eighteen days in early 2011. Which groups engaged in violence?⁵⁶ Whose interests did they represent? What were the strategies and plans of the Military Institution, the police, and others?

Despite these unanswered questions, no one can deny that the pro-democracy demonstrators who gathered in Tahrir Square brought about an exhilarating and uplifting manifestation of Egyptian patriotism and social solidarity. Its protagonists called it The Revolution.

The protesters came from almost all parts and sectors of Egypt (excepting extreme rural areas in Upper Egypt and Nubia). They also came from abroad (and several young idealists from foreign countries like the United States, Canada, and Ireland were arrested and imprisoned). People arrived by train, bus, or even on foot. Many who lived in Cairo came to the square daily to bring food and drink; doctors and medics set up tents to take care of the ill and the injured; and some came to provide entertainment and encouragement to those who had taken up residence in Tahrir Square. Egyptian expatriates provided moral and political support by holding demonstrations abroad. All of this showed a new political and social maturity, as well as solidarity among Egyptians across a wide spectrum of Egyptian society.

In Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez in particular, the experience was unforgettable for those who participated in it as well as those who witnessed it from home and afar. Many demonstrators recorded the events in photos, on video, and on film. Social media was full of images from the Revolution, each scene offering something new: a priest and an imam dressed in their religious garb, standing on the speaker's platform and holding hands high as a symbol of unity; groups of demonstrators singing and dancing around campfires among a sea of tired demonstrators whose day had been filled with chanting, echoing slogans, and standing up against the police; the constant flow of post-working hours participants and visitors who came to support those who had been there day and night, leaving food and drink, mingling with the crowd as if the occasion were a festival. There were no strangers in these crowds; everyone felt connected.

This convergence of people from so many different sectors of society did not spring from any one motivation, ideology, political view, or political objective. The people at Tahrir Square rebelled against the Mubarak regime for many reasons. For the middle- and upper-middle classes, it may have been a desire for democracy and the rejection of *tawrih*, the passing of Hosni Mubarak's presidency to his son Gamal as an inheritance. For Egypt's poorest, it could have been a quest for minimum subsistence, a rebellion against poverty. Others wanted democracy, freedom, justice, and basic human rights. All

⁵⁶ See Ghonim, *id.* See also Chapter 8.

wanted something that, in one way or another, was linked. Above all they felt linked in their opposition to the Mubarak regime. But unlike the 1979 Iranian revolution against the Shah, when Ayatollah Khomeini brought together the many factions opposing the Shah's regime, the 2011 uprising in Tahrir Square had no clear leader.

The first three days of the Revolution, January 25 to January 28, resembled a family outing – but a very large family and on a very extended outing. After the first demonstrators went to Tahrir Square on January 25, more than 250,000 people reportedly gathered there. On February 11, 2011, when Mubarak's relinquishment of power was announced, a night-long celebration began at Tahrir Square⁵⁷ with some 400,000 peaceful demonstrators, which is the square's maximum capacity. The crowds soon reached 1 million, spilling over into nearby streets and the rest of Cairo, and thousands filled the streets of other cities across Egypt in what became truly a national celebration. People joined together in chanting, "Lift your head up high! You are an Egyptian!"

Many who shouted these words probably did not know that their chants echoed words pronounced by President Nasser in 1954, when he announced the Evacuation (*Gala'a*) Treaty with Britain, which ended six decades of foreign occupation. At that time, millions of Egyptians and Arabs all over the world listened to the radio as Nasser said, "Lift your head, my fellow Egyptians! The period of *isti'mār* (colonial occupation) has ended!" With Nasser's declaration, Egyptians from all walks of life felt themselves grow taller, as did many Arabs throughout the region. On February 11, when Mubarak stepped down and power devolved to the SCAF (see Chapter 2), a similar collective emotion consumed the people of Egypt, no matter where they were. By then the chants from Tahrir and elsewhere had become "The people want to bring down the regime!" (*al-shaab yurid isqat al-nizam*). And so, when the regime fell, most Egyptians felt elated and empowered. Like those who had brought down the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, Egyptians had brought down the wall of fear.

