Cairo RBF Fieldnotes

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**Interview Guide Cairo**

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Interview Adham 21 May 2013

I'm talking to Adham. My first question would be do you think of yourself as an activist?

No it does not apply to me but if the term means the person who participated in the revolution and has political concerns, I'm activist. But nowadays the term activist has been misused and the media give it to some persons of which most of them participated in the revolution, don't consider themselves as activists in the media sense.

What about civil society, do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Yes I am a part of civil society. And the concept is really important. I have worked for four years in some of the NGOs. And I consider this concept of civil society as a medium between the authorities and citizens. And it has very important goals.

How and when did you first became politically aware?

It started in 2005. My study of political science made me to be concerned with politics. And being politically social, I was involved in politics for many years and I haven't been a member of political parties but as a member of an organization, I have connected to politics through this way. And at a reception I have participated in a book published by [organization name deleted], I have some articles and studies in this book. It was about the future of the social movements and protests. And by the way [Arabic name] is another writer.

How have you been involved in the political events of the last three years?

I haven't participated in 21st but I have participated in 26th of January on the Tahrir Square. This day some men tried to practice some violence and I told them this was a peaceful practice and we should preserve peacefulness. I have participated on 28th of January with [name] in Tahrir. That time it was almost turning and the 29th of January I called doctor [name] and ask him about the situation because you know he lives there. He told me this was a revolution and where are you? I told him maybe I'm in some places for popular committees. I asked him about the situation on the Tahrir Square and she told me that the Tahrir is the safest place in Egypt and the popular committees is very important and the popular committees and Tahrir are complementing after the revolution I participated almost every Friday. I have been a little bit an observer to get some information for my research because the media was misleading. I have participated in the referendum of 19th March and the parliament election and the presidential election. But the last referendum of the constitution, I haven't participated.

Do you feel part of a wider movement or just as an individual?

In the 18 days we were one movement, a wider one. And everyone was helping each other. Even if you were a girl afraid of the others, people would be: don't be afraid we'll protect them. But after the 11th of January and the celebration of the revolution some incidents came which were not very good. Many people have gone to Tahrir Square because they feel it all over and it's very safe. I wish we have a wider movement but we haven't because the polarization has been very wide and media has played a role in this polarization. And the authority also, make you feel all the time it doesn't represent you, even if you have been elected it. Maybe it represents someone else. The situation nowadays and in the future is more of polarization and a split. And now I get the feeling that I have divorced the revolution that if you personally have good manners, the others will be good. I mean the private course of individuals. What we have seen in the 18 days are many exceptional situations which covered all the purpose. And I think we should have this wider movement which has cohesive components, a strong one and has projects and values and is in favor of the purpose.

During the 18 days there were different slogans, which was the most meaningful to you?

The most important slogan was "The revolution tends this way (??). [from 00.16.00] And other say "Don't be afraid the military should go." And the third one "Go to the street Enzin". Enzin is the people who are sane. And the most spoken upon was "The Revolutions tells victory".

During the SCAF period and during the presidency of Morsi were there also slogans appealed to them?

At the state of SCAF people said "Don't be afraid, the military should go." Concerning mostly the period, I think the situation don't need a revolution, but it means a strong opposition observing the regime and the present alternative to give the demand of the citizens achieved with our slogans. And I haven't participated in any demonstrations against Morsi.

What would you what the high point of the movement was? The 18 days or later?

The 18 days, because in this period there was a revolution. And 28th of January was the peak of the revolution. And I'm confident that the revolution was 28th of January, not the 21st.

From the outside it looks like the Egyptian politics is all about in the streets. What is outside of the streets, that we don't see?

Okay there are many ways of participating politically and the image outside Egypt about the demonstrations are made by the media. The Egyptians have their own style of opposition against the government and this ways is not separated of the revolution even though our revolution being born the loving revolution. And the president of the government as describing him as goat. Also, the strike. But not all the practices seem are doing that on purpose because some of them make you look bad and stay at home and other being afraid for their sons and others. People keep their sons and daughters in the home, preventing them from going to schools or suppress their political orientations. But they are afraid of the strikes and so they keep them at home for their safety. This is a style of cities. The regions in upper Egypt and Delta have their own ways. I like to look in the streets and at the manifestation.

What do you think of the role of facebook and twitter?

The importance of internet and facebook is equal to the importance of the day of 21st of January. This means that facebook has triggered the revolution. Before the revolution, not so much the Egyptians were participating in facebook, but the young leaders were very active in facebook. And facebook was used as a way of cooperating and mobilizing the protestors and demonstrators. Facebook and the internet generally, have still its importance. Now many people in Egypt use it. But this is not the only factor.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the revolution and the movement?

Yes it has new leaders. Before the revolution most leaders were from the government the ruling party NDB and some opposition. Later from 2002 and 2010 we have had these young leaders. Their rule was limited but after the revolution it has been implemented. The labor leaders have not been having right of being leaders because the media focus on the used leaders. Also the media has its own leaders. The media fabricated these leaders. And the creation of [Arabic name]. This is not a revolutionary leader at all. He's against the revolution and nowadays he moved to Syria to support the Bashar Assad’s party. And he's uttermost ignorant. This guy is not revolutionary he's a political...

Do you think that the events of the last three years have had different effects on men and women and their relation in the society?

This subject needs some research but generally speaking the women have participated in a good way in the revolution. And the opinion of men about women has been changing and went to appreciate their role and their importance. Unfortunately there has been reactionary vendance in this field and the ascendance of some Islamic leaders has brought down this progress. Some of them say that women should do fun jobs and not others. And some call that the right place for women is their homes. With this reactionary ascend even has reached the judiciary/legislation. As some people say that the waiting of women of some rights before the revolution is a way of political maneuver of the NDB and they call that in term of legalization which gives some rights to women with the same laws. You know I'm speaking that the revolution has redefined the importance of women but gradually the movement has been loosened.

How do you think the police violence has affected the movement?

The violence of police had an important role in triggering the revolution. The way the police faced the revolution was very aggressive. And for every demonstrator we have a central security card. The central security was very violent towards the demonstrators and they were having some security men that were aggressive ones and they were going after the demonstrators in the night and using the gun machines excessively. The attack on the demonstrations on the 28th of January has been considered as a victory for the demonstrators. And they will say that in this day there was no going back to the day before the revolution. The violence of police has deceased again the 28th. But after the 18 days of the revolution they welcomed the violence of the military. And this means the demonstrators and revolutionaries had no resistance in the revolutions and no going back to before the revolution. And the incidence of violence committed by the military were not be forgetting by the people because they were very aggressive and we have witnessed, you know the strip down of women on Tahrir Square like that. We would not forget of the violence of the army. The violence of police and the military is one poses of the continuations of the revolution. This violence has counter effected of what they wanted.

What about the recent violence between the different movements?

The violence of police is adjective and the violence of the military has been ceased because the army has taken aside. The violence of the Sultedi only has developed because it is most there. But consequence of circumstances developed, and the police ridiculed of it because to confront fans and supporters of violence. The police was not using the law, meant that people take the right parts they have. Concerning violence between political parts, the ones that used violence are those who know they can't get some answers of the useful way of the revolution. Because some of them go to the media and satellite channels to comment on their incidence so they make their living on the continuation of violence. And the violence is both the authority and the opposition.

In the west there's the image of Egypt divided between the secular and religious forces.

This gives the image elites and peripheral leaders. The streets is more concerned with stability. What we see here is that this image is the image of media. Yes, there are differences but also they say modern civility, coexistence between different partners because they have some differences but they are still dealing with each other. But some elites and some young revolutionaries try to convey this conflict to the street. Like what we have seen in Alexandria through clashes between some secularists and some Salafists. This image is not accurate.

What does democracy means to you?

Democracy is not just a group of chosen leaders. The core value of democracy is equity and in this way democracy is some chosen leaders and equity besides rules law and the state of law. And no one hijacked the monopoly rule. Democracy is free and a process with inputs and outputs. Besides that we have to be this closeness if it's a good one it should be accomplished with accepting the results of this process and election of course.

What about the level of organizations and movements, what does he thinks of democratic practices?

As level of society this implies the despict of law. And educating people and awareing them of this importance of values. Also, the accepting of the others who different from you politically, socially and economically and religiously.

Does he think the movements are practicing this?

No, most of these movements have grown up in anti-democratic atmosphere. Their education was not democratic and their practices are not democratic. Most of the organizations of human rights, which call for human rights, in their work they are not so keen of the rights of employees, which work for them. Most of these organizations are clinic. I mean you need some sort of group of friends and accountancies from one family.

Another important term that came from the revolution is about social justice. What is social justice and were does it come from?

Yes, social justice is very important for me. It means that the state should give the service to the citizens, educations health and good quality with the just price. Also it means maximum and minimum limited salaries. And what we have seen in society that society has sources but it is been distributed in unjust ways. As an example treatment at expense of the state goes to who could pay for this and the poor are prevented from it. Now services are presented as elections bribes to get reforms. With the old regime and the present one.

And there's the value of dignity or Karamah.

We have two levels of citizenship. The state should guarantee the dignity of citizens by giving them the good services to assist them. He shows he's not dependent on others but dependent on the state. The state should deal with citizens respecting the law, and should not use violence against the citizens. And also, respecting its dignity by giving them services. Also, appreciating the state of citizens and considering him as the most valuable resource. The level of the state, dignity means that the state should have a dependent voice and wealth being able to do what is says, to be more dependent. And not be independent of all sorts of power.

Do you see what you are part of as a Cairo movement, an Egyptian movement, a pan-Arabic movement or global movement?

Basically it's an Egyptian movement in an Arabic context. Concerning the international level, I think the ordinary citizens don't think a lot of it at the beginning of the revolution. To some of them maybe, but most of the Egyptians considered it a Egyptian revolution in an Arabic context.

Do you feel an emotional connection to the revolutions in the other Arab contexts?

Yes for sure the Arab revolution, I have been affected very much by them. We have the same destiny. We have been influenced by each other. Of course technology has linked us all but we have more linkage through cultural history, social ties and religious common values. We have been very understanding. We also influenced the Arab revolutions.

Does he think there are similarities between western protests in Greece and Spain and the Occupy movement and the Arab movements?

My information about the Western protests is not very good, it is restricted on Arab research. But I can say that technology and the conveying and transformation of experiences and benefitting from each other is a common ground between the revolution and the Western protestors. It seems that there are some links untied between this revolution and protests. Our age, we call it the age of people or the age of citizen, the unpoliticised persons who were absence have been the chance to each other. They may choose this.

Does he think there are unique things about the Egyptian revolution that differ from anywhere else, even in the Arab world?

The Egyptian one was very peaceful. Also the Tunisian revolution came first. But the Egyptian revolution was inspiring to the Arab world, because of the heritage of Egypt. Also the human resources of Egypt which is all the time producing new ideas and new mechanism. And improving its actions. Because the Egyptian revolution represent enlightments for the Arabic revolution. Something like radiation.

END

**Interview Mahmoud, 18 May 2013**

I work in public international research. In a public international policy group. It's based in [name place] but public international policy group that countries undergoing transitional phases, we provide legal assistance in legal and institutional reforms etc. etc. I work with the government and the parliament and the parties and NGOs. I'm providing advice regarding new laws and regulation. I did not work on the constitution but my boss was working on the constitution. That's basically what I’m doing. I also study law, international law a joint program of [name] in [name place]. Also I have been interested in politics since I was really young. I believe in protests and social movements. I have never been a member of a social movement or political party because I just never appeared to be officially participating in a movement or political party but I always been involved in organizing activities etc. with different movements. By contrast, I love to be a member of different kinds of movements raising particular awareness. I have been part of different movements from spreading political awareness in Egypt and Cairo etc. etc. That was before and after the uprising. Also, I’ve been interested in politics since I was young because my family is all political. My dad has been arrested tens of times, my uncle, my mum. So yeah my family has an issue with politics and with oppositionist. However they were never...most of my family is Nasserites. So they were not oppositionist at the time of Nasser. Another part of it is not Nasserites but leftists. Other parties are Salafists so they are involved in politics, Salafists, leftists and Nasserites. They're all involved in politics.

Would you think of yourself as an activist?

As an activist? I dislike the term itself. I would say yes. Because also next to my job I’m also a member of an association it's called [name]. It's called the independent association for legal support. It's an association that by this very prominent jurists and economists and ex-parliamentarians it's called [name], it's very popular. I'm a member of this group this group comprises ten or fifteen jurists. And we work on campaigning for or against bills. We did not start doing this yet but we thought to do this. From time to time we do class action mitigation. So I wouldn’t say I’m an activist, I’m not an activist in the classical sense in the terms of protesting all the time and joining in protests. However now, I’m being active in something that’s just the public interests. I dislike the term activist because it has been abused for the last three years. Everyone's like I’m an activist. I don't like the word, however I’ve always been an activist I’ve been written comments. Now I’m an activist in a different sense because I do protests but not really as a use to do. But I’m doing something that affects the public interest. I work now on the demonstration law, the government stills the protest, the government still the NGOs the government still free information act judicial justice and legislation. Yeah I work in different law with the government and the parliament, the opposition and political parties. This could be called activism.

Does the idea of civil society mean something to you?

Yeah it does, however, also civil society just like activists... the term is really abused also. Yeah I do believe in civil society and I a member of civil society etc. However, the very big problem is that Egyptian civil society, and not just Egyptian but the southern civil societies if we divide the world north to south. The civil society in Egypt, East and different countries has been like how the term activist has been misused. Civil society has been misused. With endless amounts of money. So a lot of people just decided to stop working and stop doing anything positive for the society and they just launched their civil society organizations. You see millions of funds and you see basically nothing and they're labeled as activists. So this is why I’m saying that an activist in civil society is the worst thing you can describe me with. So civil society has been... I don't know if it has been intentionally or just it just happened, corrupted, got corrupt. I'm not very sure to speak about the Tunisian, Yemeni or the Syrian whatever civil society but I’m sure about their remarkance. They’re really really corrupt. I do believe in civil society but it should be subject to reform process that must follow. Not just the regime. The reform process regarding the regime and the people and definitely civil society is part of this. I definitely believe in civil society and despite the corruption, one can never say that that civil society did not play any role in the uprisings especially in Tunisia. Because I don't know if they have told you but this is how I got to know the big intrudements in Tunisia. And we've been to Tunisia and stayed a time there and Tunisia’s civil society is really really powerful. There's is corruption just like in Egypt but I’m not really familiar with that kind of corruption in Tunisia there is. But civil society definitely played a role in the revolution. However, there's corruption. However, this show could have been played with much lesser expenditure because they do extend a lot of money really. Like for example this organization for legal support I’m a part of. We pay this spent money and it's important because we do a really really important job and we lobby in the parliament and we don't really appear in the media. And it's they who pay the media and it's they who spend money. So being active does not really nescistate money. But civil society in Egypt here is really spending a lot of money paying a lot on the media. Money and media they corrupt. So civil society became corrupt and also, there is a very big prove to the word Egyptian civil society. Which is that because since the last one, Mubarak's one, was against civil society. So basically all those who were a part of civil society are more or less oppositionists. It's not a stereotype it's actually true that members of civil society became just oppositionists. And they cannot really separate between themselves as oppositionists and as civil society members or leaders whatever. So when it comes to... this problem is still severe now. It seems like now a civil society member as [name] or the network for human rights, appears in the media he appears a lot in the media, and he really be able to describe him as a civil society member, listening to what he's saying and they say: this guy's a part of the opposition. He's not talking about statistics. Would he be talking about statistics or scientific talking he'd be just talking politics. That's a very big problem in Egyptian civil society, which is that all the gymnastic like scientific research and statistics they speak politics. That's a very big problem. There's no critical thinking no critical writing no nothing. It's just politics politics politics. And we need someone to really... The Egyptian political awareness needs somebody to be or some civil society to be - I would not say nurtured but at least preserving the least amount of objectivity. To be critically commenting on the government's performance etc.etc. And not just speaking about it as politics. That's a very big problem in Egypt. And I say also civil society in different countries in north-Africa.

Especially after the uprising there have been millions of billions sent to civil society but no supervision of it. Everyone would take a lot of money and spent it on whatever.

Also, this other problem is that civil society in Egypt it's really. They not know how to do a proper research. It's a very big problem here in Egypt. [Name of organization deleted] I'd say that's the only organization that does the proper NGO work. The majority of the others, I would not say all of them, they do nothing. And all their statements and comments on governments bills or laws or decisions whatever. They are very very politized very very unprofessional. There's a general crisis in Egypt of unprofessionalism. In media, civil society and other aspects. So yeah civil society, there extremely unprofessional and this is really annoying for me.

How did you first become active? A first moment?

If you define politically active first by going to protests, so I’ve been participating in protests since I was eight. So I was really young. And I’ve been really involved in protests since 2001. When there was this sit-in in Tahrir square. That was the time of the intifada. And I was participating, I was ten. And I saw my dad being beaten. The police men they were shocking him with electric teaser. Since then I was really really involved in protests but not really active just go to protests. Then, in 2008 I attended the course [name deleted]. It's really prominent they do nice studies. I attended the annual course for university students, on basics of human rights and stuff like that. It was really good, an amazing course. And this centre, by this time was really good and effective. Now it's not but it used to be really really good. The whole group became really active after this course. We were 40 young Egyptians. Now we’re all doing something quite important. [name] she's is very active in the social democratic party which is the third most powerful party in Egypt and the only revolutionary political party that had seat in the counsel and the people's assembly. I would not name everyone but they're all very active and doing important jobs. After this, I and five or six other participants of the course, we started planning on initiatives for political awareness because we always believed it's the university that would take the lead of the new uprising but yeah we've definitely never dreamt of an uprising like this. We thought that if the university would be politically aware then something could change. So we started planning for political awareness activities at our universities. At [names universities]. I organized several political awareness events. My bachelor was van [name university], by the way. My masters were in [name university]. We organized different political awareness activities. We also used the [name] of the universities for political session etc. Because we were not allowed to organize activities of that sort. So we'd use the [name] as a cover for other political awareness activities. Definitely the university administration was not very welcoming. The security of the university was not very welcoming and they stopped us different times and we head this huge fight with the dean of my faculty. I had to retake a whole year afterwards. And we were threatened by a professor that our report of a friend of mine and I were send to the state security. Afterwards, a group of friends and I, we were in the same university, we had this movement it was called the [name].

This movement lasted for one year from January 2011 till January 2012 a few days before the completion of the election and the parliament and the completion of the laws of hope. This movement was more active and more effective. But it was not only in university but it was in Upper Egypt. Upper Egypt is entirely a different world. You should definitely go there it's like the African villages it's very very poor. It was our first time in Upper Egypt. We were shocked. Because we are all middle-class and some upper middle-class and the majority of the movement was these two. We've never seen...We always thought the slums in Cairo were the worst. Then we went to Upper Egypt and we discovered it was really different. We made a very good activity there we used to hold a sorts of seminars with the farmers and the workers and the housewives and they're all uneducated, mostly. And they're really really followers in the very... They cannot process anything they just watch the TV and see what the TV would tell them, not any TV the government TV. They see what the government would tell them and during the uprising they were in their villages knowing nothing. So they really wanted to know and the sent one from the village to Cairo, the educated guy of them - for them he was really educated. They sent him to Cairo to Tahrir Square to see what's going on and happening and go back and tell them what's happening. They're so so so isolated from society. I wouldn't say followers because that's really demeaning. They really love their country and they want to be positive but they're really isolated and have known nothing. So we were really interested in doing something with those people. We were cautious not posing this superior tone like 'I’m the guy from Cairo who came here to depate you etc.etc.’ That was very important for them. They would really be upset about that like: that’s the Cairo guy. They were really working during the first’s months of the uprising. Afterwards with the SCAF, NGOs and civil society in general. By the way this movement was funded. Till now I’ve never been part of anything that is funded. So with the SCAF raid on civil society we start to have troubles. People were not really welcoming, people would question how we get a fund to travel from south-Egypt to here and by this time I used to be paid 1200 pounds, I’d save 800 for the activity and save 400 pounds to spend for my daily expenses. That was really pretty hard for me to do and then I would go there and then they would suspect my intentions that would be founded by western powers etc.etc. We were really upset by this and then stopped our activities in January because people were not working with us anymore with the SCAF and with the joint SCAF and Islamist raid on civil society. Which is still there now and civil society is still threatened till the moment.

What about the specific accusations, was it American?

West and American very very generalized. Founded by the west, by the Americans. Until now, and this happens on a very large scale by them, by the Muslim Brotherhood and members. Three weeks ago in the parliament there was a Shura council session on transitions. I was invited as an expert on issues like that, though I’m a part of civil society but because when I’m in the Shura Council to speak really professionally and public international laws this and this and that. So they the Shura council do not perceive me as a civil society member, but as a transnational law expert. But I’m not an expert I’m not a professor I’m just a civil society member. So I made this presentation on the RST and why Egypt should ratify the Rome statute. And how would act positively towards reaching a national consolidation etc.etc. Then the MPs of the Muslim Brotherhood, when they were addressing me, the whole session was basically: I spoke and then the Salafi’s and the MPs responded to what I said. Their response was basically: the ICC is really politicized and two hands of the hands. And the west is controlling this court. And that was implicitly said though; this court was never active except against the Muslim leaders. What was explicitly said that, there was a guy from the FJP (freedom of Justice Party) said that what was the ICC stance against Myanmar, Mali, Somalia, where is it from Israel, where is it from the native Americans in the American civil wars. And this court would never be active expect it was against a [name deleted]. He unfortunately does not now that the jurisdiction of the court goes back in 2002. And would only be vis-a-vis to those who ratified the statute. And Israel and the US did not. And Myanmar did not and he does not know that. He was basically replying to what I said as that's the guy who was educated in the West. I was not educated in a foreign country, however because I’m speaking professionally... They only know politicized discourse they do not know any professional speak. So you’re the guy who's educated in western countries and you came to us to convince us to ratify the convention and the statute that would make us subject to the western countries and powers. That was implicitly the spirit of this discourse. It didn't say this explicitly though but it was clear. So yeah this is how civil society is perceived. Western western western.

Do you think there is a wider movement, something bigger organization? Or can you not say there is one?

I don't know. I think for someone who's optimistic about Egypt’s future he would say that there's a wider movement spreading awareness. But from a more pessimistic approach, I’d say no there's no wider movement and that's it. It's just like that. I believe there's a wider movement, there's something positive that happened. There is really a revolution in term of that more people became involved and interested in public affairs. Everyone first was just interested in their daily lives. Now, because public affairs directly started to touch and affects people's daily lives, they started to be interested in public affairs. I'd say yes, there's a wider movement of spreading political awareness and awareness of the essence of democracy itself because democracy always has been received as: democracy is ballot boxes, democracy is constitutional institutions and contestation and this very classic understand of democracy. After the Muslim brotherhood became in power people started to be aware that democracy is not just ballot boxes and not just several political rights but it is about social and economic rights and education and the right to work etc. etc. Then you have the ability to use you're right to vote. On the other hand, there is a movement towards the other way. I mean backwards. There is this, I’d say disgusting discourse that Mubarak was the one who pushed this Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi’s and islamists away and he made us... Because at the time of Mubarak we did not even feel that there existed... So living in an authoritarian regime is better than living in a democracy etc. etc. And then people started to recall Mubarak's quotes about the Muslim Brotherhood and how he talked about the Muslim brotherhood. That's really disgusting and also there is some of Marrar's quotes about the Muslim Brotherhood. One could never take pride of what Nasser did to the islamists. He was really awful and you can never take pride of this. Now there are slogans that were chanted in the protests saying that if: Like Nasser said to the Muslim Brotherhood: have no word. This I think portrays the brotherhood as the victims of Mubarak’s suppression. They take pride of measures. However, I believe there's a wider movement of spreading awareness and consciousness etc.etc. But that's the optimistic part of me. But it not always present.

What was the high point of the movement?

You mean the 18 days? This point was an amazing time. Tahrir square was like big utopia. It was self-governed. Everyone was on equal footing. The upper middle class guys sitting next to the very very poor farmer. It was an amazing time; however it was full of delusion. I say it's now. It is after the Muslim brotherhood. During the 18 days in the square, it was a very nice time, everyone felt there is a huge movement of awareness everyone cares about politics and this country be the best country in the world. In a few years... etc. etc. But that was to me a delusion. I believe it was a big delusion. There was no really a deep thinking of a path for the revolution. No one knew what after the revolution what would come after Mubarak. No one even agreed upon this stuff. No one knew whether Egypt should take a neoliberal model, whether it should take. Everyone was together. No one agreed on the slogan 'The people demand the fall-down of the regime'. No one agreed upon the word regime. What does it mean? And the evidence on this is that everyone left the square when Mubarak left, and the regime is not Mubarak. Now for example the Muslim Brotherhood gives all the those of Mubarak, his ministers and the employees of the parliament and the employees of the ministries they all used by the Muslim brotherhood. Shall I now describe the Muslim Brotherhood as the regime? Mubarak's regime? I say yes. But people said no. The people left the square right after Mubarak left. Even the Muslim brotherhood, that's SCAF. I mean, they are from the part of Mubarak's regime. And all the generals of the military have served Mubarak for ten's of years. And people did not consider them as part of the regime. People did not even agree on what 'regime' means. So no, during the 18 days there was disillusion that we're all one and that we all know our future and that we all know which way to take in order to achieve a better future etc. etc. But no one actually knew what to do. No one agreed upon anything. This is very annoying. But I’d say that after SCAF left, now people actually started to be more interested and drawing the contours of their future state. I would never say that the 18 days were the peak of... No, it was the peak of something, the peak of disillusion. And that's it. But now is definitely the peak of awareness of a wider movement of awareness. But I’d say that the next popular movement, which would definitely happen, I’d say. Most probably that's the next stop. It would be more aware and have more a deeper and stronger vision of the future. I'd say the next one would be much stronger.

What were the main slogans that came out of that period? During 18 days and after.

Generally 25 slogans. "Down, down with Mubarak". I'm now talking about the early hours. The first hundred gatherers in front of the Mubarak's association. That's next to the...Not far at al. The first hundred contesters gathered in front of Mubarak's association. Chanted the same slogans that we used to chant during the last ten years: 'Down down with Mubarak'. Dan then the new slogan that we started chanting since January 14th 2011: 'You, Ahmed (a typical Muslim name), tell Bulis (a typical Christian name) Egypt tomorrow will catch up with Tunis.' That was a direct invitation to effect a real revolution. Also 'Bread, freedom, social justice' that was said different ways. Sometimes it was 'bread, freedom and social justice'. And 'bread, freedom and human dignity'. There were always the slogans that accused Mubarak for being an alley of Israel. That has never been absent from any protest. Like for example "You Mubarak, you're a coward", to "the agent of the Americans". Then also there is... I recall something now. Different things about Israel. That his nation was an ally of Israel. This is a slogan that I don't really like. This slogan started on February tenth. One day before Mubarak left it says 'Talk to them in Hebrew, he cannot speak Arabic.' I don't really like that but some people did. But that was not really widespread. Then by seven p.m. when the numbers were a lot bigger. We were like 25 thousand in the square, and then this slogan started "The people demand the removal / fall down of the regime". It was really scary. For me, I did chanted, I was fine with it, but some of my friends were like... Because people were chanting "The People - Demand - The Fall down - Of the Regime". People started to get scared. Are we aware of what we are saying? A friend of mine, he always says this joke he'll be like: do we agree on the fall-down of the regime? So for some people it was quite scary. Then by seven p.m. there was this slogan the people demand the fall down of the regime. And also, some protested with chant with some slogans related to resistance against Israel. Like 'Nasser said it in the past...’ There was this man called Suleiman. He was a soldier on the borders. He shot eight Israelis who illegally crossed the borders. He was ordered to shot anyone who illegally crossed the borders. He shot them and he was imprisoned and was killed inside the prison. The regime alleged that he committed suicide but everyone knows he was killed by the regime because the Israeli’s were not comfortable with him being alive. So this guy's portrayed as hero by the opposition. Because he was killed in prison with no juridical predict. So this slogan says "Nasser, said in the past, just like the weapon of Suleiman, that everything that was taken by force should be retaken by force." Slogans recalling Nasser were always present but not at all protests because some of the protestors, big numbers of them, consider Nasser as this dictator who did this and this and that. And some actually consider the military an extension of Nasser's regime and the corrupt regime as a mere tension of Nasser's regime. Even if Nasser was not corrupt but he was the one who putt the seat of t he corrupt regime. The slogans recalling Nasser with quotes were always present. On January 25 and 28 etc. That was on January 25. All the slogans were basically, slogans related to civil and political rights, aside from this slogan that says 'bread freedom and social justice / dignity'. There was always freedom and human dignity. Civil rights basically. And there was this slogan that basically was the demands of January 25 day. This day there was four demands: new constitution, resignation of the government and the dissolution of the parliament because the election was ripped. And what else, I can't remember, but there was a fourth. Nothing about the military. The demands were basically. I mean at 7 pm "the fall, the people demand the fall down of the regime" that was no demand. Then after [name], that's a poet. An Egyptian poet. And his dad is minister Karadafi, this guy an Egyptian guy and he's a Muslim brother and the head of the Islamic conference organization. But his son, they have a lot of conflicts with each other so this man, you can never just count him s Karadafi's son. This man he was the one, a member of the Egyptian Association for change the one that was created by ElBaradei, the association in charge collecting signatures of Mubarak. So he came as a representative of the association for change. And with this big flyer. With a microphone and said: we demand 1, 2, 3, 4. then there was this slogan basically listing the demands. Someone would say 'We demand....’ and people would say 'we demand 1: this and this and that. 2: this and this and that'. Then on 28th January the slogans were much more about social-economic rights. Because 28th were the masses were in the streets. So slogans were about employment, about poverty. Basically social-economic rights and education. For example, there were slogans like....I really forgot the slogans because after this, the 18 days, there was the military era, there were new slogans and now the Muslim brotherhood new slogans, so I really started to forget you know. Though I've been anti-Mubarak slogans for ten years but I really forgot them. Basically slogans on bread. Because bread symbolizes economic rights and social justice. It symbolizes social justice. So January 28th was social justice and unemployment and poverty and bread. Freedom. "Bread, freedom and social justice", this slogan has been never disappeared. That was actually the main one. Not "the people demand the fall down of the regime". OK, both of them but the bread freedom and social justice that's the one that really represents the uprising. The other one was really particular because of the size about it because it was also chanted in Tunisia. Not just in Tunisia but also in Yemen and Syria and all in the media and in all these countries. The slogan that collects us all as an Arab nation. During SCAF, the main slogan was: 'down down the military bull'. That used to be "down, down with Mubarak". After the Maher Hamoud massacre I followed the massacre, because a lot of people were killed in it and the clashes in [Arabic name]. The people demanded the execution of the marshal [Arabic name]. Also, Nasser started to disappear from the slogans somehow, during the raid. The slogans recalling Nasser were not really present because people were chanting against the military. This link that could be made between Nasser and the military does not really exist. But definitely some of the Nasserts, they have good relations with the regime, they started... Like [Arabic name], she was a judge, she is Nasserts, and she was pro the military. Some of the Nasserts, they're pro the military but the bigger part of them were against the SCAF. The party itself, the headquarters of Nassert's party, was used as a shelter for protesters running from the military soldiers and officers. And I anyone would get shot they take them to the headquarters of the Nasser’s party. So the Nasser party was not pro the military at all. That's it. That's basically the slogans during the SCAF period. Slogans to social justice and economic right etc.etc. And slogans signifying the link between the military and Mubarak. Saying that the military are ruminants of the past regime. because some people did not consider the military as part of the regime. So there were a lot of slogans assuring that the military was part of the regime. After the presidential elections there was a plead of stability. There was no protests because Morsi was not created following to his so called 100-day time. In this time he promised us working on different pressing files and resolving these issues. I cannot recall... Basically it was the security. They were all files that touch directly the poor people's daily lives. They were not constitutional reforms; they were not about preserving political rights but social-economic rights. It was about restoring security because people's businesses stopped, there was no security. Old people they get paid on daily basis after what they sell in the bazaar. So after the SCAF period there was no security there was always protests and there was always instability. The foreigners did not come. So people in down-town did not work. This is why they all hated the regime. Because they have businesses downtown and the tourist sector in general, the hated the revolution. So restoring security and resolving the rubbish quests. The state itself during the SCAF era was not concise. So it was not consistent. So this was reflected on collecting garbage. Because the government collects the garbage. Downtown was manic; they just go to slums were people live in and bring garbage. That's really unenjoyable. Resolving this issue and the bread issue because since Mubarak there is a crisis in bread. People cannot have bread in Egypt. Bread is like potatoes in the Netherlands it's something that is very important. No one can eat without bread. So this crisis in bread, bread is really expensive and not accessible as people cannot buy it. So bread, security and garbage. There's something else, I cannot remember what it was. So anyway, this was in this hundred day time. So there were calls by protestors to give him an opportunity of hundred days. During those hundred days we would never protest. So there weren't a lot of protests. I think there were no protests at all. Very very few. After the hundred days, everything went worse and there were new crises that appeared. Electricity prices and the security was even much worse, etc. Then also the political side of things. There were more arrests against activists and torture. Illegal presidential ecrie. They took a ecrie that the parliament should be reconviene and the parliament was dissolved by the constitution court. That was unconstitutional. And the parliament was dominated by the Muslim brotherhood so he's basically contrary to the law to make the Muslim brotherhood leading the desiccative authority. So after the 100 days ended. There was a call for protests on the 100st day. Exactly after 100 days there was a call for the protests. It was called on the Friday of Kesh[Arabic] it's like holding the president account for his non accomplishments of his period. This protest was attacked by the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood attacked the square, they would move the stages. The bosses of the Muslim Brotherhood attacked us officially. I cannot remember... Something happened like prosecutor general. The office of the prosecutor general is just here. It's very near the Tahrir Square. So I cannot remember what happened but the prosecutor general was appointed by the laws of the past regime. He was an awful person. He's the guy... he was not appointed by Mubarak, because according to the law he's appointed independently by the supreme counsel for judiciary. However, he was... Because Mubarak controlled everything, even the judiciary was really corrupt. So this guy was really corrupt. And one of the main demands of the revolution was to remove him from office. So he did something, I cannot remember what was it. But so the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to protest against him. We, the revolution wanted to remove the guy and via the revolution and national consent we wanted to appoint the new prosecutor general chosen by a national consensus. But the Muslim Brotherhood also wanted to appoint the general, a new one chosen by the Muslim Brotherhood. Like all the extra constitutional measures that were taken by the Muslim Brotherhood. They were actually demanded by us to cleanse the judiciary and cleanse the police. But we want all to participate because we don't want some political course to take over this. Because if this happens, it wouldn't be poses of reform to the judiciary and the policy. It would be the brotherhoodification of the judiciary etc. etc. They wanted to brotherhoodify the judiciary and basically the office of the prosecutor general. And we wanted to revolutionize the prosecutor general's office. So in this protest we did not participate because we did not want to remove the prosecutor general because if he'd be removed, he'd be replaced by the Muslim Brotherhood. Which actually happened. He was removed and then someone of the Muslim Brotherhood came. He's the prosecutor general now. So we were in the Tahrir Square and they were coming to protest in front of the prosecutor general's office. They passed by, near the square. There was this clash. A lot of clashes. Officially the Muslim Brotherhood members and their bosses. They attacked the stages and the protestors. That was the first violent clash between the people and the people. After it became a battle definitely. Afterwards, that was in august I think or September. That was in September. Then afterwards there was another protest on the next Friday the Muslim Brotherhood could not attack it because everyone really condemned the act of attacking the protesters the peaceful ones. I mean, I'm protesting at Tahrir Square, I'm protesting against you, why would you send your members? So they were portrayed as those could make us halt. So the slogans after this, after the hundred passed, until now the slogans are most of them not against Morsi, the higher guy of the Muslim Brotherhood. And this is very important because this signifies how people never blame Morsi. Just like in Tunisia Marzouki is a puppet, also in Egypt Morsi is a puppet. So 'Down down with the higher guide'. Because they don't have a leader they have a guide like a reference of the Shiites in Iran. So 'Down down with the guide'. Also, there were all very humiliating slogans against Morsi, basically slogans focusing on how Morsi is a puppet and how he's just nothing. And how Morsi was a substitute tire. Did you hear this? Like a spare tire because...People would say "Morsi you are a [Arabic word for flat tire]. We would take you back to Kisouf". Because he was imprisoned on January 28th. I don't really like this slogan because he was a political prisoner not a... But some people believed, and this is actually feasible that it's o.k. to chant the slogan because he was not a political prisoner. He was imprisoned as an intelligence case. Because he was imprisoned as spy. Because it is believed that Morsi was informing to Hamas. Because you know Hamas is the Muslim Brotherhood branch of Palestine, that's official by the way. Because not everyone knows that Hamas is officially the branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. So thing like Morsi is a flat tire. And they would chant against the guide. Also chant some definitely socio economic rights. People cannot eat, people cannot find good education and chants against the Brotherhoodification of the state. Also chants against showing the Brotherhood is like...as... You see Mubarak used to have his entourage, also Morsi has his entourage, like a businessmen he's a business men who would use the positions in their businesses. These types of slogans were also chanted to Mubarak at Mubarak's time. Showing Mubarak is this guy who has his own entourage and is a business men and it's a marriage of the capital and the power. So same thing because also the Muslim Brotherhood they're basically all business men so then we would call a slogan, I cannot recall one now. Also slogans against the IMF loan. And slogans showing Morsi as the other face of Mubarak. They say "Shave your beard". Showing him like a Mubarak with a beard. They say: "Shave your beard, show your ugliness, define your face; it's Mubarak's face." And there's this social call too. You can find it on facebook. There is a photo of Mubarak and Morsi but he's with a beard and then Mubarak has not beard. Apart from Morsi's beard being taken, it shows Mubarak's face. So yeah it's basically shave your beard and show your ugliness. And: '"You're face is just Mubarak's face" and slogans on how the Muslim Brotherhood uses religion in Arabic, the term we use is not using religion but more like trading religion. I don't know if this term is also in English. Like the trade in religion. Or trade by religion. That's how we use it in Arabic. Yeah that's it.

From the outside it looks like in Egypt it is much about street protest, so I wonder what do people do in terms of political activities that is not on the street? What other things do people do to express their..?

I thinks this is very important because in Europe, in Spain and Greece and much of the UK. The occupy movements even in the US were really influenced by the so-called the Arab Spring and the Tahrir Square and they would always have like a corner in their camps named 'Tahrir square' right? They were really inspired by the idea of people taking over the square. I don't know who made this image. People see it by people. Because it's not just taking over the square that would change the regime, actually occupying the Tahrir Square was nothing. It was very very symbolic and that's it. But there were other activities that caused the fall down of Mubarak and that led to SCAF's fall- I would not say fall down because SCAF did not fall down. During that period the country was not stable and the regime was always shaky. Now also with the Muslim Brotherhood the regime is shaking but not thanks to the street protests. For example, Mubarak left on Feb. 11th, right? On Feb. 5th, Obama said Obama has to leave. The 9th, they asked to leave now. That's not important. What's really important is that by Feb. 9th, almost all the industrial sector, all the workers were striking. So that's really important and no one really takes care of it. People think it's a group of Egyptians occupying the Tahrir square. And apparently that's what will be written in the history books. The Egyptians took over the square for 18 days. Not even 18 by the way there were just 15 days, from January 28th to 11th. At January 25th 26th the square was not occupied because the security was basically chasing us for three days. So it would be written in the history that a group of people took over the square, occupied the square for over 18 days and then the strong regime fell down.

We'll still have time to improve, to rectify the history. So you're saying that the workers are the part of the story?

Yes the most important part. The state was completely paralyzed. The state did not function. The workers were on strike. So yeah basically the workers stroked. The rights work addressing the international community, that's very important. The statements made by human rights organizations and civil society organizations in English, addressing Western governments and addressing the international community. This was also very important. For example, the human rights office in Egypt, worked for example on the bill at the time the bill of the right to protest was revealed by the government, human rights watch asked us for an advice on how they should comment on this bill etc. etc. And they published a statement, a very strong one, against the bill describing it as a bill that only be enforced in authoritarian regimes etc. etc. The presidency institution was really annoyed by this statement. Because it takes their image in front of the international community’s that believes that in Egypt there's a real democracy after an amazing revolution. When millions of Egyptians took the square and this really nice idea about the Egyptian revolution, the chosen revolution. Like an easy task and everyone loved each other. The presidency was really annoyed by this statement and they sent [name deleted], she's the woman in charge of human rights watch's office. I was in a meeting, two days afterwards I met [name deleted] and she showed me an email sent by the presidency. A very very strong email with strong language. So also, addressing the international community between rackets the Western community with its civil society with its governments and European Union. That is also very important. Yes so basically, the Shia movements and the workers, international community. That's it. That's what really makes an effect. Obama's statement on Feb. 8th en Feb. 5th and Feb. 1st were very very effective. Unfortunately, but I have to say this.

What has been the main form of communication between activists? Became a lot has been made about twitter and facebook and so on. How important all this is?

I think they're really overrated. Some people actually describe themselves as facebook activists. What the hell is this? Yeah facebook and twitter were important on January 25 because those were the test that on January 35 where middle-class and upper-middle class and even upper-class... So they all have facebook etc. etc. and there was an event on facebook 'The Egyptian revolution: attending- maybe attending'. We've made a lot of fun about this: attending the revolution, maybe attending. It was important however, I'm really really against overrating or over estimating this effect. For example the movement 6th of April. 6 April was established on June 2008. Two or three months after the workers strike in April 2008. A lot of people believe that the 6th of April movement organized the labour rights and protest on April 2008, which is definitely not true. Why people believe so is because member of the movement created a facebook event before the strike of the workers in 2008, saying that we will protest on 6 April 2008. Did this make any effect? Certainly no, because the workers did not have facebook. So facebook was effective on January 25 and twitter etc. And it is effective to know who's arrested and for example my mum was arrested on January 25 at 10 a.m. before anything happens. They arrested her and some people and other journalists. My mother was a journalist. So it spread all over facebook and twitter that [name] is arrested and this woman is also arrested. And everyone knew in a second. However if you pretend to romantise the facebook and whenever you write something everyone can see it. Some people believe that anything they would write on facebook, the world would see them. Like for example I’d say, I’m someone and I say: I wrote on facebook two days ago and he'd assumed that I saw it on facebook. People started believing facebook is spreading our words all over the world etc. But that's not true. Now it's really less effective. Because a lot of people are on facebook and a lot of events and a lot of activities so it's harder to be effective on something that has a lot of people. On January 25 I would say something and all those that were in facebook were just choosing facebook just like paying a visit, just post photos and stuff like that. Some of the politised people would use facebook for political reasons. Afterwards everyone started to be on facebook so I tried something. Before 2011 the politized people would like what I wrote against the regime. Afterwards, after the revolution, everyone started coming on facebook so whenever I would write something there would be a lot of comments against what I'm writing. So it became less effective. Also, there is chaos on facebook now. A lot of pages and a lot of groups and a lot of activity.