4 SELMIYA (PEACEFUL) TURNS INTO VIOLENT⁵⁸

The regime could have simply let the disorganized January 25 Revolution fizzle out after a few days of protest and wait until the movement died from lack of energy. Instead, the police took violent, repressive measures that gave the movement new life. The Central Security Force, *Al-Amn al-Markazi* (i.e.,

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2. ⁵⁸ See Chapter 8.

the riot police), and State Security Force (SSI), *Mabahith Amn al-Dawla*, blocked roads and bridges, barraged demonstrators with tear gas, and opened fire on them. When the SSI snipers killed peaceful demonstrators, the violence escalated dangerously.⁵⁹

Interior Minister Habib el-Adly's senior advisors gravely miscalculated the situation, which can be attributed only to their arrogance. This was a lesson not lost on the military at that time, which cautiously entered Tahrir Square and expanded its presence in the area. The military at the time were seldom confrontational, though they later would be in Maspero that following October, and thereafter, in 2013, at the brutal confrontations at Raba'a and al-Nahda Squares.⁶⁰ But in early 2011, the authorities showed an understanding of the people's desire to express their frustrations with a corrupt, abusive, and dysfunctional regime. They kept their distance from the crowds, did not interfere with the demonstrations, contained demonstrators in certain areas, and kept a dialogue open at the street level. They prevented escalation – at least for a time.

By January 28, however, the police had not only mishandled the situation, but found defeat at the hands of the demonstrators at al-Gala'a and Kasr el-Nil bridges.⁶¹ With that, there was no stopping the regime's eventual downfall unless the military stepped in to save it. But on January 31, the military issued a brief statement acknowledging "the legitimacy of the people's demand" and pledging to respect freedom of expression. The people tacitly acknowledged the message, and those in the streets calmed down. Military leaders had acted prudently, paving the way for what occurred on February 11 when it took over (as described in Chapter 2).

During the first few days of the 2011 Revolution, three factions remained on the sidelines, waiting for an opportune time to enter the political scene: the Military Institution, the Brotherhood, and the Salafists. The former was visibly present from the Revolution's inception, as the military descended to the streets as friends of the demonstrators, even saying they were there to protect the people. The Brotherhood, and the Salafists, became active between January 28 and 31, after some police had started shooting at demonstrators and driving police cars into them, resulting in an estimated 850 civilians killed in less than ten days. Then some high-ranking political cronies of Mubarak had one of the stupidest ideas imaginable under the circumstances: hiring some 100 to 130 camel- and horse owners (who cater to tourists at the pyramids) to come to Tahrir Square and ride their camels

⁵⁹ An estimated 800 to 850 civilians were killed. See Chapter 2 and Chapter 8. ⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.*

and horses into the crowds to disperse the demonstrators.⁶² The scene was at once shocking and farcical. As the camel and horse riders rode into the crowd, estimated at the time to be about fifty thousand people, the demonstrators pulled riders off the horses and camels and beat them up. Although some politicians and police officers were later charged, they were all acquitted,⁶³ and no one ever learned who had planned this ridiculous operation.

In the days after the first peaceful protests, violent confrontations came often. The first clash between police and demonstrators headed to Tahrir Square across the al-Gala'a and Kasr el-Nil bridges occurred on January 28.⁶⁴ Most think the demonstrators came from Imbaba and Giza, where the Brotherhood enjoys popular support, and at the bridges they encountered young rural police conscripts, who were enlisted in the *Al-Amn al-Markazi*, the riot police.⁶⁵ The *Al-Amn al-Markazi* collapsed after a day-long battle at the al-Gala'a and Kasr el-Nil bridges, a confrontation that turned peaceful demonstrators into violent protesters who defeated the riot police out of necessity and despair.

Some understanding of geography is helpful here. The al-Gala'a and Kasr el-Nil bridges are two relatively narrow bridges that link the south of Cairo (Mohandeseen, Giza, and the Pyramids) to West Cairo, through the Kasr el-Nil district, whose center is Tahrir Square. The island of Zamalek, which lies between Giza and the rest of Cairo, is an upper-class residential area whose inhabitants are mostly foreign diplomats, other foreigners, and business people. The two bridges lie at the southern tip of Zamalek Island. Those coming from the south, Giza, would first have to cross the al-Gala'a Bridge, then travel some 300 meters, the approximate width of Zamalek island at that end, and then cross the Kasr el-Nil Bridge, from which it is about 500 meters to Tahrir Square.

How could the police prevent large crowds from passing through a narrow area where their superior numbers could not be contained? At best, the numbers on both sides would be even. The only advantage the *Al-Amn al-Markazi* had was its use of tear gas and shotgung fire. But no one on that side

⁶² See Fathi, Yasmine, *Egypt's 'Battle of the Camel': The Day the Tide Turned*, Ahram Online (February 2, 2012), <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/33470.aspx>; *Al-Masry al-Youm* (April 19, 2011), 14, *et seq.* See also Chapter 9.

⁶³ *Egyptian "Battle of the Camels" Officials Acquitted*, BBC News (October 10, 2012), www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19905435.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 8.

⁶⁵ Usually they had enlisted in the riot police because they failed the most elementary educational tests to serve as conscripts in the military. They historically have been treated poorly and abused by their officers. The police hierarchy used them as if they were attack dogs against fellow citizens. But this time it failed.

realized that the tear gas would also affect the police because of the narrow spaces in which they were operating. Higher-ups in the police also did not realize that the crowd of demonstrators was trapped on and between the two bridges, or that they had no place to go to save their lives. They could not jump in the Nile and risk drowning, and they could not turn back because many demonstrators behind them were pushing forward. They had no choice but to fight for their lives. So demonstrators threw back the gas canisters, and the Al-Amn al-Markazi became the targets of their own weapons. The damage these canisters inflicted on the riot police was equal, if not worse than, what the demonstrators suffered. The close quarters made this confrontation close and personal. Both sides breathed through wet cloth to keep from inhaling the gases, and both splashed water on their watery, burning, and itchy eyes. Suffering from their own gases and fighting so close to their countrymen, the Al-Amn al-Markazi, soldiers and officers, soon became aware that they were being used by the regime against their own people. They gradually fought with less zeal and then started to withdraw. By the end of the day on January 28, 2011, an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 additional demonstrators had reached Tahrir Square.

The battles with the *Al-Amn al-Markazi* at the bridges were exhausting for the demonstrators, whose stories have been told by many in books, articles, and social media. They were gassed, shot with buckshot, and beaten with sticks. They fought back and, to their surprise, succeeded. Their accounts are personal and touching, as are the exchanges they had with soldiers and police officers, many of whom the demonstrators said repeatedly expressed how sorry they were to have to use force. They were following orders, they said.

The Al-Amn al-Markazi obeyed orders with much less enthusiasm than the SSI, who, a few days later, started firing sniper rifles at demonstrators from buildings near the end of Tahrir Square, which meets the elevated roadway called the Sixth of October. There and in buildings surrounding Tahrir Square, as well as in protests around the country, officers and snipers from SSI (not from the *Al-Amn al-Markazi*) killed an estimated 800 to 850 unarmed civilians.⁶⁶ Including incidents of cars and armored personnel carriers

⁶⁶ While this report was never released in its entirety, a forty-five-page summary was published. Fact Finding National Commission [Egypt], *Final Report Summary: Commission of Fact Finding With Regard to the Revolution of January 25, 2011*, available at http://ffnc-eg.org/asset/s/ffnc-eg_final.pdf [Arabic Only]. The report stated that at least 846 protesters were killed, many of whom were shot in the head and chest, and it held Mubarak and Habib el-Adly responsible for giving the orders to fire. See Michael, Maggie, *Egypt: At Least 846 Were Killed in Protests*, *Washington Times* (April 19, 2011), www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/apr/19/egypt-least-846-killed-protests/?page=all; Chapter 8.3.

reportedly driven by SSI officers running over unarmed demonstrators. The scenes were gory: some of the demonstrators threw gas canisters, as well as any pieces of pavement and stones that they could find, back at the *Al-Amn al-Markazi* and the SSI. Although the Ministry of Interior did not release numbers or names, a number of police, soldiers, and officers were killed and injured. One incident captured on TV and other electronic media was particularly shocking. Some demonstrators threw an *Al-Amn al-Markazi* armored personnel carrier from the elevated October 6th motorway, killing its five soldiers and one officer.