Could you tell me something about last Friday’s demonstrations, could you tell me how that was organized?

It was organized by [name] that means weapon. That's the campaign to collect signatures against Morsi before June 30th. So June 30rd 2013 this movement is planning to collect signatures more than those Morsi got in the first phase of the first round of the presidential elections. He got around 5 million votes. And in the second round he got... [Phone rings again]. So their planning on collecting signatures more than he got in the elections to prove him it's not just about votes. So, that was the initiative. It's like an intervention. It's not like a movement. The organized it through internet, facebook and twitter, stuff like that. And through media and television. Now we more depend on television and journals.

Because you can announce these things now?

Yeah during Mubarak's time we only had this alternative, facebook and twitter, which were not effective because it only addresses a very limited audience. And maybe this is why the Egyptians, for example in Upper-Egypt were really isolated from everything because they cannot see what we do.

[Rest of the interview is exchanging names and contact details]

END

**Interview Menna, 20 May 2013**

Do you think of yourself of an activist, is that a way you would describe yourself?

In the traditional way no because the activist notion in Egypt has been hijacked and misused.

How about the idea of civil society, do you think of yourself of a member of civil society?

Yes, civil society is very important in Egypt and has been very active during the revolution. It was one of the causes of the revolution. But I don't mean the traditional concept of civil society but I mean the civil society which has moved from the virtual reality to the street. Bring on the legal organization and so on, this is dependent on youth initiatives.

This initiative have people with different orientations like [name] and [name] a way of informal activities I prepared initiatives and movement that have valuable contacts with the street.

When did you first become politically active?

He started from 2008 when he became politically active but before that he was more oriented to reading. In 2008 he participated with [name] and he continued in 2009 and 2010 until the revolution and he also participated in 'I will not play with you'. This is a colloquial Arab saying. This was published in December 2010.

Was it like a manifesto?

He was criticizing the political environment in Egypt.

During the revolution there was one big movement. At the moment, do you still feel part of a wider movement?

The movement of the revolution of 21 of January is very different about the situation now. I was part of this revolution but now the situation is different. He's not a part of it.

I would like to go during the 18 days what were for him the most important slogans that came out?

The people want the collapse of the regime.

And during the period of the SCAF were there different slogans?

During the SCAF period the women were being let down. And that the SCAF was a continuation of Mubarak's regime.

What was the high point / peak of the movement? The 18 days or the later time?

For him the begin days and the second wave of the revolution with the incidence [name]. of 19 November of 2011, he calls it the second wave of the revolution because there were concessions about the objective of the revolution. But the demonstrations after that because the political groups don't have consensus about their objectives.

From the outside it feels like in Egypt politics is all about demonstrating in the streets. In what other ways do people express themselves politically. What other activities are there that are not on the street?

Do you mean public or the media?

I mean the activists what else do they do than demonstrate?

Many activists demonstrate but there are other types. Like strikes, sit-ins, blocking the roads. And some of them don't go to work. These are different from strikes.

There has been very much attention to the use of social media on internet. How important are these during the revolution and how important are they now?

The role of social media is very important and now it is not less than it was in 2011. But main objective is now raising the opposition for Morsi and it supports the opposition and it has brought effect concerning some crisis like the crisis of taxes on cigarettes and some sort of drinks. It has the effect that was about month ago. The government cancelled it in six hours after this action.

How involved were formal organizations in the revolutions like political parties, trade unions and ngo's?

The most radical and active is the ngo. Then the trade unions. Then the political parties who didn't have a back before the revolution and after the revolution.

At the moment there are European movements because our economy is having a lot of trouble. You have this move toward what we call a solidarity economy projects. Like cooperatives , exchanges for very little money. Trying to do an alternative to the mainstream capitalist economy. Do you have this kind of development in Egypt.

No formal organizations. But the left here in Egypt has conception of how to suborder small projects and enhance the status of provinces like [Arab] to have a way of cooperative protection.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the movement from the revolution?

I can't say that there's a new leader but there is a political mobilization and movement, some segurds and some persons try sway political rule but they have not yet matured. They're not mature.

Do you think the effects of the revolution have been different for men and women and for boys and girls?

For woman they have been backward in their status due to security conditions after the revolution and the opinion of men about women has not been changing due to the security conditions. An ascendant of right wings revolution movement, he does not agrees that the use of women of workers should have move individually. So to have some privilege. Because if we have a democratic system such a problem will be reintolsed (?). If we have polastic vision the use of tools to the right.

How has the use of police violence affected the movement?

The social movement after the revolution has been confronted with violence so this movement thought of violence solutions for the revolution in Egypt. The trend of violence has been escalating. We have the model of Tamarud, and the incidence of twelve of our workforce. The normal model was protests and demonstrations and some sit-ins but after that the usual model was set to block the roads. Second the political movement has tended to violence. Especially in the Maspero Massacre. And this is due to regime has failed to accommodate division because it hasn't democratic way to deal with the opposition. Second the absence of social dialogue and negotiation. We have a semblance of [name] and the absence of social negotiation and dialogue.

Then he also means that this violence is between the people?

This is symptoms and phenomena. But he also means violence between people even between ordinary people.

At the moment the image of Egypt is that it is a country that is completely divided between secular forces and islamist forces. Do you think this is an accurate picture?

This image is not accurate. It is superficial. This situation we face now is a result of absence of democratic practice between the regime and the opposition.

A few more philosophical questions and them I’m done. My first question would be about democracy: what does democracy mean to you?

Democracy for me is the participation of people in invited way in the decision making process. That means that public policy is based on politics = people.

What do you think of democratic practices, not only on state-level but also more locally?

Democracy is a culture a obligation. At the popular level we use democracy for formulating our revelation in the family, in the streets. It hasn't been educated to practice dialogue and democracy. I think that the absence of democracy at the formal level is a result of the absence of democracy at the popular level.

Another important demand from the revolution was social justice. What does social justice mean to you and where do you get it?

Social justice for me means that there aren't huge differences between the social classes. I don't mean that that social view. I prefer there isn't a huge difference between the rich and the poor. Because this has dangerous consequences: social, cultural and practical for the society. This does not mean that you take from the rich and give to the poor but this means state politics don’t favor the rich and don't neglect the poor. The rule of state should be to control and manage the trade culture, industry. But the state should not be the trader, manufacturer or the farmer. She organizes these activities and leaves them for the private sectors. And order the economic activities. This is the model which will prevail in the warlegde in America and Europe.

What does dignity mean to you?

To say what dignity means for me. I prefer to state that while dignity was the slogan of the revolution, terrorists that intimidated and dealt with citizens were very oppressive. Second the citizens weren't getting their basic needs was dignity. People used to get their services and needs with our dignity. Third the administrative surfaces in all of the state institutions were conducted without dignity meaning with police officers with gunshots and with doctors. Even the ordinary workers were without dignity. Dignity has no meaning when you enter a hospital that has 300 beds and 500 patients.

Do you follow the news of the other Arab revolutions, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen. Is it something you feel emotionally close to?

The government states the notion of pan Arabism. There is the intellectual and time-frame work with united this revolution. This has created somewhat I call the patriot revolutionism. Because more than one people and one state have the same slogans and motives because we have shared the same despotic framework. And also retaitive regimes all over the Arab world. So this creates something and come as a tendency. Moreover we have one language, the same history. So this has been called some passion and affiliation with this revolution. Fourth, Tunisia was initially inspiring and motive for us and to our revolution.

Do you also follow the news of the protests outside the Arab world: the Spanish protests, the occupy movement. Is it something you follow?

I follow this news but at a less level of the following of the elections in the Arab world and revolutions. Of course the social movements in Egypt here in the Arab world and also in Europe and elsewhere have the same objective the same mechanisms. They are restricted and enforced by the same mechanism of neoliberalism economy. Another point is the ascendance of violence but the violence in Europe and America is perhaps more democratic because the sate use it in a democratic way because it is only one power that monopolizes the legal power. But here in Arab the state uses the violence excessively without any legality. And legality is most important.

Is there anything else you would like to say or to ask?

The future of social movement is related to the notion of unification of objectives. Not in a fascist way but in the sense that this movement should have a common guidance. After the revolution and getting rid of Mubarak this was something good and something bad. Negative and positive influence or effect. The positive one was that they have got rid of Mubarak and this was an objective of the revolution. But in the same time the negative aspect of it is that they avoid our objectives. Now we have no common objective. After the revolution the idealization of objectives was very bad for the revolution and I think we should go back to an objective without idolution. He wants to ask you about your research. Is your research also about the Netherlands. Is there a social movement.

END

**Interview Nader, 21 May 2013**

I'm talking to Nader. My first question would be, would you think of yourself as an activist?

The conception of activist now in Egypt is being no particular. It means that we do politics in a systematic way. In this sense I don't consider myself as an activist.

Do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

In the political sense of civil society no, but I have been participating in activities in a society who helped sick people and I have worked a lot on this domain.

When would you say that you first became politically aware?

Since 2012 the circumstances in Egypt have imposed on everybody and the generation to be concerned with politics. Especially on the collapse of the level of institutions and values has been involved on the generation to be concerned with politics.

How have you been involved in the last 3 years, have you taken part in the street protests? During the 18 days?

At the beginning of the revolution I have a different idea but I have participated in the 28th of January and by that way I have also participated in the rallies. I haven't participated in the violent activities. And at the tenth of February in 2011 I have participated in a demonstration in [Arabic name] calling on the former cultural ministers to join the revolution.

It seems to me that during the revolution everyone felt united in one movement? Do you see yourself part of a wider movement or just an individual in society?

I consider myself part of the wider movement, because the wider movement was very active and had very good impacts and more thoughtful and get some results in the 18 days. Comparing with an individual movement now which suffers from ineffectiveness.

During the 18 days there were different slogans, which was most meaningful to you?

The basic slogan of the revolution was "Bread, freedom and justice." Because it is an essential demand. It means more than just a slogan. It's more effective than more slogans like "[Arabic sentence]": "Sit-down or go" because this slogan made an exaggeration and a linguistic dispersion. And converted to reality. But the slogan about bread freedom and justice has started powerful and ended powerful.

In the SCAF period and also now, are there still slogans that appeal to him?

"Go or stay down" was still in the period of SCAF when some protestors at Tahrir square called for the departure of the SCAF and to get some stability in Egypt. For concerning more civilians, the slogans got to be liberated and denouncing the Muslim Brotherhood for Gefem, clowns. And this is some sort of to neglect the dignity of the others and don't dictating the others. If it concerns the slogans of the people and the army is one hand, this is more unreal because the army was involved in spionage incidents. They organized them. 9th and 10th October 2011, the army clashed with some Christians, some Copts, in front of willing Egyptians. It's called the Maspero incident.

What would you say was the high point of the movement. 18 days or later?

From the aspect of mass communication it is the 18 days because the spirit was very pure and there was unification between the revolution partners. There was some sort of romantic revolution. When you see the people reunited in one demand. After that there was another peak, it was in the day of the departure of Mubarak. This was 11th February 2011. Also, another peak wave was the presidential election in terms of that there was a moment to choose between the ancient regime of Shafik or Morsi and even if we know denounce Morsi.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the movement?

There is a continuation of the older leadership like ElBadarei, and what is new, is the used leaders as the beginning of the revolution we have seen some youth people of the revolution like [name], he was announcer in the radio. Also the clean youth in the revolution coalition, among them [Arabic names]. What is new of these leaders is that they have left the virtual reality and got to the streets. This makes them real leaders to be agreeing with them or to disagree with them. And this is why this is new.

Does he think the events of the last three years have had different effects on men and women (on a societal level)?

The effect of the revolution on women came with the same degree we hoped for at the beginning of the revolution which was semi-liberal. We expect some more effects in the positive direction. But we are certain of Islamists holding down this effect. And the social environment before the revolution has been turmoil to exist and there is no obvious result of the revolution on women. The distribution is the same as before the revolution.

What has been the effect of police and military violence on the movement?

The forms of violence from the policy and military, statistically it is less than before the revolution. But what makes it clear is media that focus on it. I don't want to describe it as an exaggeration. The violence of police and military was a reaction and the government did not make the people away from the street. It was more provocative so the people go more and more to the street. And the people consider the violence of the police as a violence of military and vice versa. And they consider it as the violence of the regime.

What about the more recent violence between the groups?

The revolutionary movement in the 18 days go steady about violence between its partners. After these 18 days, we have seen private interests of each party of the revolutionary courses. And they use violence each of them. The Brotherhood used violence and the revolutionary forces used violence. And we think with some practice of violence and the media aligned with the party of that to justify this violence.

In the west, we have an image of Egypt of completely dived between Western forces and Islamic forces, is this accurate?

The media focusing on that as here in Egypt we perceive it Iraq as a sectarian between Sunni and Shiites. Before I met you I only anticipated that you see the new Egypt as between sectarian and Muslim. And the Islamist use the term secular to denounce the other, terming that their not democratic and not religious. And also the secular call that the Islamists are not so as they claim. This image is not so accurate because this split is found by the media. As an example, A. Nizam former politician and the head of free and Justice party. When they win an election they shake hands and hug each other. So the media made this split. The media tried to made it a clear split between to positions, between two extremes.

For someone that works in the newspaper he's very cynical.

The media create this reality. This exaggeration is part of the profession of media. When news comes to the newspaper which is not good for the society, we have to underline it very obviously due to the huge competition between newspapers. It's good for the newspapers to make the citizen more excited more active. For example, when there is written that the Tahrir square is very calm, this is not news.

What does democracy mean to you?

The Egyptian people see democracy as elections and getting a majority in the parliament. But democracy for me, is the ability of people to get the government for accountability. And I have this from Karl Popper. After democracy for Egyptian people has to do with majority and election but to me, democracy is the ability of people to get the government to account for them. I have elected some one who wants to get in parliament to get the government accountable, and I as a citizen, I do this part of democracy.

What does social justice mean to you?

Social justice is very important because most of the problems that face Egypt are the result of the absence of social justice. Egypt has witnessed the Nasserite model. In this model we have sensed that social justice. Because the people more see themselves as educated broadly in a situation to be more valued as citizenship. And the dimension about this recent incident of hijacking the Islam of military and police soldiers. To Morsi we are all youth and demands on the sit the hijackers, their supporters in the prison, which was the government that send us to sentence. There is a example comparing the situation with another situation in 1965 when the Egyptian Mohammed M. was a prisoner to the British forces and they asked them to tell the audience of the BBC in Arabic that Egypt has been defeated. He refused to do that and said that Nasser was victorious. The importance of this example is that the absence of social justice don't make people loyal to their country.

What does dignity mean to you?

The concept of Karamah appeared in the revolution. It means not to be... A different mind-set in the police station. And the real meaning of dignity implies for everyone and at the international level to be a powerful state, at the international manner.

Does he follow closely the other revolutions in the Arab world and does he has an emotional connection?

There is message with all the revolution because the Arab world deserved this revolution against the regime. And even the states which don't have a revolution now, is in a bad need for a revolution. But the economy maybe delay this revolution. I have full agreement with the Tunisian revolution, concerning Syrian revolution I sympathize with that, but I think that the use of violence is not good. I would push that they would practice some demonstrations for a number things like the Egyptian experiences and so. Because this resort to violence accidentally, and at the very beginning of the revolution was not good for this revolution. For Bahrain I'm very symphatized with Jihad because they are very deprived of their rights in elections especially. I wish more revolutions in the Arab world. Not necessarily in the same way. I mean it was some sort of reform.

We've also seen a lot of protests in the West as well. There has been protests in Spain and Greece and the Occupy movement. Does he think there are similarities or is it a different struggle?

In the beginning I have seen the Western protests as a luxury, compared with our situation in Egypt. They are protesting for some luxury demands. But after second thought I have reached the conclusion that they protested for a dysfunction of the system and this is the common ground of the Arab revolution and the Western protests. With the dysfunction were the Arab revolution protested against.

Is there anything else he think I should know or be aware of?

The situation in Egypt now, concerning the Muslim Brotherhood, the whole situation is an experiment. [Arabic names] in 19th in governing a meeting told the attendees that maybe Egypt want to see the experience with the government of Islam. The government is just an experiment and it will reveal its potential and he mentioned a pharaonic saying: you are a ghost, so be in the sun to be more obvious. It means: show us your potential. And people need that.

END

**Interview karim, 22 May 2013**

I'm talking to Karim. My first question to you is, do you think of yourself as a revolutionary? Or an activist?

Yes, I think that because the revolution is our way to change. There are many methods to change, hots or colds. Hot is the revolutionary radical and cold is the initiation and persuasion for elections or something like that. But, before the revolution when we began in 2005, with transformist movements and secularist movements, we said that the called truth of the called methods are not efficient for this regime, for Mubarak's regime. So we needed a revolution, a change, because Mubarak didn't accept any advises. Didn't want to make any reform, so we needed a revolution and a radical change socially. Until now we follow the revolutionary ways to change because until now the process of change and the process of radical change it's completed now. So we need to continue our revolution efforts to have a real change. Sometimes we can use political reform for cold methods too. And we will negotiate sometimes. We are not frigid no sometimes we accept to play inside the regime, sometimes.

Would you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Civil society is a very diverse slogan. It includes movements, lobby groups like [name] (?), political parties, the part of the society building unions, syndicates, trade unions. All of that is civil society and all of that has importance for democratic process. The political parties or politicians they have candidates running the elections. NGOs make a trading to political parties defending human rights, minority rights, against corruption, advocating for some issues. The type or example of our movement is something called lobbying group. We are political lobbying and make pressure for the main values or principles of freedom, social justice and dignity. These are our main slogans or values. And transparency and governments and quality of scholars, students. So we defend around this and we support these values. Any activities but we organize... O.K. is that degree on freedom of earth? Freedom of speech is a degree of democracy? Does is support equality, does it support citizenship? Is that peaceful? Is that violence? And everything, if we find law, or new rules or a constitution or paying heavier from the government. Against freedom, against social justice, against dignity, against equality. So we make a purpose against this.

When and how did you first become politically active?

I have participated in politics in 2003. My first participation was a demonstration against the war in Iraq. After that, I was moved to do something. There's is a lot of corruption. At that time I was student in the faculty of engineering. And there was a very bad educational system. And our science has several engineers, so I studied many sciences traffic engineering, sewerage systems, roads, underground metros. Why can't this science be applied in Egypt? Why is this a problem? The problem is the corruption and disability by this regime. So wanted to join any group against this regime, against this government, against Mubarak. So I started to search for opposition groups and I found the old parties but they did not work. The old parties they work inside the regime and accept any conditions. But the appearance of a new revolutionary movement called [name]. I joined this movement in 2004, in December 2004. And this movement, the first movement in Egypt said 'Down to Mubarak.' So I joined this movement and we made a group called [name], as a part of [name] movement. That was in 2004 and in 2005 I was arrested at that time also. I was arrested again in 2006. In 2008 I established a group [details withheld]. To support workers and opponents of younger generations joined this group to do something against this regime. After that, we established a regional group.

How have you been involved in the last three years?

During the revolution we were the main group that rised that day 21st of January. Because that day is a police day. And there's is a lot of clashes or problems between the movement and the special security or state security. From the beginning we started the movement. I was arrested and was tortured. Also and many members of the movement were arrested and lost their jobs. So we have a problem with security, with the police in Egypt because they protect the corrupt regime. They work in cladenist democracy. So the 21st of January is a police day. So we organized demonstrations on 21st January 2009 and 2010. And in December 2010 we started to organize and talk about [Arabic name]. The atmosphere at this time, at 2010, and what happened in Tunis, and the corruption and torture and the elections, we followed big events. So we organized a research and took it to a group which organized this day and after that we organized the groups during the 18 days at Tahrir Square.

During the 18 days, it seemed that everyone felt part of a big movement. Do you still feel that 6th April is part of a wider movement?

Yes. During the 18 days all the political parties, the old and new, all the religious candidates, the movements, the up rise of protests, NGOs, persons and individuals, Muslim Brotherhood, all of them joined demonstrations. And they stayed at Tahrir Square. It was very unique. All the persons, all the members, all the movements working together and help each other against Mubarak. Now it's different. Now it's not like before. But we try to do something.

During the 18 days, there were different slogans what is the most memorable slogan to you?

"Freedom and social justice", because we haven't seen freedom in Egypt and Mubarak's regime was supporting capitalism, businessmen and also corruption. But we're not socialists. But there's no freedom, no democracy and social justice, at least to me is social efforts to the people. Because the poverty in Egypt is more than 40%. It's not fair, Equality, if 1% has all the money and 99% haven't anything.

During the SCAF period, what were the slogans then?

The same, and also a new slogan "Down with SCAF". Because we made them, as [name] we made them. We made general's office scaf. And they betrayed us. They bluffed. They said: you are our children, we are very proud of what's happened. And the revolution is very important. Then when we said to them o.k. Now we need to tell you the efforts to end this corruption, we need to make charges to the old persons of the old regime. We want to change the structure of the government. We want to change the cabinets. Because now leaders of the regime they are travelling outside Egypt with money and no one to stop them. They stop any approval against them. So why do you want to go to the revolution? The police, we want to change, I’m tired of the police. A new structure. We need solution, any kind of solution, a new structure of the police. The officers killed the people. Many before the revolution. And they said: ok, ok. We'll do this and that, step by step. Week after week, month after month and: nothing. And we found them charting us. There were rumors and they are opposition movements and they travel to Serbia to take away money and try to destroy Egypt. The same liars and the same rumors. So we consider the SCAF as a part of Mubarak's regime.

From the outside, the Egyptian politics it looks like it's all about street protests. What do people do people to express themselves politically that is not on the streets?

We have political parties, liberal and socio-democratic parties. The old and the new. We have all political parties like [Arab names]. But they are not the strong parties and have old persons with old intelligence. And we have a new political party the party of ElBaradei [other Arab names]. But this party try to grind. Also in Egypt, we are casual in democracy. We have not experience in how to organize, how to work in teams, how to work in the street. Maybe that's the problem with the opposition in Egypt. They're working more than 80 years. But we try to support this particular parties and we try to compromise and have this and this demands.

How important do you think facebook and twitter are now?

Before the revolution, it was tools. We used them to abstract people to deliver our message, to meeting. Before the revolution it was not allowed to have a meeting. So it was useful as a tool to organize ourselves and to mobilize people. But it’s not enough. To mobilize people in the streets, you need to go to the streets. Not on the internet, because the majority of Egyptians don't have internet. Now its main use is also mobilizing and reform the public opinion. Deliver your message. But also, it's not an alternative for the social workers and building grassroots in the streets. For example, in 2011 after the revolution, after Mubarak, we used social media for mobilizing people to vote for no. But the Islamists and the SCAF told people in the street: vote for yes. And this was a majority.

What do you think the high point of the movement was, the 18 days of later, your own movement?

April 6th in 2008 was a very important day for the movement. And many things happened after that. Like ElBaradei came to Egypt, that was really important for the movement. Then the Khaled Said incident, was a very important moment for the movement because we were working on this issue to rent a new generation against the regime. And also the movement of the revolution, and when the SCAF targeted us in July 2011. Very important for the movement because we found ourselves under attack, again. We got a little bit solidarity of other movements but also a bit of rumors against us in the media and on the streets.

How involved were formal organization in the revolution (political parties, trade unions and NGOs)?

During the revolution all the political parties including the old parties. Maybe in the beginning they were against the day of 21 of January. The old political parties. Before the revolution we decide the parties, is the opposition. They were actually supporting Mubarak or fake opposition, like the old parties. And leading or revolutioning was the opposition. Like Baath Party or Democratic Front Party. These parties support the ideology of the revolution. The revolutioning parties were radical parties that supported the regime from the first day, but the old parties, no. But when they found the revolution, they participated.

And what about trade unions?

Before the revolution we haven't had really strong trade unions. Because it is totally controlled by the government. Because we have a law if the government tries with its abilities resolve or illegal any union. And the government controlled the election. At the end of the revolution they joined. But before that they did not join. Now we try to push for free unions. To get the rights of a healthy civil society. To have a real democracy we need free movements that are not controlled by the government.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the movement?

There are many faces appeared after the revolution. A new generation is there every day. Yes our mission now to get all these new faces, and they can form a coalition.

Do you think the revolution has had a different effect on men and women and on boys and girls?

I think that it changed many of the traditional issues. Like before the revolution the old tradition that girls shouldn’t participate in protests as it's dangerous. But during the revolution the girls and women joined the revolution and demonstrations like men. Maybe that Eastern mentality or culture doesn't want women to participate. Sometimes afraid of sexual harassment. Sometimes afraid of police and torture. But now we have a leader. Women leaders, in many political parties. Yes, for sure it is not enough. But compare that with ten years ago. And now we are at present. Sure it's not enough but it's better than ten years ago. Now we have female leaders in political movements like [Arabic names]. It's good. So not enough but in 20 years we will have maybe better politics.

How has the police and military violence impacted on the movement?

The military, they began in March 2011. They attacked Tahrir Square and they said we apologize, it's a big mistake. And then they repeated the attacking in April 2011. And they said it's a mistake, apologize. And they attacked us with rumors in July. And they didn't apologize until now. But many clashes happened after this because they published the statement number 69 against April movement and all civil society and NGOs. So many clashes happened in July 2011. And then in November and December 2001. Was the military, there was a lot of persons or members of the movement injured or killed.

What was the nature of the rumors?

Any dictatorship or authoritarian government knows how to destroy the opposition's credibility by these rumors. "But it's true, it's the opposition checking on us from abroad, to destroy our country". People in the streets are like "really?” Sometimes they believe it's true.

What about the recent violence that is more between movements?

I know it has many reasons for violence. The frustration of children. The officers... they did not found any accountability. There weren’t any charges against officers. If you found someone of 18 or 15 years old, his brother or father was killed, and there is no charges. What can he do? I know that. But also I know that the violence is a mistake. So we try to compromise and try to be against violence. Violence is not the solution. And anyone who enters violence, you loose. Because violence give reasons to the government and the authority to kill you.

In the west there is this image of Egypt dived by secular and Islamic forces, do you think this picture is accurate?

Yes, this game, this debate. The Islamists attacked the liberal and secular groups in this fake debate. Because our big debate is about how to build Egypt. And the religion parties using speech to the uprising people. Because the Egyptians are religious, they love religion.

What does democracy mean to you?

My perspective on democracy is not only the election or voting stations. Want many countries have elections. But from my perspective I haven't democracy. How is democracy without social justice? How is democracy without equality? So sometimes you can find a democratic system but that’s not really democracy. The example of countries in Europe for example, have social justice, have a mixed political system, social democratic system. But it's better. The total economical freedom without the control of the state, is not democracy. It's no changes in education, it's no democracy. Health insurance, it's no democracy. And social services, social insurance, not democracy. So my perspective on the value of democracy is not freedom only, not election only, no. We need rules about social justice, dignity, equality and freedom of speech, freedom of believes accountability. That's freedom for me, that's democracy.

And what about the level of organizations and movements and their democratic practices?

Inside the movement until now we consider ourselves in the building or establishing side. So to say that the values and rules... We have democratic process inside the movement, but also, because it's so vague in Egypt right now. So the group of founders make evaluations every two or three months and talk about ideology and values. It does not mean that some Salafi is going to join our movement; we talk about liberal and civil state. We talk about social justice, so if anyone joined the movement- a Salafi for example or the Muslim Brotherhood- why? So we have to have democratic progress. So we have elections every six months for the local groups or one year for the coordinators. But also we have founders protected against…

Also to protect against infiltration I suppose.

Yes sometimes the security puts many persons inside. Sometimes you can find a group of 300 persons joined the movement and you can find them, if you follow their twitter or facebook account that they're for the Muslim Brotherhood. You are Muslim Broterhood, why do you try to move into this group with this big number?

What does dignity mean to you?

If I drive my car and found any security checkpoints. Definitely that officer would ask to me: can I see your ID please? And said: Ok. welcome. Because it's good behavior. If they found me having troubles on the tracks or they can leave me to the decision and torture me. And they can't investigate the meaning of my torture. That's for the police and human rights. All things... If I want to renew my license, so if you go to do that, you must stay four days, staying in very long lines in the sun. And if you can find someone who has connections, who has a car for me, officers of generals and finish his process in a few minutes. And you stay four days in a really bad place in the sun or snow. It's not dignity. Dignity is that human services from the state they must do that for me with dignity. Find a place to stand or stay.

Do you think of your movement as a Cairo movement or Egyptian or pan-Arabic or even global movement?

You have a group [name] in UK, Spain, France, Austria. They are Egyptians. In the U.S. also, they are Egyptian. But we have good relations with other movements. Social movements, occupy movements. We're working towards the same values.

Do you feel an emotional connection with the other Arab revolutions?

Yes, sure, before the revolution I met many groups in Tunisia. Now after the revolution we supported protestors in Libya, Bahrein and Syria and Yemen and Sudan sometimes, Morocco, Nigeria. In Syria in the beginning, but now it's very complicated in Syria. Now it's war, not a revolution. Russia, and Hezbollah, Iran, and Al-Bashar. U.S. and E.U. are supporting the opposition. But they don't want to support the opposition because they're afraid of the Jihad or radical Islamic groups. It's very complicated in Syria.

Do you see similarities between the recent movements, occupy in the west and the Arab revolutions? Or do you think their different struggles?

No, I think not. The Occupy movement, I have international contacts and I travel with them sometimes to New York, Auckland and L.A. and Boston. But they're defending social justice and minority rights and try to change their economic system. So it's not all the same troubles. In Spain, we have good connection with the groups there also. And social parties. But our strong interference or the movements that we learn it from, is Otpor from Serbia, Solidarity from Poland. What happened in Armenia and Georgia, Czech Republic? They try also to... For me especially, I try to study what happens in Iran. There's this movement in Iran and the big movement now. What happened after the revolution in Iran? It's really important to be careful.

Do you think there are unique things in the revolution in Cairo that are different from revolutions anywhere else?

In Cairo all the media has wrong things done in Cairo. Many evils have happened in other governorates but we know after that, two days after that. In Cairo you can't know everything at the same time. But if we want to success we need to work our type Cairo.

END

**interview MOhab, 20 May 2013**

I'm talking to Mohab. Do you think of yourself as an activist?

I never identify myself as an activist because my participation in the revolution was based on the things I see that in the community and I was concerned with the development. My first work in the ground started in 2004 with a community called the [name withheld] so we go and make some charity and small development. So I have a sense of the ground that people are poor because they don't have a good services.... This made me have the sense of the street and the sense of this people. In 2008 it was my first time to try to go to protests. But actually when I tried to enter this protests all the people in the protest... It was 6th of April 2008. But during the protests they were arrested by the republicans, by the police so I didn't find any participation. No one knows me, so no one arrested me. After that, I didn't try to join any protests until 2010. But after, some Christians had some clashes with the police in January 2011. And for me this was a part of the beginning of the revolution. Because in the first day in 2011 in the first of January we had an explosion in the church in Alexandria.

The coptic christmas?

Yes and this made me very very disappointed and for me there is nothing of the end of the revolution. My first protest I joined was the 7th of January 2011. It was Friday, and we had a silent protest in [name]. It's my first protest but I have it in the last exams we will have on university, and it was the last semester for me and so I was doing this. It was my last semester in university, but my first protest to join. And Tunis came. And when Tunis came it was like the flame were delighted. Yes we can make Mubarak down, yes we have people who protested from 2002 and 2001 that are called [name]. After that we have a movement called the [name]. They are very very good people. So when the 21st came people were ready for the revolution. All people suffer from the police treatment, all people suffer from terrorists, afraid when some one let's his guard down, no one feels safe, sexual harassment. All this would say the regime to step down and to go forever. So we should make a protest or uh a revolution. No one was expecting what happened after the revolution. All of us think if Mubarak goes, everything can be good, but no one thinks what happens after the revolution. Because yes we have... Mubarak should go, some people now ask us if you know after the revolution this will happen. You gonna make the revolution, you gonna go and make a protest? I say this because we a bad... A bad revolution. And now we make the protest more fast. The Muslim Brotherhood was in the committee for a long time. They have a good group a learny group of people they can... So no one was expecting that the Brotherhood would act like this. After the revolution I joined protests until last January we went to protest. I organized some of the protests in the SCAF time. Everyone was in [Arabic name] somewhere called in [Arabic] palace. And this was a part of... This was in November 2011. This was against the SCAF. And one of them is part of [Arabic name] which is the military's guys. Before we had a very good stance and expressing in July. Then we began some of the revolutionary demands. But the military didn't promise us with the transferring or the transition, o.k. Our giving us really the time so people had something called the Asker's revolution. Asker which is the military or the SCAF, they say somewhere that they didn't gave us a promise. And sometimes gives promises and no one didn't set a deadline so we had a clash in the Mohammed Mahmoud and company was called [Arabic] which was again the military's head of military [Arabic name]. Then we have the Coptic revolution... You know Mohammed Mahmoud? So military says something and the ground mustn’t accept it. Because people get killed and people get attacked by the police. So people make a campaign called the [Arabic] the military's lies. And you get a video and shows what they say and what they make on the ground. Some go to protests and participate, after that they make an emergency in the streets of some district and they make the video. So make more people aware of the case. They make something called series of rederation. That people try to have everyone silenced... Everyone try and have everyone silenced like a sign that says the word Muslim. Let's do this and do that...I was involved in parts so much that I was responsible for the finance of the [name withheld] campaign until he went out of the race because he don't like the oath of the presidency and nothing was clear. So he says we'll never go on the game if we don't have the prove. I spent 6 months working there. And during these sixth months I attended some meeting of revolutionists meeting with between parties and some of the movements.

Do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Really... I think the government is the top of everything of the developing. Because really we don't have a good government that can control. I would not like the government to control everything but control the plans of developing. We don't have real transfer with that. People's societies start from the beginning of 2000 of the new century. And people would make a lot of ground work because the government does not do this and they make this instead of governing. For me, the informal sectors and NGOs that make Egypt until now are not a highly revolutionists people. They make people and find everyone something to eat at night. And no one sleeps hungry. It's because of the civil society now as we don't have the government. We have a good informal sector that people open workshops and make their slums and make their living by themselves and not asking government to make them employed. They come from the South and come here from different governates to make a living. So from around the beginning of 2007 the government don't really carry anything useful for the people. They have nothing improved. The improving in for Africa in upper and middle A-class. All the services is going to the airport and houses and space for huge companies and factories and make involvement... They can employ poor people who can take 700 pounds in the month. It's the main problem that the wages are low. So my concern with the civil society, I feel empowering people. I would like to empower people. When people know themselves and know that they can do and can dream. And when they can dream they can do their pays. So with this collective action we'll have some synergy. So I'm concerned with making people dream and making people feel that they can do. Because when they feel that they can do, they really can have a impact.

Would you say at the moment you feel part of a wider movement?

No, nowadays I'm not a part. Because when I can't find the movement or the protest that say things that I want. Nowadays some of revolutionists, not united, but try to work with some of the people called here in Egypt [name](?) who are the remaining people from the old regime. For me the revolution is something pure. You can't see bad people or people who are against you. I can't align with someone who is trying to kill me for sixth months. So some revolutionists to this. And those revolutionists are the Islamists and now the ones who are ruling. So I'm not a part, but I have the intention. I would like to go in the streets. I would like to make something, but really I can't find the ground. But I think if there's something wide range movement or that have good demands, like Tamarod. I didn't sign Tamarod's papers, but I respect them. But I have sometimes problems with their facebook page. It says somewhere things I don't like so. I'm an emotional person. So if there's something that stops me from doing things, I must stop. I don't like Morsi. I like Morsi. ok. In second round. Not because Morsi's the person but because I hate Ahmed Shafik from the old regime. I would like to start a new era. I know that it might be that as we have but I owe Morsi's kind that military against him, media against him. But if Shafik is here now, he had the military in his pocket. The media in his pocket and so if I went to any politist in the ground, the military would say: I have no problem with calling this people because they getting out of democracy and they elected. But... So now I'm not much in the street. I like, left protests four months ago. Since the first of January.

What is the problem you have with Tamarod?

I hate popularized, make up a list of rumors. Or something that they don't have a good evidence. To get more people involved.

So they say that some minister is corrupt, while they are not certain?

Yes. There's no good evidence that says this. Yes, we have a lot of corruption and a lot of bad decisions you can make propaganda of. So you don't have to catch in the lies and against the crime. There is enough real stuff about bad decisions or corrupted things so you can't catch this evidence. You don't have to make propaganda of lies. So this is my problem. I don't believe that a politician should be a jury again. They make a propaganda of this to make a dirty face. But I don't think that politics should be like that. If you are human, if you say the truth every time, people trust you. Credibility is something very important. Most of the people who work in Tamarod, I think they are revolutionists. They made this from the start and this will make a very good input. I like the idea. But because I have also concerns.

What would you say the high point of the movement was, the 18 day or after?

The 18 days is right. The importance of the 18 days atmosphere. People felt like we can have a good change. They can tensions and they have a good society. We can live together. We have a lot of diverged in the 18 days. So people feel like that we can make something together, we can run this country. We had a small country on the Tahrir square. One of the most important parts in the revolution was the Mohammed Mahmoud actions that happened in November 2011. We had previous clashes between the police and people in June 2011. But it was not running for four days. It was a night and morning. But Mohammed Mahmoud these clashes were going on for four days. They say every day 40 to 70 people. The criterium regime of the SCAF showed us on how media is propaganda for the military and how much lies they say. They don't feel that killing people is something medium that Egyptians kill Egyptians. So it was black. Very hard knocking the doors... After that we had a couple of clashes. The Nour Said clashes. Before Said we had some clashes in the street. And now there's some protests went to violence because of they throw the themselves to the rights. So there was like to show the people that we are men, we can clash with the police. They don't have anything in their minds... Only the thing that they would like to clash with the police and feel that there are a men and now that they can step against the police so that was the state towards the violence. So no one can control these kids and some of them said "were are the Black Block." I have a problem with people covering their faces. For me, if you have glasjnakov and you say I'm Achmed [Arabic name] and I have glasnjagokov and I stand against the police and they will genegover (?), for me this guy is odd (?) because he says I'm gonna do that so there's no one else that will take the responsibility for this. For me, I will go and tell to this guy and say that: I have a problem with guys who cover their faces. And they're afraid. So some other people, they can wear these masks and go and make violence in a bad way, instead of say I look like this. I know some of them are really liberational and they want to make something in the ground, but still I have a problem with covering their faces. When there was a revolution, when the Mubarak regime were kidnapping people from their houses, no one was covering their faces. So now I fear we have more freedom and now everyone can say what they think of anyone. Yes. Not for protests were not promising because people still like the police to get people from their houses because they say somewhere that they're against the regime. But we still have that we can't say anything. I think.

What would you say were the main slogans of the movement in the 18 days?

"[Arabic slogans]", which was one of the first slogan Ish is the plea hearing for calling life. So [Arabic] freedom, and [Arabic] social justice. O.k. Mubarak stepped down just because of Mubarak was in one of the main slogans. Freedom, freedom, freedom. And the people asking for very high values. They will say freedom, they will say social justice. Not small changes. They say the whole thing. "We would like Mubarak to step down and like to have a real life, and social justice and freedom." So Mubarak... There were other kinds that people plead. One of them during the 18 days states that Mubarak has 70 billion abroad, how he's spent his money on himself. And saying the Americans were working the ministers and the corrupt. And the interior minister that was very corrupted and violent. People were scanting [Arab phrase]. For me, I was not chanting this slogan because in the gemal (?) clashes. They didn't chant this so I was not feeling the... Every time we were in the square we were afraid of the military. We don't know if it's Mubarak or not or what he will do so I was afraid. I might be... after the 18th days, yes I say that the military was good and I feel that after the first call in 19 of March, for me, is the turn of the revolution. Because 19th March that say that we would like to make changes in the constitution that not changed the whole constitution. So this was a huge turn. So this was after one month of disposing, the military get a new loose and make this new constitution. They used the old constitution of Mubarak and made 60 changes and said here's the new constitution. But people, the poll was around just nine points, not 60 points.

During the SCAF time, you already said "the military are liars" was that the most important slogan during that time?

Yes because they say they'll do things. There is the clashes and people tell them and they say no one told them. We are tax and we are rules in the streets and we can't control this behavior. If they would like they could stop violence. But they would like to make more violence to... "You see how the revolutionarists they are like violence and we can't control them. They make the country unstable". So they can't control people. They can make more balance. When then they make in the media that the country will never be stable because of the protests, people will stay at home. "You should stop protesting, the military will leave and they don't like!" But actually this time the military don't set for leaving them.

From the outside if you look at Egyptian politics it looks like it's all about the protests in the streets. Tell me a bit about other things that people do to express themselves?

Via the social media. For sure it's the social media they have a huge effect in the revolution and the media effect were effecting the mindset of the islamists. Most of the days, most of the people who joined to protests received an invitation through the social media via facebook and twitter. There is this huge to say whatever you want and whatever is in your mind. A few years ago they started calling people to protests through a page on facebook and say a slogan or a slogan against the military and go to pages. Also for sure. Not all of the protests...What was the question again? Oh yeah, for sure through the TV and the talk shows. For me, I can't watch TV. I feel that people say what the sponsor would like them to say. There are only a few people that are really trustworthy. I really don't trust a lot of people in the media. Most of them just work of the money.

The work that you do, these summer and winter schools, do you also consider these as actions to express yourself, politically?

The concerns of old people change. Whatever political chance that chances the society whatever that means. So anyone is concerned with change. Because we are all in the ecosystem. Not only the parties, but also the civil society and the movements and all of this is part of a ecosystem. We have a problem here in Cairo. It's in Egypt. The ecosystem. Every movement, and every organization and every party would like to be the only one in the society. "He's a big name, and he's the one that's controlling everything." But we would like to have this ecosystem that combines all these people in one home that's Egypt with community aspects. And we can cooperate with each other and with different backgrounds, the socialists and liberals and everything we can combine. You have your views and ideas. Actually this is what volunteering is, also I'm volunteering at [name]. In [name]we work in the garden (?) we make some work. Charity work and development work and also my job is, I'm working in something called [name deleted] media. We working to produce [details deleted].

In Europe of course you see high unemployment. What you see is new initiatives which we call solidarity solidarity. They either work with no money or little money to kind of bring services. Do you see these things in Egypt?