The downtrodden conscripts retreated, leaving the way open for new demonstrators to move not only into Tahrir Square, but into surrounding areas that had three relatively major police stations: Kasr el-Nil, Sayeda Zeinab, and Azbakia. The newcomers, many of them from the Brotherhood, overran these and other police stations, and later two major prison centers, from which they released prisoners and took weapons.⁶⁷ The Salafists were also involved in the attacks on the police stations and on the police in general, though they were not involved in the Brotherhood's carefully planned operation against some thirty prisons, from which it is believed that they released approximately twenty-three thousand detainees and prisoners.⁶⁸

At the same time, in Cairo, hooligans attacked stores and cars on both public and private property. It soon became clear that the Brotherhood had taken over the streets in central Cairo and that the chaos caused by the hooligans was a diversion that benefited the Brotherhood. By the end of January 28, the so-called "day of rage," it was clear that the police had lost control of the streets.

After January 28, the military moved in on Tahrir Square and elsewhere, and declared a curfew from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m., with the hope of confining demonstrators to Tahrir Square and preventing others from joining them. It was a classic policy of containment, and in a narrow tactical sense, it worked. But then what? The political crisis still needed to be addressed, and neither Mubarak nor his cronies was capable of doing so.⁶⁹

The scene in Tahrir Square was different from others; many were in the vicinity because Tahrir Square is so close to the Parliament, the prime

⁶⁷ See Chapter 8.

⁶⁸ Hendawi, Hamza, *Egypt Court: Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and Hezbollah Broke President Morsi Out of Jail in 2011*, Business Insider (June 23, 2013), www.businessinsider.com/how-president-morsi-got-out-of-jail-in-2011-2013-6.

⁶⁹ As described in Chapter 2.

minister's office, and other offices. The nearby police stations of Kasr el-Nil, Garden City, Sayeda Zeinab, Abdin, and Azbakia were attacked between January 28 and January 31, and other attacks further away followed. Most people are sure these attacks were carried out by the Brotherhood and the Salafists, but hooligans also may have contributed. Whoever was responsible, within days the violence had significantly escalated on all sides. The police could no longer contain or control the violence, let alone keep pace with the growing number of demonstrators. The military inevitably had to intervene. But the military wanted to do it gently, to continue to appear as friends of the people and contain the spreading violence. One can only imagine military analysts considering the risks of having another 500,000 to 1 million demonstrators entering into the fray, and the violence extending to other cities. Already, there was violence in Alexandria, Suez, Port Said, and other cities. The military could not risk a civil war, nor could it risk being drawn into an urban guerrilla warfare that would lead to thousands of casualties.

Often, identifying participants and their leaders in confrontations was difficult. On the police side, the units were Al-Amn al-Markazi and SSI, but officers and soldiers of the general security (*Al-Amn al-^cAm*), particularly in cities outside Cairo, probably joined in, which would have been important for accountability purposes, to identify the officers in command and their hierarchical superiors. But that did not occur. In any event, on the authorities' side it was all police and all MOI, save for those incidents involving the military. In those cases, the units involved were identified as the Presidential Guard (*al-Harass al-Gumhouri*), military police (*al-Shorta al-^cAskaria*), and infantry from Central Command, which essentially covered Cairo and its surroundings.

On the other side, identifying violent participants was even more difficult because so many actors were involved. Some incidents almost exclusively involved members of the Brotherhood or a combination of Brotherhood and some Salafists, or some blend of these plus hooligans. Some incidents, such as at the textile factories of the city of al-Mehalla al-Kubra, involved striking workers believed to be mostly leftists. At Port Said, an incident at a stadium involved soccer fans and thugs and hooligans. In other cities, such as Alexandria and Suez, a mixture of pro-democracy demonstrators and others were confronted by police. Thugs took advantage of confrontational situations between demonstrators and police or broke into smaller groups and gangs and went on a rampage.

Most of the identification of the protagonists in these and other violent confrontations was made by the media, which at the time covered the entire range of political views. In fact, it was the media, including international,

regional, and local outlets, that gave the Revolution its coverage and ensured its success, from the start of the demonstrations to the day Mubarak relinquished power. The media played a big role until it became an open target for the Military Institution after July 3, 2013. Since then, media outlets have been very heavily controlled, to the point where foreign media, with a few exceptions, cover Egypt sparingly, and the local media has been purged of those who were critical of the Military Institution. Since 2014, there has been little critical coverage of the el-Sisi presidency and the Military Institution.

In the early days of February 2011, as anti-Mubarak demonstrations spread throughout the country, the momentum for his resignation began building.⁷⁰ The Brotherhood exploited the situation, and its presence became more obvious. The Brotherhood started its own post-Friday prayer demonstrations in cities throughout the country, particularly in the south of Egypt, where the Brotherhood was most popular. The Salafists participated in these demonstrations, but no one knew at the time whether this participation was to support the Brotherhood or to promote its own political goals.⁷¹ The military subsequently used the Brotherhood's involvement in the revolutionary process to obtain Mubarak's resignation, probably relying on military intelligence's assessments, led then by Major-General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.⁷²

Meanwhile, at Tahrir Square and elsewhere throughout the country, demonstrations continued and violence escalated. The police gave no estimates of its own casualties. Some government hospitals, at the behest of the police, either refused to treat injured civilians or did so only after police at these hospitals had interrogated the wounded. It is unknown how many civilians died of their injuries during that time.

For a certain number of days at Tahrir Square, military units from the Presidential Guard, whose mission was to protect the president and the properties of the presidency, were present, supposedly to contain the crowds and protect the regime. Those units were later replaced by regular army forces from Central Command and military police.

It was during these first days of the Revolution that senior Army officers were seen at Tahrir Square comforting demonstrators in support of the idea that the armed forces were there to protect them. Apache helicopters appeared

⁷⁰ See Chapter 2.

⁷¹ For a while, the Salafists sided openly with the Brotherhood, then, probably on instructions from their sponsors in Saudi Arabia, they first turned neutral and then, after 2013, many of them turned against the Brotherhood. See Chapter 6.

⁷² See Chapter 5.

overhead, several in formations of three with 4' × 10' Egyptian flags attached to them. The crowds were elated, chanting "Egypt! Egypt!" (*Misr! Misr!*).

This, too, was part of the military strategy of containment. Its objective was to separate pro-democracy demonstrators and protesters from the Brotherhood, whose tactics took them beyond Tahrir Square as they sought to control central parts of the city. As this occurred, the Brotherhood was closing in on Abbasiyah and Heliopolis, where the armed forces headquarters and the presidency were located. The Presidential Guard and Military Police were deployed there, and some violent clashes occurred.

The military's mission at that early stage of the Revolution was to control the crowds and prevent the demonstration from spilling outside Tahrir Square. But newcomers to the original protests, mostly from the Brotherhood and Salafists but also hooligans, joined in and spilled into other streets, causing much damage to public property, including the burning of a historic repository of Muslim documents and artifacts dating back more than a thousand years.⁷³ The Brotherhood street units were well organized as they attacked police stations, took weapons, and freed prisoners. They attacked the Wadi el-Natroun prison and freed more than eleven thousand prisoners, including Mohamed Morsi.⁷⁴

January 31, 2011, was a pivotal date in the Revolution's history. The protesters had called for one million people to march in Cairo to demand Mubarak's removal of power.⁷⁵ The police did everything they could to prevent the march, including canceling trains to Cairo and closing traffic to the city from neighboring areas and certain popular districts. They also urged the leaders of Al-Azhar University and the Coptic Church to dissuade people from joining that event and the movement. The religious establishments complied as they always do with requests of those in power. These efforts failed, and the Revolution briefly succeeded. But it did not succeed in remaining peaceful

⁷³ The leaders of this tragic event were convicted and received heavy sentences. See Halime, Farah, *Revolution Brings Hard Times for Egypt's Treasures*, New York Times (October 31, 2012), www.nytimes.com/2012/11/01/world/middleeast/revolution-brings-hard-times-for-egypts-treasures.html.

⁷⁴ Hendawi, *supra* note 68. He was removed from office and arrested in 2013, and convicted in April 2015 for his involvement in the detention and torture of prisoners outside the Ittihadiya presidential palace in Cairo in December 2012. He was convicted in May 2015 for escaping from the Wadi el-Natroun prison in January 2011. Along with him were many Brotherhood members who were affiliated with Hamas. In fact, Morsi first spoke on television, after his 2011 escape, from Gaza, the home of Hamas, which is affiliated with the Egyptian Brotherhood. Furthermore, he was convicted in May 2015 for conspiring to commit terrorist acts with foreign organizations, thus undermining national security. As of July 2015, he still faced trials regarding undermining national security, fraud, and insulting the judiciary. See Chapter 4.