Yes. If you want a service from me, somebody is were inspired by this. I would tell you the story and I will go to your point. Because one of these people comes from the South or from the poor areas or from somewhere poor. And they come and they try to make anything to make a living. To work as a street vendors or in workshops. Or when they work in the workshops they start to make the workers to the sewer and try to make anything to make a living. But actually some of them make a very very good workshop after this, the workshop will be a small factory, and they might develop. That's what they liked to do. They didn't say "I don't have money" at the start, or "I don't have the talent", but they just worked. So I believe, not only the money stops people, but also how much they would like to really work. So when you work in the store, people really make good work. So the problem of employment all over the world is that a lot of capitalist people have to money and have the factories and have a propaganda. If you work in a factory you have sustainable wage and health insurance, and you'll have some rights but actually if every man can be

If you work in a factory you have sustainable wage and health insurance, and you'll have some rights but actually if every man started to think if he can be an entrepreneur or thinks "I can be involved also and make change. I can make difference in it." So the idea of employment all over the world, that government should create more employment and more jobs and the cooperatives should employ more people, this is for me totally wrong. You can start your business, you can grow. You have to invest not just to study, you have to know the market, so you can start. This was the warden (?) in thousand spheres, people who have money and employ some people and employ laborers. And some of them really are slaves not labors. They just make a living of them. I thinks it's the right of everyone to start something. Some internationals companies have... The idea is that only cooperatives and governments make the jobs. But we have to kill this idea. We can start, we can make something. Everyone can make a difference, everywhere. If someone is concerned with the society he can make a NGO and make an initiative, the smallest can change something. Every small world, every small move can affect this world.

Do you think new leaders have emerged?

We are not talking about these old guys ok? We can space them but for me, [name]was inspiring. [Arabic name] he's acting alone. But he's a good man. I like [Arabic name] this old man. Some of them I don't like because of their backgrounds, his background I don't know but his ground work and mentality are amazing, the organization system he works in, is very good. For me [name] is a good intellectual. He thinks a lot. He has a strategic and good manners. Young people who I like are is someone called [Arabic name] she's a doctor in [name withheld] and she's concerned with social work. She works in a group called the [name]. And there is some other people [Arabic name], he's also a doctor in [name and details withheld. These are big names. And there are some people working in the ground like [details withheld]. I don't like some of them but I like the movement. Every movement will have some people you won't like. Some good people in there. Yes my feeling is that new leaders have emerged from the movement. I like every small move that everybody does. Nowadays I'm tired of myself because I don't really engage in politics. I feel I have a role, but I can't catch it. I'm thinking now of finding a second line of people. I didn't take anything in the ground towards this. After the revolution I made something called [name], with my friend. When we continued this work, I liked it. We were concerned with people in the borders of Egypt and people who are living as nomads and people living in risky governorates people in Sewa, Sira. We went there and made conversations and say "You're not alone, we are all Egyptians. We all have the rights." So we feel the engagement between us and find the common. It's something more than politics. It starts with we think after the revolution that people there don't have political awareness, but when we went there, we found that we need to learn from their politics, from their small politics. So we transferred it to call it "[name]" because they have knowledge and we have knowledge. So we have to feel we are one. So this was... I profound of this activity, but now I'm not too much involved. But I like this. There's some groups, someone called [name] movement, they're amazing guys. But the problems of movements here in Egypt is that most movements feel that they're the right one. But when they work together they make a very good job and they make a huge entry in the society. So for me, we have a lot of energy and people who can make change and have good minds. I hate that when they say "You have to have guys working in the government to make real change!" We have a country. We have people abroad we can call in. We have people with good minds here in Egypt. We have really good people who just need to collect to make something real and good. But if we combine together to make something. If we trust in each other and believe that everyone would like to make a for the country, for the kids, for the real, not just the ideology.

Do you think the effects of the revolutions have been different for men and women and for boys and girls?

For me, the whole society feels more free. So a lot of tradition has been important throughout the revolution. You can see that in girls and boys. It's happened it has shown. Because after the revolution they would cover their head because of tradition. Other girls remove it. Nowadays some of the revolutionist girls, they wear it. But they wear it by the chosen, not by their tradition. Nowadays the focus on and the propaganda on sexual harassment increased. Because now the people can say that. People are not afraid anymore to say "I've been harassed." Before the revolution when a girl was harassed, she was afraid to say that because social traditions would say she was wearing the wrong clothes. So this impacted the feel of people, how people can say. Now we can have a protests of female, defending their rights. The role of women in the revolution was really... I can't say most of the people in the streets were men. The change came from all people, not just men. They might gave us courage to work more. I can't forget in 28th of January that went over a police car and she stood over the car and her face was like the face of the driver. And around 5 of 6 police men tried to get her down, but no one could. I tell they get this police car and go to their place. And a small kid of ten years old come over the car. And you know the guy who came out of the car? He went over the car and every time the police violence went up this guy was making the door. He was 13 or 14 years old. So the participation in the revolution was from all different people of all different ages. Some were with their whole family. I love this guy who's 50 years old and makes 15 banners in really good handwriting and goes to the protest. For me he's very inspiring. He's making so much difference when he's coming. He doesn’t talk a lot, but his signs are very nice.

How do you think the police violence affected the movement, do you think people stayed home because of it?

I think no. More violence of the police, more people will join the protest. Yes there are some people who are afraid of the police and the violence. Everyone is afraid of violence. But not everyone can sacrifice his life. Some people want to go just to the peaceful march. Some people join anything against the police. The police violence is one part that made me go in the street. When they're kidnapping people and put down the press and I don't know Tazid, which is taking them and hurting them and harass them. Again the police all the time. I was with the Ultra’s in 2011 so I saw the police violence in the city. I saw this and this gave me the feeling: we're a large group. So we can step up against the police. So in the revolution I have the courage to stand up against. But the people who never stand against the police and who never feel the power of the people, they're afraid. So I have experience from 2008 against police. If you are experienced you know that the police are more afraid than the people so they use violence to protect himself.

What about the violence between the movements?

I hate it. In the time of the clashes people were asking to transmit the governance from the SCAF to the parliament. The president of Chem. The Muslim Brotherhood was 40% of the parliament and the Islamists was 20 to 30% so the Islamists. But the Liberal and other movements say, because they are elected... It was in the beginning of 2011. But in this day, people made a protest that would elect this parliament and they want to go to parliament, but the Muslim Brotherhood, military and the security told them that they can't do. To make violence against you in the parliament, and these guys don't have good intentions and just say this transmission to come to parliament and go inside there and say that there's no parliament. But this is not real. So the Muslim Brotherhood get their demands and stand against people who come to protest to give the government for the Muslim Brotherhood. This was the first clash between people. The first real clash. But this was not too much violence just some pushing and small rocks. Just small injuries. This was the first clash. For me, the second real clash was that I remember it started last November when some movements went to after [Arabic name] Freedom, Justice and prosperity and make protest against them. I don't know who started the violence, they start turning to the office or the people of the office attacked them, I don't know. But after Mohammed Mahmoud the revolutionists say that the Muslim Brotherhood are not revolutionists. They just would like to be in the government. So there's Anonymous facebook clashed and ideological clashes. So the clashes are not just in the street, but also in different media and everywhere. After that, we had the clashes in front of the presidential palace in Minneapolis in November and December 2012. This was the hardest moments after Kamel clashes. Kamel clashes were Egyptians against Egyptians, but I fear that the clashes between people cannot last longer than 6 hours, if you see it Kamel clashes, it was just the night. It started at 3 p.m. and it ended by 1 p.m. Also the clashes before the presidential palace were only spent for 7 or 8 hours. So people can fight the police, of fight the military. Egyptians are peaceful people. Violence is not the first choice. They don't like a lot of... In the history of Egypt, most of the time we were attacked by other countries and we are trying to defend our countries, most of the time. Sometimes we disturb the peace and go outside but most of the time we are occupied. We don't have a real Egyptian military from something like 1000 years. And king Mohammed Ali started and made a military and had an idea for something defending the country. So the idea of attacking is not too much. So the clashes in Egypt are not like Syria or in Libya, which hasn't had peaceful protests. When clashes happen they don't have the heavy workers. It might be in the side of Egypt, in time. But it's not too much like the other countries.

At the moment in the West there's this image of Egypt divided in secularist forces and Islamist forces. Do you think this is an accurate picture?

Divided ok. On the ground there's not much division. You can find a family somewhere supporting Morsi, and somewhere else a family supporting liberal or secular forces. We don't have much secularism. We say secularism; we talk about people who don't believe in religion?

Rather they wouldn't like a religious state.

Most of the people say about the constitution that they don't like article 2. So the liberal parties are not against it. For me, the freedom and value of freedom is the one who controls. Everything has everything to do. Everyone can do whatever he wants. The division, for me I have some people say "We are social Islamists". And they're against Mohammed Morsi. And there are a lot of Islamists against Morsi. Because they think he's a capitalist. And he's aligned with America and the states and their organization. The problem now is that really we don't human civility about our country, but we have pressure from outside and Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood are controlled by these people. Also, the Muslim Brotherhood think that the liberals are control of outside. So everyone accuses each other. But in real action, we would like to take a loan from IMF. But IMF says you have some point to scarify to get your loan. So we really don't have the real decision making process but from outside the state they tell us "If you are going to do this we'll give you the money." Now Mohammed does not try to say anything about pressure or U.S. against him, because he would like to have him in his pocket, he don't like to have a pressure from them. Also try not to be against him so much and try to fight him. This was not our revolution. Our revolution was against our system and the world system that take word for us. They tell us that we are a developing country. So if every time we think of our country as a development country, we will never be a developed country in the world. But for me, I'm not a developing country. I have a country very poor, and I would like to have a country of dignity, a country of freedom, a country of people who have their decisions in their hands. And not in the hands of America or another country. Before the revolution the Muslim Brotherhood said that we are against Israel and America and we open the doors to go and fight Israel. Nowadays what do they say? It's horrible. Before the revolution they say "Open the Jihad for us to go and fight Israel!" Now they close the doors even if we don't give an aid or give. Our position in the bigger image is seen as Mubarak. They say they support the Islamists but they don't really. Our position in the case of Syria is horrible. We really don't have a position. We don't know we are with the revolutionists, with Bashar of with Western people like America, Russia. So we don't have the civility or a real decision they're just trying to be in the governance and top of everything in Egypt because they would like to say they are the only good people and the people who fight the Mubarak regime of the military regime. "We have been arrested for so much time, so we're only good people. We have to control. Our mentality is only good." For me, I have no problem with the Muslim Brotherhood as religious people. Or to have a political party. They have to believe in freedom for each other. They have to believe in the calibers of other people because now we have in Egypt something called that you have all the people involved in the decision making, Rehadella and your people. You don't like America, I will get another one from Rehadella so he can apply it to my ruler.

What does democracy mean to you?

Democracy, for me, is freedom of choice. We have the freedom to chose who's ruling us. The freedom they chose our parliament. Freedom to chose the government, the ruling party to ask them about the decision that the community needs. Not because of their ideological background, of the parties. But what the people in the ground need. The ordinary people. Democracy wants people to have the power. We elect some people to present us, to make some policies that effect us in a good way. But really nowadays, democracy is all over the world. There's a party that would like to implement some change, change in the minds of the people. So we would like to stay in term of ideology. It's the opposite side and not democracy.

What does dignity mean?

Karamah is... Ok. If you have rights, you can take your rights. No one makes violence over me. I find a good standard of livings. I feel that I have my decision and no one else controlling me. Karamah, for our country, we don't depend on someone for food, so he catch us from our house if he would like to push us. So this is Karamah. The value of freedom the value of making decisions of myself that no one feel that he's unsafe in his country. The problem is that Egyptians don't feel safe when they go in the street. Before the revolution from the police and the people who would maybe harass him or take something from him. After the revolution Karamah, that everyone wants. I have civility in my country, not just some people from other countries saying that you have to do this and that. That's not Karamah at all. So it's a value, not more implemented by some actions. If actions actions I will live high Karamah. So if people feel dignity, they feel that they can do. And I have rights and I would fight for these rights. It's not about killing people, and how much is this worth and how much I can take money of people.

Do you think the movement is a Cairo thing, an Egyptian thing, a pan-Arabic thing, or even a global thing? On what level you think it's most important?

I think there were protests all over Egypt during the 18 days. But the most catching thing was the Tahrir square. The numbers outside Cairo were not as large as in Cairo. We have a very centralized country. So people come from their governorates to protest here in Cairo, not in their cities. So the revolution was a centralized revolution because it was in Cairo. But you will find everything in Cairo. If you like to get the laf in Egypt or the government, you come to Cairo. Before the revolution, there were a lot of protests asking for the right of labor and the right of a small group. So there's is a lot of protest around Egypt. This increased after the revolution. People feel that they have to take their right. A lot of people in the square came to take their rights. But you can feel the revolution in Egypt, everywhere you go. Not just by protest. But how people say the words, they can speak more freely. Before when you would talk about Mubarak, you were afraid. Because you might be arrested. Now everyone can say anything about anyone.

What about the other Arab revolutions, do you feel close to them, do you follow them closely and do you feel emotionally involved?

For sure because for me sometimes you have to go more humanitarian than you think. If you appreciate the freedom of people, you appreciate the freedom of anyone else. And you try to contain their freedom. For me, in Tunisia the situation might be better than in Egypt. Somehow it is similar, but better because people there are more educated. The standard of living is higher. So the democratic persists. In Libya, the revolution was totally other than in Egypt. They had a lot of violence and they started from scratch. They started to build country and a new parliament. They are developing in a clean way. Not like in Egypt. We still have corruption in our government and everywhere. So in Libya they started in a good way. In Syria, it's very very sophisticated. In positioning, for me I'm totally with the revolutionists. But the violence is very horrible. And a lot of people die. And a foreign countries put their hand in the country. Everyone says "I'm doing nothing." But really everyone's pushing for something. America, Hezbollah, Turkey. But when you sit with Syrian people they say that Assad should go and they have to start a democratic transition and start to have rebuild their country. No one would like to have another Afghanistan or another country that have violence.

Do you also see similarities with the protests we have had in the west? Or is it a different story?

They are social demands. For me, in America, people are not as free as they can. They have just two parties which are capitalist and controlled by E-Pac, that's the son of Murphy. People have the media that moves people. They really don't have too much freedom. They feel that they are free but they are not. They're just two parties. They have the same parties, the difference between the two parties is the lead or the people who are controlling. So this is what's happening in America. In Europe, if you see the demonstrations, it's very stable because there's a lot of social justice. People they can reach 40% of the share for of the taxes. You have a social security and health insurance. Enough, but people are asking for more. More freedom and involvement in decision making. They are asking for a higher value. People would like to have food. For me a have the luxury food, I have a car and I have good house. I have a flat on my own. So I have the luxury to think of freedom in the values. Poor people are concerned about food and about a good civil service. I feel everyone in the world now would like to be more free. Have more dignity. Have the right to chose, has the right to not be afraid. So the protest there is more about key social changes and democracy. It's more social demands for our rights in work. People in Egypt would like to work. It's not people who think about how much values. I have work. ok. I don't know if I'm right about Occupy Wall street, or Madrid or in Moscow. Really they have big numbers. If I see how big are they're protests. When I was in Turkey, two weeks ago. There communist socialists parties make protest for the labor rights and respect. Some people say the Egyptian revolution is driven by foreign people or foreign pressure. If you think like that you have an old mind. We have a very big social movement before the revolution. Civil society was working right. So a lot of people touching the ground and knowing a lot of people in a real situation, so they make a revolution. They make it from the parts, no one is forcing them. Obama, during the 18 days, his opinion about the revolution was changing every day. He was following. So no one can tell us it was driven by a military or driven by the Muslim Brotherhood. There's the people rights.

Do you have contact with other people in Arab countries?

I don't have. I travelled abroad twice, but don’t have too much contacts.

END

**interview Ibrahim, 22 may 2013**

I'm talking to Ibrahim. Do you think of yourself as an activist?

I am an activist. I used to be an activist since 1997 or 1998. I used to be in the Muslim Brotherhood, since 1997. For fourteen years, till 2011 after the revolution. I went to [name deleted] too in his campaign. Now I'm one of the founders of the Egyptian mainstream party. It's a youth party. But it's still under construction until now, facing problems with the law.

What is it called?

Egyptian Mainstream Party. So I'm a political activist. I work as Islamic … for a while. You know Muslim Brotherhood is a mixture of Islamic calling, political activities, social activities.

Would you think of yourself also a member of civil society?

You know, in a country like Egypt, you're always doing politics. Except if you're not allies with them, with the system. So now you're doing NGOs or civil society. If you are doing civil society, you are doing politics. You are doing struggling with the system, I mean in the days of Mubarak. So I can't find myself as civil society activist. No you can consider me like that in the days of Muslim Brotherhood. The old days, but now civil society is underdeveloped in Egypt. It's a community were for a lot of people, if you aren't used to work for charity, so you're working in a rural area, development. You're touching politics, according to people sometimes. Depend on the climate of hostilities and international conspiracy. But I'm closer to politics. But I work in politics from the grassroots. I believe in grassroots. For democracy, our youth party tried to do that. But they were short of money, short of support, short of legal existence. But I used to go here and there to go to governorates, to villages, talking about politics, development, economic rights, human rights. And might peruse people to join the party, to join the youth movement. Even as youth joining youth movements or even as grown-up and elderly to be led by youth, to believe in youth. I have a very tragic experiences in that. People don't believe neither in politics, nor in NGOs. They don't believe in development. They don't believe in politics. They suffer. They suffer economically and socially. And they suspect everybody to be against them and make use of them. I lived in poor villages myself. People don't like politicians, they don't like media spokesmen. They want something. They want something touchable.

You said you have been active as a brotherhood member since 1997 1998. What made you want to become politically active?

When I joined Muslim Brotherhood in 1997, I knew this is political activity. And I’m then political activist. From day one we were having our struggle with the police and with the state. For minimal acts. To do anything here you're having great problems with the state. I was prone for arrest. But I used to run away, they couldn't arrest me. I was prohibited from going to college. I had [name] path in college, a demonstrator. It took me three years to get back to college. I didn't think of myself as this tough political activist, but I had enough to have them as enemies. So as I said at first it was like hell. If you do anything. Even sometimes charity, you're going against law and against the police and the system. So we were forced to be political activists. If you are doing anything. If you're against the mainstream of people. If you are different from the mainstream people, you are an enemy.

During the 18 days everyone felt part of one big movement. Now do you still feel part of a wider movement?

No. Hell no. The 18 days were the best days I lived in my life. I was from minute one from the 5th of January. I faced the police after the 28th. I saw death. Actually one of the people of the protestors died just beside me from the same dose of a gas bomb. I survived and he died. I survived after three of four minutes of dying. This situation has a great impact on that you're talking about one unity of people. The clear enemy. Clear targets. Clear goals. And the outside pressure. So we are one. Muslim Brotherhood and up the communists and leftists and Christians, we are one. Then the main, clear goal was met. They then fought for other goals and they turned to be 1000 movements rather than one united movement or group. At first we weren't afraid to die. We were going for death. We were standing for our human rights, it was crystal clear. And people in Egypt are really this people. They have no problem with religion, it's like their engine, their oil. But not in the way of the Islamic vice and the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi, but in the people way. In the 18 days people were praying, people were participating in religious activities with each other. People were living the essence of religion. The essence of the Islam and the essence of Christianity. Love, tolerance, moral values. This was, I think, the most religious period of the Egyptian history. To civility, really religious. People were near God. They were seeking help from God. They were doing their best. Then it became something like a tribal thing. It formed in a tribal thing. I'm a Muslim, I'm a Sunni, you're Sunni, Shia or a Christian. They're like tribes, not like religion and it's an essential way. I think that started from the remains of the old regime, which we call Veloul (?). They play on that, they play very well. They had Salafis as their ally, before the revolution. And the formers turned with the people in the revolution late, but I think many of them kept their loyalties for the old regime. Their loyalties for the Saudi-Arabian regime. It's an elaboration between thoughts, politics and economical relationships, I think. Especially Salafis. And people who are religious they love and they trust the beard, they trust the Islamic traditional way of wearing clothes on the outside. So people elected Salafis and they are going to elect them again and again. I think Salafis will never fall down 15 of 20% of the parliament. This is a representation of the politics. In the other way, secularists are playing on Salafists. They're playing like "We are the people. We will protect you against this fundamentalism. And the Egyptian Pharaonic identity, our Egyptian history, our non-Islamic history. Come with us, Christians. Because you're relying on me, and torture in the Salafist era." This was the first problem in our revolution, this power division between Salafi and Islamic fundamentalists. And secularists. Moslim Brotherhood was away before to be the force that united them again. But it was like an audition. So Muslim Brotherhood played with Salafies against secularists. To take a bigger part of the cake. Before there was a cake or whatsoever. And the SCAF mastered the game in a very excellent way. It kept the states cool. Like that. It has polarized the situation. And this is very helpful for the SCAF and for the remain of the old regime, for the international forces or system to regain control. Not to leave people to have a new social... To have a new constitution, to have new value system to have a new state. So it came down to be the same, but in different shapes and faces. You know sometimes they take the cars, sorry for being offensive, but they like different days the same shit. You know. Nothing changed and nothing is going to change in this situation. This is a game between fundamentalists and secularists, so the country won't go further and forwards. It's going backwards actually, because it was a control game in the era of Mubarak. Now it's an uncontrolled game. So if you're going now to say "Let's unite again. let's meet again at Tahrir Square" this impossible. Because you are united against Muslim Brotherhood. Muslim Brotherhood were very big and a vital part of the revolution. Not as a number but as supporter. Salafies were part of the revolution, Christians were part and it wasn't the revolution of elect. It was the revolution of people. Now, every call for the unity or for revolution or anything. It's a call of elect. It's a call of leaders. They were leaders of failure before the revolution. They couldn't do anything. And then the people put them aside and brought their victory.

Do you see as the high point of the movement the 18 days or the SCAF period, what is most significant to you?

It were phases, I think. There were phases of the revolution. The first phase was the 18 days phase. Then the July, we came to the Tahrir Square again, in July 6th or 8th of July to 28th of July. You know, you remember when the end was? It was the 29th was the big day of the Islamists, they sometimes call it here in Egypt the Friday of Kandahar. This was a very very good game of SCAF to use the Islamists against the revolutionists. The youth of the revolution for the first time. It was against, not versus as Morsi says. I think this day alone is the third wave of the revolution. Then we started [name]. People are fasting, it's very hot weather. SCAF was playing by the game in the absence of all people, social movements and political parties. And we woke up after Ramadan to see SCAF arresting youth leaders, arresting activists. Arresting and torturing. We don't want to believe it, but it's true. We know it's true. We know the revolutionalists are going to end. This is the period of Ultra’s, then. Since 7th of September it was a match between Al-Ahly and another Egyptian team called Kima Aswan. And the troupes of police had the war with the Ultra’s. It was a big war on the 7th of September. This was a Wednesday. Then Friday, we have a very big demonstration in Tahrir Square. It was the Friday of the Ultra’s. And ironically they were talking about the symbols of the old regime. They were talking about Mubarak and the old police. Singing the old songs about the police, I have some videos of this on my mobile. The same songs like it's not a revolution. They considered SCAF the remains of Mubarak. In a clear way. I think this phase of the revolution, just after Ramadan, it was 10 days of September 2011, this phase was promising. But it was ended tragically. In the same day, 9th of September, 9/9. It was ended by the tragedy of the Israeli embassy in the same day. I don't know who did that. There was no... You know it wasn't explainable. Why now, why today? I think it was SCAF. And it worked. So SCAF started again to arrest activist and started to talk about chaos. To frighten people from chaos. This was very near before the parliamental elections. Then phase 4 or 5, Maspero Massacre of the Christians. This was chaos. To kill around 25 from the Christian minority in Egypt. And to tell people on the television by the minister to go to the streets to protect the Egyptian army from the Christians. This was formal, a formal call from the ministry. His name was Osama Hikel. Hikel was formal friend by Netanyahu for his performance in the day of the embassy, 9th of September. But at this day of Maspero he was like Goebbels, of Germany. You know what that means? To tell people on TV, to tell regular people to go protect the army from other people. Not only other people, but from the minority. It was a massacre. Then it was a war between Muslims and Christians. It was a very big line. It was a phase. After that there was no hope for a reunion. Just before the parliament elections, we came to the Mohammed Mahmoud Massacre. Who started Mohammed Mahmoud Massacre? Originally it were the Islamists. They called for a very big event in the Tahrir Square at 18th of November. [Arabic name], the presidential candidate and the Muslim Brotherhood were playing with SCAF a political game. But they couldn't control people. They couldn't control youth. So it was a big event to the formal. But after that, some people, I think two to three tents in Tahrir Square, some people decided, like every time, to stay. Because nothing was changing. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamists decided to go, just like that. As they have done anything. 19th of November, I think [Arabic name] was witness of that. She told me. She lived in [name withheld], you know. And she saw that by eyes. The police and then the army started to torture people. And this was the phase of eye shooting. And they were targeting activists. As if they had distributed photos of the activists. I recall one of the political activists, you know [name]. He was an Arab boy and he has a doctor degree [details withheld]. I had a call with him on the phone. He told me not go to the Tahrir Square because they were targeting people by the faces. He said, is your face is known from the police, don't go. You're going to be killed or you're going to be shoot in your arm. People then, went to the ministry of interior, went to the police headquarters. It was a final situation in this circumstances. Muslim Brotherhood had used people for conspiracy, for inspiring for presidential elections, and against the formal system, represented by SCAF. And this was a sort of great betrayal between Muslim Brotherhood and the people. And youth and revolutionary people. Regardless of the massacre that happened. I think tens of people were killed in a bad way. And all people saw that on the TV. This was phase that continued for November. The elections was not... Then December... Another massacre, a chaotic scene. But this time with the military troops, not with police. Not only the SCAF was against people, but also with war crimes. This wasn't a fair nor clean thing. A had a physician, one of my colleagues that was hit badly. For protecting people. The soldier who was hitting him, was saying "Why are you protecting them?" I can forget this day because this friend of mine had six stitches. Just because he was protecting, he was in a hospital. One of the three hospitals. And the troops, the forces that the SCAF used this time, we a mixture of military parts of every time and other forces. More professional war forces. They were guns hooting the rebel parties. This is the day of the girl, you know the girl's photo. And of [name withheld], one of the people of religion in Egypt. Very contributed, very modest, very revolutionary men. He was killed. Some rebels said he was killed by a machinery gun. So it was suspicious that he was murdered by a sniper or the army of the state. All of that led to a very deep phase in the first anniversary of the revolution. 12th of January 2012. It was very big. Very useful. Very promising. I thought it was going to end in a happy ending like the first one. But the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafies stood against it. At Mohammed Mahmour it was the first betrayal. This was the first confrontation. Physical confrontation. Between non-Muslim Brotherhood revolutionarists and Muslim Brotherhood revolutionarists. I conform on the revolutionists, because Muslim Brotherhood were part of the revolution. But their leaders have their agenda, after the revolution. And would lead them to their agenda. And the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood, didn't think, didn't try to use their minds in a political way or in a logical way. They persuaded them, they brainwashed them that this is the Islamic battle. The final battle against Islamic enemies, against enemies of the Islam and the international conspiracy. World against the Islam. It was a bad situation. I'm a Islamist and I see it like that. It can be like that. But then it turned to be like that. It's easy to be. If you are an Islamist and you are an enemy you are shooting me, or trying to kill me, so I'm an enemy of you. And I'm an enemy of the Islam. So they created enemies against the Islam and monsters against the Islam.

Do you think it's true that some people said to me that these early clashes that actually the Muslim Brotherhood members that were fighting, were actually people from outside Cairo, very simple minded youth.

Yeah. Salafi people and people from the Muslim Brotherhood are people from the remote areas. With no culture. And very strict obedience of their leaders. Very strict trust in their leaders. They believe their leaders are leading the situation. It's their golden chance for the Islam for religion, for Sharia to win. So they transformed the battle. The situation into war. You know something like that happened in Europe in the 2008...Something like that. Because we have an economic crisis. We going, because we have unemployment and Arabs and Muslims have gold and money, but how can we force people to go. It must be a religious thing. So it must be something like that. Very similar. And the Islamic leaders were the people that believed that the Muslim Brotherhood were playing politics and negotiating with the SCAF and international forces, with the U.S. You know John McCain was here in Egypt, and his first meeting with Shutter, the king of the Muslim Brotherhood. After the meeting, he tweeted on twitter, McCain: "I've met with the Muslim Brotherhood leaders. They believe in liberal economy and neoliberal politics emporium. Good news." This was a tweet. He also thinks it was a good thing.

I think they also did a deal on Israel, something he didn't tweet.

Yeah. You know, I don't think they care as much of Israel as they care of the economy. If you give me the role of Israel, so down with Israel. These people can sell their children. It's an economical problem. It's about oil, it's about economy, it's about strategic... You're the professor or International Relations, ha-ha, this is your work.

I want to ask you, during the 18 days there were very different slogans. Which slogan was most meaningful?

First there was the slogan of the Tunisian revolution. "People demand the falling of the regime or Down with the regime." This was the mean one because it was a successful one in the Tunisian revolution, which we were very close to. Then the Egyptians were very creative. Tunisians were calling "Degage" in French. We were calling "Go" in Arabic. Just one word. Go or step down. So they were calling for the army. "People and the army one hand." I think this was very smart. Very intelligent from people, you know littlelizing the army, subconsciously. I'm not your enemy now, don't clash with me. I'm clashing with the police, I'm clashing with a bad system, you now it's a bad system, so me and your troops will be friends. But I think, if the army was unclever, idiot enough clash with the people, like the Syrian army, people would beat the army, like they did with the police. I know with more victims, more martyrs, but so on. People weren't afraid to die. And their numbers were increasing by massacres and clashes. The day Mubarak stepped down, I think there were more than 5 million people in the streets. Some countries haven't got this number for all the people.

We have 20 million, just like in Cairo.

You have 20 million? I think we have more than that in the streets. So it was intelligent of the people, and a good one to littlelize the army. I think it wasn't then a love relationship between the revolutionists and the army. It was an intelligent move. And the army was Mubarak's army. But it was also an intelligent move from the army not to clash.

The army is also individual soldiers...

Yes, but I think this point, will be of use after ten days of clashes. After 30 or 50000 killed people, not before that. Like what happened in the army in 1979, the army shoot people and it continued to shoot people for a year. Then,

Or like in Syria, where a lot of the army became into the resistance.

But in Syria there's a religious part, there's a tribal part. In Syria it's cleaned for a lot of time. It is estimated. This army destroyed Haman, in 1982 and killed 30000 people with Napolemon air attack, so there's a revenge. I'm saying to the army, the country will kill you. "Oh". So it's a situation not like in Egypt. In Egypt we have soldiers troops, they're not the enemy of people. They couldn't do it.

During the SCAF period, were there slogans that appealed to you?

At 25th of January 2012 people were saying "Mubarak, stepped Down, then Tantawi is here, and no change." Nothing was changed and people were insulting the SCAF and insulting the army. People sometimes try to differentiate between the army as an institute and the SCAF. And sometimes they were insulting both. You know Mubarak's name was Mohammed Hosni Mubarak. And Tantawi's name was Mohammed Hasim Tantawi, so the people were saying We met Hosni, stepped down. And they brought Hasim. They were insulting them both "Both of them are like them." Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis were very strong. So they could stop the ways of the 25th of January of the first anniversary. People called for a strike, a general strike at the 11th of February. But Muslim Brotherhood were upset about it, something like that. They had the parliament with them. So they fought against this strike, it was a very good fight. And they won. It was failure. I think this day was the end of the revolution. The end of the people's revolution. The youth were very frustrated some of them got depressed. They knew at last they lost control, they lost the upper hand on the revolution and they turned down do be politics. This was the end. The end of the revolutionary youth coalition, 6th of April impact on the youth, other movements. It was the fall of an end. Just after the coalition revolutionary youth. Some member of this coalition played with parties. Some of them wanted in the parliament. And remember the parliament in the same way of polarization "I want because I am a Islamist/Anti-Islamist." Not because because of the youth of the revolution or the new generation, the new era. He won by the old rules. So he stopped believing in the old rules, because he wanted to win. The goals and the means, you know the equilibrum. So the people, some of the youth of the revolution started to work for the means, not for the goals. And it ended in the presidency elections. Were two of the so-called revolutionary candidates, they killed each other in the elections. 5 million votes no one hand or 4,5 million and both were out. Both were out in the second race, it was between Morsi. He was then the revolution presented against Shafik, the first man of Mubarak. The most important man of the Mubarak regime. And Morsi hardly won. He had to use the revolution, not the Islam. And he used it very well. And if it weren't for that, he wouldn't have won. Then again, after he became the president. I said: I don't know you anymore. We have no cooperation between us. He said: I won because I know the Islam, people know me, I'm a good president, I held my promises." So this is the start of a pure chaotic phase we are living in now.

What does democracy meant to you? What's the core value?

I'm asking myself this question every day. Do I still believe in democracy? Is democracy really the best way? The best way to represent people? Sometimes I rethink and think again about the aristocratic system. Not in a economical way. But to pick up the best mines from all people, from all the economic classes. I don't know. You know democracy is one man one vote. Is it right to give everyone this vote? And to let people, to be prone to the media propaganda and religious polarization, and then to talk about democracy and people's will? Is it suitable? Is it good to leave the money flubbing here and there? In the media and outside the media without even having a strong neutral state to guide this. I know what happened in Egypt is not democracy. But is pure democracy, I think you have democracy in Europe. A sort of a good one, better than in America. In the U.K. and the northern countries, France, Germany, Japan. This is the best way of democracy, I think. But is democracy the best way to do it? I'm thinking about something else, all the time. I believed in the participatory democracy for a while, but I don't know how can we do it. Are Brazilians doing very well participatory democracy? Not sure? Is it the Swiss one, the Suisse model. Participatory democracy is an old and wide saying. I believe in people. I believe in people taking their decisions and taking their lead. But I don't know how. I think we have to have our authentic experience. Not to be imported from anywhere else. You know from our history we have our Islamic democracy for a while, for a short while actually. It wasn't this democracy, but it was satisfactory to people.

Do you think the movement themselves have democratic practices?

No, whatsoever, no. no no. And this is one of the great problems. I was fired from the Muslim Brotherhood for that. I had another opinion and another point of view. But they are good, very good at making it feel democratic. Like something that is happening in the country. I think democracy a way of living, a way of thinking before anything. It's a way of 'I respect you and your opinion. I know it's not mine. It differs from mine, but I respect you. I'm ready to go with you. I'm not manipulating to regain my opinion again.'

What about another big term. What does social justice mean to you and where do you get it from?

As I said, I'm a Islamist. I think Islam has very strict rules for social justice. It hasn't got a strict system, an old system for social justice, but it has rules. Starting from the human being himself and his way of dealing with money and property. I used to consider myself socialist of somewhat leftist. Some Marxists saw me as Marxist. But I don't think I'm to that extent. I'm still Islamist. And there are great differences between Marx' vision and the Islamic vision. Especially that the Islamic vision isn't specific like Marx's vision, it's general. I think social justice is one of the big steps for democracy. If you haven't got social justice and you have this big gap between classes, there's no democracy. It's the buying of votes. This is the one merits of democracy in Europe. You got better social justice than the US and other countries. You now I hear about Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Finland. You know the conditions are different and the number of people are different, the resources are different. I know that well. But I know the left and the right were clashing in the last 50 years. To end up in a better way. A better way of living. I respect this way. I respect the history of it. I think it will remain a struggle for a better life, for the grassroots, for the people. I'm afraid the struggle is going against religion. I'm afraid of that to happen. You know what happened in the French revolution. Killed the last Nobel with the priest. I still believe Islam has solutions, but not specific solutions, like they are marking. It's deep solutions and general ones in the moral structural attitudes of the people. So no Islam with this consumer culture. Islam can't live with this capitalism as a country with communism. But being the leftist you know, I think it can live in social way, but it can't live with capitalism. I understand my religion. The other people understand the contrary because they are business men, they had their education in the American way of living. American way of seeing money.

The final concept is dignity, Karamah, what does it mean to you?

If was obvious and clear in the 18 days. I think people were dying for their dignity. Not for the money. Nobody lives for money I think. Or Israel. Nobody lies for social justice. If I can't live because of social injustice, so I think, I'm not going to die for social justice. It's a exist issue, it's a life issue. But people were dying for their dignity. People were standing for their rights. It was ground. And it was a good ground. People were watching martyrs, the pictures of martyrs on the 25th of January with pride. It was the first time in my struggling life to give my mother saying to me "Go and die and not said. Go and die because you're a man. And you must be a man. You must stand for your rights." It was a surprise for me. Very good to feel satisfaction with my parents. They are satisfied of what I'm doing. They feel this is right. Even if it is dangerous and it's a life and death situation. But it's the very right thing. So doing the right thing. In the religious way, this is the right thing. God created us to do this. To defend ourselves, our lives. To support the people. To support justice. I think the 18 days were very good opportunity. Not only for dignity. For all essences. Not material speaking. Not materialistic essence. You're here for humanism, you're here for social justice, we are here for dignity, we're here for social justice. Because we are humans and I'm proud of that. Animals can't do that. We feel this pride of being human beings and standing for our rights, we feel strong. People are dying around you. You're feeling death is very very close. I have a video. Just after the Kamel battle, one or two days. I was looking and some people were drawing on the ground, very creatively. So I said something about the creativeness of our revolution and the more delayed the decision to step down, the more creative the revolution was going to be. And they heard me and gave me charcoal said say it there. And I was looking for 8 or 10 minutes. Then one of my friends in the U.S. shared this video. It happened to be the Andy Goodman show. I didn't know anything about that. I didn't know this was the Andy Goodman show. And they shared what I said: Anka. The first second to the last second. I can make the link. This was me in the 18 days. It was... I can't describe it, it were the best days of my life. Mixture of fear, hope, dignity, respect, self-respect, high self-esteem, indifference to death, readiness for anything. I was ready to face tanks. I faced airplanes. They were freighting us with phantoms in the air. Some people led down like that. I was praying then, it was a tragic experience. You know a airplane at a low altitude, a fighter, just above you, you head and you're ready for bombs. And this was demonstrating enough. People were singing after the situation: Mubarak has gone crazy. People in Egypt are very sarcastic. They love sarcasm, they digest it. It's their way of living. So every time they were increasing in their sarcastic. Even with this fear. I think because of this fear. They are singing. One of the nights, it was very cold, extremely cold and we were burning stuff to warm. And this stuff was... You know incomplete burning carbon monoxide, if you sleep beside it you end up choking. It was a very fearful night. Then two of the youth started going to all the groups to sing a song for the reunion of Muslims and Christians. One of them was Mohammed and the other was Mina (Christian), they were very delightful, they were comedians. Nine months after that Mina was killed in Maspero. And when I realized this Mina, is Mina of the 18 days. I realize the revolution is being killed. You can also find this video on YouTube, Mohammed and Mina. I can send you several links of this environment of climate of the revolution.

END

**interview Zeyad, 19 may 2013**

I'm talking Zeyad.

So my name is Zeyad. I'm a journalist for the [name], a newspaper. And I'm also an activist. Currently I'm a member in the [name] party. I have also a modest political background and experience in political parties and movements before the revolution.

Do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

What do you mean with civil society by the academic world?

No but is it a meaningful idea to you, that's what I'm asking.

I considered myself, before the revolution, I was belonging to the civil society because during the revolution we were mainly depending on movements and groups out of the form of the political frame can be. We were working during movements our groups out of the frame of the political part. I remember in 2009 professional wise I decided to work as a researcher in the [organization name withheld]. I was thinking that the space you can get by using civil society institutes or joining a voluntary group, not have a legal form, gives you enough space to work and to move. The situation after the revolution... Also it is not changed completely but there is some differences. I mean you have maybe better a change and better space to work through a political party. But I think according to the definition of civil society it is the volunteering groups and associations that away from the formal political shapes like political parties and sphere. Although it may have a political role.

When did you first become politically active?

2006. I was following the... From my childhood I was hearing about hearing about reading politics. And this concern... I had an attempt to convert this concern in to a real action in 2005. In 2003 maybe it was just through discussions, in the universities with my colleagues who are concerned with political issues. Then I decided to start have some voluntary work like working in social activities. That was in 2004 and 2005, so I started campaigning against HIV and did something away from politics. But again, in 2006 there was a political party, called the [name withheld], it was a new party that was founded in this year by famous respected political figures. They were presenting themselves as the third alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood and the old regime. And actually along just came [Arabic term] who were implicated in different political experiments before like the formation of the Bath party and a big number of us joined this party and it seemed strong in its beginning. So I joined the party. I was living in Alexandria. I participated in founding the party in Alexandria and founding the committees inside.

How have you been in the developments in the last three years. So in the revolution itself and the period afterwards.

After the joining the party. The situation of this party, I'm speaking about, was similar for other parties founded in Mubarak's era. I mean it was like some kind of decorative political parties or decorative political form. But we were seeking to be more involved and actually such experiment like [name] experiment, if it flourished strongly, or stared strongly, after different variables and different factors the experiment was coming down. I mean you have the security penetrating, a kind of restriction on working in the street, a kind of restriction in making a campaign or speaking tot he people either on the level of funding you're political cooperation. So the party started strongly but came down after a few months. We started to feel like we were occupied by security, we were restricted in our political actions, our leaders who were a little bid conservative about adopting radical actions. So I was still member, but me and another group of youths from the political party started to search for... We started to feel that the party does not fill our dreams for the country. So we started to search for another political group. I remembered in 2008, there was there was the famous call for the 6th of April strike and each group of youth in its governorate started to adopt the call and started to make flyers and posters and sprayed the invitation depending on its own fund. And I can remember, I was in Alexandria and me and my colleagues were collecting money from each house and made the flyers and went to the street in 2 a.m. or something we were fixing the posters in the street. And at the 6th of April it succeeded a little bit and some people say this day was more of a rehearsal for the Egyptian revolution. So the guys in this day especially started to feel like they can depend on themselves and they don't need any more to join political forms that were usually founded by old political triggers. Specially I think it was this moment that the people realized that they can do something depending on themselves. And it was a call for founding April 6th movement. After the 6th of April strike, a lot of people were arrested. After few days they were released, after one month or something and we found it like a celebration with a success of the day and we were celebrating our friends getting out of jail. And this day our friends announced the formation of the 6th of April movement. Also I didn't join the movement officially but I was a close friend and supporter and I was participating in several.. Participating, arranging and coordinating for making different political events with them. During this year, from 2006 till 2009 we had different attempts sometimes to reform our party. Sometimes to engage with the other political group activities and sometimes we were thinking about doing things depending on ourselves. I remember this time any event was adopted by any political force and we were considered important for the political actions. The political movements in Egypt were showing their support even if small demonstrations in the street. Then, in 2010, no in 2009 we started to form groups, trying to communicate with the political figures who we maybe can promote as presidential candidate. So we started to speak to [Arabic name] and started to speak to [name], and he promised us to come back to Egypt after ending his job at [name withheld] and we started to organize like a campaign for making a reception for him and it was also a big day. I can remember that in the beginning of 2010, it was a big demonstration in the airport and this moment we started to form like another organization which is called [name] campaign and it succeeded in collection large scale of use and more spread on a large scale on different governorates. Then we formed the [name] in the middle of 2010. Then the Tunisian revolution came and we started to speak about doing the same thing. So we started to coordinate with leaders of different groups in Egypt. Like Freedom and Justice movement and the The Socialist Revolutionist groups. Different groups actually, to organize for 21st of January. In the beginning we thought this will be a big demonstration or something. The situation is different than a revolution... I'm trying to summarize as possible as I can.