⁷⁵ In Chicago and elsewhere in the United States, the chant was "Hosni Mubarak has to go."

(*Selmiya*). And it ultimately did not succeed in achieving its goals of freedom, justice, human dignity, and democracy.⁷⁶

The United States, the European Union, and Israel remained strongly supportive of Mubarak, who had been a loyal ally to them. In the Arab world, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also continued to support Mubarak; this was not the case in Qatar, whose government supported the Brotherhood. In time, all supported the el-Sisi regime.⁷⁷

5 THE REVOLUTION AND THE REVOLUTIONARIES

It is important to distinguish the peaceful demonstrators who took to Tahrir Square from the Brotherhood and the Salafists. The Brotherhood briefly rode on the coattails of the peaceful demonstrators, until it saw the opportunity to act on its separate agenda. Earlier, the Brotherhood had one of the members of its Guidance Office (its leadership group), Mohamed el-Beltagy, encamped at Tahrir Square with a team of observers assessing the situation. Between January 28 and January 31, they attacked police stations and prisons, freeing an estimated twenty-three prisoners, seizing firearms, and killing police officers even after they had surrendered.⁷⁸ Many from the Brotherhood did join in peacefully, but as individuals, not as Brotherhood members. The Salafists were at first supportive of the Brotherhood's street actions, and then acted autonomously in attacking police forces, police stations, and Coptic Christians.⁷⁹ Their violent acts were reported as particularly brutal and vicious.

Each of those who took to the streets to fight for democracy, freedom, justice, and human dignity has a story that probably shaped his or her life. Among them were those who spontaneously assumed leadership roles and various levels of responsibility, whether in strategic or tactical ways, or even on a day-by-day, event-by-event, moment-by-moment basis, something they probably never thought they would or could do. But history usually records big moments and events, not what individuals do, though that is what the whole is made of, despite so much pain, suffering, love, and dedication reflected in the actions of those who were part of the masses. Indeed, there is such a thing called the masses only because of individuals. They are the ones who bring

⁷⁶ See Shahin, Emad El-Din, *Egypt's Revolution Turned on Its Head*, 114 *Current History* 343 (2015).

⁷⁷ See Chapter 5.

⁷⁸ Information about these incidents was posted on several websites but they had all been erased by 2014, which leads to the assumption that it was systematically done and that it is probably a government operation. See Chapter 8.

⁷⁹ *Id.*

about momentous, historic events and, ultimately, change. There can be no followers without leaders, even though in some cases they are only temporary.

One of those leaders is Wael Ghonim who, with a group of friends and followers, made the spontaneous happening a reality by using social media skills.⁸⁰ Although Wael Ghonim was not at Tahrir Square during the first ten days of the Revolution because he was under arrest, he was present during the last ten days of the demonstrations. Wael Khalil, who worked closely with him, was a veteran social organizer. There were also those who planned routes in and out of Tahrir Square and crafted tactics for avoiding or confronting the police, particularly the Central Security Forces (i.e., the riot police).

And then there were leaders such as the single mother, a high school teacher, who took her 6-year-old daughter to an apartment overlooking Tahrir Square, which she turned into a command-and-control post. From there she tactically directed some of the events on the ground. Someone should have chronicled what she did so well without having to graduate from an army command and general staff school; her skill and accomplishment show how innate and spontaneous leadership can be, as history has proven before in so many contexts.

At the street level, other leaders emerged spontaneously. There were those who kept the crowds' enthusiasm going, those who provided needed medical services, those who distributed food and water, and those who carried out security functions. They, too, were exercising leadership qualities that they probably never thought they possessed. Of them, Bothaina Kamel, a journalist who was Egypt's first female presidential candidate in 2012, descended on Tahrir Square with flowers that she delivered to the military (the military had surrounded the Square, in large part to keep the demonstrations contained in that area even though the military had presented itself as the protector of the people).

There was also Shaimaa al Sabbagh, a leading member of the Socialist Popular Alliance party, a mother, and a poet. She was active in organizing and demonstrating, bringing not only organizational skills to the street but also charm and grace. On January 24, 2015, she returned to a place where a number of peaceful protesters had been killed and laid a wreath of flowers in remembrance. While doing so, she was shot to death, killed by a security officer wearing a balaclava mask. Her death was so shocking that even President el-Sisi publically deplored it, urging an investigation, but

⁸⁰ They are listed in his book, see Ghonim, *supra* note 55. So many individuals contributed to these historic events; I name only a few in this book as an illustration of the many who will remain anonymous, but to whom Egyptians owe a debt of gratitude.

a spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior promptly proclaimed that her death must have been caused by one of her own followers who killed her as a way of inflaming anti-regime sentiments. Then-Prosecutor General Hisham Barakat⁸¹ later identified the perpetrator as a police first lieutenant and charged him with homicide; the officer has since been sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but his sentence is being appealed.⁸² Barakat also initiated criminal cases against many of the witnesses to this murder, which may lead to the disqualification of their testimony and be basis for the eventual reversal of the first lieutenant's conviction.

Wael Ghonim, Wael Khalil, Bothaina Kamel, and Shaimaa al Sabbagh, as well as Ahmed Maher, Mohammed Adel, and Alaa Abd el-Fattah are but a few of the hundreds of thousands of people whose involvement in the Revolution will be recorded by history. Sadly, so many young, socially conscious, and concerned Egyptians' talents are now being wasted in prisons across Egypt because they had the courage to bring attention to the abuses of the politically and militarily powerful. Ahmed Maher and Mohammed Adel, the founders of the April 6 Youth Movement, are serving three-year sentences for violating the "protest law."⁸³ Alaa Abd el-Fattah, a member of a multigenerational activist family, was arrested along with Maher and Adel for their participation in a protest outside the Upper House of the Egyptian Parliament calling for an end to the practice of charging civilians in military courts. Yara Sallam, a human rights lawyer, researcher, and winner of the 2013 North Africa Human Rights Defender Shield Award, spent more than a year in prison after being arrested for illegally protesting the "protest law" outside the presidential palace in June 2014; she eventually was among the activists pardoned by President el-Sisi on the day before he left Egypt to address the United Nations.⁸⁴ Mahinour el-Masry, a human rights lawyer, social activist, and winner of the 2014 Ludovic Trarieux International Human

⁸¹ Barakat was ambushed and killed on June 29, 2015. *Egypt Prosecutor Hisham Barakat Killed in Cairo Attack*, BBC News (June 29, 2015), www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33308518.

⁸² See Chapter 9.3.

⁸³ *Full English Translation of Egypt's New Protest Law*, Ahram Online (November 25, 2013), <http://english.ahram.org/eg/News/87375.aspx>.

⁸⁴ See The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders et al., *Egypt: Joint Press Release: The United Nations Working Group Declares the Detention of Yara Sallam as Arbitrary and Requests Compensation* (Jan. 20, 2016), www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/egypt/2016/01/d23576/; *EGYPT: Human Rights Defenders Yara Sallam and Sanaa Seif are Free!*, Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (Sept. 24, 2015), www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/egypt-human-rights-defenders-yara-sallam-and-sanaa-seif-are-free.

Rights Prize, spent four months in prison for protesting at the Khaled Said murder trial in 2013 and is now serving a fifteen-month sentence ostensibly for attacking the Al-Raml police station in Alexandria, along with a journalist and a poet/activist. Their version of the events is that they were there to check on a fellow lawyer who had been arrested for allegedly setting fire to a local Brotherhood office. Many of these Egyptian activists also were members of the Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution, which met with the SCAF after Mubarak relinquished the presidency to voice the people's desires for the end to the "Emergency Law," the resignation of Minister of the Interior Habib el-Adly, an updated minimum wage, and presidential term limits. But their eyewitness accounts tell only part of the story – so much happened at so many different locations on so many different days under so many different circumstances that much of it has yet to be recorded. So many stories of the many thousands of people who participated in one way or another have not yet been told. Only their collective accounts will tell the complete story of the 2011 Revolution.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Those who have described the events of those extraordinary eighteen days must have been part of or witnessed many or some of these events. Considering the nature of these events, whose occurrences covered diverse locations at different times and under different circumstances, it is almost certain that these eyewitness and participant accounts covered only part of what occurred over that span of time and in locations far enough removed from others that no one person or group of persons could have been physically present for all of the protests and demonstrations.