At the moment would you still think of yourself as part of a wider movement?

Yes it's true. Before the revolution I was part of a very small movement, a very limited movement. I know before the revolution we were knowing the activists by name. We were a group maybe of 100 or 200. We were knowing ourselves by names. But the situation after the revolution became completely different. I mean if [name] stopped working, you would not feel big differences, I mean there is another generation another people making invitations and move. I mean before the revolution you were depending on yourself and on every small action. We were distributing the flyers we were fixing posters, in the street we were not doing anything. The situation is completely different. I mean now, we have at least concrete groups in the governates, in the parties. Now it's the moment that the movement is becoming wider and wider. So no one can stop it, even the Muslim Brotherhood.

During the first period the 18 days, what were the slogans that you found most important?

Actually the slogan hold by the people themselves is "Bread, freedom and social justice". To the main slogan people spontaneously announced. Maybe they were affected by what they had seen in the Tunisian revolution. This slogan was very spontaneously. Then after the clashes with the security and government, they started particular to hold this slogan against Mubarak. And they decided not to leave the square before the leaving of Mubarak. I mean during the first days the people had more reformist demands. But it was replaced gradually to the maximum. After the clash with the security on the 28th, and till the 2nd of February.

During the SCAF period were there new slogans coming out?

The situation during the SCAF period was a little bid sophisticated. I mean when Mubarak was removed in 11th February the people, the persons of the SCAF and we were supporting them for making a democratic transition. Maybe the SCAF members have the ood intention. But, what we saw during one year maybe, they were very weak, they were reluctantly imposing different actions against the protestors. I mean if you knew about the virginity tests, and if you hear about what happened in Maspero a lot of Copts were killed. A lot of military courts and a lot of activist accused in such military courts. This is on the human rights side. But on the political side they were very stupid in managing this country. They were like delivering the country for the Muslim Brotherhood in cooperation with the U.S. support. That's what we realized later. So there were some slogans arised against the SCAF when they spent position time, like calling for accusing them due to the charges they were responsible for in Maspero and the virginity tests. And then I remembered that the people by the end of 2012 started to call for removing the SCAF.

And now at the presendency of Morsi do you see again different slogans?

Look, the demands are the same from Mubarak's era during the SCAF till this moment. And it increased gradually. I mean I speak about you are calling for or against. During this specific Mubarak era, before the revolution, they were calling for stop working with the emergency law. Then due to the wrong response of the regime, and the regime was completely neglecting the people's demands so the demands were increasing. The same thing happened with the SCAF and the same thing is happening with Morsi. With Morsi, at the beginning we were just calling for a constitution representing the whole people and to be named by consolidation. And we are calling for freedom of expression and we were calling for informing the police and institutes. We were calling for liberation the national media and newspapers. We're calling for specific rules and laws for making the parliament election. We're calling for a collective government representing different political parties that can make the real transition spirit. This is what we were calling for. But you know you have the demand and the regime behave badly and respond strongly and behave badly with your demands. So the situation becomes sophisticated. We started to demonstrate against him. And he started to use the right to oppress you. And day after day you feel like nothing will change. Especially when your colleague died. When you found the president decided to make constitutional resolution that the changing moment that you were calling for reforming demands into getting down Morsi. And that's what I think people are seeing in these movements. When the people calling in the end of June, that's the same day that Morsi got his presidency in the last year.

What would you say the high point or the peak or the movement was? Have you passed the high point?

Sure it reached the highest point. But every point is comparing with the situation and this moment. The 18 days I considered the highest point was after Kamel battle. After a long time of working in politics during Mubarak era, I felt like when people getting out in a huge number in the street, would be the peak. Maybe the situation now became different. The demonstrations in the street become something normal. So maybe something will come. We can't expect that we'll consider of describe it as the peak.

From the outside it looks as if Egypt is all about street demonstrations. But are there also other things going on?

Yes sure, the situation is not only demonstration. The problem is the local and international media adapted with this specific action. It's like when we have a demonstration in Egypt then we will have a problem with this and that. But they didn't search on other actions. I mean during the last period the groups of political activists, either in party or other groups or related to movements, work in a very good way. When went to the street they made different campaigns against the Muslim Brotherhood. They were distributing a lot flyers and were fixing a lot of posters. Even the graffiti. On the level of awareness of stimulating the people, working in media campaigns and arranging the letters between the people and trying to get space into the local and national media, create this, and stay day after day. For example in this movement, there was this campaign called Repel. It was a campaign called for collecting signatures for removing Morsi. And actually millions signatures were collected in very few days. For example this campaign got this by the use of the distribution parties, b by the use of different... Even yesterday I was in the train station in Alexandria, I found guys I don't know collecting signatures. I went to ask them: to which movement do you belong? And they told me: we don't belong to any movement, but we like the idea and started to work on it. We have different actions, we have also means of communication with the international civil society. The official foreign representatives in Egypt. We have different actions actually, we are using the whole means and the whole things. If you do the action of the use in the election of the parliament or the presidential collection, we wouldn't get results like that. For example [Arabic name] in the beginning he was just depending on its own small groups working in his political party but when the use of the revolution of the leaders of the revolution started to announce that they were aligned with [Arabic names] the situation started good and a lot of people joined his campaign and a lot of work moved into different governates so he got a very good score. When the competition started to be between Morsi and [Arab name] a lot of political movements decided to work in support of Morsi. And I think in comparing the numbers of votes he got in the first round and in the second round, you will find there were 7 million votes to him due to the action and the support of the civilians and the youth groups.

How important do you think social media has been, not only during the revolution but also afterwards. Do you think it makes a real difference?

Sure it was very important before the revolution I mean, for me and for my experience with facebook it was the first time to use in 2007. It was a good way for communicating and linking political activists. A lot of political activists. I mean a lot of political activists I now this time their number were few I know from the facebook. I was in Alexandria, the April movement call in 2008. I got the invitation and started to work from Alexandria while I know the majority of the political activists from Cairo from the internet started to meet later. And a lot of demonstrations actually were called by this way before the revolution. Youtube it has a significant impact too. In 2008 the newspapers started to focus on the facebook. So we started to recruited more and more membership. In 2007 the uses of the Egyptian facebook were very limited, while the number sharply increased in 2010. And I think I had an interview with BBC that the producer informed me that in Egypt in 2010 we had 5 million users. After the revolution the number increased sharply and sharply. So it's very simple way to communicate with people to promote your ideas, to call for events or causes. So it's very important and give you even more space to be liberated from the limited space given by the normal or private media. I mean the facebook you can say anything, anytime. Even when they try to stop the facebook on the 7th on January. The majority of activists in Egypt has a program to overcome that actions. So the importance of the facebook now become more and more because it's succeeding in recruiting more and more people. It's an advantage to be liberated from the normal restrictions. It's very important way for knowing the news and circumstances firstly and give you chance to even about the people how they're seeing this action and this action and this action. I mean the whole political actors when they are waken up they're opening twitter and seeing the news and seeing how [name] is talking about and that [Arabic name] thinks in that ways. I mean you have different, first opinion in a very small time you can use to adopt a situation or a call for a response.

And is it as important now as during the revolution? Do you still rely on it very much?

We still rely on it. Sure it's not the only way but we are still relying on it. I think it's still important.

How involved have formal organizations been in the movement? I mean political parties, trade unions and NGOs is there a link during the revolution and afterwards?

During the revolution... Look... Before the revolution there were a few days, there was a strong link. But with the civil society organization I first mean the group of political actors. With a group of journalists, photographers, even the people who are caring about the media in a voluntary way. Strong link with civil society and the group are depending demonstrators. And actually they played a very important role before the revolution and after the revolution for defending the arrested people. We had a communication with people in either workers groups or something like that. Maybe it was not very useful before the revolution. And as I remembered the workers unions joined the revolution in it's last stage. So we are still working on that but the strongest link is between the political parties and the use of this party, the use of movements, journalists, civil society. And from our colleagues from socialists they may have stronger relationships with the workers with the trade unions.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the movement? Leaders that were not there on the scene before the revolution?

Sure, and that's an advantage of this stage. And even before the revolution it was something like a wait, a small wait. I mean in 2006 when I joined the political work, I came after a famous and important generations of youths, all made a big propaganda about blogging and criticizing... It was the first way of activists network. Propaganda of blogging. A lot youth figures made use of blogging about the regime. And it had strong effects outside Egypt than inside. It was the wave of Kefaya. The wave of Kefaya got the message on another wave came up. It was the Baath party, and it get down. Then the democratic party came up and it went down. With its new leaders. Sure leaders can overcome the emergence of the wave and staying in the scene and stimulating and provoking them. And some people are disappeared and other people arised. The situation is different after the revolution in the number of the replacement. Before the revolution the replacements were very few, maybe [Arabic name], she disappeared and another one replaced her. But the majority... Before I'm speaking in general: the numbers in general are few. After the revolution the numbers become wider and wider. So if [name] and [name] disappeared [name] will come and lead. And it's an advantage.

Do you think the activism from the last three years has been different for men and for women in changing their lives?

Changing their lives... Look I think the movement changed the people's life in general. Neglecting the gender. I mean the awareness, the people their tendency to participate, they way they are expressing their engagement with politics, either on the discussion level. I mean a lot of people after the revolution started to take care about the revolution. The level of awareness increased in a very short time. The ability of the people of criticizing, the old and the stupid religious ideas. Before the revolution it was forbidden to criticize something like that. Now there is criticizing youth and Islamic leaders every time. A wide number of people became cared about doing something. Some people started to work in politics, some people started to do it in social work. Even the normal daily discussions of people converted from speaking about soccer games to speaking about politics. And that's very important. This is on one level. On the youth level also in general. I think they're told to liberate from transitions and adjustments and what is normal and what we should do and what they should do and where they should work. The whole things they got from their parents and family and traditional customs, they started to liberate. Before the revolution I thought you were an exception of you were for example a political scientist working in journalism. But after the revolution it became not exceptional. A lot of people decided to change their career and to do what they want to do, either personal wise or social wise. I loved that people emitted from old thoughts in expression, they are you thing on facebook a lot of creativity skills flourished. The sense of sarcasm on the facebook. A lot of talented people appeared. So it was a big change on the thoughts, awareness and participation. On the female specifically, I think they were a part of that. I had a lot of friends who started to think again about the normal traditions that she should of her family. And it was actually something strange for Egypt for not wearing nihad for example. To speak free about issues, she was not supposed to speak the desire to liberate from the sexual stress. And by sexual stress I mean sexual harassment on the street. Before the revolution if a lady was harassed, it will pass as normally. After the revolution no, big campaigns against harassments. And people started to organize campaigns against the.. and started to make activities on the street. I mean the voice of the females become more clear and become more striking. And the real equality came from the ground. I mean it's not mentioned in the constitutions or the presentation in the parliament or something like that. But on the normal life, you can't find a liberation movement even if it's not organized, came from down. You can observe it in small touches like what I mentioned in the daily life.

What about police violence, how do you think that has affected the movement?

The police violence is converted as interstimulated. I mean the people broke down the border of the fear on 21st of January. Before when someone was kidnapped or arrested by the police it was something horrible and incredible and the people were afraid. The people was walking besides demonstrations and see us. Ten or twenty were looking and going the way. Now the situation is completely different. If the police will take an action, tens of other actions will be taken at the other side. If someone was arrested, another people will get his rule. If you were in demonstrations you would find something very strange. The people...The use in the demonstration, when they were listening to the sound of the shotgun, they were going towards this. I mean the normal human behavior that when you are listening to something like that, you are running in the other direction. The use now is completely different the people, I'm not exaggerating I'm not speaking as a journalist, I'm faithful in what I'm saying. So when they were listening to the shotgun they were going towards it. So I think that the actions of the police stimulated for more opposition and more strong movements and more strong actions in the street.

What about the violence between the movements? Violent clashes between Brotherhood supporters and protesters.

Look, if I'm speaking about violence, we don't have a violence between movements. And we don't have violence between groups. We have violence between opposition and... Sorry. We have peaceful demonstrators who are going out for demands or recall and do something normal and represent their minimum rights. Security groups either from the Muslim Brotherhood or the police are using rape and to oppress this movement. So it's normal the situation turned into violence and the violence from the other direction. It was like in Yemen. Before the revolution the regime was not merely depending on the police, but was depending on a civilian group, supporting him. It's an old idea that when a certain authority wants to control everything in the country and want to send a message to the international media that it's clashes and fights and violence between people. That's what they are trying to export but the truth is authority on its people and opposition. I mean I'm really against the people who are writing and say the desire for violence in Egypt increased. Due to the security absence the situation in Egypt has become bad and the people clashing in each other. It's completely wrong. And again if you have a respectable authority or an obligate and applied by rules and the concept of human rights and they're respecting the freedom of the opposition you will not find that. So what is the problem is that if I went to [Arabic name] to make a protest demonstration. He was like: what's the problem. Yesterday when I was in the train station, I found the guys that were collecting signatures for Tamarod. I was seeing them from a big distance. Suddenly I found someone, he came to these guys. He said: what are you doing? You are annoying us. So I went to this guy and asked: what is your problem they are doing something normal and expressing and if you don't like listening go away. He was this small bear, a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and he was saying the same words the leaders are saying in their television. But what would happen in this situation? The men were shouting to the guys and the guys were trying to express in a calm way. Then he started to insult them. So on the other way they started to do the same. And it was about to develop into a fight. But in case of this action and respect their right to express and their right to work in a peaceful way, nothing will happen.

At the moment, there's the image in the West of Egypt divided between the secular forces and Islamist forces. Is this an accurate picture?

Look divided can be used if we are comparing to equal parts. The division as expression itself, maybe if we used it from one year. In this time there was some people really promoting the idea of the islamists. We didn't try them. What is the problem is when we see how they are doing. They spend a lot of time oppress the initiatives. They are calling for a Sharia. The year passed was enough time for these people to realize that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamists are religious tradors or religion dealers. They had enough opportunity why they do nothing. So the division converted into different calculations. For now. I think maybe the Muslim Brotherhood if they enterered in a fair election they will get maybe the third of the parliament. The people realized well who they are.

What does democracy mean to you?

I hope you don't ask Morsi! The problem is we have misunderstanding of this definition. And that's actually what the Muslim Brotherhood was depending on they try in a specific time, and since this moment actually the promote that the idea of democracy is a box, we are getting to vote and there's a result we have to respect. Actually I don't believe in that, but anyway. This is the democracy of Hitler. The democracy came as Hitler. And this is what, I was discussing with this for... This will be taped? Let keep it between us. I was speaking to an American official and they same they came with the election, they came with the election. And I said: do you have a problem with Hitler who came with election? Do you have a problem with Hitler who invaded Paris and Belgium and Poland? Do you have a problem with this? If not, it's o.k. it's fine. So it's not only election but it is... And even democracy there is another thing derived from it, consolidated democracy. I mean, in a democracy you should have a constitution that represents the whole people, the whole minorities the whole sectors in your country to present their interest well and the constitution should actually be obligated with the minimum human rights documents the humanity agreed on. Actually the international human rights decelerated by the UN, and the international resolution for civil and political rights and the international resolution for economical and social rights. It has the product of the developed idea of the humanity. About your rights. So in the beginning if we are speaking about democracy, we should have a contribution, the social contract between the authority and the people. For example the idea of the social contract is me, and the people are applied with paying you authority. If you are responsible for protecting my freedom and rights. If you don't do, so the contract does not work anymore. So the first thing that the constitution and how it's representing the people and how it's applied the concept assets of human rights. The second thing the rule of law. I mean for example maybe you have a clean and fair election. But you have a general prosecutor getting his orders by phone call. If you have judges getting their orders by phone call, if you have press taking its order by phone calls, so tell me about this kind of democracy. Maybe you have a clean and clear fair elections while you have group who adopted authentic ideas that I'm against Mary because she's blond and wearing beautiful green skirt for example. So I will arrest her and put her in the lower level. So the second thing is the rule of law and how the people are respecting that. Which is taking us toward the certain thing of the separation of authority. It's normal that the legislative authorities should be separated from the judicial authority, separated from the executive authority. It's normal and knowing. Knowing from the gates. You are not inventing something different. The first thing the people ask is the complete right to organize themselves in organizations, either political parties either unions. And it's guaranteed by a free legislation. Which make always the acceptance of being part of the democratic institutes and participating in the political courses and its normal way. No one can play without it. There was some one who was former military ministry in Spain. His name is Narcis, this man made a book for all the military transitions. What I liked in this book, in the first chapter he was defining what democracy means. So he was speaking too much about the rule of law and the separation of institutes. He wrote about the consolidation of democracy. I can't remember the exact term he used or the definition but what means is that it was the democracy that forced the whole political forces and the whole political institutes and form inside the community to accept this rule. And forced the whole political parties to participate in elections. I mean for example, here in Egypt we don't have a consolidated democracy. Why? because if Morsi decided to make elections tomorrow, I can't announce that. I will not participate. And I can't keep a wide movement at least y youth in the street making a kind of annoying. So I think we understand democracy in another way that you understand.

What do you think are democratic practices on the level organizatons you work in, do you think there's a link between them?

Look, sure there is a link. I mean the importance of the political practices on the high level or state level will make that the dominant culture in the country. Also I'm not caring too much about our generation, I'm caring much about the generation that will come after us. It will depend on something specific, if they are raised in a climate and see that the authority is moved and round between the people. They are seeing the free and fair elections. They are seeing the the people have their own rights to spread their ideas. They're seeing that competition is the only way for making a success. So it will make real and healthy political institutes. Maybe even in our political institutes we have something with the culture of the people. Some people don't like, don't accept easily the idea of the other so what I think practice is the best way for overcoming this problem. Practices. The competition is the only way, the personal development either on the side of idea or reading or management. Is getting the result of the....

Do you think the movements themselves have been democratic?

I think so, from the experience in my party we had elections. We had … organizing the way the mechanisms worked and the assurity as donation. And we are doing that, having an election in our party. Maybe the election came with a result we don't like but it's okay. it's fine. And the people who are managing abide with its items. And trying to make as much consolidation as possible as we can. I'm always seeing an attempt from the leaders to collect the people who are opposing them and I think we have a democratic institute. Sure it is not perfect, but I'm speaking about the experience of the party I mean. Maybe we don't depend on a complete democracy before the revolution. Because we suffered a lot from the kind of penetration. I mean for example, if I want to destroy Marlies’ organization, I have the authority and have big numbers of people, working with the security and join organization and participating in the elections and making clashes and destroying it. So we are not depending on democracy completely. Before the revolution, but the situation became different after the revolution and I think we're still working on developing for something.

What does social justice mean to you? Does it need to be demanded from the state?

Look, it's mainly depending on two things. First, the political stability. That's the first stage, you should have a political stability in order to make economical stability, in order to make investments, in order attract again the tourists, to start to make the economical side and increase the production. So you can apply laws like minimum wages and maximum wages, The way of tax sectors if you want to make a reform to support the development from civil society institutes and to encourage them to work free. First you need political stability, leads to economic stability, leads to more production that enable to review you laws related to social justice like the minimum wages, the taxes, invading corruption itself. This one is on the level of general management. The second issue is how you see... Or how high is your ideology. If you came, like the Muslim Brotherhood has the same ideology as neo-liberal ideas. You are coming with privatization. And doing the same practices. So social justice is depending on the general situation, depending on your own policies. How do you stay and how is your policy concerning more about the poor people. Sure what the poor people see is the politicians on the TV in the talk shows who are concerning social justice. But the ideology and the effects in the international or Egyptian experiences we had maybe indicators for how the regime dept effect the social justice should be.

What does dignity mean to you?

Look, dignity is a very broad expression. It had maybe several political sides and social and economical sides. I think if you are speaking about the political and civil side you are talking about the minimum rights of the people to be respected in the police station to have their rights to express freely to have the rights to speak freely. To have acceptable treatment in the state institutes who should apply the law, following the law. The main human rights, the main human feeling, this is one side. The second side which is social and economic that's what we speak about. The rights to have respectful way of transportation. I mean I travel to Belgium or travel to Paris, I travel to Qatar. I travel to different countries and I see how they people have the right to use a public thing and pubic transportation. How the people are treated well when they are dealt with governments institutes. How for example if my finger was broken I can go to a good hospital and get well treatment and get well cure without paying too much. This is the social-economical side. Even about the view of people of how people are seeing themselves in the community. And it's mainly related to the political situation. The big political situation. I mean if the whole people have equal opportunities. I'm not speaking about equal presence I'm speaking about equal opportunities, equal rights, equal duties. So each one will respect the other. But in Egypt we still have a sectarian view. For example, I will tell you something. We have something in Egypt when two people in the street start to fight. They start to shout and push each other and then someone say to the other guy: you don't know who I am. It's very normal and common, you can ask anyone about it. I mean the argue of who I am. Is the accumulation of corruption. It maybe gives you an indication if people went to the police station they will deal with him in a way and put me in jail even if I was not guilty. I mean this is the dignity either on its political side or on its social-economical side.

Do you see what you're part of as a Cairo movement, or an Egyptian movement, or a pan-Arabic movement or even on a global level? What level do you think we should think of this moment?

This is a philosophical question... Sure maybe I feel or I know or realized it can be considered as an internation action. Especially in the countries that are neglecting the social justice and the rights of the poor people or who are depending on a specific extreme right ideology. That's what I feel. And actually something in the think-tank was speaking about the ideals of the waves. And the people actually inspired each other in each country. So we can consider it as an international, not movement, but international desire for more social justice, for democracy and for having development and for having dignity, like what you said. But I'm concerning more about the Arab level because I'm seeing the Muslim Brotherhood now, is like the Nazis or the Fascists. If they the opportunity to control Egypt, and Tunis and Libya, for example or Egypt and Tunisia and Syria and they become stabilized in their authority, you will see a historical alliance, like the alliance of Mussolini and Hitler who were destroying the world. I'm speaking seriously and it's not an imagination. But that's what I'm expecting. So the importance of the movement in Egypt and Tunis specificated against the Muslim Brotherhood and working for getting them down, is very important. I think the two experiments inspired each other a lot. So even if I'm admitting a international desire for... But I'm caring directly for the movements in the Arab world. I mean if this fascist regime will stabilize we will not have an opportunity for democracy and justice and freedom but it'll be forced to enter the democratic poses or making the kind of... except the rule of the game the situation maybe become better?

Do you have contacts with other people in the Arab world?

Yes, I have contacts with people from Tunisia. And I went to Tunisia actually this year and I was supposed to be there again but...

Do you think there are things that are different from the Egyptian and Tunisian experiences?

Differences? Look before the revolution I was working in the Tunisian issues in a research institute. So I was seeing the issue, I was seeing this country from outside. And I know I had light expectations about the level of education, there is accumulated secular parties. But when I went to Tunisia this year I learned that the institution was not in this way, I realized why the situation when it happened in Tunisia inspired Egypt a lot. The same situation and place, the people movement and the situation of the army. The result after the democratic transition etc. The situation is a little bit close. Either there's a causality. Either the mess decades in the street. Even the way the people in the institutes and the markets are dealing with is the same. When I went to Tunisia I was asking the economical research how much is there international internal reserve from foreign currency. In proportion we have the same currency. So the situation is not completely different but what I thought that the two north sides we have to record it. The letter of the opposition. Maybe a little bid late from the Egyptian opposition. I mean they are still using the same expression for the classic socialist that have disappeared from the whole world. The second is that the secular ideas are more there than here in Egypt. I liked very much that when I was in the Tunisian streets I saw ladies and girls wearing good fashion and what they want and no one is speaking about them moving freely. It was a very nice scene.

END

**Interview Yasmin, 20 May 2013**

I’m talking to Yasmin. The first thing I would ask you is, actually what I asked you when you came in: do you think of yourself of an activist is that a term you would use for yourself?

I try to be I feel like in order to be a fulltime activist one can’t have a fulltime job. Because we have fulltime jobs, you know, people like me and others. People like us, mostly fresh graduates who are interested in opposing and social change and obviously want to play a part in the uprising. It’s hard for us to focus on just being an activist so I try during work you know, I share things on Facebook. I don’t pretend to, I try to do as much as I can, but I can’t believe I think of myself as an activist. Even during work, I work for [name]website. And a good thing about it is that we have a lot of freedom. I try to do my work. I support news every day but I try to force in social stories. We ran a story last week about homosexuals. We were actually the first newspaper in Egypt to have a story on homosexuals. For me that was my activist within me going: you must do this. Because there was an announcement of an Egyptian day against homophobia. And it was a really important story but no one covered it. And none of the newspapers covered it. And I was scared of my boss to tell my boss I couldn’t tell him about it. But this was a cause that I obviously cared about. I don't want to be biased or force it on the readers but we must include it. We did and I was really happy about it. I feel like everybody tries through work to not be too pathetic.

Do you also think of yourself as a member of civil society?

I wish I was but I’m not. I’m a journalist and I report news all day. When I have time I go out and I join protests here and there. I'm an official member of the association for animal rights so I go to their shelters and stuff and I try to report on their stories. When there is a protest close to my heart I go. But I can't call myself an activist or a member of civil society. We are all members of civil society in a way. It's funny because the line between a journalist and activist in Egypt is very thin. Especially with young people there is no young journalist that doesn’t see themselves as a activist. I feel like al lot of us become a journalist because we don't know what else to do. We want to create raise awareness of certain issues but we don't know how to do that. So we become journalists in order to do that. To write about women, to write about equality, to write about justice. So the line between journalist and activist is actually very vague in Egypt.

When did you first become politically aware or a political activist? Was this during the revolution or ..?

Before the revolution I wasn't active at all basically. But I wasn't completely ignorant, I read newspapers. But I was kind of weird I was more obsessed with international news. And I think a part of me just didn't feel I belonged in Egypt. So I was in denial a bit. I would go online and read some gossip. Oh you know .... Egypt for me was.. I don't want to live here and it's a devastating place. I don't know where to start with rights and freedom so I didn't want to be bothered with it. I read news but it was more like: what did the US do today? I was kind of like a member of the international community than I was an Egyptian citizen, fighting for rights. After the uprising we obviously we became a lot more aware of things and all the shoe shield problems in Egypt became a lot of clearer to us. In the beginning it was more: Egypt is obviously not perfect but we didn't know what the problem was. So with the uprising I became politically active. And actually, I want to tell you something, there is a bit of discrimination against people like me. People who just started becoming part of civil society or just started to become active. People who already became active look down on us. Like where were you before. I was like, I was nineteen, so don't look down on me or give me crap for only just joining the revolution. I just didn't care before but don't tell me about it. It's a huge deal. Like all the old activists won't talk to the new activists. And it's kind of like we all have the same fight and they should work among us. The should think; we've been in here longer but you guys finally are willing to join us, come with us and we'll teach you how to do this. We'll teach you more about rights and we'll include you in but a lot of them don't do that. A lot of them just look down to us like: you only just started caring now? And it makes me laugh a little bit. Like they're very small in their brains and immature. Instead of welcoming everybody they judge everybody.

I also heard people say that it's marvelous that first it were 100 or 200 people, but now you have so many.

Yeah they should be happy about it and include everybody. Instead they exclude all the new people like me. And they're like you've only been around for two years so I don't care what you're saying. Yes, that's kind of a weird problem.

During the revolution I heard everyone talk of one movement, but do you still feel you belong to something bigger or a wider movement or are you just a little bit on your own?

We do sometimes. I do certain things. During the uprising we felt like one group, but then we started breaking up and it was a disaster. But during the marches against the military counsel, it was awesome. It became back to the same feeling. You're all together, you're all one block. A few of the marchers were of the Muslim brotherhood. The marches against the military counsel were a lot like the marches against the marches against Mubarak. And you would look at the faces and feel like I’ve seen these people before. They're the same faces in every protest. I know these people. They always go out against injustice. When [name] go's to prison for paying the army encouraging violence. They go out to march and you see the same faces against every injustice. But, the people you see against the Muslim brotherhood are not really the same. A don't want to discriminate against anyone but a lot of them were supporters of Mubarak. So I don't feel like I’m on the same block with them. When we went on a protest against Muslim brotherhood, halve of them are protesters who've always been around, and then there are the new protesters, which again is a good thing, it is a positive sign we're becoming a lot bigger. We need to accept each other. Even though at the beginning we were like: we are not joining forces with these robbers. But now we are becoming a lot more tolerant. Because we are so tired of that we just want to unite against the evil thing and push for better conditions. I don't feel like we are not one block against the Muslim brotherhood because there are a lot of Mubarak supporters. And you can tell like if it's a new protest they look very scared. That's funny.

What would you say has been the high point in the movement? Would you say during the first days or actually later?

I think the eighteen days were very very important. But everything that happened afterwards is equally important or even more important. Because after the 18 days nothing had changed what so ever. Mubarak had stepped down but we had the military counsel of which you could tell was transferring though Mubarak. He was its security chief for 30 years. Or maybe 20. So nothing had changed. And what is happening now is also very important as civil societies are pushing for changes. We need a lot of patience. A lot of people are really getting tired of it. We used to be so excited about the uprising but now it is more like a dread bump for so long. But this is equally important what's going on and we need to keep going until we see change happen.

What to you would be the most important slogan that you would choose between the 18 days? What had the most meaning for you?

I think it was: Give me sugars. Not even Justice for Mubarak. It didn't have the same effect on me even though I’m a big supporter of social justice. Arabic speaking slogan wasn't also as powerful. Shaba...zone is a lot more powerful because 'saab' is very inclusive and [Arabic term] is very.. Because it isn't just because of Mubarak. I you follow my old Facebook posts I would say that every time the military counsel did something awful I would say [Arab]. If the Muslim brotherhood does something horrible I would say the same. If the next president we'll have, when it is still this bad, we don't have social injustice and we don't have freedom and prisons full. If it is just this bad I would still say 'the people want the downfall of the regime.' It's not one person but a whole global thing. That’s why to me it is personal.

Form the outside it looks very much like everything Egyptian is in street protests. Could you tell me a little bit about the political activity and protests that are not on the streets?

Actually, these things have learnt their way to court. It's incredible. We had a meeting a couple of weeks ago and we were just discussing what we can do. About two weeks ago, three bears got killed in the Egyptian zoo. It was of carelessness basically. And then they are lying about it and said that the bears fought and killed each other, what was a lie. And then someone in the audience suggested to go to the general secured and do some legal challenges and file some complaints and I was like wow. I didn't even know what a legal challenge was before the uprising. And know everybody's going to court and filing legal complaints. Two days ago I listened to a report of this story, a NGO for women's rights filed 50 legal challenges against different things like domestic violence and things like that. I feel it is not just protest. A lot of people are moving to do things and a lot of things are forming as well. Little groups of people doing different things like environment, or just doing crazy things you wouldn’t imagine. There's is group called [name] and sometimes I go to their meetings and basically they want a greener Egypt. And you would never think of such thing I mean all the political associations that we have wouldn’t think there's a group in Egypt insane enough to want a green Egypt. And they teach people how to make green walls. You spread the seeds out and water them occasionally so you have trees and plants and flowers. A lot of my friends have become like that, they form little groups. There's a group that goes to around to villages and issue ID cards for Egyptian women. They're doing great, they're my neighbors they live in the same building. They're my age. This thing started out of nothing. They were like what do we want to do? It was a couple of weeks after the uprising. They were like we have all these issues, what can we do you know? And they came up with this idea, travelling around villages. They do this under oath. They take illiterate women to the nearest police station and issue for them ID cartd which most women never had. People sometimes say we're 90 million, but then I say: no we're not, they are people who don't have ID carts. There's no way we're ninety million.

A lot has been made about the importance about twitter, Facebook and the social media during the revolution and afterwards. Do you think this is still a very important medium?

Yes. I think it's important. It's where my mum gets all her news. She's constantly on twitter and tells me a lot more rumors than I hear, well al lot earlier than I find them out. She's always like this and that happened blablabla, and I’m like how does she know this? So yeah they're still very powerful and they're very very good for mobilization. They're good to rally people behind a cause and good for marketing of course. And good for getting a cause out to national community. They're good for connections as well like.. It was so beautiful to see people connect through my article. I just see people connecting through it they're commenting on each other stories. People are finding each other. Like 'Oh my god I didn't know you were interested too.' So it's good for connecting people who care about the same causes. Also, it's a great source of news. A lot of my friends were not interested in politics whatsoever and the first thing they say to me is that I’m their source of news as I’m always sharing news on fb. They're like we depend on you for news and I’m like yes that's exactly my purpose.

How has the role of formal organizations been in the revolution and I’m thinking political parties, trade unions, and ngo's?

Parties in Egypt are failing, haha. They're going very badly. Even now they have the main alliance, the national salvation party, it's still quite a failure. It’s more like a response to things as opposed to take an initiative. Which I find quite disappointing. Even with [name] (?) the campaign going on right now collecting signatures, what happened is after young people started this [name] (?)Thing, political parties started joining it and I’m like you should be starting these things, you should be calling out. You're the older generation. I don't really trust many of them. And I will say is that the only people I trust in Egypt are the protesting minority. People like [name] and just like small minority of people who you see at protests. They're never in newspapers, they're not politicians whatsoever, but you see them at every march. And these are not biased, these are the people we can trust in our community. People that we will see at different protests. I don't know a lot of them personally but I see them at protests. I know you know everybody I hate too. Some of them are effective too like labor unions and things but I feel like people are too distracted with political changes. They don't do anything effective. They're too distracted with things like parliament seats and next presidential elections, alliances. I don't feel like they do a lot of work on the ground. I have faith in young people though al lot of them are doing great things of which I’m proud of.

Do you think they're the new leaders have emerged from the movement?

Definitely, [name] he's an activist. And when he first came out he couldn’t really speak. And now if you see him you would never think he's 26, 27 years old. He's sounds like al well-grounded unbiased politician. He's not conning and evil. He's kind of like a clean young person, activist, who you can trust, and now he speaks like a politician. He's on their grounds. Of course .... is also a great politician of which I had never heard before the revolution. He was there during the uprising with curly hair. They're a lot more of which a can't think right now but there are a lot more leaders. But not like as popular as we would like.

Do you think the revolution has impacted differently on men and women and on boys and girls?

Not really because I don't think there's a difference between men and women. So I can't tell you that like women feel a lot more liberated or that we are a lot more willing to fight for freedom because there are some women who don't really feel that way. I can't just generalize and assume everyone feels just like me. My brother and his girlfriend go out to protest. He's 21 and the revolution kind of screwed up his life and he's a [deleted] and there were no jobs after the uprising so he's been home for 3 years. During the 18 days he was like 'yes change' and he's still very revolutionary and for all the rights you can think of just like my family. But he does not want to be part of the revolt. Because it is personally affecting him that he can't find a job. We can't fool ourselves, unemployment has become a lot worse. People who work in tourism, I had a friend who works as a tour guide, before the uprising he was doing great because he's the only Egyptian who speaks Japanese fluently. He's part of a really small community of ten people who speaks Japanese as well as he does. And he was doing so well making a lot of money travelling all over Egypt and abroad. After the uprising he left he went to japan. because there we're no jobs or tourists. So I can't really generalize about women and men.

How has police violence impacted/affected the movement after and during the protests the police violence?

I don't want to generalize but I personally am terrified of the police. I’m terrified of torture and violence. One time, during the military counsel, they detained some activists, not just the police but the authorities. At some point there was a plan to deliberate these activists in prison. A friend of mine and I - at that time I didn't have my newspaper job and I was a full time activist so went around looking for trouble - we followed these people we saw troops of police dragging people on the ground, beating them, arresting them. And as soon as a saw them I pretended I had nothing to do with the cause and I just left. I don't think, I don't really feel bad about it because I know what it mean to be a coward. A coward does not leave his house. I was being save I did not want to be thrown into prison, that's not the kind of person I am. I don't think it's smart to be brave about these things. I'm not encouraging that people stay home but encouraging movements, revolts and protests. But I’m also saying people should be careful not to put themselves into trouble because anything could happen in there. I remember the march 19, the virginity tests of Amr Imam that was only a month after Mubarak stepped down and we came out of the uprising feeling so brave and cool and we thought we could do anything we want. It was a beautiful time until that happened. That was definitely changing point. A point were my family just stared - I usually go to protests with my mum, sister and grandma - into each other eyes, holey shit, it could have been us. And we were just terrified. And it just changed us a little bit, it scared us. Of course, sexual harassment plays a big part as well. All the terrifying things, they terrify you. But you learn how to control the appear. And how to be careful as well. Usually when I go to the Tharir or another protest I hear from everybody on twitter or Facebook right away if someone gets raped. So we're a lot more careful and a lot more on guard when we get there. And when I hear of terrible things, it doesn't always stop me from going there. OK, if it’s something very terrible, I don't go. But if it's something mildly terrible like, someone got really harassed... It's seems like a horrible thing to say but after so many times your mind learns to tolerate this. If it’s mildly or dangerous I take my brother or my dad. Or a big friend that can protect me.

What about the violence that recently can be seen between the people. Between brotherhood supporters and other protesters?

I don't think that would end up in a civil war. But don't quote me because if it turns out on a civil war people will laugh about what I said.

Unfortunately people have said it could become serious.

I don't think it could ever turn into a civil war. Because, honestly, although I don't have faith in the Muslim brotherhood, there are people like their supporters are not all malicious. Obviously they have a proof of pain of strange thoughts that go out to protests and beat us up. But I don't think the genuine supporters have anything to do with the political movement. I thinks there just people like us and I don't think they would ever rally against more than have the population. It would be deadly. We have lived together for so long, it's not like they have different villages or tribe. Every building has a Muslim family and a family that does not wear scarfs, and conservative Christians. Conservative Christians have become more common than conservative Egyptians than liberals. They support the regime whatever it is. And I mean by conservative politically conservative. Not just socially. They support the system whatever it is and live for tradition. Conservative Christians in Egypt don't drink, just like conservative Muslims. But they have a lot more in common. They hate each other obviously but their religious books are the same; everyone else's going to hell. But they have a lot in common than with liberals.

At the moment in the west there is a namage that Egypt is imploding divided between secular forces and islamist forces. Do you think that's an accurate picture?

Yeah, honestly, that’s what it looks like on the surface. But actually it is still the same fight. Cause nothing has changed. They have replaced Mubarak by the Muslim Brotherhood. But they're exactly the same. They're not really calling for Islam. To everybody's surprise -well, not to my surprise. I really thought of them as using the Islam in their political game to get what they want -. It's still the fight against prochange and activism and let's have stability and get more donations from the IMF and still have a gap between the really poor and the really really rich because all the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood are business man. There's nothing really different between them. Mubarak drank wine, maybe they don't. I don't know what they drink but there's a friendship between them. To me it's still the same problem. It's still quiet for social justice and even people who are still holding on the uprising they never things like: we don't want them to take away our alcohol or that's our biggest fight. Before they came to power, everybody said things are going to turn around they're going to take away our freedom, they going to make me wear headscarf’s. People like me were fine, let them take our alcohol and put headscarf’s on our heads. But give us social justice. Give us health care. Give me depation and that's what I say to people when I talk to them because I have friends who are Muslim brotherhood supporters. I tell them this in their face: I'll support your Morsi if he gives me health care, good free health care. If he gives me good free education for everybody. At least, not free but accessible education that mildly acceptable by international standards. Social justice in the sense that you don't have the chief of [Arabic, secret service?] to give a shit load of money in order to control everyone and keep everybody under cloth. Everyone else gets paid really really bad money. People my age working at university, they pay them 400 pounds. 400 pounds, while the big boss, gets million pounds a month. That's crazy! And the reason that we get paid so little is because he get paid so much. It's completely dependable on each other. That’s what I tell them (her friends). If he gives me that I’ll put a scarf on my head, seriously. Because social justice is more important than my faith. Even though I like my beer after work, I would still give that up so that everybody would have food on their table. And it's so funny because we all said the same thing, but they came around and didn't call for stricter...The Salafi's kind of do. The Salifi's strike but they're so simple minded that you could convince them really easy. I'm not talking about the politicians but about real Salifi's that are very conservative and obsessed with their own thoughts, but they're also people who listen to you. If the Muslim brotherhood came around and they're not calling for a Muslim Egypt, they're just calling for the same thing. We're still fighting for the same thing. Just rights. We're asking for rights.

What does democracy mean to you?

I don't really believe in democracy I’m a person who still thinks the rich people in the world control everything. If they want to bring someone to election, they will. And even if the people choose somebody and if he's elected freely and all that stuff. He does have to abide to international rules because the rich people, the bank and everything have all the power. I'm not saying people like Obama don't have power at all. I was still glad that Obama won over McCain, but I’m not naive enough to think that Obama was going to stop support Israel and rally behind the Arabs and go: Go Arabs, go Arabs, let's support humanity and justice. So democracy to me is, there could be democracy and places like Canada and there are places that maybe have clean democracy, although I’m not so involved in the political issues. I think they do have some kind of democracy that works for them. But again, Canada voted against the Palestinian state last year. I don't know, I have lost faith in democracy.

What about democratic practices of the level??

Some of these are clean. It is easier for them to be clean if they don't have the shadow of global pressure on them? That's why it was impossible for me to.. even I was optimistic during and after the uprising. I was never optimistic enough to think that the West is going to let us be. I was always like, there's no way they're going to let us develop. Israel is on the border. They want us to be this way. Ignorant, unemancipated. We're such a big group of people too, we're not a tiny little country. We're like an army of sheep. And we all have - although we hate each other. No, we don't hate each other but there are regional rivalries and hate threads- but we're still one people. We thinks of ourselves as one people. And I thinks that scares the west. I'm not trying to claim the West for our failures. We failed. But I’m just saying that I didn't believed for a second that the West was going to let us have our uprising. I always thought, they're going to bring another horrible leader that's going to maintain the status quo. That's important to them. People were so scared of the Muslim brotherhood. I talking to my white friends in America and I said you should be afraid of [Arabic name] because he hates Israel. The Muslim brotherhood are obviously going to abide international conventions and all the international laws and play it so nice. People actually think anyone cares of the Muslim brotherhood. They say the care ('they're going to take away alcohol and give us scarfs'), but they don't. As long we keep our deal with the border with Israel and we don't start war with anyone we'll remain weak and un-independent because we are so pressured by the international community and courses. That's what they want.

What about the other idea of the revolution, dignity, is that a meaningful idea to you?

It’s quite sad, this dignity thing, asking for aid. How are we supposed to feel dignified when we've been asking for IMF loans for the past half year. They don't want to give it to us. How am I supposed to feel dignified when that happens. How I'm supposed to feel dignified when the US continuously give us aid and ok. they threating us they're going to lift their generous generous unconditional - I’m being sarcastic here - support if we continue to be unfair to our people. Like our authorities. How I’m a supposed to feel signified? I want it all. My type of dignity, if I had become president, I would have said: hey you guys, get the hell out of here. I wouldn’t have gone like 'oh no we don't want people to interfere with our national affairs' and then ask them for money. Because that's not dignity that's embarrassing. It's great hypocrisy. The Muslim brotherhood are greeaaat at it. They're so great at it, you know. At their Arab twitter account they say things like we don't want you to fear the international community. On their English twitter they're asking for their loans and I’m like: you can't ask for money unless you abide certain things. And you can't ask for support unless you give ours. So that's not dignity to mo whatsoever. And Egypt actually has the people to produce, that's the funny thing. We have the people, we have the space, and we’re not like Japan were there's no space to build a factory. We have all the space in the world. We have a lot of space in Egypt.. Oh the freaking desert. I mean yes it would be difficult to get the water running through there but it is possible. It is not an impossible thing. We could produce anything, a dam or glass. They can produce stuff and that would create employment and create and extra GDP that we need desperately. They don't produce anything. They just sit around and ask for permission. That's not a way to develop the economy. It's embarrassing.

Do you see that your part of what is an Ira movement or an Egyptian movement or an Arabic or global movement? On what level do you see you?

Sometimes it feels like it's a global movement. I look around and I can see that a lot of people like me from different countries, which has nothing to do with Egypt, haun for the same thing. And in that way it's a very universal thing. Justice, calling for rights that's a very universal idea. I have a friend, who's a gay rights activist in Finland. In Finland everyone has the rights, they don't even care to be it. But she and I are friends. We talk and you can see that we want the same things. Not just for Finland or Egypt we want it for the world. Which is kind of beautiful. So I feel like in that way it's universal. I don't want to feel like an Arab thing. That's why Arabs great Tunisia sounds digpeace. Because we're like 23 countries. But I don't know many Arab countries that are.. I mean what in Syria is going on is a war, not an uprising founded by the West. Horrible thing to sponsor. And what's going on in Palestine, occupation has nothing to do with the Arab word. Maybe Tunisia and Egypt can see the link. The rise of the psalmists.. but Jemez has got a completely different story and Libya again a different story. So I don't feel like it's an Arab thing. Even though Egypt is a big country, I just kind of think other countries have nothing to do with...

So do you see similarities between the Egyptian revolution and Western movements like the indigenous in Spain and Greece, Occupy movements.

Yes. Same thing. That's why I feel it's an universal thing. One of my close friends is a republican in America. Whenever we hang out- she's obviously never to Egypt, her family hates Egypt. We met in Scotland and we still keep in touch. She always says to me 'You'll get along so great with my liberal friends.' So I feel like, not just liberals, but I feel like we're all one community even though we don't know each other but our causes are the same. It's all about rights and people. It's one big universal thing. I don't know if it was always this way. I was too young. I feel like, I don't know, I wasn't around but I think it is as big as it could be right now because of the internet. I could be completely wrong, but that's just my assumption. I feel like it's easier to call for rights now and to get international exposure. It's easier to get support and feel that connection when you are on the internet. I don't know how they did it before that. There were probably still groups calling for rights everywhere.

END

**INTERVIEW Adel, 24 May 2013**

I'm speaking to Adel.

He's a member of the central committee of the [name deleted] party. And the support group for [name deleted].

Would you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Yes of course. Yes I'm a executive [name withheld] and I'm a counselor for [name withheld]. And I'm also working with the centre [name withheld].

When and how did you become politically active?

I started at the end of the 70s. There were the election campaigns in favor of some syndicate and trade union leaders for the parliament. In 1982 I have participated with some other in publishing magazine the [name deleted]. I tried to link the labor protests with the freeing of the structure of syndicate. I have continued that till 2001, when we formalized a coalition between trade unions and syndicates. It was entity called the [name deleted]. And it was hosted by [name deleted] centre. This was a prominent centre for rights. And I was in the coordinating committee from 2001 to 2008. Before and after the revolution I worked with independent syndicates in educating and training the leaders and drafting the vision and hosters of this union. And giving consulting. Also I'm a trainer in ILO. Also from 2004 and 2005 there was an attempt from the government to get the money from the pension funds. We have formulated a popular campaign to face that and we have succeeded in hitting this money. Also there was a try to issue a law concerning the pensions funds. And I have participated in a committee to defend the [details withheld].

How have you been involved in the event of the last past three years?

In the revolution all the Egyptians have participated in the Tahrir Square and for me, before the revolution I have worked to issue a law concerning the freedom of trade unions and after the revolution we worked hard for this legal specially when doctor Achmed M. was the minister of labor. In this period we tried to support and socialize independent syndicates, trade unions. And also I worked for capacity building and training in the labor trade union leaders.

During the revolution, it seems like everyone was very much united. Do you still feel part of a wider movement?

No of course just after the stepping down of Mubarak and sit-in at Tahrir Square on twelve February has been spitted. And this is some sort of social distinguishment between who participated in the revolution. And this was enforced when the Ikhwan, the Moslim Brotherhood and the Islamists reached the authorities. We have more than one campaign. The Salafis and the Ikhwan and the others for revolutionary courses. And now we try to build a social coalition to be the basis of the political movement to get the social and economic rights.

What were the most significant slogans for him during the 18 days?

"Freedom and social justice." The linkage between them.

And during the SCAF period?

"Down with the SCAF" and "Vote for the civil state." The Egyptian meaning of the civil state. The strips between the civil society and civil state. There is not a counter part of it in English.

And during the period of Morsi?

"Down with the government of Morsi" with the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood.

From the outside Egyptian politics seems all about street protests. What about the activities outside the street?

The labor movements uses many different techniques combining the sit-in demonstrations, but also negotiation to get the rights at the general level negotiation between the labor movement and the government.

Is the social media important to the labor movement?

The role of social media concerning the labor movement has grown after the revolution. Before it wasn't there. Because nowadays trade unions have their own pages on Facebook and Twitter and this increase the support for the labor movement. Besides the labor funds.

What are the labor funds?

Foundations that support the strikes and other things. They collect money from each other to support the strikes. They're offered, not given.

Does he think of the revolution as a working class revolution or a middle class revolution?

A middle class revolution. The revolution is the revolution of middle class. Of course youth coalition has moved the revolution. And they were from middle class. The revolution was in the city and the country side has not participated in it. The first beginning of the revolution hasn't witnessed a participation of the labor movement. But with the beginning of February it has participated in it and it accelerated the movement and contributed to the removal of the Mubarak regime.

In Europe we have seen in recent years of the crisis alternatives to the capitalist system. Has he seen anything like this in Egypt?

Yes of course. From the beginning we have good relation with the global social forum. And we have common vision that the solution against the virus globalization is a more humanistic globalization which we connect to the protest movements all over the world. And so we endorse democracy from below. Popular democracy or associative democracy. And cooperatives and trade unions are the main sources of this democracy because it represents a different formula of ownership. Different from the ownership of companies. And also it gives its members opportunity to participate in its management. And there is a writing of some intellectuals like [name] who supports this visions. We also try to get benefits from reading the experiences of Latin-America and of factory management and the good upper hand on the farmlands.

Does he think that in the labor movement, new leaders have emerged from the revolution or since the revolution.

For sure yes. Many leaders have emerged from the revolution in the labor movement, independent trade unions. This was not valuable in the previous government, before the revolution. We have got many people who have got the potential and capability and they need training. After the revolution the Egyptian people have rushed in to politics in a positive way and they have come to something like speaking of politics and a political Egyptian environment. There has been the suggestion that the Egyptian crisis is linked to the global one. We have witnessed the refusal of the IMF loan and now as we are speaking there's a demonstration in front of the agricultural ministry against Monsanto company, the American agricultural company. Against the stealing of the Egyptian seeds.

Does he think the Egyptian revolution has had different effects on men and women?

The same effects. The same effects on men and women. But we have had the harassments and virginity tests in the period of the SCAF. Also the revolutionaries parties put women in a low hierarchy in their election lists and they sometimes bought women without putting their picture in their propaganda. So the status of women has been let down. Comparing before the revolution. All the attempts don't conform to the international agreements like Zidahu (?) and others that give women some of their rights. And also the refuse of the Gola (?) law, and personal status laws against the rights of women.

How has the police and military violence impacted the labor movement?

Of course this violence has a very long history. In 1952 the tanks has crashed in [Arabic name] factories. Also in 1989 the tanks crashed in steel factories. Also in 1968 the military tanks has crashed into the military factors where there was a labor strike. And after the revolution the SCAF has been against the labor movement protests. In Ikhwan the leaders are not so experienced as others and back when the leaders are not so experienced than others it exceeds and increase the call for rights and freedoms. In the latest strikes in the public transportations, the army tried to use violence against the laborers and to use its soldiers in driving the railway. But the laborers has succeeded in preventing them from doing that.

What about the recent violence between protestors and Muslim Brotherhood, has it affected the labor movement?

Laborers use the same mechanism of violence against the Muslim Brotherhood. After the revolution the Muslim Brotherhood tried to expel and demolate the labor movement. But because of their social discourse and not having so good, or even at all, he was social with the labor movement. The labor movement has succeeded in confronting them. They have no impact on the labor movement.

What does democracy means to you?

Democracy means the participation of all persons in their public affairs. And the continuation of the evidence of whom represented in the parliament and the trade unions. And this is related to their ability to know their rights and defend it.

What about social justice, what does it mean to you?

For me as a socialist, social justice means the management of labor to all the resources of the state and redistribution of the resources in favor of the working class. And the farmers of course.

What does dignity means to you?

Dignity means that everyone should have its basic rights, social, economic and political rights without discrimination at social, economical or religious phases.

Do you see what you're part of as a Cairo movement, an Egyptian movement, or even a pan-Arabic movement or global movement?

A global one, international. Because confronting capitalism doesn't occur only in Egypt but in the capitalist centre and in its great symptoms.

Does he see similarities between the European protests, Occupy and the Arabic revolutions?

In some sorts. In refusing the neoliberal policies and refusing privatization and refusing the IMF loans. And I feel that we have some common concern in like in Spain, Greece and Latin-America.

Are there also thing that were unique for Cairo?

The insularism of middle class use and their persistence to keep the squares violent against the government. And this has not occurred in Yemen and Bahrain. Little in Tunisia. We have here same amount of millions to use it against the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood in authority now.

The phenomena of what?

The demonstrations of millions. And the participation of governorates. Governorates are nowadays more than they were in the revolution. And this is a positive development.

He thinks there is a similarity between fascism and the Muslim Brotherhood. And they're presented in Europe in a different way. And Hitler was being presented as an exit of the capitalist crisis, and the Muslim Brotherhood are expressed as an exit of the current economical crisis.

END

**interview rania, 21 may 2013**

I'm talking to Rania at the [name withheld] centre

So let me tell me a little bit about what this centre is about and what we do here and then we can come to the concrete questions about social mobilization. As a centre we were made or created in 2009, in mid 2009, so were quite recent compared to other NGOs in Egypt. [details withheld] But also, it plays an important role in following up with the workers. So we get hundreds of phone calls every day, just letting us know that there's a strike in this place or a worker was tortured in that place and so on so that we can bring it over to the media. So that's the centre in, hopefully a nutshell.

And you've worked here since the beginning?

Yes.

Would you think of yourself as an activist?

I would be labeled by others as an activist. I get mixed up and confused by the words because of its genetic use nowadays after the revolution. So everyone walks along in a demonstration becomes an activist. And then you start asking if everyone is doing this professionally and this is really my career, do I call myself an activist? So it's a very dazzling question but I don't go around calling myself an activist at all. I say I work in human rights, but I don't say I'm an activist or anything. Just because the term confuses.

What about civil society? Do you think of yourself as a member of civil society, do you think this is an useful concept to describe what you do?

Absolutely. Specifically with the experience of post revolution in Egypt, which is not so much post of course. But when we talk about some of the structural changes that the revolution has brought, like having a parliament that you can talk to, for the very first time in the history of mankind. So in that moment we felt like civil society, that was being consulted, maybe not listened to in the end, we had to change to bridge an important gap between citizens and the political decision makers and we still do it until today. And we have a change to represent many of the people who come to us and ask us to represent them, specifically the more organized groups like the local committees and Islameas or in villages. Workers and different unions and federations. And in that regard we really feel like being for civil society?

How and when did you first become politically active?

It's a weird story. I was taking a course of a professor who's politically active it's [name]. You must have heard of her. And as part of the course requirements she required that I'd do an internship at an organization. And there were different sets of organizations in developmental and human rights and different things. And for some reason I picked a human rights organization, which was the [name withheld]. And then I just couldn't leave.

Do you feel part of a wider movement, or just someone who works for this organization.

Well, I absolutely felt part of a wider movement, definitely it's not as wide and as big as it was on the eve of the revolution, but it's quite natural and it's not disappointing of anything forming. I'm enjoying the moment very much and like many Egyptians, understandably. But I was certainly enjoying it because I feel the movement is still wide enough, considering that now there are different things at stake and different interests that need to be defended by different groups and so on. So I certainly do feel as part of a bigger movement still. And that's perhaps because in many ways, when you have your interests politically, that are able to be politically framed within one framework. So for instance now the opposition to be in Ikhwan. You can have different motivations for opposing the Ikhwan. On the eve on the revolution people had different motivation to stand against the Mubarak regime, and I think we have a very similar moment now. It's not as wide of course, but again, it's wide enough that you can feel part of bigger movement.

During the 18 days what would you say was the most meaningful slogan for you?

I need to tell you something. I was not in Egypt during the 18 days.

You're not the first one, you're the second person I speak to...

I was in England I had scholarship, I was doing my masters when the revolution broke out.

When did you come back?

I came back first time after the revolution in March and I started living in Egypt for good in June 2011.

So you went through most of the SCAF period.

Yes.

During the SCAF period, what was the language of the opposition? How do you think it was expressed?

I feel that for the very first time there was a change to deconstruct the holy image of the military. I think that was very important. Because you would see many people just fighting over the names. Many people telling you it's offensive to your country's military if you call them [Arabic name], which I don't know how to translate. And others say that's basically, what they say "We're going to stay like this." And the fact that you had campaigns such as the [Arabic name] to military trials, being so successful and so widespread. And not just in Cairo, in many other governorates as well. And again, a campaign that is not doing something simple, it's challenging the holy military. So I think it was a very powerful thing. So I think that in terms of framing the opposition that was one of the strongest things that will remain in my head and in many people's heads.

What about the period since the ascendance of Mohammed Morsi's presidency? What is the language in which people have common ground to oppose?

On the one hand you have sarcastic language which is very common to Egyptians, to frame everything in jokes and sarcasm. So you have very common language of dealing with the yuan as herd of sheep. Because the idea is that they are following Morsi of the Mussert, or whoever is the leader of the Brotherhood without listening or understanding. We're dealing with the rule of Egypt as a person who owns... It's almost going back to feudalism, someone who owns a big piece of land and he can do whatever he likes with it. So the word Hezba, which is widely used to describe Egypt on the Ikhwan’s rule. So this kind of sarcasm. But when it comes to the Ikhwan I think you have to know it's important know that you have two different kinds of opposition. You have an opposition that has been growing because of the failure of the Ikhwan. And this not only came from the revolutionaries but even from the more - let's say - apathic citizens who didn't want to go back to the old regime so they didn't Shafik but pick Morsi because, well it might be something new. And then they were dissatisfied day after day with the failure of his new government to deal with their problems and demands. And we have been able to see it in term of protests, social protests. Because we do protest mapping on a weekly basis. So we do it on a daily basis, but we publish reports by a weekly basis. We have been able to see an increase in the number of protests that doubled with his ascendance to the presidency. That continues to increase at a very high rate. So we went from having like a hundred protests a month, and I can give you the exact number. Of course later. To two hundred to four hundred. So it's increasing really fast. So this is one kind of opposition and then you have the other kind of opposition the romancers of the Mubarak regime who cannot believe themselves that the same group that was not even allowed to speak out under Mubarak's regime, is now ruling Egypt. And of course doing so badly at it. In both cases it's a language of sarcasm and a language of see how much you failed, how can you fail so badly after the revolution?

From the outside it looks as if Egyptian politics is all about street protests and being in the streets. Can you say a little bit about what people do express themselves politically when they’re not in the street.

The kind of street politics is the more random and therefore what makes us happier, the fact that they haven't organized...[phone rings]. So the kind of street protest makes us happier, it reflects a genetic dissatisfaction in the streets that doesn’t necessarily reflect a political motivation or an ideological opposition and so on. The other type of organization that has been very strong, other than the street kind of politics, is organizing in political parties, in NGOs, even in charity organizations. And I haven't quite checked the exact number yet, but I know for sure that there are thousands of organizations that have been established since the revolution at a much faster rate than before the revolution. The kind of youth movements, and I think most local committees. The fact that you would have citizens living in an area together who feel that they have demands that need to be voiced and decide that all of a sudden to create a group, to hold press conferences, to deal with NGOs. So we get invited by local committees in urban slums, in Cairo, telling us "we want you to be with us, because we going to hold a press conference". Asking for the right of the people of this specific area, for instance in Ramli Rouleh, the area next to the Nile Towers, not to be moved from the land. and then they would ask you for information about what kind of rights do we really have, legally what can they do to us? So this kind of organization I think is very admirable. It's a very small scale one, but what we've seen is that it's way more effective than it might seem from the very small scale where it comes from. On very interesting initiative from a group that just was recently created, they're called [name]. And they were created to defend housing rights as well. What they have managed to do is to help local committees to establish local committees in different areas that they work in. And then they managed to get the local committees to work together. So it usually goes by somatic co operations. So for instance the slum areas who were facing the same evacuation trends, would work together. They have three areas of inhabitants of the cemeteries, who are now working very closely together in one committee. And the committee was made up of three committees in three far away cemeteries. And now they meet and see how they can struggle together against the violation to the rights of housing and the basic human rights really, not just the rights to housing. So I think this is...

Is this a Cairo phenomenon or do you see it in other parts of the country as well?

It's very intensive in Cairo of course, but for instance this group [name]they also work outside Cairo, so they have things in other governorates and not limited to Alexandria. Because of course spreading to Alexandria is normal, but the fact that they work in smaller governorates of Ashurd of Area or something like that, I think that's in itself an attempt of decentralization, which I think most of the people in Egypt are realizing something that needs - most of the organize groups are civil society, let's call it - are realizing that there's a certain kind of decentralization that needs to be achieved. we even hear we have an office opening soon in Alexandria, but we have fourteen smaller officers offering legal assistance in 14 different governorates. And most of them came to being after the revolution.

What do you thinks was the high point of the movement, was it during the 18 days or later?

Maybe the peak was the 18 days. But it didn't go down from there. The failure of the SCAF period made things... The deterioration of the situation under the SCAF gave a momentum to the movement. The refiguration of the situation under the Ikhwan again gave the situation a momentum to the movement. So I see it as an ongoing movement and of course, saying that the 18 days were a peak is not to suggest that things started with the 18 days. I personally was working in human rights, a least 3 of 4 years before the revolution. And I did see different momentums. I did see the workers movement going as far as the parliament in downtown. I heard slogans that were very disrespectful to the regime which is now the characteristic of the time that we're in and it's a nice characteristic that we can challenge on that level but it happened before hand. It was not as widespread and it was not as wide-known, so many Egyptian were like: "Oh my god it's the first time that the people are going on the street!" But in fact it comes only from a media that didn't really cover that and wasn't that interested in what the workers were doing for instance, but also from a well done job from the regime to isolate those who were protesting. So the Kefaya movement or 6th of April movement. All of these people not just only by arresting and detaining them and keeping them as prisoners as long as possible and giving them a hard time, but also by making their demands seems very sectarian, something that today's governments are trying to do, but they're not very well at is because, you now sectarian demands finem, but everyone has sectarian demands so it becomes everybody's demand at the end of the day.

Do you think the revolution has impacted differently on men and women and on boy and girls?

The revolution has impacted on women, I would say in an empowering way. Even though women's rights after the revolution are just as they used to be and perhaps there are expectations of them getting worse, but nothing concrete has happened. Of course with the exception of what happens to female human rights defenders in demonstration and so on. But I mean in term of legal framework or state policy and so on it's the usual neglect and what can we do more than women than they work, they're educated, but should be happy with it, take it or leave it. But I think it was empowering because on the one hand it gave the chance to women to again, work within a wider movement on more generic demands that weren't specific women's demands, and it gave them a chance to prove if man can do it then women can do it of course as well. Which I don't think needed to be proved but for many people they needed to see it. It's almost like the 18 days and the relationships between the Salafist and the other Islamists and the Christians and the seculars and the leftists in the square. For the very first time oh my god can we talk together. Yes you can, it should be common sense but it was only realized in that moment, that it's doable. I think it was very similar to women. But I think one was also the ability of women to react every time harassments happen or every time women faced particular problems like the virginity tests for instance at the beginning of the SCAF period. Their ability to react, to gather a large amount of demonstrator, male and female who are standing just for women's demands and not just for generic demands. I think this is one of the victorious moments when you have men and women gathering in such large sums even though the first women's watch for instance ended in catastrophe. Ended in harassment. It's annoying that it could end this way and it's ironic in a way as well. But still the fact that you always have these demonstrations with this gender specific demand, I think is something new that we haven't had. Usually we have them in something like sorority clubs, women sitting together, and saying yes women's rights. You didn't have it on the ground like that.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the movement?

Certainly. Of course you'd have to ask what kinds of leaders. So of youth leaders, who have emerged as young as leaders of... For instance the guy who wrote this book. He's turning 16. He and a group of friend in middle school created a group called [name withheld]. They were all between the ages of 12 and 15. And they have their group, they write their articles, they write their demands specifically on things that are very specific to them, like their education and what they are being taught, how they're being taught and what about the revolution now, we had a recent revolution. So they have their own demands but also they interact with the general demands. And then you have someone like [name] who is a leader in self now and he hasn't even turned 16 yet. And others in his age. You also have the student movement trying to get alive again. It was very much alive in different periods of the Egyptian history, but it has been undermined for so long. Perhaps by the constant presence of the police on university premises. Perhaps by the harassment of student activists and so on. But the fact is that the movement was undermined and killed at one moment. But it's coming back, definitely, And then you have leaders within this movement who have their own demands, but also have demands for a better Egypt, framed in political demands, civil demands and of course socio-economic demands. And of course you have people from within NGOs and you have political leaders. And the political leaders are of course the most popular and the most renowned. And the political leaders are of course the most popular and the most renowned. Maybe someone like [name] who was such leader before the revolution. And if anything has been losing momentum after the revolution, especially these days. But then you have politicians and academics like [Arabic name] for instance for the Salafi movement, [name] [Arabic]. You have these names emerging within ideological assumption behind them and the promise of a political program that usually doesn't really exist, but it's framed in term of ideology and rhetoric and promises.

How do you think police violence has affected the movement?

I think it played a major role and I really believe if it wasn't for the police beating up some of the demonstrators, or shooting some of them and if it wasn't for demonstrators dying, it wouldn't have given the movement the chance to move on. In many cases I feel that whenever there's a stopping point or maybe a pause for the movement, when people stop reacting and there's really nothing that is done. And then you have a small group of people going to demonstrations and it's really a tiny group of people. And I think one of the moments this was happening was when the constitution and the declaration came out from Morsi and all of the sudden everyone was silent and everyone was mad and sad and everything, but in their own homes. All the attempts to move and do anything were really tiny. Until a small group of demonstrators went to the presidential palace and then some of them got attacked and then you would see again thousands of people going to the palace. And I think this was the reason. They were going to the palace because again some of their colleagues and some of their people, maybe they don't know, but share the same demands were attacked this way. And I think this was one of the ways that the movement kept its momentum, definitely.

What about the more recent clashes between movements. We have Brotherhood people fighting with other protestors.

When it comes to the clash between the brotherhood and other protestors it feels more like the clash between the regime, the ruling party and other protestors. So when I look at this kind of clash it's very different from the kind of clashes that you can have between the popular clashes between the liberals and the Salafists for instance. It's not the same thing. When the protestors were clashing with the Brotherhood members, they were clashing with the rulers, basically. And it was very obvious in the way the clashes were led. On the one hand the Brotherhood, the youth of the Brotherhood were very clear on defending the president who has a delegate of the elections, and who hasn't had the time yet to establish for a democratic state and to make meets end and so on. And between demonstrators were telling them that this is not true and he has failed grossly and he has done so much badly and so on. So the kind of discourse even between them is a discourse between the ruled and the ruling or the ruler. It wasn't a typical discourse between two different movements.

In the west the image of Egypt is a country completely divided between Islamist and secular forces, do you think that's accurate?

I don't think it's accurate. But again, I think even for many Egyptians this is the picture. The kind of divide between... So when the question becomes: Is Egypt a secular state or an Islamists state? And in the end you don't even get an answer. The problem is that this question occupies the whole public space and it becomes the only thing that people are concerned about, or fighting about or conversing about. So when you see the whole struggle with the constitution when the focus was on this very same question of secular or Islamist. We ended up with article 2 of the constitution which was basically the same as the article that Mubarak held, so even if you have a different kind of phrasing, yet this is not what's going to make a difference. It would only make a difference once you have a public policy in place to Islamize. Or when you have actual laws that interpreted it. But I mean the very same article has existed in the old constitution we were living with. So I think packing the fight over the constitution over a fight about religion or should we religion of the Islam should be the religion of the state or not. It's a fallacy but it's pretty much present in people's mind. And it's basically what kept the period of writing the constitution so long and very problematic and made us end up with a constitution that does not satisfy any of the revolution's demands, because no one was talking about the things that we actually had to fight about. We were not talking about the economic system or we were not talking about the assets of Egypt. We were not talking about even the transitional period and it came as a surprise for many people that the constitution has a section on the transition period in Egypt. People didn't know it even. I think this was one of the things we should have been fighting about, how the transitional period will be led, what will happen if we don't have a parliament that will assure the counsel do things like that we are now fighting about. But when we were writing the constitution we were just fighting about articles 2 and women's rights and Islam and so on. So I don't see this as the real conflict for sure but it's not the mistake of the West to understand it in this way. It's the mistake of the Egyptians themselves and even of the Egyptian politicians and the educated activists. They do fall in the same trap.

What does democracy mean to you? What is the core?

What is the core... Let's start with what democracy does not mean to me. It doesn't mean to me a ballot box to go to every four years. So this is the smallest part of democracy that I can image. And democracy has been described for so long as this ballot box. For me democracy can be the protection of the rights of the least privileged citizens. It can be the protection of the rights of the minorities. It can the assurance of the equal treatment of those who are more likely to be discriminated and discriminated against. It's definitely not the protection of the majority's rights. And I think this is a major problem in Egypt today. Because what you hear all the time, even from the president himself and he comes out very philosophical and saying: Well this is democracy, it's that everyone listens to the majority. And then you go like: no, if it is. If this is the democracy you are talking about, then this is not what we are asking for. Because in fact the Egyptian revolution was not asking for democracy. If you are asking about the slogans in the beginning and I think it is very noteworthy that democracy wasn't the big slogan. And therefore saying that the revolution was to bring about democracy and that democracy is the rule of the majority and the rule of the majority can rule in every way that they want even if they want to get rid of the minority, is a big logical fallacy that we followed in nowadays. The democracy that I mean has social and economic demands and aspects to it. It's not merely a political democracy and it's certainly... Certainly it doesn't focus on the political aspects of the state only. It focuses on the everyday life of citizens. It's a realization of the sets of welfare and rights without discrimination. And it's certainly a democracy that is not present in Egypt. And maybe not only voted for by politicians yet, because it's not the way they frame democracy.

What about away from the level of the state to the level of organizations and movements. Democratic practices, what do you think of as democratic practices?

This really depends on the organization. So we more or less democratic in this centre for instance. Aren't we? You may disagree, haha. There's still a kind of cultural aspect of having someone at the top who's the decision maker. This definitely still exists. And it's always hard to get rid of, even if you believe in total democracy and so on. There's always an understanding that if you have a director or you have a boss, they will have the last will in everything and then it's a challenge to let people decide on their own and to let people not get back to the director at every moment. And we have the same problem. We have our director coming to us and telling us: you can deal with this on your own, why are you asking? So I think this culture is pretty much existing. But you don't have something like... But I think there's certainly not the degree dictatorship or the degree of autocracy that would make you be almost be like an employee. And I think this is something that many people in civil society try to differentiate themselves from. And this is perhaps were the activist's word comes because many people in civil society or in the different organizations that are part of the movement in Egypt, or the different movements in Egypt. One of the things what they call themselves is activists to differentiate themselves from a employee who just would take orders and following them through. And I think this is one of the ways in which the movements themselves become more democratic from inside. But I'm not the one to be romantizing about democracy within them. Because there's still so much to learn to get there.

Another big concept from the revolution was social justice. What is social justice and who do you demand it from?

Social justice to us means basically two things. That you give an equal minimum standard of living to everyone. So that everyone has the same starting point. If everyone has the same starting point then you are talking about a population that looks very similar to each other. So you have a population that has a minimum degree of education and has a minimum degree of health protection and has a minimum degree of the place they live, how it looks like, the water that they get and whether they get water or not. That's another question. Things like the sewerage system, does it reach your home? Do you have a road that connects you to the city or to the closest urban or even rural centre? Things like that create the minimum standard of living that we think everyone should be living in or at least starting from, let's call it this way. So everyone can start with an equal opportunity to raise their standards or to go up higher. I think one of the things we always connect this with is that the Egyptian population because of the huge income inequalities and the huge differences between people who have money. Which entails going to different schools and different hospitals, but also living in other places and usually living in fenced communities and outskirts of Cairo, suburbs and things like that. It usually means to us that you have a population more cohesive and more homogenous. That you would actually a population that can call themselves a population. That people are actually neighbors. So you'd have a population that looks similar to each other and that has similar objectives. And these are the things that define social justice to us. Who you demand social justice from, that's a trick question because the starting point is always the state. The state has the biggest responsibility and the state has obligations under Egyptian law, under international law, to make it sound legal, the state has concrete responsibilities to realize a minimum standards of the enjoyment of human rights and specifically socio-economic rights to all its citizens without discrimination. But also the state has an obligation to make use of its resources in a way that would benefit the population and would progressively realize the rights of the citizens. And that's also one of the reasons we work on budget analyses, because we would like to have the whole sum of budget that Egypt has and just show that we are progressively paying less into social justice. We are progressively paying less in to education and in to health and in to social security and such crucial sectors that should take up the majority of the budget. Alternatively our demands, don't go directly to the state but go to others who might be influential on the sate, so one of the things that we work on very closely is the international financial institutions. So our demands can go to the demands such as the IMF and the IBR and the World Bank. And specifically when you are talking about the specific programs in Egypt and how they affect the policy of the Egyptian government. When we talk about the IMF and when we talk to the IMF we certainly talk about the austerity measures and how this affected the Egyptian citizens, by increasing prices, increasing taxes which led again to an increase in prices. Cutting subsidiaries in a way that would definitely harm the most vulnerable in the Egyptian society and again make them unable to reach their basic food needs but also unable to use the basis energy that they were used to having access to. When we talk to the IBRD for instance, it usually has to do with the recommendations of privatization, privatization in different sectors in Egypt. Our concern is that you privatize things like health, or education or transportation, that the largest bit of the Egyptian society will not be able to meet these things which again will harm social justice and increase the inequality gap in Egypt and so on.

A final concept of the revolution, is dignity. What does that consists of to you? Does it has a lot of meaning?

It definitely has a lot of meaning. It's sometimes very closely connected with the torture and humiliating treatment by the police of the military. So in many cases in those movements and those demonstrations, it would come out as the strong word. I was asking about my dignity and I didn't get it. Dignity is usually consisted in the right not to be tortured. The right to body integrity, the right not to be detained for no reason. Things like that. So it usually carries this meaning. But interestly it carries the meaning... And I don't have the picture of it now. But we had a picture of one of the workers holding up a banner saying: where is my dignity? And in that case he was asking for the standard of living. And then you go to the social and economic rights. And there again the dignity is the core concept because if you cannot make ends meet and if you cannot have enough food for your children by the end of the month, where's your dignity? And again it usually refers back to the revolution. The assumption is that the revolution happened to realize a certain kind of dignity to the Egyptians. Again a dignity that includes all of these different entitlements. So the question becomes, if the revolution happened, where’s my dignity now? No matter what it means with the whole spectrum of meanings that would have.

Do you see what you do as part of a Cairo movement, an Egyptian movement, pan-Arabic or even a global movement?

I think because of our involvement in the anti-globalization movement, we see it as more of global movement. So in different campaigns that we work on, we get to meet people who are fighting the same fight. In far away countries. So when we work, for instance on debt issues, on third world country that we get people from Asia, we get people from Africa, we get people from Latin-America, we get even assistance from Europe and the U.S.A. And it's part of a such a global movement. We share ideas, we exchange these ideas, definitely. They give us advise. Sometimes we give advice to other smaller and younger movements in other countries telling them what they should do and so on. Another example is that we work on tax justice, for instance, and we work within the African network, it's the tax justice network for Africa. It's part of the global network, but it's the Africa chapter of this network. And then the amounts of advocacy that you do with different African countries and the amounts of exchanging ideas and trying to learn things together. We're hosting together for instance in June this year the usual training that we do as part of the network in Cairo. And it will be hosting people from the Middle-East and North-Africa and from African countries and at least from seven or eight different African countries, and from Asia. So we have people from India and Pakistan coming. And all of these people are gathering this very same momentum around advocating for a fairer taxation system. And all of this makes us feel that we are part of the greater movement. And I have to say that, personally I didn't feel like part of this movement, before the revolution. Before that, even when we worked on issues like torture, or humiliating treatment and things like that. Even if we got in touch with other organizations in other countries, it was as simple as: ok. what should we do. Ok. do you think this is the best way. And: thank you very much, goodbye. But it wasn't a real cooperation and it wasn't the feeling that we were working together towards the same ends and we're having the same milestones covered together. And I think this is the feeling that we have now.

Do you see similarities or differences between the revolution here and maybe also in Tunisia and the Indignadios in Spain, the Greek protests and Occupy movements are do you think these are different struggles?

Speaking of the anti-globalization movement. There's a same core reasons for the struggles. So the same core exists, for sure. I also think that the local situation in those different countries gives an unique experience and a unique layer to the movement itself. So even when it comes to countries which should be similar to each other like Tunisia and Egypt, close enough, wouldn't have so much differences. But there are still differences, so for instance one of the differences that always strikes us, is the standard of living in Tunisia is much better than the standard of living in Egypt. My colleague, who sits here, when she entered Tunisia for the very first time was like: Uh, what did they have a revolution for? And you get this a lot from Egyptians. But also, when you see were the military of Tunisia was standing, when you see how the police, the police is much smarter than in Egypt for instance, so we wouldn't have this continuous momentum if the police was very good not killing people but emptying streets without killing demonstrators. So I think there are those specific differences to each movement. But at the end of the day, after the revolution, I think many Egyptians. And it wouldn't just be me or this centre. But many Egyptians who have become more politically involved, feel like part of a global movement. I think it's obvious in the youth movement, it's obvious, for instance. Like you have something like the Black Block in Egypt. Whether you with it, or against it, it's an international phenomena. It's not an Egyptian phenomena. And it's not usual and it's sounds very weird to many Egyptians, or to the majority of Egyptians. But the fact that it would translate into Egypt in this way, this similar to Anonymous in Egypt, all of these are just a sign, and I think a very strong one, that many Egyptians feel as part of this global movement that's certainly gaining momentum these days.

END

**interview Gamal, 24 may 2013**

Activist?

I would rather describe myself as a socialist, I am a member of the[name deleted], before the revolution I was a member of the [name deleted].

When and how did you first become politically active?

When I was at university at the beginning of the 1990s. Through my family and my education I have been able to be involved in politics.

How have you been involved in the events of the last few years?

I have been a member of something called the [name and details deleted] Movement, one of the components of the Youth Coalition, and I am one of the callers of the 25 January demonstration. I have been involved in the 18 days and the events after that, and afterwards I have been involved in the [name deleted] Party, I am one of its leaders.

(Translator intervenes: 'You are too modest, I know you have done much more' )

So he told me, he has participated in the organisation of the 'Military are liars' campaign, and the popular committees, he has travelled throughout Egypt to ... aware of this movement.

Wider movement?

The continuation of the movement and the realignment of the forces has been splitted, and the situation has changed. I don't think that all those who are against Ikhwan are with the revolution, but all those who are with the revolution are against the Ikhwan and the Interior Minister and the military and the army. I think the alignment is not through the identity of secularists/Islamists, something like that.

Main slogans?

'Change, Freedom, Social Justice'

SCAF period slogans?

In the days of the January Martyrs (?) we went to the Coptic hospital with the slogan 'No sectarian strife, military slander'

And recently?

Again 'Change, Freedom, Social Justice', 'People want the downfall of the regime'

What would you consider the high point of the movement?

No one can grasp one definite moment, there have been so many peaks, the 2012 peak a rally of millions, Mohamed Mahmoud. When the cabinet was announced (?) in November another peak. There was an ascendance. We are now in a descendant moment, but I am very optimistic. The next social movement will be around social demands.

Activism beyond the streets?

There is a creative developing energy created by the revolution's success, people discover activities to resist in untraditional ways, that capability will continue, with demonstrations, roadblocks, the Internet, the revolution is creative.

What about strikes?

It is my personal conviction that the labour struggle will decide the destiny and fate, the energy of the revolution, the cause of its continued success. 9-10-11 Feburary 2011. It was the main cause. These struggles will decide the future of the revolution, political leaders will succeed if they pay attention to the socio-economic aspects.

Are social media of any importance to labour organising?

They have a role for who can use it. The working class don't know very much about it, but it is an important way to publish struggles, they don't use it in a good way, we are practicing, training them to use it.

New leaders?

Of course, there is a new generation involved in political parties, initiatives. There are some frustrations, but they are learning from there mistakes, there is a change in that people are dealing with politics, all the people.

Did the revolution impact differently on men and women?

Yes, it is different although the revolution was not about women's rights it created an atmosphere of change, nothing had changed completely but it has changed a little bit. Even people who were against the revolution try to organise, to imitate. Concerning women there is still discrimination, there is still harassment, but also peoplework against it, they report it to the police.

Police violence?

Of course it has had a very great impact. Hundreds were murdered. This violence distinguishes the realignment. Rallying in some demonstrations there are revolutionary and unrevolutionary forces. Those who oppose slogans against the military and the police are against the revolution.

Violence between the movements?

The Muslim Brotherhood is like any authority, they inherited the regime of Mubarak, they are claiming that they are not as corrupt as him, but it is not just the police is still there, there are some similarities, they think everyone is against the Muslim Brotherhood. They think 'we are better than Mubarak',

Was it a working class or a middle class revolution?

Definitely a middle class revolution, The leftists tried to organise the class aspect, the labour working class element. But we were not successful, if we had been we would be in another stage, but we are doing our best.

Democracy?

For me democracy us not about representation or western democracy. It is a grassroots movement from below. The ballot box is not valid if you do not respond to the demands from the people, even if there are elections.

Democratic practices?

Trying to organise independent trade unions, not completed (?) from the social democratic party, from the socialist parties, represent the revolution. The political reality is pressuring parties, we don't know how to move, to create political involvement, there is a crisis of structuring. Organisation or movement, that is the problem, alternative structure or movement.

Social justice?

It gets reductionist from the Islamists, it gets reduced to minimum and maximum salary. It is more than salaries or safe labour conditions, health care, education, humane housing, to be a free man in your country, to have respect from the authorities. The organisation of all forces of trade unions and organisations to defend rights. At the heart if this is the labour movement that will lead all social movements.

Dignity?

To live in a safe country, to have rights without a nepotistic relation to the authorities. That is dignity.

At what level (Cairo/Egypt/pan-Arab/global)?

Of course it is very connected. The Tunisian revolution, the 14th of January step-down of Ben-Ali.

Similarities western movements?

There are probably some similarities, it is all about social justice. We may be more than them against a more visible despotic state, but they are also struggling with the western notion of democracy, because they are against the injustice of the system (?)

Unique about Cairo?

The revolution's creativity. It also existed in other protests but here it was more obvious. But also the maturity of the counterrevolution.

Anything else?

I want to assure you that the revolution can be achieved, the leftists are succeeding in organising to get rights, to link the socio-economic issues to the political.

END

**interview Mustafa, 20 may 2013**

I'm talking to Mustafa. Do you think of yourself as an activist?

During the revolution, I'm one of the guys who, actually I don't been there from the first day, the 25th January. And during the revolution I had a lot of activities. After that I started to join many movements that were affecting me. Whether it was protesting against the SCAF, prior to the presidential elections. And after that, we also established some NGOs and political movements. And finally now I'm the vice president of one of the political parties. It's a new party called [Arabic name] party. So the term activist is developed.

Do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Sure because we all, after the revolution, started to believe that we are really part of this country and that we have a lot of responsibilities, that we have to hold. And after the regime of Mubarak the amount of the oppression that we faced during this period, we believed now we had the space and the time to give to our country, to help the country move forward. Also, the country requires many reforms in different directions. Whether from the economic side, the political side, from the social side. So all of us, we try our best to put our efforts in this direction. We started to feel loyal to the country, prior to the revolution I believe everyone felt that totally disconnected because of like I said earlier the oppression of the regime. And the amount of tyranny that we have faced. But now things are different, hopefully.

How and when did you first become politically active?

Actually I believe we were politically active before the revolution but the problem was that we didn't have the chance to get recognized by that because we had a lot of problems from the government, especially Islamists. All types of Islamists from the spectrum from the left to the right. After the revolution, during the revolution we had the chance to pace/peace this society and work transparently and start also to state laws and rules about our understandings and our objectives without any kind of fear or anything like that. This pace/peace gave us the opportunity to work effectively and to work in a different way when it comes to politics.

So ever since you were a young man you also tried in some underground way to do political things and be politically active even though it's difficult?

During Mubarak, because we were forced to work in politics, but in a different way. Just because of our appearance, for example if I go out of the country, when I come back here I have to stay for four hours at the police office, asking me a lot of questions, reasons why you are there, who did you met and other stuff. So they were giving us a hard time. This kind of circumstances actually put us in a situation that we had to be part of the political scene, but in a different way. Not in the way of that we are trying to work in the parties and sharing the government, no it's not like this. We had to understand what was going on. Why they are putting a hard time on us, what are the spaces we can work in. So we had to get involved actually, but in a different way. This is a sort of understanding and a sort of involvement during the period of the old regime. Give us the amount of knowledge and information and the sense of the ability to work in politics later on after the overthrowing of the regime of Mubarak.

In the current situation, do you feel like an individual, or do you feel part of a wider movement?

I don't believe I'm an individual. I always believe I'm a part of a movement or group in different circles actually. For example I'm part of [Arabic name], it consists of Islamists, communists, rebels. For example [Arabic names] we are having different people from different background, but we were able to develop a movement that is based working on common shared, common grounds. So it was a real good example of how can we work together towards common objectives. This is called [name deleted]. On the other side, I'm also working within the political party [name deleted]. [name deleted] is a political party, holding an ideology so it's very clear that it has a very clear agenda, which is an Islamic agenda for sure. But it's we mean it more like a policy party than a political party. So we are trying to be more towards programs, initiatives, projects, addressing all the obstacles, and the challenges we are facing here now. But the theme of the political party is Islamic. That shows that we have to work in different circles. I don't have any problem with working in a circle that is not totally formed from the same issues that I like, but at least we can work with people of which we are having common ground, common understanding, and also common objectives, who may not be absolute identic but still we have something in common.

So does your party have seat in parliament at the moment?

No, it's new party. We established the party two months ago. So we are going to compete in the next poll. Now the president of the party was actually a member in the rest parliament but it was like from an individual stadium. But most of the members of the supreme counsel of the party are known within politicians and Islamists to a certain extent.

During the 18 days, what would you say were the slogans that were most meaningful to you?

"[Arabic slogan]" was the best, because it was the first time that we started to say this loudly with no fear. It was very touching.

It was: the people demand the downfall of the regime?

Yes. This is one, you know like you feel that there is no way back. Since you said it, you put an end. Whether you succeed or you don't. No hesitations, there's no way back. Because it's very meaningful actually. It's not like a normal slogan. It's a very empowering and influencing. So I believe it's demonstrating for...

During the SCAF period?

I was totally involved in most of the protests. Especially many of them, we were the organizers of them. For example, we organized the marches of the 25th of January 2012. And also, we were part of the so-called Mohammed Mahmoud, it was like on the 18th of November 2011. During this period we were working on the ground, protesting against the SCAF, waiting demands came. It's all about we don't want militants to govern the country anymore. We want the power to be transferred to civilians. Totally hands free. I believe we succeeded to the maximum pressure that eliminated any change of maintaining the power within the militants and the SCAF.

What would you say was the high point of the movement of the revolution? Was it the 18 days or in fact later?

No, the 18 days.

From the outside Egyptian politics it looks like it's all about street protests, but can you talk a little bit about what other activities people do to express themselves?

Demonstrations always were the final outcome. But at any point of time we used to meet together as activists from different directions having different talks and discussions regarding the political scene. And also, analyzing the situation. And analyzing the so-called actions of the scaff and other people in power even in the recent government of Morsi. With this sort of analysis we've come to conclusions and according to conclusions we started to put like 'we agree on this' or 'we don't agree on this'. If we discovered there was a clear visible...[phone rings]. If there's a disagreement about something we started to develop the required actions and give each other a clear agenda. This agenda should come up with like: we have certain demands, we can start with to go to the people in power and talk with them and transfer our demands and our needs. And stuff like that. And if we face something like they are not listening to us and they are stubborn enough, so we started to move in the ground. So actually movement in the ground, like marches and that is the some sort of development. It's not the first action. So people can see marches or whatever on the streets, worldwide. But demonstrations this is not a beginning, it's a result of many development that take place beyond the scenes.

There has been a lot said about social media. How important do you think it was then, but also now?

Sure. Sure. Social media whether on facebook or twitter. We used them always. Not in mobilizing only but to you need it sometimes to make your point clear. Because you take it to another space another stage of confrontation than through demonstrations, marches protests whatever. You need to have the maximum amount of people having with you having the same understanding and standing on the same ground. So we use social media to develop arguments, to put our points clear, to make our points clear, to start some sort of discussions. So people start to get convinced on what we are saying. Sometimes also, the accumulation of information to develop a clear argument is also very important. When you say that they started to... Even when it comes to the recent government, which is the Muslim Brotherhood government, and we believe that we are standing on the opposition side, we believe that we are having a clear positions. And this position has to be transferred to people. And why we are taking this position. And how we are taking this position towards action. Are we just opposing the government, trying to take them another direction, or we are asking for, like example, early elections what has not been demonstrated by the Tamarod movement. So we go back and forth through social media, you find people with you and people against you. But social media for sure is a very rich environment for us. Especially most of our urgencies are from the young people, ages from 20s, 30s, 40s. Most of these people are clearly inside social media. So we can have clear discussions with them.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the revolution?

I believe not, I can't say new leaders and this is the problem. We are having a very big problem that we are still influenced by old leaders. And I personally say that the problem was not with Mubarak himself, the problem is a theme. Even people who were opposing Mubarak during his period, some of them, were in the same field, but in different positions they played different roles. I believe that many of the problems that happened between, even the polarization that happened in Egypt. The real problem of this was the different people who were not able to work together, talk together trying to reach common grounds. So it's a generation problem. The new situation the young leaders as we can name them and the activists that emerged from the revolution, we are able to sit together and talk together. Yes we are different. We have different objective's maybe.. But still we are able to talk together and I believe this generation will not take the country to some sort of confrontation like the early leaders that we are facing and we are actually suffering their bad mentalities and their negative dealing with situations. I believe this is one of the main problem that we are facing.

Do you think the effect of the revolution have been different for men and women and boys and girls?

I don't see clear differences. I can't see… Everybody shared.. And I believe that it's not remarkable in all the directions.

How has police violence affected the movement?

They made them stronger I believe. They made them stronger because even in the post-revolution now they are trying to regain their power again, unfortunately they believe their power is entitled and the way they oppress movements and activists in any sort of political and social freedom. What we think that we need to stop this. That is actually why we are now developing a new initiative that is totally against the police and the old members inside the police. Especially in the so called [arab name], which is called the state security. This is old... I don't know if you know the structure of the department. The state security is called [arabic name] the state is called [arabic name]. We have a very great problem with these guys. Most of them were committed, they committed torture, killed people, prisoning people. All that things and all horrible things that actually they committed this in the old days. Now they started to, they are trying to regain their power again. And they started to appear in the political scene. And that's why we are also trying now to develop a new initiative to oppose them, whether from the media side and also from the legal side by suing most of them and getting witnesses against them and trying to put them in jail.

What about the recent violence between movements?

This is actually a result of polarization. This is another one. It's a result of some bad or some negative policies from the government. The recent regime and also it's also a result from the negative feedback from the opposition being formed by old guys like [name] ,[Arabic name] and all this kind of old leaders like I said they are part of the problem that we are now in. The whole scene of polarization actually resulted to some kind of clashes, competition in the streets.

The moment the image of Egypt in the West is a country that's completely divided between secularists and islamists.

This is not an accurate picture at all, I believe. Egyptians actually never lived this lifestyle and all of us, even in my family, in Egypt we don't have socially some sort of clear secularism. And also we don't have like Islamists who are fighting people in the streets. This is a very disturbed image, the image is not clear. We don't have this kind of extreme divisions socially. People are living peacefully. Yes there are arguments always back and forth but this some sort of division is not there. I believe if you lived sometime in Egypt or stayed sometime and I don't think you would recognize some sort of division. We never felt that. Yes clearly this is a reaction and a result from this sort of polarization but I don't believe it's from the political view. 'Are you against or with Morsi?' So at this point of time you can see a division but for example that I'm opposing the policies of the government and I'm against for example of the formation and deformation of the new government, I'm against what's happening from the Muslim Brotherhood when it comes to justice and all this stuff. So at this point of time we share some interests with many people from different directions. So it's like division based on your view against the government.

What does democracy mean to you?

Actually we went through this topic a lot during the period of the first elections. For me democracy is like a foundation and a platform that is going to govern the way we are going to rule this country. So it's a sort of a platform and a tool and a rule system. It's like a whole package. It's not more than that. I don't want... It's like letting people choose the way and the people who will govern. And this way we bypass any sort of timing because people in power will know they will get questioned, people going through actually whether they get them out of authority or maintain them till elections. At this stage we are having problems with democracy. After that by starting to reinforce any ideology, getting out from what’s so called democracy at this stage, we come to face it we believe it's not true and it's not.. If you are holding a ideology you can formulate you party and then compete on the ground. At this stage, we have no problem. But to influence the system by an ideology, this is weird for us, this is refused. So we still believe it's a platform.

What would you think of democratic practices on the level of organizations or movements?

We have no problem as long it's not any sort of practice, any democratic practice, we have no problem. On the contrary we try to commit this kind of practices but as long as it's not contradicting with any of Islamic rules and Sharia an all this stuff. And actually I believe that most of the practices are aligned with this sort of belief so were are not having a clear problem with that. Even when it comes for example, with women. For example in our party we believe there's a big a huge space for women to practice politics for example. Not in all certain areas when it comes to economics, politics, initiatives, but when it comes to for example the way of practicing this is when it comes on how I want to organize this, so we organize this in a way it's complied with our culture with our religion, but when comes to the public itself and the way that women can work harder and share that we are giving registries and believe it's very important to work in this space.

Do you think the movements that came from the revolution themselves were democratic?

Why?

It's very difficult if you come from an authoritarian system, you've not been allowed to work in an open way. How did people become leaders, who were the spokespersons?

Yes for sure there are some problems. And I cannot say that all practices all completely democratic and everything is perfect, no. At the end of the day, some practices need to be a culture before it's a practice. And people have to practice once and twice until they believe it's part of the ecosystem of the life. So it's like in the mindset. But what I can assure is people are having this intention. They're all towards this direction. For sure there's some sort of problems and challenges but when it comes to the young generation, I believe it's much easier to get acquaintance to this. And it's moving upwards. People are now raising a lot of arguments that we never ruled before so it's easy. And also Egyptians, I believe they are smart enough to move towards these stages very quickly and acquire this talent and this culture as soon as possible.

Another term that came very much out of the revolution was social justice. What does it mean to you and where do you think it should come from? Something the state gives the people?

Yes for sure. Social justice, first of all it has to be a clear demand. Resulted from the ground. From the grassroots. People want this , this is our clear objective. When it comes this way. So all political parties, they have to demonstrate their ability to achieve this. Through policies, through laws and legislations, so they are having a complete strategic program to achieve people's demands. And when people are mature enough they will be able to choose the right program that seems to be appropriate, seems to be realistic, it's not only sort of slogans and shouting, no it's not like that. It's like a clear program. And at least part of this at this point of time, any party or any regime becoming in power because of this, nowadays they are obliged to show people they have the policy to achieve and also to get them want they really want. So it's like two directions. It's from both directions. From the government and also from the people's side.

A last term that seems to have come out of the revolution is dignity. What does it mean to you?

It's too differently. The first day that we are trying to do our best now on this day when it comes to the regime, they have to maintain the dignity of the people and that's we are opposing now the old tyranny culture inside the police and inside the interior ministry. And this is part of the initiative we are working in. Another level is, it's a culture inside the government also. In different directions. In the exterior spheres, in all places dealing with the civil services. The way the government perceives citizens, should be changed, they are there to serve the citizens. They are taking money from our taxes, they are being positioned in delegations and their jobs just to serve citizens. At this point of time, they way the serve them and they way they work for their rights should be very different. So this is a level and another level, it's inside the society. We always say that we're having many social problems due to the tyranny of Mubarak. Thirty years of having this sort of regime ruling the country in a way that oppress the whole country, the whole society. We believe this resulted in many problems inside the society in different ways in the country. In Sinai, in South-Egypt. After overthrowing this regime, all these problems started to appear now on the surface. The social problems I mean. Part of the social problems is in dignity. When it comes to the intersocial aspects, so this is another level we have to overcome. And I believe this should be part of the social movements and the civil societies to work internally to address this sort of problems. So it's also by the regime. But this will take time.

Do you see that you are a part of a Cairo movement or an Egyptian movement, or even a pan-Arabic, or even a global movement? How do you see your activities? Is it most and foremost Egyptian?

Yes it's Egyptian, for sure that our movement created of activities whether in Cairo or in other cities. But also at the same time we have conferences out of the countries so we are trying to transfer our political experience maybe to other movements outside the country. So this is some sort of like experience sharing. No more than that. But the focus is for sure in Egypt.

When you follow the news of the other Arab revolutions, do you feel emotionally involved?

Sure, even with the Syrian one.

Do you also see similarities or connections between the protests movements that we have had in the West movements recently, so the Spanish and the Greece and the Occupy movements and the Arab revolutions or is it a different struggle?

For sure some sort of common ground like the struggle for the rights of people and also I believe there are many common things between both. Also there is accumulation of experience, knowledge and also I believe for example in the past, when we see some sort of struggling and marches on the TV we say 'oh this is totally away from us, people are demonstrating for their rights.' But we didn't believe that we will be in this position one day. Now after the Egyptian revolution, when we monitor some sort of movements in the streets in the West for example, we are not like embarrassed anymore. We are like "We did that and we're doing this every day." So the clear issue "Oh see, how the police deal with the people..." We started to recognize details how people demonstrate. The way how do they demonstrate their messages, the slogans. How the security how they deal with them. So we started to look at the micro details and come out with like "o.k. Why is this the case that the police and the security are not dealing with us the same way." So we have a clear demand now how to deal with the demonstration for example. Also the technical issues. How do they move? What about the slogans? So we started to look at the demonstrations with different insights. Also, we are having lessons learnt. For example, if we are going to make a stadium, when to end up the stadium, like when we accomplish all the demands and when we accomplish a satisfactory amount of these demands, as not to, for example end up the stadium in as fading mode because you have a capacity. You need to have an endpoint. The problems that we had like this stage starts and we don't know when to end. Like the revolutionary mind-sets. No, we did not accomplish all our needs, we have to stay. But people do not help you all the time. People do not stay with you for months on the streets. So you have to be reasonable also to make this activity successful. Also when we monitored these demonstrations in the West and the activities in the West we were also starting getting some lessons learned from them.

Are there other things you think I should know about?

I don't know exactly. I don't know to what extent you recognize things from other people that you interviewed but I believe the maturity level of the revolution is like is been transforming from a level to a level. And we are learning a lot of lessons. Yes the 18 days were the best. And its like a status that is very powerful to begin it. But now things are not emotional anymore they are very practical. The 18 days, it was very emotional, we practiced things for the first time. All of us had like a very clear objective. Now things are different. Building is very different. Seeing the future is different but I believe the way now, we look to things and how to build the country and how to save the country from the clashes that we are facing, whether the economic one or the political one, is like developing a new mind-set, a new culture, a new society in Egypt. This should end up, I believe, by something different. A total different story. Egypt will be different. A different country, a different mind-set. But this will take time and the formation of this is taking place now. So I'm one of the guys that is not seeing the real situation as bad as people are trying to demonstrate. I think it's very useful. We are having now, we are dealing now with were we are through many useful lessons and I believe this will make the new generation harder enough, mature enough to be able to confront the old generation. Whether they are liberal whether they are islamists whether they are leftists, thing will be different. Still I'm very optimistic and I believe tings are going from better to better.

END

**interview ABubakar, 20 may 2013**

I'm speaking to Abubakar. My first question would be: would you describe yourself as an activist?

After the revolution yes. Before the revolution I was mainly a researcher.

Do you think of yourself as a member of civil society, is that a meaningful idea to you?

Yes I'm a member of several social activities in and organizations. And in the sense of social activities, I'm participating in many of these activities.

How and when became you politically active?

Before the revolution, I remember the recession in the centre, we consider ourselves as active in the political arena in the broad sense because we are concerned about the calculation and education and training and access to many youth. And we have a rule with some groups of them which are very active nowadays. After the revolution I have accessed the society in different winter activities and political awareness in the streets like popular committees against Sharia. And I have a rule to support some political parties in terms or training, 13. And the NGOs. This is a popular distant West of Cairo.

Do you still see yourself as part of a wider movement?

I'm a part in both movements. In the revolutionary sense of state and my vision are focused on the national common ground with the other partners.

During the 18 days, there were many slogans. What was the most meaningful to you?

"The people want." There is not the resisted of the collapse of the regime, but the first part of it. The people wants.

During the SCAF period, were there other slogans?

I was very concerned about the popular way. And "Down with the SCAF" also. There was a Friday, and a "marionette" also. They were called this Kandahar. But the official minute was "Popular will" and also the "correction of the path (for the ruled)." The projectory of the revolution.

What would say the high point of the mobilization was. The 18 days or a later point that was important to you?

We can distinguish the revolution to three stages. The first one was the 18 days. This was real revolution. The second one maybe called the critical transition of the period of the SCAF. The third one is obvious transition of what we see now. But the real revolution was the 18 days. After the 18 days the revolution has sit back and the activities and the actions went from move to the front and being revolutionary to being political. And now the revolution transformed to a spirit for … and after the revolution I have been... We have had some parties of revolution don't have this spirit. In the latest stage the revolution is very weak.

There has been very much emphasis on social media. Do you see it as a very important form of mobilization and communication, in the revolution, but also now?

The social media is still important, but for another role. It's the role of opposition and the use of access to the political system. And social media will cause a different type of democracy. Different from the Western one. This means that the possibility of transformation of this opposition from the virtual reality to the street and this is very important because this can inhabit the discutism of the regime. And it's still very important after the going away of the spirit of the revolution in favor of the political interaction. After 2 years of the revolution the social media is more important even the president en [name] are doing some tweeting.

From the outside, it seems sometimes that Egyptian politics in the last past 3 years is all about street protest. Can you talk a little bit about what people do to express themselves politically that is not on the street, that we are not seeing?  
Before the revolution and after the Egyptians have had mainly a different way of participation and political orientation. The broader system of Brotherhood don't express his attitudes in a obvious way. But the diversity and creativity are authentic of the opposition. This means includes secularism and effective resistance and positive oppositions. We can add that moving between parties. One can move from one party to another, due to some changing in the programs. Also the talk shows, the reportage about the reviews on the street to some reportage of the system. We have also the graffiti and songs. This all are means of political expressions. And I think that the ballot is the most powerful of them. The Egyptians have gone to the ballot for four times in 19th of March in 2011, in 20th December 2011 and January and 2012 for the parliament elections. Also in July 2012. Lately in the referendum in 2011 and 2012.

How involved were formal organizations in the revolution? Political parties, trade unions and NGOs?

Formal organizations don't have so much about the revolution. They follow it. The main factor of the revolution were the rise of youth groups and the most speakers of this group were the most developed youths. And other parties and organizations followed.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the revolution?

Yes of course and some of them are in the political environment in Egypt. And some of them will be more obvious and famous after the establishment of the state institutions.

In Europe we have seen a move towards different ways of trying to be an alternative to capitalist economy though small exchange programs etc. Do you see such alternatives in Egypt?

Yes, before the revolution there was a struggle for this kind of economy. For an aspiration for just economy which enhance the social justice. The constitution of Egypt endorses some sort of establishing and empowering cooperative. The Waqfs, and NGOs and charity. And some articles of the constitution talk about the justice economy like the minimum terms and limits of salaries.

Do you think the revolution has had a different effect on men and women?

He needs some clarification.

Ok. You see two contraries in the developments. On the one hand many women have been very visible in the revolution and in the streets. Do perhaps they have become more visible in society. On the other hand there has also been the issue of sexual harassment.

The vision of women in the 18 days, may be discussed in two ways. That the presence of women is a normal thing in Egypt. We have women in the city and the country who would effect this discourse and labor. And the exceptional was the presence of this 18 days without sexual harassment. About the sexual harassment, it's something that was before the revolution. But the media now focused on it excessively.

How has the use of police violence effected the movement in the revolution, SCAF period and even now?

The police and military are some of the triggers of the revolution and the violence. Whether it was the revolution over something else. All this years we have witnessed the intervention of the police was followed by clashes and some casualties. But the new president is very keen to keep the police away from the streets and the rage of the movement and the moments of rage. The Taharia incidents are very obvious examples of that. And he's trying to avoid the clashes between the police and the people.

And what about most recently, the recent violence between the movement? So fighting between Brotherhood supporters and other protestors?

I prefer the term confrontation, not clashes to describe the violence between Muslim Brotherhood or Islamists generally and the opposition. It existed before the coming of Morsi. It started with the Mohammed Mahmoud incident in November 2011 and even before that in July 2011, they were called competing Fridays. The secularists had a Friday and the Islamists have another one. And with the triumph of Islamists in the parliament, confidence has kept between the secularists and the ancient regime. And confronting the Islamists. From then to now the clashes are more probable. So as to the responsibility of this incidence, the Islamists and the secularists have the same responsibility. Share it.

In the West at the moment there's the image of Egypt divided completely between Western and Islamist forces, is this accurate?

Yes, but this is not a static image, it is in movement. And the establishment and the entitlement of state institutions and the new parliament will remove the patterns from supporters and Islamists of the regime and the opposition from ideology to popular policies.

So he expects that it will be a more civil dialogue in the parliament?

Yes.

What does democracy mean to you?

Democracy is democracy, but we will see a different type of Egyptian democracy. Because the Egyptians are given a chance to present a new pattern and model of democracy with a particularity. First, the parties will do a developmental role, more than just a political competitiveness. Second the connection between political parties and the civil society, we have some sort of organizations that we have. We call it Atni. Some have a different genology of civil society. There will be more connection and distinguished from the Western pattern. Also the third that Egyptian democracy will present different pattern about relationship between religion and state politics.

What about democratic practices not only on the level of state but on level of organizations?

This pattern of practices was not there in Egypt. In the democratic form in the Egyptian society. But there is some sort of initiation in the social groups and parties. The existence of youth will focus on this meaning. We will not find this vital an political parties and organization to manage in a democratic way. I don't want to say that there isn’t still some sort hierarchic patriarchal sense, but there's still some confidence and trust in the elder in the chef. And at the same time we will see and opening enough for negotiation and dialogue. And deliberation.

Another important concept that seemed to be all over the revolution is social justice. What does it mean from you and where does it come from?

In Egypt there are two conceptions, two conflicting conceptions of justice. Different one is justice in poverty. And the second one that there will be not justice without development. The first conception says that: justice now even if we haven't have the resources. And the revolution focused on that. And what we have seen is political leaders that kept calling the demand but don't set up the gaps between classes. The second moral of justice is justice in development and in this conception they say that Egypt should have to move abroad and with this we can get some justice in the distribution of merits of privileged and sots of development. What is now in Egypt is that Egypt has not done so much within the justice. Because Egypt hasn't done well in the field of development.

And then the final concept that was important, was dignity. What does it actually mean, how would you define it?

I have a notion of dignity. The first one that no one should be afraid of the authorities. The second one is that you have some equal opportunities in the society. And the third that his nation is dignity in the way of the international level. Before the revolution, the Egyptians were afraid. They sensed that the non-equality in Egypt and also that their nation is a developing country at the international level. And after the revolution all of this has been changed.

Do you see what you are part of as a Cairo, Egyptian, pan-Arabic or International level?

I live in Islam. I don't see this is a decisive in this field or contradictory. I'm part of each one of them. I'm a part of the Egyptian, and pan-Arabism and African and humanistic. And also the Islamic one, of course. And I see that its dangerous to see that these are conflicting and that one should be one of them. This thing is vivid for me. And the revolution related me in the evolutional manner in the whole of the world, and also to the Umma, the Islamic nation, which needs a comprehensive civilizational revolution.

Do you see similarities between the protests movement in the West and the Arab revolution, or do you think it's a completely different struggle?

All the social movements have some common grounds. But the one this that's important that the Arabic revolution are Arabic in the sense that we have five revolutions in the Arab world. And they have common concerns against despotism which is absent in the Western protests. They are not protesting against despotism. Also the Western protestors don't concern with the identity attached for the international arena. The protestors in the West are against the international capitalism. And the revolutions in the Arab world are against their agent.

The final question is, do you think there are also unique things about Cairo?

There are many things about the Egyptian revolution. It has some sort of particularism due to its position, its strategic position. The other four countries don't have this thing. Also, we have the problem with Israel. The position of Egypt in the international and regional system. Also the ancient political Egyptian regime was very related and connected with the U.S.A. and also with some Arabic regime in the same dependency with the U.S.A. And the revolution in Egypt was a revolution of a situation in political and international arena. I mean the connection and relation between the U.S.A. and the Gulf regimes and also in Egypt. And finally, the Egyptian revolution has been used condition for the success of other revolutions and the other revolutions have not the same value. And this is due to strategic facts. Also, the movement of the revolution is not an ordinary Islamic claim, it's the motherhood of all the others friends, I mean the Muslim Brotherhood.

It started here the Brotherhood?

Yes. And at the opposition level the Muslim Brotherhood is a basis of all other organizations.

He would like to see the report when it’s finished and maybe I can translate it in Arabic.

END

**Interview Omar, 19 May 2013**

I'm talking to Omar, do you think of yourself as an activist or more as a political analyst?

Both, I’m a participant and during my participation I do observe. And also, sometimes I'm not participant but I have for example, a kind of protest of demonstration for something that I'm not involved in or against, I usually go to see and try to see the people there and what they're doing and their slogans. So I'm doing both. But, I see my own even as an activist more trying to provide my colleagues activists always an academic view of what happening, about how to develop the movement so I play both roles. But of course I do like separation between my professionally work in the research centre and my activism.

What do you think of the concept of civil society? Is that still meaningful to you, do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Yes, I feel that it is still in Egypt very important. Because one of the mean thing that neglect through the revolution. The change that happened in civil society before the revolution moving from development perspective to right perspective in their work, has helped a lot on forming groups. And unions from the ground from the grassroots, they participated actively in the revolution was one of the reason there was a big mess, as they were participating in the demonstrations. Then we have this research watch that we leave in our book about protests movements that was popular, that was published in January 2011, days before the revolution, saying that a protest movement witnessing in the Arab region can be developed to be like social movements. And not only this divided protest movements there and here, and could this lead to a change? Actually to our thinking until now, to change this question to ask ourselves: the protests led to revolutions and sometimes in the [...] regions. But these revolutions are facing real obstacles. Is it because this protest movement didn't take the form of social movement before the revolutions? So that's why they are still divided and not able to impose an agenda on the people counsel, the power. Or it's still in the formation and continuing and the revolution was a part of this formation, of this development towards social movements. This is still al research question that we will work on. So still we don't have the answer, but my opinion is that what happened was like a cycle, like the cycles of development and protests movement towards social movements. And when the social movements will be fault and it's happening on the ground now, relating to social-economic rights and political rights, collecting the same sectors in the same movements, this is happening now. Through independent syndicates, through coalitions that are formed on the ground. I think this will lead to the change. Maybe through another wave of the revolution. Or maybe through getting grassroots through the political sphere by a number of representatives of them in the political institutions that could lead to the change. So this is my opinion. Civil society is playing a role in that and that's why the freedom of organization and the freedom of civil society is now under attack from authorities in Egypt. Again.

When did you first become politically active?

I studied political science since I was in the university in the beginning of the 1990s I was a political activist. Actually when I finished my study I worked in a bank for like four years. And I was still writing pieces, articles, research and I finished my master in political science. And then I changed to civil society. So I see myself let's say from the beginning of 2000 as an activist, because in the 90s there was terrorism in Egypt and there was polarization between supporting the government or supporting the terrorists so all the political movements were absorbed in this. So there was not really movement on the ground. There was only this side of development methodology and not real... Actually the second intifada led to the beginning of demonstrations in the streets of Cairo, supporting the Palestinians, forming a committee. There was a very big committee in other countries supporting the Intifada, Palestinian people. And then this same group changed to be against the war in general, so we had this big demonstration in 2003 against the war in Iraq. And in this demonstration people started to... No, it stopped from the beginning, but at least it elaborated more the idea of relating what is happening internationally with institution in Egypt. So in 2003 we have for the first time the slogan "Down, Down Mubarak." And the same group, the core of the same group were the core of Kefaya after that. So it moved like that from regional issues, linking regional issues with internal democracy and internal problems. Internal democracy. And then moving to an internal democracy movement which is Kefaya which in 2005 have lost its own resonate because it was against electing Mubarak for a second round. And he was elected. So here, because the culture of virals breaking by Kefaya and its demonstrations, people started to see the social-economic protests movements that dured from 2006 to 2011. This is the revolution. And here we moved another step to relate the political situation with the social-economic demands, so this is how it developed. So I was part from beginning of 2003. As an activist. I have never joined an organization or a party. I was also this independent at the time of the revolution. I'm a member of a party now, but not active in the party at all. Not active when they ask me for lecture, when they ask me to attend a meeting, I go but I really don't do anything election or taking place in the party.

Do you think at the moments there's still a wider movement or that this moment has passed?

The real movement now, you can see the real movement, the biggest now is happening. Rebels, I don't I see Tamarud... It's a big address. When I was going out, people are standing in front of it. Which is a governmental place and they are standing in front of it, collecting signatures of the people in street. So, this is a big movement, I think. It's typical tradition for the Egyptians collecting hand signatures. Still the protest movements are very strong. I recommend you to see this book. From the economic-social centre. It's about social protests in 2012. Like the numbers of protests. Each of them have ratings and sectors. It's very good analysis. So we have like around 3817 protests actions between demonstrations and in 2012. So it is increasing and still going on the ground. The problem that sometimes is that this movements are sometimes misused by the regime. We are one of the countries where the supporters of the regime mix in demonstrations. I don't know demonstrations is for pressure, I don't know who are they in power. And also by the people of the old regime that is still in that places. Also, they are abusing this movement. Actually what happened last Friday, because there are some revolutionary movements preparing for demonstrations, and suddenly the people of the old regime, many people who are related somehow and see that the revolution is a conspiracy of the Americans against Egypt. The [Arabic Name] and the Independence movement, which are the small parties that existed during Mubarak and that were working with Mubarak, and just they declared joining and they started to make the call for demonstrations, so demonstration was very weak. So they are a weak power and we don't have to fear them. But at least they are working on the ground. And this gives the authority the legitimacy that the demonstrations are made by the old people regime. But actually this is not the truth, there are other people that represent the demands of the revolution. And they are still working on the ground. And when they mobilize for an event, it's big event, usually.

I arrived in the middle of it, on Friday.

It was not big. But if you compare it to the last one in January. It was big because it was leaded by the revolutionary movements.

What have been the main slogans of the movements? There were 3 periods.

During the revolution: "The people want the collapse/ downfall of the regime" and this "freedom, bread and social justice", "bread freedom, and dignity". That were the main slogans. There were a lot of slogans that were sarcastic. During the time of the SCAF it started at the beginning with "People and the army are our hand" and finished with "Down to the military rule". Due to all the disasters they made this year and a half. Now the main one is "Down with the rule of the Musher, the Muslim Brotherhood". I think this is the main one. And now we came back with the slogan of "Bread, freedom and social justice". And people want to regime to fall also. That returned but not very strong now. And all during this, you should do the sarcastic slogans because it was... I remember during the 18 days when the first time the military or the plane flight very close to the people and all the square with 100.000 we thought will they bomb us, should we leave? That was for like thirty seconds and suddenly somebody became shouting: Mubarak became crazy. And everyone started shouting and nobody left. So it was like thirty seconds and sarcasm was very clear and used and was giving people energy.

What was the high point of the mobilization? The 18 days or...?

Of course. It was the 18 days and the first... 21nd of January 2012 it was even bigger than the 18 days. Because there were people celebrating plus people who were searching for the revolution to continue and to achieve... I was in the square the most of the days. I was not sleeping there, because I live very close to the square, so I was going home and returning. So it was easy to go every day into the square. In 2012 I couldn't reach the square. I was totally far because there were people and it was very crowded. So I think this mobilization.. And of course the day the demonstration when the people went to finish by people going to the palace. And there was the fights between them and the Muslim Brotherhood, there were very big demonstrations in Tahrir. And not everybody went to the palace. But on Tahrir square it was very big. But of course the mobilization that was when people were more mobilized not on the term of number but on the term of spirit. It was a 18 days of hope.

From the outside it looks very much like all the Egyptians do is demonstrating on the streets. What other things people do?

At the last day [Arabic name] was minister and he decided we would leave the people in Tahrir and life would turn as it is. And the factories and the state institution start working. People moved from Tahrir to their place of work and the revolution was there. The workers make their strikes in their factories. The people working in the state institutions started sit-ins in these places. And even making walks-around in different districts of Cairo. So it was like a Wednesday and Thursday. I think these two days were really like a message that the regime cannot continue anymore and that the people would not work and everything was stopped in the country. And that's why there was more pressure on Mubarak to leave this time. Give the people this thing only on the square, I think it would happen but not in 18 days, it should take ten months. Maybe it was better if this happened because in 18 days leaders were not formed in the square. So when the 18 people left, we had all the leader of the opposition, who really failed and were working with Mubarak were in the picture again because 18 days were not enough to get somebody from the movement itself to be in the leadership. Of course there are new ones appeared but they didn't reach to be leaders of the public figures. people are forming, like I said.. the most now is the forming of independent syndicates. This is very important. Making coalitions. Especially use coalitions, using art. And this is new like graffiti. Shows movies on YouTube by the youth. Youth movements are getting stronger. Expressing itself by art and campaigns against the new government. On the political level, we have like the coalitions that are formed by different parties. Like [Arabic name] Rescue coalition. The rescue front. Coalitions between NGOs like the freedom of association coalition working on the freedom of syndicates and unions. And they're working on the Jiaf parties who are better parties than the parties that we have. People are using different strategies and not only demonstrations.

There's been a big hype about the social media. How important you think facebook, twitter was in the beginning and is still now?

I think it's important. It's played a wide role. But actually, it's not the main thing. The main things are the snowballs that started in 2001 were growing. At one point someone started to push the snowball another way. They used it through media, through social media. But also, while they were working on social media, that was not this effect. On the 25th social media has played a role to make this huge move but 28th, the biggest day was due to the oppression of the police. So people start joining and the private media played a role in that. On TV shows and this kind, not social media.

So way the commercials not stated ...

Not stated to be for, of course stated to be against.

How involved have been formal organizations, like political parties and trade unions in the beginning and then also later on?

I think that a lot of the parties that existed before the revolution were not part at the beginning. All of them. There were members of them in the streets but they didn't... If we see their formal statements from the 25th, it was totally against. Saying that we are behind the demonstration but that we don't think all this could do something and this kind of... But the parties all cured after the revolution. And are now more involved in this movement. And there are a lot of youth who were not addressed are now part of these parties and they are making pressure on all leaders of parties towards being part of this. Trade unions, of course before the revolution we didn't have but three independent trade unions. All others were following the state, so they did not have a role also. But now we have a boom of independent trade unions and they are participating quietly in the protests that are happening. But there is a big gap between this protest related to trade unions and the political sphere or paths. So I think the change that we are talking about at the beginning, it will happen that these paths will link together.

And have NGOs been playing a role?

Yes NGOs are there. Helping the youth local committees. There are a lot local committees from the youth so they are in good link with them and they are supporting them. Also, we're talking the independent. In Egypt you have 40 thousand NGOs. 30 thousand of them have nothing to do with what is happening. There are even arms of the government in local areas, or they are on paper. They don't exist, only on paper. But we are talking about active NGOs who are really independent and they're working on the ground. And some of them are not registered NGOs. I don't know if you know what the situation is, but for example human rights, most of them just registered as illegal components, and they're also forming coalitions to defend the people who are arrested from the revolution. And the people who are attacked because of their opinion and this kind of things so they are doing a great job actually.

Would you see similarities between the European movement?

Yes of course. Some movements appeared now against the IMF loan. To drop the depts. of Mubarak's regime, so these movements are working on socio-economic and economic things and they are trying to lit it with political awareness.

To what extent are the local initiatives in neighborhoods in the cities or outside the cities?

I don't think they're based in the centre of Cairo at all. The big districts in Cairo they don't have this kind of movements. Small movements in marginalized areas where people are trying to organize themselves in what you call popular places. Lower middle-class. These are the area's where there are forming... Some rich places and middle-class places are following but it's a little bit, it seems related to cleaning their areas and that kind of things. But area's who have the most events are in this area. It's spreading all over Egypt. I've been travelling to different governates in the last period. And I was hearing more about movements than I was hearing of parties. So youth movements in local areas. Is getting bigger and bigger.

And what do they do?

Actually, these committees are more working on what you said about economic demand for the areas and political awareness for the people and participating with like Tamarud movement, most of them joined or are helping from that areas. So they're working on political awareness and economic demands.

Have new leaders emerged from the movement?

No, like I said the new people that appeared from the movement we can now call them public figures. People know them, they are speaking over the media but they're not leaders, they don't have movements. And I think at one moment, in developing the relation with these local committees, they will be able to call them leaders. Or maybe these local movements themselves will get from inside of them new leaders. But you can't see that the old leaders who are still the main figures now are like.... The light of them is going down and down. They're not... I think in two years we will not find them on the political space.

Is it also that the younger people are rejecting the idea of leadership?

Yes, it's part of it. Actually the problem between the two parts that we talked about; the revolutionary and the political path. A lot of youths also are refusing the political path. They don't believe in it. Because, actually they are right because they never saw something from it in Egypt.

Do you think the developments of the last few years have impacted differently on women and men?

Of course yes. In front of the sight, yes. Women are more participating and women are more in the picture and are the more courageous people. They are in the committee's, the most active in the committee's of supporting the arrested people, for example are the women lawyers. In the old military judgments it was also the young girls in front of the people. But actually as an activist of a long time this was always... Women were always in the front. I remember during the time of Mubarak, there was this demonstration and they surrounded the demonstration. Always the women and girls insisted to leave the last to ensure that they would not beat the mean after they left. So no, I see, that it's not new. But for the society it's new seeing women participating this way. At the same time there is a big again women's rights. Due to...people try to make it sophisticated but it's very easy: due to the religious thinking. Religious thinking is always against rights, of course on different levels.

Within the movement, are there special gender dynamics? Are the men always the organizers or is it mixed?

No, it's mixed. Always mixed. Unless it's some Salafist movement or something preparing for this kind of events.

How's the police and military violence affected the movement? Do you think it changed its character in any way?

I think till now the violence is helping to make the movement bigger. This always happens when we have a few demonstrations and they're attacked by the security forces because they discover they are not a big number and they can disperse them. Suddenly in less than 2 or 3 hours we find thousands in the streets supporting them. People are not willing attempt to the old regime security way. So people are still confronting them. But the problem more is violence between people and people. Between the supporters of the authority and... This makes people afraid of going and afraid of... They don't see why we should get involved in such confrontations.

So it's the violence between civilians... In the west there's this image that Egypt is split between Islamic and secularist forces. Do you think this is an accurate picture?

We are pushed to this kind of polarization by the Islamists in my opinion. Because this is the way that they win. If they make believers against non-believers. They make the picture right there. And the civilians are really always going to the ground and this is a problem. We should get out of this problem by tackling the main issues concerning social-economic rights, concerning freedom. And not to talk about civil state and religious state, because people do not know what these concepts mean. The more important for people is their life. Their daily life and how it's affected. So I think that not going out of this polarization and continuing on it will be in favor of the authority.

What does democracy mean to you?

Democracy is a set of value. Set of mechanism. The main values are to accept the other and to give him all the rights as citizenship in democracy. In democracy the values are citizenship and non-discrimination. And non-discrimination on both level: political and social-economic. The mechanisms are fair and free and fair elections and freedom of associations. This set of civil rights and free elections. I think this... Democracy itself, in my opinion is not the objective of the moral. The moral is freedom. Democracy is a way to freedom. And of course the transition and the definitions of its rule of the people and for the people.

What would you say are practices of democracy, like being democratic.

Being democratic is being able to deal with different opinions, despite you have your own opinion. To give the right to minorities to express themselves. It's not the majority who rules and the minority that does not have rights on the political... I'm talking about minorities, religious or something, minorities with their own political opinion have their rights to oppose, to be the opposition. And of course one of the main things in that is the freedom of expression, freedom of information also.

Do you think the movements themselves have been democratic, apart from demanding democracy from the state?

Some of them yes. There are some democratic and there are some, they have the mentality of the authoritarian regimes as a way to function. But the youth movements are more democratic. The examples that came in my head for the democratic movements are the youth movements. They are more collective... They transition in more collective way and give more space to the members to move and to... Except the ones that have old leaders. Those are less democratic.

Where do you think the youth of Egypt learned democracy?

I think they learn through practicing and forming movements. Their refuse for the old mentality helped them to try to search for another way of govern themselves. So that's how they became democratic, through practicing self. And of course though the internet and learning from other experiences and learning from other experience.

The idea of social justice. Is that an idea that has meaning in Arabic?

Yes, [Arabic word]. It was one of the main slogans of the revolution. And it was one of the main critique of the regime of Mubarak. And now people are expressing this idea through some even mechanisms like minimum wages and high wages. And try to bridge the gap between them. I'm talking about a lot of youths and people they are talking about the idea of collaborative as a way of economic forum.

My next question is, is social justice something you would demand from the state. Then a cooperative is different.

But still the idea of cooperatives what we are talking about is not elaborated enough.

Another concept was the notion of dignity what does this means?

For normal people? Dignity was actually and this is why the movement started on the 21st of January which is the day of the police. It was against the brutality of the police in dealing with the people. In the 50s, 60s and 70s we had very severe abuse of human rights, torture. But torture was for prisoners and political detained. In the 1990s and 2003 everybody - because is the police station was torture, even in the streets by the police - so the normal people meant with dignity the brutality of the police. But with the movements on the 18 days they started to relate it also to dignity on the level of living. We have rights to food and clean water and to get central services in a good way and good level.

Do you see what has been happening as an Egyptian, Arabic, global? Where would you locate it?

No... A pan-Arabic thing is happening. Cause what started in Tunisia started in Egypt. And the relation and slogans and the development of slogans in Cairo started in Tunisia - Of course putting them in context. Even moving to Libya and to Syria now and in Bahrain they are using the same slogans. So I think it's a more regional thing. And I think of course it's related to movements all over the world. The world became smaller. But I think it's a regional thing or an Arabic thing.

And for yourself, how much are you in contact with movements outside Egypt?

I don't have any organizational thing. But I have contact with people from Tunisia, movements from Tunisia, participant in Tunisia. Lebanon, Syria. So there is a lot of activists from Syria who are in Egypt now, so I have good relations with them. And we know them. And actually part of my activism was the anti-globalization movement. And we were doing the idea of Egyptian one have this Arab anti-globalization movement. So I was in connection with activists even before. So I have relations in Morocco, in different countries. And of course if you're are following twitter and facebook you can see the relation between the youth in these countries discussing different things and even giving advice during demonstrations. For example in Egypt, most of this youths have never dealt with gas bombs. So the situation was sending them how to deal with these gas bombs.

Do you think there are similarities between the protests movements in the West and the Arabic movements?

Of course, there are similarities like I said. But, not to the extend we talk about in the Arabic countries. For example, we talk about Eastern Europe it was mainly the political change about freedom and the political problems but the part of the economic demands in the Arabic region is totally different.

Do you think the demands are more basic in the Arab world?

We had in Istria for example it was against the communist regime that depends on economy on the state. Planning state institutions. here it was against neoliberalism. So it was a totally different perspective on the economy. We are demanding that state's interfere more and that they should not be so far and even the liberal ones in Egypt believe and are talking about that there should be more... Because what happened in Europe in 2008, the states cannot leave it totally to the markets right now. So it's a little bit different than the other movements. Also it's... Talking about freedom and dignity everywhere it's human demands.

Do you also think there are things unique about Cairo that you would not find anywhere else in the Arab world.

During the 18 days yes there was a lot of difference in spirits between the people themselves. You know people are usually nothing strong relations together, it's the way people live. During the revolution it was totally different but I can't say that there's something characteristic that you cannot find anywhere else.

END

**interview Osama, 19 may 2013**

Activist?  
I feel that I am a little bit between three things, I was an activist, but I wasn’t mainly activist-oriented, I was also part of the academic networks and thinktanks that are related to political engagement and also political economy, and at the same time I consider myself a politician because I am a political party member. But I cannot say that I was a hardcore activist, because I was not from the people who were organizing the people on the streets, I was just participating in the protests.

Member civ soc?  
For me the definition of civil society is a bit controversial because I can say that we have a civil community not a civil society in Egypt because the level of our organization and participation is either very low, or there is some sort of duplication of efforts. So I cannot say we have a civil society, we have a civil community and civil service, we have a bureaucracy. But we don’t have this sense of civil society where people organize themselves and start deliberating and bargaining as a collective bargain with the state or with other stakeholders. People are either organized within the state, or in a mutually exclusive sense, that this lobby is organizing against that lobby and so forth. But there is no sense of collective bargaining, we don’t have this. It is either I am bargaining for myself, or someone else is bargaining for me, but not we are all bargaining together for one thing, we don’t have this.

First pol active?  
Before revolution highly politically active in political party, [name deleted], but I was not officially registered as a member of this party because it was one of the few liberal parties and opposition parties emerging at that time, but I mean political party at that stage, but when I unofficially joined I was sure they were too fragile, easily infiltrated by security, inactive at the grassroots level. So I tried to engage myself with a political party at that level before the revolution, but it seems that it was not possible at all. The real engagement that I feel was fruitful and really beneficial were the student activities at the university, the political awareness activities, these were actually the simulations for the real developments and that stuff, but they were the only thing that were a little bit actors, for most of the students, for maybe 70% they were for academic purposes to get credits, or to get some sort of thing for their spare time, but for 20% they were really interested in political engagement, and they had no other access. These 20% ironically became the main characters in a lot of thinktanks and parties before the revolution. [name] was one of these actually.

How involved in devs of last few years?   
Involved in a lot of … political economy in Lebanon, in a project that was working ironically enough on Tunisia and Egypt, just before the revolution. I started on this project in Dec 2010, it was very interesting. Just before I arrived back to Egypt I joined the [name deleted] Party, and I have been involved in the political development of the youth committee. Currently I am focusing exclusively on the international affairs, these are my main concern. And I was also active in most of the developments that took place on the ground since the 18 days in 2011. The events in January I was in Lebanon and I was involved with some Lebanese activists and also with the media in Lebanon to create awareness about what was happening in Egypt, and not only in Egypt, we were trying to spread the philosophies behind the revolution, the ideas behind the revolution. And I think it would have been better that I was in Lebanon instead of Egypt because I have added more value in Lebanon than I would have done in Egypt because of the access to the international media.

Now part of wider movement?  
Not part of wider movement, trying to establish wider movement. In our countries, things work by power and passion, so you can not think strategically about the MENA region, because things are very uncertain, the uncertainty is very high. When you wake up in the morning you don’t really know what you need to do, and you don’t really know I have blablabla, no, things are highly uncertain. The days when you think you are going to achieve hundreds, or you are going to achieve ten, or you are going to achieve nothing, like the 18 days of the revolution, you achieve everything. So it’s all dependent and interdependent, so things work here by power and passion, so let’s say now that people are highly disappointed in the revolution, they are not happy, they hope that a new form of despotism comes back, and they cannot sustain a certain minimum level of livelihood, but at the same time, if they found something promising, and a socio-economic alternative that is democratic they will support it and they will protect it and they will abide by it. So it’s all about the options and the variety that you are going to give to the people. This is how I think things are working over here, so never listen to the polls, analyse the level of the trend of the polls, but never listen to the polls as if they are something static, because here in Egypt, public opinion is very volatile, 70% of the people are among the swing votes, or even 80%. Those who are polarized are polarized, and dogmatic, and they don’t change, but the majority is highly volatile, highly swinging.

Slogans 18 days and after?  
There were philosophies behind the slogans, but the collective mindset is much better and more sophisticated than our intelligentsia, and than our citizens individually, our collective mindset is greater. For example a slogan like let’s say iduachta, or one hand, it is really interesting because it is thinking about the idea of inclusivity and exclusivity, but the whole idea is that we need an inclusive model. We need a regime that doesn’t put the people on a mutually exclusive level, like not the rich vs. the poor, not the Christians vs. the muslims, not the students vs. the labour, not the … but it’s all about inclusivity at the end of the day, it’s not about dogma, it’s not about certain doctrines, it’s about ownership and participation: as long as you have ownership for everyone and participation for everyone things are going to stabilize progressively. On the other hand you have the opposite, the 1919 revolution we had in Egypt was mainly about liberties and civil rights and it was about moral courage and constitutionalism, whereas the 1950 revolution was more about physical courage, and it was more about social rights than about liberties. And what the collective mindset in Egypt came to understand on the eve of the 25th of January is that we need both. We need the moral courage and physical courage, we need freedom and justice as well. But I don’t mean the Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood, but I mean genuinely that we need freedom and justice because if you don’t have freedom of access you will not gain a fair and equitable distribution. Especially when you don’t have wealth, when you don’t have minerals or petroleum or any sort of rentseeking activity. So the only way to achieve wealth for everyone is to make everyone a contributor in the process. This is how Egypt works. I mean Egypt is not Algeria, you cannot depend upon the public sector and the state structure to offset all the …. And it’s not Saudi Arabia where you already have a lot of resources, and it’s not Jordan where the whole population can depend upon foreign aid. No, the only thing that can really work in Egypt is a genuine social democratic form. It’s a good thing and a bad thing, it’s a good thing because the parties, all the parties, not only the political parties, all the stakeholders didn’t have the conviction, not just a consensus, no a conviction that we need a free and just, a free and fair Egypt, we will not achieve anything, and we will all suffer, like we are all suffering right now, and on the other hand nothing is going to fix Egypt except a genuine regional structure. I mean loans will not work … foreign assistance will not work, security measures will not work. Before the revolution it worked because the culture was different. It was not an expressive culture, but now it is very expressive. If you are going to repress people they are going to retaliate. Suppression is not an answer any more in Egypt like it was before the revolution. Nothing will actually work except the right route, other quick fixes won’t work. Just genuine restructuring.

So how would you see that expressed in the slogans on the streets, in the 18 days but also now perhaps?

I think it was very clear, like saying we need …. Bread, freedom and dignity, that people are not accepting trade-offs anymore. They will not trade freedom and civil liberties for social welfare and they will not trade social welfare for some sort of democratic expression rather than democracy, because what we have now is democratic expression, not democracy. I have the right to express, but not the right to transform those expressions into reality. Which is better than what we had before the revolution because expression itself was contained. I cannot see it was completely censored, it was not like Syria it was not like Tunisia, but it was contained to a great extent.

High point?  
I think it is half a revolution, half an evolution. We needed access to the public sphere, which the revolution had achieved, and the second thing we need is to fill the public sphere, which the revolution didn’t achieve. A lot of debate has been raised whether it’s a revolution, it’s an uprising …

And the evolutionary process I think is harder than the revolutionary process, because the revolution was very successful from my perspective. In Egypt, and in Tunisia, for in Syria things are a bit different. And it couldn’t have continued afterwards because if the regime wasn’t toppled after the 18 days we would have faced some sort of retaliation from the regime upon the people. And it would have continued afterwards, the momentum wouldn't have been unified. The split that took place within the society would have taken place, and we would have been going through the same phase that Syria is going through right now. So the revolutionary phase was very successful. And the evolutionary process was disturbed, extremely disturbed by external factors but also by internal factors. Everyone made mistakes, everyone. But if I have to say something about who holds accountability for fragmenting and polluting the momentum of the Arab spring I have to say that what happened in Egypt in 48 in Europe it was the aristocracy, the church and the military, that united together all over Europe to suppress and conquer the social revolutionary movement [etc] and this is what happened in Egypt. What we need to think about is these three elements: former regime structures, I am not speaking about certain figures, I am speaking about the philosophies, the structures, the mechanisms. The church, and you could say the political islam movement resembles the church what happened in Europe. They can say there is no democracy without islam, but on the ground, practically, this is what they are doing, using religious discourse for political aims, so yes, in islam there is no church, but in practicality, you are doing the same what the church was doing in Europe. And the third part is the military, I mean in the wider sense, not only the local, I mean the national armies, they are often used against the people in a suppressive manner, whereas the jihadist movements, you could say are some sort of informal armies of the MENA region, as the armies of the civil society I could name them actually. They are usually used in a sectarian manner. So for instance you will find the Mujahedeen are never really fighting the occupation forces, like the allied forces or the American forces, no they are only fighting other sects. And the national armies, they are never fighting, they are usually suppressing their own people.

Other than streets?  
It is not true, it has elements of truth, and people are really fed up of demonstrations. If it’s going to be abused more than this, what would happen is that people really wouldn’t mind restricting the right to protest, because we are going in the direction of some sort of Lebanisation, but not in the structures itself, because they Egyptian fabric is very complex and very interrelated, you cannot compare Egypt to Lebanon. We all have sects living in every region, Christians, Muslims, you don’t have this segregation, and even the culture itself, because of the language, it is very interrelated …. Egyptians identify themselves as Egyptians, and this is very important, the identity issue. But every party is now … not by providing welfare to the people but through power struggles, whether within the institutions or on the streets, so it became like street fights. I’m going to put 1000 in the streets, you are going to put 100,000, I’m going to the media, you’re going to go to the mosques, and this is how it works. Mosques vs. media, and urban mobilization vs. rural mobilization … though it’s happening in terms of state sovereignty over certain areas like Sinai, like the West of Egypt, too much arms crossing the border coming from Libya. And ironically enough these arms are going from Libya to Gaza … sex trade … so Egypt has some elements of Iraq in terms of losing control over the territory. So the situation we are in right now is much worse than Mubarak, because then we had some sort of sovereignty but without justice, but now we still have injustice but we have lost all sorts of sovereignty. Yet you have open access to the public sphere, so you have raised all sorts of tensions, but which side is going to win over the other, this will decide the fate of Egypt.

Social media?   
I think the lack of … between the social media, civil society and political parties has caused this liberalization and polarization in Egyptian society. As I said, mosque vs. media, urban vs. rural, is also taking place on the Facebook. An electronic network working for the sake of the Brotherhood vs. the electronic pages working for Hamdeen or working for the military or for the former regime, and a lot of money is being invested in that, and at the end of the day it is not anymore a debate, it is not anymore an enlightening … it is more of a gangfight taking place on Facebook. We are the people of Hamdeen, we are the people of blabla, and we are all cursing each other, and this is what is happening on the Facebook. On the other hand there is some sort of a smaller gathering between the enlightened forces and if someone could be the platform, the all-inclusive platform to be the enlightened forces, this is actually what we would need in our life. I don’t see it as an information age anymore, it’s an age of wisdom, what we are lacking is wisdom, not information. Someone who would get the people together to form this collective mindset. I am not talking about a charismatic leader who chants and stands in the square, no I am speaking about someone who is capable of creating platforms, of acting as an information mechanism for all sorts of progressive currents, getting them all together for genuine strategic change. And this director or this platform creator would actually be the real leader. Even during the 18 days, who work considered the leaders of the revolution, well you could name Baradei blablabla, but they are not charisma’s, they are mainly facilitators and directors. But the problem is that they did that only for a temporary phase. They gave the sparks. But what we need is an interrelation between connectors that is sustainable and visionary, not collecting people for a spark, and then the flash goes.

Formal organisations?   
No. No involvement during the 18 days there was no involvement. Afterwards, this is the idea of the access to the public sphere. Syndicates for instance, my dad was running for the elections of the syndicate for engineers for instance. What happens when you open the public access suddenly for participation in big institutions on the national scale, whether the parliament, whether the syndicate for engineering, whether the presidential elections, those who have the power and the passion are going to take over. Let’s say Morsi and Shafiq, what do they symbolize, capital, power, organizational … passion, religious discourse, or you could say social discourse, because Hamdeen for instance adopted a social discourse, as did the Brotherhood, but which at the same time from my perspective is populist, because it doesn't have a genuine social economic structural vision, he doesn’t. All the time he is speaking about social justice social justice social justice, like the Brotherhood about religious values religious values religious values but at the end of the day do you have a vision no, does the Brotherhood have a vision no, does the army have a vision no, does Ahmed Shafiq have a vision no, yes but a repressive one, very repressive. So what happened in for example in the elections that you have the Brotherhood versus a group of rich businessmen and you have to choose between this and that, and if any elections took place in any of the syndicates, you will find that either the Brotherhood end up getting it, or rich businessmen who are actually affiliates of the former regime are trying to take over.

So the same choice you had at the national level was mirrored?

Yes, and the independent tendencies could not survive, whatsoever, whatever they have done. This is why I was talking about this … between social movements, political parties and civil society. This coordination and collaboration should take place, inside Egypt and outside Egypt, because regressive forces are working together across borders, so progressive ones need to work together also.

Solidarity economy?  
It has been there in the 50s and the 60s, and Nasser’s regime has always been promoting them, but as I said before the lack of freedom leads to the lack of social welfare and the lack of social welfare leads to the lack of freedom because of the authoritarian and controlling methods of the state over the cooperatives, they were just a tool for control, not a tool for progression, so there has been nothing after this, except the public sector in Egypt, an institution that has been created to crowded out private initiatives, claiming that this was better for the people, but in fact it was trying to control the people by power, not by capital, not by money. And the neoliberal trends were trying to control the people by money not by power. Mubarak in the last six years was trying to control the people by the money, by the power, by everything. The Muslim Brotherhood are trying to control the people by the passion.

Economic alternative?

Everyone speaking about economic alteration, but the vision is not crystallised, frankly speaking. The vision is extremely unclear. [This place was nationalized – I don’t remember the exact history of Groppi, but I remember for a while the state used to own it. The founder was an Austrian guy, who was the first person to bring ice cream to Egypt.]

New leaders?  
No, it’s the opposite. We had too much leaders on the eve of the 11th of February. And they are being filtered. Only the genuine will stay on the stage afterwards, and only the inspiring will emerge.

Someone like [name]for instance was established as a revolutionary, but I knew he was not sincere [?] Only the genuine will stay in the revolutionary spectrum.

Men and women?

No, things are just going on the surface. Especially on gender issues I see that we don’t work a by a certain value system. The value system that we have is power and passion again. In some areas, socially conservative, not religiously conservative rural and urban areas, they claim to work by tradition, but in practice you’ll find that whoever will break the power balance will break this tradition. Prostitution is all over Egypt for example, but at the same time, access of women to the public sphere is restricted in some areas. So I don’t really get how you can claim to be socially conservative and you have these wide networks of prostitution. On the other hand you don’t adopt religious values in the value system, for instance if you find that something is not socially acceptable, like for instance for someone to marry one who is different in age, though religiously this is accepted, because the prophet himself did it. Like for instance a guy would accept that he would marry more than one, in a sort of polygamy, but he would not accept that his daughter’s husband does the same. As for civil rights, even when you find that some people go for sexuality rights and blablabla, they only want it from their side, not both ways. So in Egypt there is no value system. This is some kind of distortion that you are getting right now, where we really don’t get it , why there is so much harassment , so much sexual frustration, because the Egyptian citizen does not really have a value system to adopt. It’s all about power and passion, and when the power structures were balanced by suppression, through the revolution it broke, so there is no longer a solidification of the power balance, and we all emerged, and we had no value system, and this is what is happening.

Police and mil violence?  
I think it has been the least to think about. I’ll tell you about the stage when we had the three variables, the military, the old regime eminents, and the church or the Muslim Brotherhood when there was an attempt during the SCAF’s time, exactly at this stage, to return back to some sort of suppressive regime with the same Mubarak era orientation, and it did not work. And as I said this is the achievement that is irreversible for the revolution: expression. So you will find when the SCAF tried to use extreme repressive measures, especially in November 2011, especially at that time, they failed completely, completely. They were testing: they were going to televise killing of citizens in the public square, and they thought that ah, because of the economic situation people are fed up, and it is true people were actually fed up with the revolutionary movement, they were fed up with everything. But because they were stupid, they didn’t understand the psychology of the Egyptian people, that they are very passionate, and they are very switchy and swingy, so all the support that the SCAF had, and could actually make them return to some sort of authoritarian regime restructuring, they have destroyed that by using brutality. Egyptians don’t accept brutality, especially when it is televised and publicly disseminated. We don’t accept this. It’s something weird, it’s like if they are going to manipulate with me it’s ok, but brutally telling me I cannot do blablabla, no, it’s not going to work any more. It used to work during Mubarak’s time, but it’s not going to work any more.

Violence between movements?   
Yes. Yes, it is. If you have heard about the protests that took place in front of the Muslim Brotherhood premises, a friend of mine, I think he was recording for Reuters or another foreign agency, his name is [deleted], he told me that he has seen the scene from the Brotherhood side, from the protestors side, and also from the side of the local residents of the area, and he said that every side was fascist. Like when the Muslim Brotherhood captures a protestor they literally torched him and displayed all the anger on him, and the same happens by the protestors, and the same happens by the people, when they catch a protestor, they were hitting him with extreme furiousness and revenge, it wasn’t a protest. And everyone has an emotional credit in his subconsciousness in saying well, I have hurt a lot, I have suffered a lot, like the Muslim Brotherhood guys, and then they are judging us, and where were they when we were suffering inside the prison and blablablaba, and on the other hand the protestors will say we were the ones who got you out and on the other hand the average mainstream people are telling the protestors, you should be protesting for our interests, not against our interests, so everyone is blaming the other, it is a vicious circle.

This is a liberalization of Egypt that I am speaking about, in this sense, but not in the sense of the country is going to be divided into sects. The fabric cannot be more polarized than this, this is the maximum polarization. But it is also dangerous, it can fall into a disastrous cycle for everyone.

Completely divided secularist and islamist?

It is not accurate. It’s some sort of lack of a deep analogy for the Egyptian society. We don’t have a clear-cut value system to adopt in Egypt, neither civil rights nor rule of law, nor tradition, nor religious doctrine or sharia or whatever, and all these things are very political, they are manipulated. There is a lack of understanding about how the Egyptian context works. Power and passion, intermingling point all of MENA region. Yemen embedded in Egypt, Tunisia, etc. Fabric mixture of everything … not as segregated, unified, diversity within fabric … In one house you could find someone who is a liberal, someone who is a Salafi, someone who is a Christian.

Democracy?

I think it’s about, it should be totalitarian. In other words, though the word totalitarian would seem to be an antonym for democracy, in reality it’s the only way that it should be a democracy is totalitarian, in other words it should be a democracy for power, for wealth and for passion. The power structures should serve the purpose of justice, the wealth accumulation should lead to more welfare, not less welfare, and the passion should be about truth. So we need to democratize all sort of media and information-giving networks, to democratize the socio-economic structure, and you need to democratize the power structures, the three of them. If you don’t have this totalitarian democracy and you only democratize the power structures, and you don’t control the wealth, and if you only democratize the wealth, those who control the power are going to monopolise the wealth. And if you don’t democratize the passion, those who control the information, the media, and I mean the media in the broader sense, whether the mosque, the Facebook, the social networks, whatever. So it should be totalitarian, this is how I believe it.

Democratic practices?

I think democratic practices are important but not enough. Because there is this trend that is coming up now that oh, representative democracy is not working, elections are not working, that does not mean that we should not do it, no, on the contrary, this is the only opportunity for us to practice, and we should practice, but it is not enough.

karamah dignity?  
I think dignity is about ownership. And justice is about participation. So if you could maximize the level of ownership and participation this is what Egypt would need. Sadat maximized participation, from his perspective, but he didn’t work on the ownership, so they killed him. While Nasser he focused on the ownership but he didn’t allow any form of participation, so they worshipped him. Mubarak … Before 1962 we had exclusive ownership and participation. So in other words 20% of the population was highly educated, were participating in a real intellectual and civil rights movement, but it was exclusive, it was high ownership and participation for 20% and zero ownership and participation for 80%. During Mubarak it was ownership and participation for 2%, nouveau riche about 10%, and then nothing. And this was why he could not sustain, because it was too exclusive. If I was in Mubarak’s place I would have thought why do we not broaden this.

Level movement?  
I think it is more of a humanistic movement. It’s frankly speaking if you speak to the mainstream of people now, they have very bad connotations about the revolution. If you talk to them they will say it could have been better if we stayed without all this happening, though during the 18 days they highly believed in what they were doing. To some extent they are right, because we are suffering not struggling, and before the revolution we were inflating not progressing, so this was fake growth, but what we are having is genuine destruction, serious and real destruction. So I think it is more of a humanistic movement because only those who adhere to real and humanistic values are sticking genuinely in the course of the revolution from the philosophical perspective, but if you talk to the people of Egypt, they don’t really care about this, because they are not inspired. Once there is some sort of inspirational prototype on the ground people will adhere and stick with it. If you give them no hope they will give you no mercy.

Similarities Occupy/Indignados and arab revolutions?   
Yes and no, they were inspired by the arab spring, but they were not inspiring, for a very funny and ironic reason. Our societies are not organized, theirs are organized. So their organized society had this vacuum, this void they needed to fill. Our societies are not organized, they deal with external variables not as if he controls his own fate. So when he found something that gave him choice for the first time he adhered to it. Other than that they are unemployed and they don’t have any other option. But in Europe and the United States, no democracy has not been as exclusive as it has been here in Egypt, as I said if Mubarak had been smart he would have widened the circles. But in the US the circles are wide, which in the short run means that they can sustain more, we have higher threats but we have higher opportunities.

END

**interview mariam, 23 may 2013**

Consider self as activist?

No, I think I am an active person but not an activist in the familiar meaning of the term. I have been socially engaged in various ways inside and outside the university and I was part of the revolution since day one, until the presidential election and even after, but I don't think of myself as politically engaged.

Are you a member of civil society?

Yes. I was started my civic engagement as part of the [deleted] School for[deleted], which taught a generation of youths in Egypt who can go into the communities and solve the community problems, of which [name] was the academic adviser, with community initiatives, and I was one of those. After school I was a volunteer for several years, until now doing other social work with different initiatives, my main focus is how to use writing as a form of self-expression and being socially engaged.

So you do not think of yourself as politically active?

No I am not used to this. For 2 years I was very much engaged, in the streets, but after some time, after January, I didn't go to street movements anymore, it does not seem very important.

Do you still feel part of a wider movement?

Yes I am still part of a wider movement, but there are now different parties and initiatives with different approaches to change, very politicised, they are now in the streets, taking the lead to change.

What slogans from the 18 days are most memorable to you?

I was astonished the 25th of January that people went 'Mubarak to step down', I did not know we were capable of saying this. During the SCAF period we always kept saying SCAF should go.

Wider movement?

I think social work is some other kind of political movement, I am currently taking care of community initiatives, this is how we believe we work for reform in the current situation. It is small scale, but there is a repetition in efforts, the movements will be complementary and we will have reform. We are taking the responsibility from the government: in community initiatives, all the sectors that have been neglected, we're making an alternative. It started before the revolution, but increased after, everyone want to be part of the scene. It is a kind of politics the government does not consider as politics, and hopefully they will continue to do so, so they leave us the space.

Peak?

Each time it's a different fight. Moh. Mahmoud in November was the highest peak. To see the army entering into the square fighting us furiously. The elections also but there was polarisation. After this there has been nothing really big.

Social media?

It was not the first player. On the 27th there was no communication, and people went into the street. I don't think the social media are doing us good now. When people want to say something they just put it on Facebook or Twitter and they do not go into the streets.

Solidarity economy?

There is a lot of charity work. Most civic movement in Egypt is charity. There has never been a good economy, especailly outside Cairo.

New leaders?

I think yes, leaders with influence, there are different roles of leadership. There are people who are leaders but not public figures. They have influence on their circles, influence on a movement, but not in the sense of public figures.

Impacted differently on men and women?

I don't have that experience myself, I always had all the rights, I had a picture of myself, but when I have a policeman firing at me, that picture changed. I don't know about women's interests in general. I felt more humane, it is a common and a personal experience. I used to consider myself strong in some ways, but not strong that I would go fight in the streets. When I went down and faced the whole situation, it told me how to wlk the whole way. How not to face fears in life. I decided to follow my dream after the revolution, it was very personal. Moh. Mahmoud was very violent, it was never like this, taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions, so it was taking a decision at a different level, not just being moved by the crowd.

Violence between movements?

I was there in Tahrir last Nov, Dec, but I was very sad, I want to walk the whole way, but it was not the same as in the 18 days. There were probably people from the old regime, uniting with their old enemies in the same way, As for the fights between the Muslim Brotherhood and other people, these were very simple people from outside Cairo, and someone had told them that we were the bad guys, they were coming to Cairo to defend Islam. It was not a clash, they did not have bad intentions, they were manipulated it was not really a fight. I would never judge, which one was responsible, it is very complicated. I didn't join the street after that.

Divided?

No, neither group knows what it takes for a religious or a secular model to be accomplished, We didn't learn to live together. I don't think this sensitivity is in the county's interest. They have to negotiate, but each own has their own beliefs and no one has the intention to enter into real negotiations. But they are not actually aware what a religious or secular model is.

Democracy?

Participation, representation, governance.

Democratic practices?

It is about ownership, about participation of all the members. A transparent process. When you believe for each thing, there should be no blockages. There should be a deep sense of equal ownership.

Movements democratic?

Yes.

Social justice?

I was for the 4th time in Spain this year, but I never went to Madrid before, normally I go to a small place could Murcia. Going there people never felt poor. People have Facebook, I went to Cartagena and it was the same, people feel connected, they look exactly the same, Madrid is also the same. I work very much in other governorates, in Upper Egypt, in the Delta, and it is different, people do not live in the same conditions.  each time I travel out of Cairo I have to bring everything because I know I will not be able to buy it. Social justice is not that people should just be copies, but they should be living in one country enjoying state resources.

Dignity?

I don't want to think of it as a financial thing only. I will tell you about one situation when I was in university. There was a minister visiting the university for some reason or other, and we were locked into the classroom, 700 students, because it was not considered appropriate that we should be rushing out when the minister was there. I did not have to go anywhere, but I did not accept to be locked in, I had to go out, so I screamed at the guard, but he would not open the door. It was so humiliating, you can have different definitions, but it is that someone should not be determining for me what I should do.

This space?

It is called [name]. We started in November 2011 with a group 6 or 8 people, we wanted to have space where we could meet and have different activities. After a while we were 25. We had said that if after one year if it is not sustainable we will stop it, but in November last year it became sustainable, now it pays for itself, with people pay 50 pounds to do an activity for a few hours, not just development but different classes, I learned to play the flute here, and there is an origami teacher.

END

**interview Salim, 25 may 2013**

I'm talking to Salim. Do you think of yourself as an activist?

I'm an activist in a certain field, which is decentralization of the power and municipality and municipality system in Egypt. So I'm not a kind of human rights activist or a revolutionary activist. Because I'm not a researcher, I'm not a politician, I'm just excited about this issue. So yes I'm active in this issue.

Would you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

Of course. By definition I'm also a member of civil society. I'm not working for a political party, I'm not working for the military party, I'm not working for anything so I lay in the civil society part.

Could you tell me a little bit more about what you do?

Yes. After the revolution. My studies are about management, project management. I'm a engineer so I work on the organizational structures of companies, co operations and things like that. So after the revolution I started looking into the organization structure of the country, of the government, where's the governor, where's the president, were are the people in the municipalities. All this stuff. And we started looking for the problems in this system in Egypt and then started to make a plan of how to attack these problems and fix them. First thing is we want people to... We work for access. The first access is awareness. We want people to know about the municipalities, because no one ever went to the municipalities before and elected. Or I mean voted because the last elections in the municipalities, 99% of the seat were taken by the people that didn't even go by themselves. People don't know about the municipalities, it's a very bad awareness issue so... And the second thing, we wanted to change the laws. And we suggested another structure for the country and the government for everything to be more decentralized and the power would be nearer to the people and everything is in Cairo with the minister. And the third thing is we wanted the youth to run for the elections. Because I believe, we and my friend believe that taking the youth into the municipalities, before going into politics would be a very good start, because they would be near to the people and their problems. So when they go to a higher level, they know what's happening in the ground and grassroots. And the fourth thing is after the elections we are going to make centre in each area, or each city in Cairo to monitor the activity and the work of the people who were elected. These were the four more actions.

And who is 'we'?

I started with a friend, [Arabic name]. And we did a twitter account. We asked if people were interested in municipalities and want to join us. And then people started going up and we made a meeting and started talking. We grew up till it became like... I had like 1000 votes here, were like 6 governorate's, 30 zone areas, but I left the initiative in January.

So you're doing something else now?

When the constitution came, it didn’t come for decentralization. It didn't come from for public sharing and public democracy or the public monitoring of the government, like watch dogs for the government. Military transparency, nothing like that, especially in the municipalities. So I gave up and I started thinking for other alternatives to force the government, to force public monitoring, to force transparency, to force everything like that, about the need of a constitution.

When did you first and how did you first became interested and active in politics?

Before the revolution everyone was with concerned with what was happening in... I was concerned since 2005, when Mubarak changed 87 laws in the constitution, and then he was re-elected. This was for me a media show. And then started just by forming by reading and analyzing and things like that. Then it was the first protest in the street. Before that, everyone in Cairo was more into charity, or work in the streets on the poor and things like that. And when you work in that you see how poor are the people. How they government is so screwed and all these things. And then in 2010, when[name] came and he started his campaign for gathering signatures and all this stuff, we started working on that. So I can say it's 2010.

How have you been involved in the events of the revolution, and also afterwards? You were just in the streets during the 18 days or also afterwards?

Yes. I was more into the municipalities things, because I was interested in that before the revolution. Because when I went to Amsterdam, the municipalities are very nice there. It's very decentralized. The people have authority over the authorities. In Turkey it was a very nice story of Istanbul. I went to America three years and the federalization is very nice. So I was into that. So I was more concerned in the structure more than politics and things like this.

So for you it wasn't all about Tahrir Square, but about the local level?

Yes. In the revolution and 18 days I was here, but after the revolution I was concerned about the municipalities.

What would you say of the slogans that came out of the revolution?

The first thing is " bread, freedom and social justice." And social justice is the most important.

I understand that there has been these popular committees standing up also at the local level. How does your work relates to what they do?

The neighborhood activities to demand services. When this occurred it was is not so revolutionary, because these people were not so much into the Tahrir Square or the protests or something like that. But this told the people that they can run their own daily stuff by themselves, and they don't need the government. So after the revolution we started working on them. On our awareness campaigns. We would go in their area and start to aware the people about the decentralization, about the municipalities. That people have to monitor the government. The people have to share in their area at least.

From the outside, if you look at the Egyptian politics, it looks like it's all about street protests. What other things do people do to express themselves politically?

We went from step one to step seven. We didn't do like... People would like start blogging, and then do a protest. The people don't know, and this is why we are doing awareness. People don't know that they have the right to monitor the government, they have the right to ask the government and the right to do all these things because the government doesn't have transparency so people don't do that. So they actually go to protesting. Because the law forces that people can asked the government and open their files and open everything. They want me to protests. Then they close all the roads by asking and expressing themselves. Protest would be the first thing.

A lot have been said about the use of the social media, during the revolution but also after. How important is it from your perspective, looking from the municipality's level? Do people use it, do people have access or is it much more word of men?

Social media have helped me through the awareness to spread the videos, spread the page, spread the ideas to everyone who has access to the computer. And then construct groups on the ground. So yes it was very helpful on municipality level. The alternative I'm working on these days, is mainly depending on technology and people feeding what's happening on the ground. Because like the world record that everyone will be online in 20 or 30 days, so we have to prepare that. We have to take advantage of this that all people in Egypt will have access to the internet. So have to prepare something that will help us through that.

For instance this 1000 volunteers you mentioned, they come through internet calls.

Yes.

How do you, or do you work with formal organizations (political parties, trade unions and NGOs)?

The politicians and political parties were more concerned with controlling power and acting for just grabbing power. So I was trying to use that to like "OK. If you are going to take power, at least know how to go and how to run the municipalities." So they would ask for courses for municipalities and courses how to monitor and how to read the balance of the municipalities and all these things. But they were more into politics and power. My work was more into the society and the people. I believe they wanted to work on the elections. And the second thing was the trade unions. The unions in Egypt are not strong at all so I didn't work with them. Actually I'm not meeting at any other point. They are concerned by jobs and concerned by areas of work. NGOs would be the enter for you in any other new area I'm going to because they are the people who are working with the poor people. They are the link between them and the outside world. I would go to them and talk to them and tell them I want to do awareness in your area, so please introduce me to the people.

So you never just walk into a village, you always go through NGOs that work there already.

Our people or a NGO would call me, give us a lecture or a course, or tell people about what you're doing and so on.

In the European movement, since we had the economic crisis, we've seen a move towards what we call solidarity economy, have you seen anything like that?

Yes! This is the main thing of decentralization and municipalities, the things that hold the... I can't remember the name in English. It's like if you do a economical community, it can take by itself, it's called...cooperatives. This is the literate translation, but the cooperatives... I was very concerned in that. I was very concerned in that because I Egypt would need that. People are very poor, but if they know how to do cooperatives between themselves and between areas, this would construct social justice.

And what areas and sectors are you thinking about? Agriculture for instance?

Each, each place has its own things. So like if people in the delta can work on agriculture. On the shores can work on fishing and this s tuff. Other parts would be on tourism. Other parts would be on mining, I don't know.

And is this beginning to happen already?

No, they don't have the awareness. Because people don't know the other things than capitalism. So even the shit thing is about the Muslim Brotherhood or any Islamist would say: capitalism is complete darkness and I have the solution which is in the Islam. And he doesn't give an alternative. And when they come in power they act capitalistly so I was like: what are you doing?!

Do you think that new leaders have come up from the recent movement?

The thing I like about our revolution is the youth of the revolution. And many of them have initiatives and many of them went to the NGOs as they don't see power. So they're gaining knowledge and experience from the grassroots, from downside, from problems from the poor. So at a certain moment, when they had to come in power they would be ready, more than any other that just went into power and doesn't know anything about politics or the country. So I'm very optimistic about that, I see very nice guys who make good leaders of the country even as ministers as businessmen. Anything can happen. For me I'm more into anarchy and decentralization of the country. I'm not fascinated about the one man show of the president or the prime-minster or something. I'm more about giving the power to the people and they will work much better than a one man show I think.

Do you thing the revolution has had different effects on men and women and boys and girls? I'm thinking about various things. On the one hand I'm thinking about during the 18 days, women and girls were very visible, as a part of the revolution. On the other hand I'm thinking about the sexual harassments. Just wondering whether you think, things have changed for men and women.

The revolution proved that women are as much capable of men of doing anything. Including fighting, talking, teaching, politics. Because we have seen [name] she's much wiser than anyone in power now. So. She's a women so. About the sexual harassment. It's about the society in Egypt in the last ten years is losing its morals and its values and I don't know if it's because of the media or the poverty. I don't think it's poverty, I think it's mainly the media. And then the power is using sexual harassment to keep girls out of the protests. But I can say it's using it because the character and the values of the Egyptian character is changing dangerously in the last three years. And everyone is focusing on the structure of the country and the constitution of the country. But no one is focusing on the building of the values of the Egyptian character. What is the Egyptian, what is the Egyptian dreams or Egyptian goals and all this stuff and this will be a big failure when were realized that... And that's why I hate the old men who are running the country. From all parties liberal, secular, religious, they are all messed up.

How do you think police violence has affected the movement?

I think the best way to say is that it didn't change. The only thing that is changed is that we are with so many so they can't keep running after us. That's the main thing. Before the revolution, the amount of initiatives were very small they could control them. But then suddenly boom, a million initiatives and they can't monitor us all so it's kind of funny. But the police are the same, nothing changed so... They're just more scared or more careless. People became more violent. That's where I was talking about, people are using their values.

What do you think about the recent violence that we have seen between the different movements?

That's just childish acts because the Egyptians are not concerned in that and the Egyptians will never a civil war, because people are so indulged in poverty that they will not go into political civil war. They politicians are playing in an area and they're just doing their shows and talk shows and stuff like that. And the whole other people are into their daily problems, trying to solve this. And they just see these guys as clowns, just making their lives worse. Like people don't like Morsi, but on the other hand, they don't like Hamdeen. And they don't love any other politician, so there's no politician that can throw off Morsi the chair.

At the moment there's an image of Egypt in the West that's completely divided between secular and Islamist forces. Do you think this is an accurate picture?

Only between the people in power. Because at all people are indulged into their problems. People would vote for an Islamist, and then go to a bar or something like that. People won't revolt for secularism. People won't revolt for a Sharia or something like that. But people would revolt for justice or against the mentality of the police. Something like that. People are much simpler than us doing theories and theorizing and analyzing everything. And that's the thing I like about the Egyptians, they are much more smarter than Americans. Americans would go in the media and say "Wow, that's analyzing and that's like..." They love theories and all these things. But the Egyptians are much simpler, "Just give me your conclusion, what are you going to do?" That why Shafiq was criticizing Morsi and Islamists voted for Shafiq and it was complete surreal.

What does democracy mean to you? What is the core value?

I'm with democracy, but they say that they die through democracy or that people demand democracy. The democracy is that people really run their own daily lives on all levels. On the municipal level or the local level, they would control their food, their prices, their things and on higher level the governorate would do their policies. And on the other level the army. So people would have real access. I don't just go and vote for a new dictatorship every four years. It's just... So that's why I'm telling you I'm more into anarchy and decentralization of power. I don't care about the president or the prime-minister. Or the media [two Arabic names]. Everything between them is by initiating and talking and things like that. They're not doing this Islamists but Islamic thing.

What do you think are democratic practices?

In the law, because on the big head the small ones. When everyone obeys the law. When everyone has the real... It's really complicated what we have seen in Egypt, because people were manipulated by the media and people didn't have the full truth to decide who's better for them. And transparency is the main thing for democracy. Transparency from all parties. That's why I appreciate the word Wiki leaks. Because truth won't hurt people. Lies would kill people. So transparency is it. It was killing us in Egypt. From Mubarak and until now, no transparency.

What does social justice mean to you?

Social justice for me is. I'd say no poverty and the very big gap between poor and rich people. In Egypt we have billionaires and people under the poverty line. It doesn’t make sense. Something is wrong. And when you see a nurse having 60 pounds a month. And in her same ministry, I guy who's consultant for the minister and gets a million a month, that's not justice. We have to put a maximum wage and a minimum wage. The government has to get more taxes from the rich people because all people have the right for health and education. Even if we gave people 5000 pounds as wage, but we don't secure for their education and health care, money will mean nothing. And Egyptians are very smart if you ask them what do you need? They will tell you education and health. I will sleep anywhere, I will get food for my kids anywhere, but I will never treat my kid for when he's ill and I will never educate my kid.

Where do you think you get social justice from, is it just from the government?

No I'm not depending on the government in any way at all. I'm not depending on the government at all. I believe if the society became aware of that and if the society started to force transparency and started to do what they want really. There would be a balance in power between the people and then it would be ascendency achieved. But I don't depend on the government at all. Because even if the government are angels, they don't know everything in the country. Even with the internet and with all the power. It's very hard, it's very big. How can you take your responsibility for 80 million people who need to eat every day?

What does dignity mean to you?

Ok. This is was in the 18 days and this is what I feel inside now. People would feel that they own this place, so they love this place. So if I own it, you would not come and humiliate me in my place that I own. So that's why so many people in Egypt after the 18 days, they were cleaning the streets. Because they felt ownership of this country again. We lost it again. And that's why you see the streets, they are not clean. Even the people who were against the revolution, after the 18 days, for a month or two, they felt ownership for this country. So I will not do something bad for what I own. This is mine, so dignity is ownership and love for the country.

Do you see what you do, your work as a Cairo thing, or an Egyptian thing, or a pan-Arabic thing, or a global thing?

For me? Human being. Just human beings.

Do you feel an emotional connection to the other Arab revolutions?

Of course. The same feeling I felt for Athens or Occupy. Actually I went to Occupy Wall Street. I was there on the first day. I would love seeing anyone liberating truly and getting the idea that they have the power that the people are in power.

If you were at Occupy and you were also in Tahrir I think you are a good person to ask. Do you see similarities but also differences between these mobilizations?

The difference? They were very close on what they want. Social justice and transparency. The control over the people in power and money over power and all this complicated things. The only difference that I saw, was that Egyptians were more aware of the Americans on Occupy Wall Street. When I was in Occupy Wall Street in 2011, I told them they had the same awareness that Egyptians had in 2004 when Kefaya started. But they have the same... Because when Occupy Wall Street started, they didn't know exactly what they want. The first thing that came out was one dollar, one vote, one person and then they went to occupy wall street and went to Sopa. But still they don't know what they want. But all the activist and all the people who are working for liberation. They are all going to the same sort. Liberating humanity from any other kind of authority. Even money, even religion, even weapons.

You could say that the people at the Tahrir Square only knew one thing, they wanted to get rid of Mubarak. But after that, they also didn't know what they want. Or do you think that's not the right representation?

The people knew what they wanted. But the thing is. The Egyptians always trusted the army since 300 years ago. When people did a revolution 100 years ago, they came with Muhammad A. because he was a military person. The people trusted the military again. And then they manipulated the people what they wanted. Like the first referendum, they weren't asking us anything. They were just dividing to conquer. But people knew what they wanted. People wanted a new constitution so they came with a referendum. We wanted a constitution, so why are we doing a referendum? And then the referendum passed and they did a constitution. They just confused the people by the media, because people were at a complete truth and then they started to cut it down. And that's why I say the revolution was not protected by a power. But I believe the revolution was not our glorious moment. It was just a glimpse from god to show us utopia. Utopia, because it was the darkest point, that we were. And god shows certain people utopia and to tell them it exists and that you have to achieve it yourself. And then it's gone. So the people who saw the utopia in the 18 days, not all the Egyptians saw it. Only a few Egyptians saw it. They would live their whole life to achieve it again by their own human effort. Not by some gods miracle. That’s why I don't see the revolution as a failure, because it was just hope and a glimpse of what we can achieve. And then it's gone. You have to achieve it yourself.

Would you say the 18 days as a high point or is it at a later stage?

High point is still coming. But not as a revolutionary act or radical act, but about change. Because the revolution is just hope and a glimpse of what we can achieve.

Do you think there's anything about the Cairo experience that's unique?

I can tell you that the Cairo Alexandria ways, everyone has its pace so. But the techniques that they were all using they were the same. Although there was not internet. And it's amazing.

You mean the time the military shut down the internet?

This was for the military, during Mubarak. When he shot down the internet, the people went down to protect their houses and people went to fight police in all the governates and all the parts in the governates or in the same governates, they would do the same techniques of defense or attacking. And the people were amazed how all of us got the same idea at the same time. No one went to tell the people to protect the streets. No one told them that, not even the media. So people went themselves, it's amazing.

For instance the burning down of police stations was not a coordinated act?

I'm talking about the techniques of passwords, of even doing the blockades for cars. It was like the exact blocks of frogs. It was done in whole Egypt and there was no internet. It was very amazing actually. The people had the same system of protecting their neighborhoods.

END

**interview Salma, 18 may 2013**

I'm speaking to Salma. Would you think of yourself as an activist or more as an academic?

This is the kind of question that… The way we see ourselves and the way we describe ourselves are changing by the day. I think more and more, and many people of different persuasions carry these disciplines are increasingly finding themselves practically activists. Not star activists but active participants and at least highly committed citizens. But I'm an academic also. Because I'm trying to always to... Academic is not always a boring or useful thing.

Is civil society a useful society to you? Would you think you're a member of it?

Yes, I think it's a useful category. We still need it even as an analytical category. It's useful. It's not advisable at times like this to deconstruct our category out of existence just because their imperfect. Then we are left with nothing. This is not a time to have to worry about lack of categories of descriptions. Maybe later we'll fine-tune everything, but right now, classic events. It's there it's useful it is... As an analytical category, as an analytical tool.

And academics can be part of it?

Yes.

When did you first become politically active yourself?

I don't know if... I think at this time I'm not alone in being this sort of very in between sort of category. I think there are many. But I’ve never been some sort of member of a party or a formal group or an underground movement. Not really not formally. Still, I'm not. I come from a political family. So just examined the political was from the very beginning part of every day life and our social life. Social and political work have great overlap. But I don't know if I... I worked in my academic work on things that could be broadly turned political, or at least there were clear biases in my work. But the time just before the revolution. I started to participate increasingly. In street activity. Again not a lot, I was not one of the people that used to go to every demonstration but I would try as much as possible. I didn't find my place. But I think the kind of movement or activity that I appreciated very much was, and that I found that it fit me, again I'm not alone in this, was after the murder of Khaled Said, this facebook called 'We are all Khaled Said' appeared. And I think this group, I would identify it as a turning point in political practice in Egypt. People know this concerning sort of young people that were apolitical, because it really costs a very wide net. And I think personally its main contribution is that it's popularized the idea of human rights and turned it into a grassroots movement. And this was a crucial contribution. But also, I cost a wide net in term of, it was very inclusive for young people who were not political, but were doing things or wanted to do things that would not be considered political in a sort of classical conventional sense. Yet, within this group, emotional feelings and feelings for the country changed within the group to a political force and I think that was part of the inputs of the momentum of the mobilization for the 25th of January. And of course the first call came from that page. I can maybe forward something to you something I wrote about. So that's for these young apolitical kids. But also for me. Early on when the 'We are all Khaled Said' page started in order to publicize the case of Khaled Said and to fight against the narrative that was being propagated by the state and the minister of interior, that he swallowed some marihuana package, that's why he died. So they were fighting for establishing the true narrative. And with this there were several communication techniques and mobilization techniques. But all the time it was very interactive, people were part of the page. And one of the followers suggested this brilliant idea of the silence stands of people wearing black. And then the page advertised: how about if we all go all over the country and stand in front of the water, either the Nile or the Sea or the canal, just wearing black and just looking in it. And this I thought immediately when I read it: I'm going. I found that my friends were going so we went. The first day for us was awkward because it was a spot which was not suitable but other young people were trying to do and they did it. That evening and the day after they started posting their pictures. That was the first kind of political activity that they would consider political. Then there was this other silence stance wearing black. We were also always thinking: we must do things differently. There is something that is not working. With the conventional demonstrations, with the conventional slogans. Something is not right. We wanted to get away from the old categories. Many things were happening, not just this, but the 6th of April movement were also doing things with this non-violence techniques. This mated with my temperament with my preferences and with what I thought was the way to go. There was something there that clicked, like a true reading of the temperament of the moment of the people. And as things... The traditional politicians, including some young people, there is always this assumption that they are going to impart knowledge or consciousness to the people. That there is a version of what is true or false or whatever and that they understand better. But then there is a simpler version that has to be presented to them. In thought and in action. And this lack is detrimental. The other actions, I thought, this is brilliant because nothing can work with cote-en-cote people if it does not work for me. If I don't like the slogan and it doesn't really interest me, if I don't think that it's brilliant, than I shouldn't present it to the people. And I was talking sometimes with the art funds. The art scene is fantastic because the new artists are not doing this. on the contrary their going higher than what you expect from the cote-en-cote average person. Classical politician they cater to an imagined average person. So they end of lagging behind the revolutionary streets. A streets is more revolutionary. And because of this assumption that young people will not understand, they cannot catch up even. With those new forms of action and expression and demonstration I think one of the things that distinguished them was not just their imagination and creativity, non-violence, and non-confrontational. Also it was brilliant because many of these things were not illegal. They were really challenging, but not illegal. Although of course it was not like a state that respects the law. Even if you're not doing illegal things, you can get that. But then you look ridiculous, because then the officer would stop and say: why are you wearing black? So it was difficult for them. But apart from the fact that they are creative and non violent etc. I think there was some confidence in the people, in the convention of the moment. They placed the right bet. The read the people and the moment and the temperament. So I became part of this. I became part as a participant. Then I participated in the revolution from the very beginning. I participated I think in a very important way, as an individual, as a body. A body is more important than as a professor. Even professors who are there with their bodies they end up saying different things than those who are not there. So yes I participated.

Do you still feel part of a wider movement?

Yes. I don't know about a movement. I don't know it's a movement. But I have no doubt that we are in the throes of a revolution. And it's a revolutionary time. So yes we are part of something. I'm part of a society that is undergoing a revolution.

How have you seen the slogans involved during the 18 days, and the SCAF time and now. Were they always the same slogans?

There are new things, but there are classics that remain. And also, when new groups enter the scene, then they introduce or change the slogan. Like with the [name] for example. When they came they had this these distinctive slogans. What other groups? ... And also depending the incident. So the capacity to generate slogans and add slogans that rhyme and have to do with the movement. Their capacity is quite present.

So what are important ones for you?

The first one "[Arabic speaking]". We are all Khaled Said is a brand.

What would you say the high point of the movement was? The 18 days or before of after?

The 18 days are very special. Now they are.... Of course it was a revolutionary time, where time is compressed and telescopic. It's very quick. Even memory. Things that... Maybe narratives start changing all with after many years. So now even the day after then you start to have a narrative of what happened as if it's a distance part. The 18 days, very quickly, are remembered as, even by the people who lived through them day by day as utopian 18 days. They are something that encapsulated in encapsulated time with certain characteristics that are utopian, that have a beginning and an end. Some people, especially anthropologists... It can easily be looked as ritual process and the rights of passage and the eliminality and an eternal... That it's where the rites are suspended and it's a bit mixed between them. It's … This has been said, it's not my contention. But this was time it lend itself to analysis in these terms. Because people experienced things that were... They expressed the day very different from what they experienced. Before there really was an universal out of the ordinary in a way that was seen as positive. That was the general description of the 18 days. However, if you ask people to remember the 18 days, people look back really nostalgic on the 18 days, although these were the most nerve wrecking days. Very few moments were loving moments. Most of them were violent and there was anxiety. Everything was unknown. People were fighting amongst themselves. Not in the square but at home because of the tension. It was not an easy time at all. So how do you look back and look back to when? So here I noticed that you look back very quickly even on something that happened last month. That was of course a high point. But it was like an extended prelude. A ceremonial performing prelude. Until the 11th of February it was the end of the prelude. Then we got to the serious business. After that there are several mile stones of turning point and they were all violent.

From the outside it looks as if these movements are all about street protests, what other things do people do to express themselves politically?

There is a lot that is happening. When I'm thinking about the answer to your question I think that there are also many new faces that you cannot.. I wouldn't be able to tell whether this is a public or a private places. These semi-public places are spaces for young people were they can do not just art but several initiatives. I see people everyday doing just things I didn't know about. Just over the past several months, I was approached by a group of people, a group of young people who are from different backgrounds and disciplines. Some of them dropped out, some of them were studying law, some of them were studying the media, some of them are drop-outs. The person bringing them together is a physiotherapist. And they applied for a grant from a charity, an organization, to go and do a study of the people of a very remote governorate. I was like: what do you want from me haha? And they were like: we want you to learn us to study a group. I said I cannot do this, this is not a quick fix to do or to teach. But I went, and I met them. First I went to a place that's like something like this hotel. In some popular part of Cairo. Beautiful a huge flat that some people started to sponsor, to rent this flat and make it available for young people with initiatives who do not have a place. Including the quiet area work space for those who just want write. And so that all these people could now each other. That was a beautiful place, colorful really nice in a popular area. So I went and I met them there. They are twenty-something people. I heard their story. They wrote a very nice proposal. I said: what is this seminar? And they said: were are just friends and after the revolution we thought we don't know enough about the rest of the people in this country. And so they started travelling. Just travelling and stopping in villages and towns introducing themselves, and listening to the people. So it didn't have thing annoying things of the politicians that they were going to spread awareness to the ignorant farmers. And then they came upon this village, a really remote village and they felt that these people were the most remote. They could not relate very well to them. That the were really marginalized. And got intrigued so they decided to go and live with them for a while for mutual understanding. Something about knowledge. And at the same time knowing that the people will know something about themselves and what this nation is about. So I sat with them and said: ok. let's do. If you have to take a crash course in talking in to hours let's start. And then I told them I'd sit with them after that. When the came back from the first visit they still... But I don't know anyone of them. And I know many people. I go to many places. I have many students, many friends. But I don't know anybody. The person who got in touch with me knows someone, who knows someone who attended media training. I was there and I said: she knows how to... Maybe she can give a training. I don't now anyone. I didn't know the place. And then, after that, a couple of weeks later, I got an email that said: hello, we learn that you agreed to sit and talk to the Yokim (?). We are a group of people and we think we want to read about anthropology. We tried to read outside of our specializations, and some of us are not in university, and it would be good if you can come and talk to us and give us a reading list, and make a curriculum. So I went and took my friend (we met also in that place). There were different 20 people. Then we started like: ok. this is not conventional so let's see... We decide what we want to do as we go along. So my friend said: each of you tell us, why you want to read more anthropology and sociology. They started and each one had reason that is really fresh and genuine. And people they want to know something about themselves and the world. About the relationships between themselves and the world. That there is something beyond the nation. That they want to reach and while at the same time remaining part of... Really fundamental questions and they thought they would find answers in anthropology, probably, as close as can be. We started this reading group, we meet every two weeks. I think also part of this, I think it's the collapse of the regime of the traditional political science. We have been ruled, and not just Egypt, I mean we can pinpoint this building ruled by a regime of conventional conservative political science, that not just monopolize the upper hand of defining public opinion but also policy. Cause they were the ones who had the ear of the rulers. Whether this Mubarak think-tank this high policy committee, was led and devised and led by the political scientists. There was always this political scientist lurking somewhere in the presidential era. There still there by the way but first of all... I'm talking only about certain type of political...They are trapped in...But now after the revolutions, it's clear now, even to them that the people are a player. Maybe THE player. The society is the player now, not the rulers. The society and therefore I think that will happen a change in the balance of power between the disciplines.

How important has been the role of social media?

I think it was very important. I think it was very important, all the street kills and all the kills are very important. There has been several points, when there was too much emphasis on social media. The people who have been working sort of outside the social media in the street and know about this, felt the need to stress that it's not just a facebook revolution. Sometimes they oversize this factor and sometimes there was this tension between.. as if whether it was or not the social media to the extent of maybe downplaying the role of social media. I think social media are very important especially for marginal groups, marginalized groups and here I mean with marginalized, socially vulnerable marginalized. For example the girls, who are not allowed to go out. This is their only window. Social media is very important. Even the boys are not allowed to go and don't underestimate the power of the Egyptian mother. Girls are not allowed or restricted mobility. They have the experience and the participation. People can really have an impact through their pages. And through their participation. Because sometimes it is portrayed as if facebook is the frivolous and for the middle-class kids, versus the workers. No. Because in villages and poor areas there is access to internet. And sometimes people would have it at home or on their mobile phones. And this is the only opportunity to participate. So in fact, when we downplay the social media you are maybe unwillingly doing injustice to this maybe very small type of participation which is very important. Facebook, twitter and etc.

How involved have formal organizations been in the movement, parties, trade unions and NGOs?

I think the most important work is done by the human rights organizations. And there is this very funny relationship between the political and the rights. Sometimes they are the same people. The most interesting political work is done by the rights groups. Political parties are not catching up, they're not as savvy, not as they should. Not as clear visioned and clear sighted as the rights groups. We were trying to urge more cooperation between the political parties and the rights groups. But I think the political parties are too much burdened by their internal organization manners. That's the problem with working under these difficult laws that burden the formal organizations. So they have internal elections and... Even the setting up of the parties they have to have an amount of signatures and parts of entries. So it was a costly operation and all of them, the new parties had clams in beginning because of the rules that were set by the SCAF in order to put al the obstacles. And the obstacles remain. Other groups that are... The human rights groups come on and the groups on rights are also working on personal civil rights, but also the groups are working on social-economic rights and doing fantastic work. So it's the rights group that stands out. Because also they do research, they do policy. They're a heavy weight in terms of the content that they produce. They do a lot of homework. Also the other sort of less formal groups of April 6th.

I'm glad to hear that because I was very disillusioned with human rights groups.

No no no it's a human rights revolution. The first slogan was against torture. The first call to go out on the streets on the 25th of January was against torture, corruption and unemployment. Torture first. It's a revolution against the ministry of interior and against torture and against human rights abuses. And this is what’s still being fought. So it's really a confrontation between the tortured and the torturers.

A lot of this groups have tried to reject traditional leadership, is there a different kind of leadership. Are there new leaders emerging?

This is the question. This is a question people keep asking. I don't know, I don't have an answer. No, in term of the old traditional leadership that is there. I will call it the leadership of the movement. The leadership of quasi opposition and the political status quo. It is still decentralized but there is a understanding of strong communication lines between different groups and persons to do things and more things. But in terms of getting power, not now. Because the election route is not ridable. Because the rules of the game again are really worked. And no one in their rights mind should accept to play by those rules. Especially after what the Muslim brotherhood has done with the idea of democracy and the ballot box that decides everything. So the repetition of this slogan the idea of ruling by the ballot box defines all legitimacy after. And the people are very weary of this. So the fact that they are putting now the election law, that is very again restricted and tailored for them. So the election route is not very attractive. The revolutionary, continuing in the street is flourishing again and with the Tamarod signatures. They're doing very well. There has to be some transition. The next step is not. I think where we should be hoping for in the next movement is a transition. As a functioning transitioning state, not the settled.

Do you think the development of the past three years have impacted differently on men and women?

They must have.

Also in the movement do you see specific gender dynamics?

Well you see, there a deep changes and this is why this is a real revolution because really there are deep changes. Even the geological layers of the society are shifting. A lot of disruption and eruption at the top because really there is deep change, deep plowing. Including the gender relationships there was a marked women participation in the revolution. Women and girls. But also, on the other hand, with the Muslim Brotherhood rule and the Salafi impact, with the parliament reelection and... Hardly any women got on the parliament. But also women became sort of almost the centre of the fight, the most easy target. But also it's a difficult battle. So a lot of it is about women unwilling to do like women. On the other hand there was a big reaction from the women themselves, that they do not want to be rules this way. Yes, activists and artists and so on, but also sort of different kinds of working women felt very threatened by a regime that would threaten to make them stay at home. This is a country were even according to the official definition one third of the household are women depended households. So even a slight thread for women on restrictions to work is a real threat to these women, it's not a joke. So there was felt that there was something not right. Then of course there's the violence and the rapes, and harassment. It was organized to intimidate activists. But of course it's this kinds of things resulting to do thing that are under the belt, literately. Because it's resonates with the base instincts of the street. Things like sectarian incidents. It's the same kind of thing. Something that the society do not resist you. This is a favorite Mubarak technique to create whenever there's a crises to divert the attention, creating sectarian incidents. Also, it is something the society will love, the same as the sexual harassments.

How do you think violence have impacted the movement? Do you think people will stay away from street protests?

Street protests are... I think people now are trying to ration the streets protests, these conventional street protests and marches and so on. Not just because of the police violence but because of they were becoming without a direction and they will be easily infiltrated. Or they're becoming a venue for venting testosterone for different groups of street kids. So it's just becoming counterproductive now, but the police violence, I don't know to what extent it could be a determinant. I don't think it functions as a determinant. Now people are getting killed in police stations every day, and those people are not in there because they are protesting, they're not political. It's just that it's business as usual at the ministry interior or even worse. So many people that are killed, or tortured to death at the time of Morsi. So many people in the past few months. The Egyptian initiative for personal rights have all the documentation. All over the country every day there's an incident. And of course this affects the poor young men who are just be working and the police is become more and more cruel and violent and senseless.

In the west there's a image of Egypt being completely split between the secularists and the islamists. Is this an accurate picture?

I think it is split between the Muslim Brotherhood and the rest of the country. Not between religious and secular. They have managed to unite everybody against them.

There is this global march against Monsanto on the 25th all over the world. And it followed the Monsanto managed to get this law passed it's called the Monsanto protection act. So you cannot sue Monsanto even if it's above the state. So we decided to organize on here, because there is a Monsanto here. So we want to organize a march on Saturday. They already introduces GMO crops without any discussion. These things sneak in without the people knowing, what they're eating and the consequence. And it has serious implications on food so the seed issue is a big issue and not many people know about this. So we're organizing several things and campaigns but there's a march on Saturday. So I have an organization meeting on 7.

What does democracy mean to you?

To me? I didn't think about that... Yes this has been an democratic movement but right now, I think many of us are thinking of democracy. Maybe we talk about democracy but we mean freedom. It's freedom that we are more concerned about. The course of freedom. And if it has to come through democracy then fine. We did not ask for democracy, we asked for freedom. OK. We asked for freedom, they brought us democracy. But one of the problems of democracy is the debate about what democracy is, is it a representative democracy? We're not trained in this, and it's not very interesting also. It's not an interesting debate and it's really, it sidetracks the issue. The very issue is about freedom and about the individual. This is what we are trying to do, effect is to complete this promise of having the individual as the centre of this movement. Because this is the real revolution. So it's against all forms of totalitarianism. And against all the regime, not just the political regimes, the religious regimes and social regimes but also the cultural regimes that did not think that there's a problem with crushing one or two or a thousand individuals for the good of some kind of collectivity, whether the nation or the family. So what this is about, is the right of the individual and the importance of the individual integrity. So right now we are really only addressing the part about the individual, but the integrity, that they are not tortured.

Do you think the movements themselves have been democratic in the way they make decisions?

Well people, they've been open. The movements generally i would say. Because it is already more there are several decentralized groups. I'm meeting with four friend of mine, we made an event on facebook and then there's an event and we're trying to include someone we met on facebook from the state so... In terms of the movement is democratic, I don't know how to answer this but at least there's a dynamic of experimentation of good will, democratic or not, i don't know. But I think yes, it's highly participatory. Highly collective, collective decisions as much as possible. But also in certain movements there's this general mood of the people are thinking very similar things and they can understand. Certain movements are just magical. When we are not at one of these magical movements then things are difficult. To agree on what to do also.

What about social justice? Is that equally a priority?

Yes, freedom, and the social justice and dignity. Because bread its intercepulates the justice and as a slogan, which is a human dignity. It includes social justice. It is one demand. What is different about this slogan is that it's one demand not three. So it's a combo demand.

What does dignity mean to you?

For dignity we would not have to think very far. They should stop torturing people to death. That would be a nice start actually. This is already easily translated into demands about reforming the police for example. This is the first thing. Let me say another thing about freedom and social justice because sometimes these two demands are presented as one is an elite demand and one is for the people. And in fact again, we have to remember that freedom is a popular demand. It's not an elite demand and the people who are most vulnerable and who suffer most from the violations. And again whenever I think of this, I always keep in mind the teenage girl from a village in Upper Egypt. If she's not happy, I'm not happy. She would not be happy enough with only social justice. Human dignity is all inclusive I think. There is no dignity without social justice. There's no dignity without freedom. So I think this is the first demand. It's enough in itself. I would be satisfied with this to be the only slogan of the revolution.

Do you see what is happening as a Cairo movement, pan-Arabic, a global movement? Can we put a level on it?

I think definitely there is a global dimension. That is probably very deep but very hard to verbalize. The uneasiness is global, there is something wrong and something that is deeply wrong with the global system. It's very difficult to look at injustice and greed and cruelty as country phenomena even if certain regimes are responsible and so one. But for example something like the Monsanto march. Because the evil forces of globalization are this, evil co operations. The only way to fight back is through global solidarity movements. This is one example. We don't do this every day this is the first... Almost 500 are going on the facebook page. I would expect 150, which is not bad for a start because I think it's the first time people hear the name Monsanto. So it's an awareness campaign also. I see of course the Arab dimension. We've been oppressed for to long and it's the hope. When we got the hope that this could be done there was no stopping.

END

**Interview Youssef, 22 may 2013**

I'm talking to Youssef. Do you think of yourself as an activist?

I think in a way it applies to me. Currently I'm a member of a political party and of this politcal group and I'm one of the founding members of this political party, a social liberal party, established after the revolution. Prior to the revolution as well in the 18 days I was also, among millions of Egyptians protesting on the streets during the 18 days. Previously I've been a member of several movements, such [name], which is the Egyptian movement for change, or even later on the [name], which is led by [name]. I would never had an organization, because all of these movements, all of the this... I didn't have the key role, I signed the statements, joined the protests, sometimes asked people to sign statements or something for the International Institute for Change. There has been the famous seven demands that we want to get with a campaign collecting signatures. But not in an organizing sense like now, being involved in a political party, having a key role, head accountant of members and so on. In all of the sense I think I'm more of an activist post-revolution than before the revolution.

Why did you first become politically active? What triggered it?

I think many things, I've always been interested. Because I've been studying political science. I continued to be interested in political science during my master, and also working in development, but also in the public sphere, in civil society, NGOs. So as a career also I was interested in building a movement. And I think also the way I was raised. Because my father is also an activist, and he's actually been the generator or the leader of [name]. And he's also politically active and engaged so politics is not something outside. It's definitely something inspirational for me to be engaged and concerning them and to think of activism as a goal. So it's definitely something that played a role.

During the 18 days, everyone felt like they were one big movement? Do you mostly feel part of your political party or still feel part of a wider movement?

Politically party. I think there is of course I'm part of a wider movement. Whether in a bigger sense like we're part of a coalition called the [name]. The coalitions of different local parties and our party included. And also part of a wider movement believing in the demands of the revolution and what it stood for even if they're not organization and needed the national association. When you call for a demonstration, you do not necessarily people that are affiliated to parties or to the [name]. But you find other people. All are joined the demands are closer. The case of many took part in the 18 days realized what we fought for hasn't been achieved. Yes there might have been some elections here and there, but still elections itself we don't trust they reach the optimum of fair elections. The call for election and political freedom is not the what we are hoping for. The independence of judiciary, social justice, policies, taking in consideration the interests of different social classes. All of these have not been changed in the decision making. And of course the difference with the 18 days that we have lost attraction of the square. The Muslim Brotherhood were part of the Square. In a later stage of course, but still they played a role in the 18 days and we felt like we could do something together during the 18 days. And now we believe we cannot do this anymore, especially after they reached power. This old euphoria path, being able to overcome our differences and focus on clear goals has moved. A certain faction is something different than us all in the square. And it's interesting to notice that those who are still -even from the Muslim Brotherhood- who have the shared dream dropped out of the Muslim Brotherhood. Especially the young youth. I remember in the last parliament elections that took place in 2011, we were part of a coalition called the Revolutionary Continues. And this included a political party of the young of the Muslim Brotherhood cadres who left the Muslim Brotherhood and created a new party, the Egyptian Stream.

I've met [name]earlier today.

Yeah, he's a good friend as well. So they were part of it. So this is another fraction who represents something. And even the Islamists who were part and have the same believes are being aligned to themselves. I consider myself a part of a social movement that includes [Arabic] youth. Even the Egyptian Mainstream party youth, even if they're not part of the coalition. But of course this does not say it's a solid social movement in the classical sense of social movement. But of course there's something that those people are realizing, you can say, goals that mobilize that people whenever there's a goal. There's a goal fighting for independence of judiciary, you find all these people standing the same way. It was very clear in November's presidential declaration that Morsi issued. A non-constitutional declaration he issues saying that he's above all powers. All this you found them in the streets. You found them mobilized against these demands, these calls, rather than the calls of individuals. The street is always mobilized by these demands rather than by... Yes of course there are functional organizations, but the capacity of these mobilizations are usually bigger than the capacity of these parties. The memberships in these parties or movements are not millions. But who go to the square are millions.

What would you say the most meaningful slogan came out of the 18 days?

I think both. I think it's all, because the three main slogans really has a lot of meaning when you talk about freedom, dignity and social justice. These are all things that we have been witnessing for the last past years and part of the reasons that created our consciousness of why the revolution is needed. I personally believe in the freedom of the individual and that's why I'm in a party that's defending individual freedom. And not only political freedom, but also civil liberties. This is an issue. They don't have the same meaning, but the joint meaning is political freedom. Talking about freedom of parties, but civil liberties is not common. But for me it was one of the things I was fighting for. And social justice. We all see now the poverty rates. Beside political interest, poverty has been a crucial issue of my concern. I've been working for a NGO, fighting against poverty and seeing how to eradicate poverty from its roots. Poverty's in social justice's core. And dignity, because what about you're feeling when you really live in a social justice society, you're dignity is balanced. Dignity is more of an outcome of freedom and social justice. So all have crucial meanings to me.

What would you say the high point of the movement was, the 18 days or a later time?

I think the 18 days were definitely one of the high points. It's interesting that there are hypes of the movement. Especially during the landmarks of the revolution. Whenever you feel that this movement is fading away, major events come back. The first morning of the revolution was a great high, showing such a strong movement, believing the same demands and marching on the streets. And also, another hype was the event for declarations, because it was a very important test because it super sealed the expectations of us all. I think the president himself though the movement is fading away and only thousands will come. And then the millions came on the street. And then we had our second memory of our anniversary of the revolution and again, the demands of people across the governorate's are still there. I think were growing in a sense. Because even if you've lost a faction, there are others who came aboard and filled the factions. This is indication of a growing movement. Also the heights in this governorate's appear much clearer. Governorate's are always there, since day one. But it started its way in Alexandria and now you hear near new governorates joining in. Always new governorate's are joining in the interaction.

How involved where formal organizations, such as political parties, trade unions and NGOs?

Maybe their involvement in raising awareness. On the scale of media. Of course there were some acts on the ground and I think the key is social movement. The biggest social movements as Kefaya or International Federation for Change or the El-Baradei movement and his campaign. The 6th of April movement as well. There are many of these movements that are working on the streets. Political parties in pre-revolution had a minimum role. Whether it was mobilization, rhetoric, courage to join demonstrations. I think they only joined later after the 2010 when they felt no hope. But even their capacity and credibility in Egypt were much weaker. NGOs they might have played a role in raising consciousness, because NGOs were very anti political and very politically correct. They didn't break so many taboos but in a way, I think they've created consciousness. But again, mobilization as well also came out of all of these institutions. Something that happened in the consciousness ended up in something that was key in the post revolution. If you go in the street, you cannot identify and speak on their behalf, they have no entity to represent. So the role of all this institutions is making people more conscious of the problems, status and ability to do so. But they still fail to capture inside brands. And trade unions as well, it wasn't possible. Because trade unions in Egypt, and actually this is part of my interest as a researcher, because I'm working on state labor relations in my master's thesis. When it comes to labor unions, they were very state controlled and they had no freedom of movement. Very few movements started to capitalize and work since the 1990s, but again they have an influence in breaking the walls, but on a smaller scale. And only in 2008 an independent union would call, a tax collectors union. And only then they announced their existence and started to combat and raise awareness outside the official trade unions. They might have played an determent role in at the end of the revolution calling for strikes, but I think still their scale of influence at that time, was not as big as... I'm not talking about workers but about trade unions. Because even when the cause of a strike I think were workers' initiatives, rather than union initiatives. Because all the structures were state controlled.

What do you think the role is now of the social media?

I think it's still playing a leading role, because pages. Everyone is in facebook now, the users are increasing. And it's an easy form of communication and coming together and knowing that you're not alone. I remember the incident of Khaled Said. This was one of the turning points in the Egyptian revolution. One of the things of this facebook page was recognizing that we are so many. We are so that's frustrated. This always gives you courage and increases your abilities to know your strength. Because all the time organizations wasn't able to show how strong they are. They always depended on working on the ground. And this was easy. Demonstrations usually faced brutality and state-security. But facebook made people recognize that they are stronger without needing to call for a demonstration. And actually this was also one of the smartest things that has been used by the 6th of April in 2008, when they asked people to stay home. Because you always try to find ways that we are bigger, without paying a heave cost. Of course it is not enough to show that you'll take serious action, when it matters to the state it's action. You can see a much bigger scope of people who are frustrated and fed up with the regime. And suddenly the call for demonstrations encouraged people, when it says that 70.000 people are attending on facebook, this was a big number. Only 30.000 weren't afraid to come but still, in Egypt we haven't witnessed a 30.000 revolution before. Before the 2011, big demonstrations wouldn't have happened. I'm talking about something that crosses sectors. Egyptians willing to raise tens of thousands and maybe ten thousands was the biggest of number. And this it's doing the same link. Making people to communicate faster. Learning about the different positions. You put a YouTube video and message is getting across to millions in no time. So it also speeds the time and effort needing to mobilize. You can send a message easily across governorate's it's not something limited anymore to Cairo-based. Of course not on the bigger scale and you have to supplement it with real work and functional organizational structures of course. That's the limitation of the revolution. We're able to stop or slow down the anti-revolution force. But we're not able to win because we're still weak on other functions. We're morally strong on Facebook and Twitter, but we're not that strong in organization. But Facebook and Twitter and social media is slowing down.

Do you think new leaders have emerged from the movements?

Of course. Even if they're not known. The media is classically attracting the old figures. But in the local and rural areas, you always find new figures coming to the forefront, and more encouraged to lead the local protests and local demands. I mean the national demands. More than 60 parties is trenched, and all have new leaders and cadres that are doing a good job. The scale is enormous. It encourages many people to come to the forefront and many leaders are adapting to support local areas, whether media cover them or not, but you always find them in everywhere you go. Something is happening locally. Youth is taking the forefront. Although when it comes to classical representation, national elections and so, they don't succeed. But there's something in the making. And there's something strong growing, but they lack experience which is only more. But demand of interest is huge in amount of leaders emerging.

Do you think the revolution has impacted differently on men and women or on boys and girls?

Of course. I mean in everything. One of the new women leaders themselves are becoming stronger and reshaping and they're trying to work differently than the classical form of NGOs. One of the great lacks of Egyptian civil society is the legal framework. You can find me into a NGO that is state controlled and state sensed. Now, no one can sense that of any NGO. The amounts of moving to the street, working, collecting funds, even small funds, even small brochures are huge. And no one can tell them no because that's their basic rights. So this is helping women movements, and creating stronger women movements that's been given to address women's voices as well. Also the 18 days have broken many of the barriers where everyone saw that we can do all things equal. Of course after the 18 days, things regressed again, things went back. but again the debate is clearly on the surface. We're not hiding as previously. There's a grassroots movement, there's a women movements that's trying to enforce it's existence. And women are getting to enter the political parties and enter the scene much stronger to balance things and issues like sexual harassment, a disastrous issue in Egypt is on the public debate strongly. On movements, not only women's movements. Everyone if fighting. So these issues are getting more concerned. I think women voters and women's representation, and all of these issues are debated and taken in consideration on a regular scale. So this is a new thing happening.

What do you think police violence and military violence has done to the movement?

I think more or less the resistance is stronger. But one of the things that political violence is still existing. I think now the Egyptians are fearing less. The only harm it is doing is creating more distress through these institutions. So this violence is affecting movements. Of course it intimidates activists and those who are newly joining politics. But the resistance is stronger to such violence and once this violence is captured and got on the media, they have to respond back. So I think it's intimidates a bit but has not been able to slow down the movements as much as it did. The real damage is how it's affecting the distrust between communities and these institutions. It was really clear when people went to the police stations and started burning the police stations. It was a very strong movement. Some of this violence has been spontaneous violence against these institutions and how they felt that they didn't treat citizens human and with dignity. So police brutality being within creates more distrust. And this is something not healthy for building proper state institutions when of course police institutions will be part of. We want police institutions. But we want them to respect human rights and creating really badges of trust.

What about the recent violence between different movement?

I think is the real dangerous issue. For me, it's been taken violent for a while and no one realizes that once you get used to violence, and you get used to it's only normal, it goes out of scale And we have had an issue in Egypt and also the widespread of arms on great scale and this is a real danger. So far the scale has been contained and most political activist have condemned violence and refused to take place. But also this requires more open political challenge. Because the reason you use violence is that first, you the mind-set of people. A reaction of defending yourself and taking it as an option. And also, this acceptance when there are no peaceful forms, when you find yourself in elections and you get tricked. When you find peaceful demonstrations and no one listens to you. Closing all peaceful challenges creates violence. But in no way it should be just a creation of violence, because once you accept it as violence, as a tool, it's like a fire that will explode. You will never know when will be the turning point, where it turns massive over the wider scale. No one can control it as much as people. But I think also it should start from the state, by opening more political challenge, stop police brutality and bring also into justice all who use violence. Because one of the reasons violence started in the scene in Egypt has always been the case of justice. You get beaten up and want to take your right. It started after all the trials in the first signs of violence in Egypt as far as I recall after the revolution has been against judiciary. People are getting no fair trials. Those who've been killed in the revolution, those who died, those who scarified their lives for their country. No one gave them their right back. So this is when you see start of violence. It started against the state institutions. That's why you saw demonstrations in front of the ministry of interior. He has been the one mainly responsible for brutality during the 18 days. At least in the Kamel battle. So without justice as well and without peaceful contemplation violence starts. And across actors, I think this is new, but also because actors started to use violence. The turning point has been, especially between actors, the November declarations. When there were peaceful protestors in front of the palace and Muslim Brother Kamels came and used violence against them. This was the first time that violence was being used by an actor. It was usually used in the state versus the peaceful demonstrators. Now it's an actor who decided to come and beat demonstrators. And this started the whole thing. Previously they said that justification due to the discourse of the Brotherhood, our headquarters has been set on fire by the demonstrators. So this was one of the things they said how it started by them, but again there's a big difference in addressing headquarters. Also headquarters have not been an issue that is known by political actors. This indecent have been caused by Brotherhood leaders to protect the president. I don't recall any political call by any political figures saying go setting the headquarters on fire in Cairo. To say where it started does not put us much into a reason. The issue is to how to get this good. Justice, peaceful political challenge, as a key of every day.

At the moment in the West there's an image of Egypt completely divided. How accurate do you think this picture is?

It's a fake vision. The fight is about how the Egyptians want to be governed. And there are those even at the Islamist camp who accept democracy as a way of governing the country.

Secularists and Islamists might divide between important issues as civil liberties... Not civil liberties. But we have our debates related to how far can liberty go. And this actually goes in the whole society there are more concerned than liberals. You can put them in the same work. I think the reason that those in the Islamists are the ones that want to oppress citizens and to refuse democracy. They see democracy as a onetime chance to get in power. And there are Islamists, liberals and leftists who believe in democracy as a framework of the game. There is the fight between those Islamists and previous regime who believed in liberal economic policies that only see the far sight of liberal policies. And those who understand social justice and believe that there are basic requirements by the state. Liberals, socialists and Islamists who believe in social justice as a key element. And believe in free chance and free and transparent government. Even the economy. So there are small divisions between islamists and secularists. Between those who believe in democracy and social justice on the one side and those who believe in neoliberal autocratic system or Islam on the other side.

Do you see what you're part of as a Cairo movement, an Egyptian movement, or even a pan-Arabic movement or global movement?

I think in the minute of time it's mainly an Egyptian movement, but also, we've been an inspiring movement, at least in the region. Of course internationally. I travel around and the wherever I meet people from other countries I hear that they're inspired by the experience so when you realize that you've been an inspiration to other movements, it does gives also the feeling that you are part of a global movement. And to acknowledge those who are defending freedom and social justice globally. But maybe because our fight at the minute is so centered on state rule and I see it primary at the Egyptian regional level, but eventually global movement, because I think we'll have our global fights as well as a country aspired for independence and for social justice. We'll have to read this is a state involving us in economic agreements and other agreements. But these international fights are coming at a later part. So we're mainly Egyptian focused. But we're definitely conscious of how we are part of a wider movement, whether regionally of globally.

What does democracy mean to you? What is the core of it?

I think the core of it, is freedom of choice. And freedom of expression, of your choices. And ability to change rulers and governors, which is an outcome of both. For me, essentially it's the freedom of choice and expression. Later comes rule of law as well and equal access to the rule of law. Because it's not simply the rule of law and understanding alone, but how can we all have a equal access. And that's a big issue in Egypt whether in terms of institutional capacity or political will of who has access to justice.

What would you think of democratic practices?

I think... And this is interesting for us. How it can be more of a participatory decision making process. Really engagement of these movements in decisions. And transparency in these movements. About what we're doing and why. And again, rotation of power. How this movement being able to bring new leadership and it's more dynamic and fresh and young and not only found the movement led by people for 30 years. Like in the state. The rotation of power is fundamental.

You also spoke about social justice a lot. What is the core of it, and where do we get it from?

Here it's also the equality of chance. And we have to dig deep in the equality of chance. It's the equality of chance, that you're chances are open. You have the proper education and you're competing on even footage with others. You do not simply start poor and end poor. And the next generation ends poor. It's simply how there is space for every individual to widen. A society that widens the option of the member of society all the time, give them wider options and capacity to choose. I think for me that's the key to social justice.

What does dignity mean to you?

I think it's simply that you don't feel... When you're recognized or treated as a priority. As a human priority. Dignity versus the state. Fundamentally demanding the state. We need dignity from the state. We need to find from the state that it treats its citizens as humans. Putting the at most effort to think of them as human beings with rights and they recognize the responsibility of those rights. Also dignity in general, I think by any Egyptian, the feel of less dependent. He does not need to beg for his rights. He does not have to feel he's dependent all the time. It's part of why we need choice and options. The less dependency in fact. That you don't have to beg the state for pensions or to get justice. People are trying to make you at ease. Trying to help you and recognize you're a human being.

END

**interview malak, 22 may 2013**

I'm talking to Malak. Do you think of yourself as an activist?

Yes it is.

And do you think of yourself as a member of civil society?

The problem with the word civil society in Egypt is that it came to represent a specific type of fulltime organizations. Mostly human rights organizations, but other forms of NGOs as well. So the way the word correlates in one's mind, when you say civil society, you think immediately of those specific NGOs. I understand the wider concept of civil society and it should really encompass everything that's not the government and the not competing parties and the trade unions. But specifically here this term is overtaken by the human rights NGOs. That other space that should be called civil society is really nothing very much. But it's called activists, movements, but not civil society.

When did you first become politically active?

I became politically active early 90s. I was part of the revolutionary socialists, the Marxist group that grew under the collapse of the Soviet union, making socialist propaganda. So the whole of the 90s our activities were... I mean it was clandestine but not really, but for the most of the 90s it was on our universities, we published monthly magazines and books. We held seminars. Only with beginning of 2000, we had the current economical crisis taking place, the anti-globalization movement taking place, the pro-Palestinian, the intifada taking place and the Palestinian solidarity movement, moving into the anti-war movement in both places. The anti-war and the anti-globalization coming here as well. And here we continued more transforming into the democracy movement and Kefaya and then to the revolution and the current. With the beginning of 2000, specifically in September 2000, we had that new space that was not political parties, that was not controlled by the political parties. It was not controlled even by the fascist indicates, it was a space that existed and the regime tolerated it in a sense, because it wasn't so threatening and it was bad PR for the regime to really attack it. So in the 1990s I was part of the [name] that I joined in the [name deleted], that I joined because it was the only space that you could really criticize the government throughout 2000. Even some of the NGOs that really were focusing on the human rights became part of [name deleted]. Whether it was the Palestinian’s Solidarity or the anti-globalization, the anti-war or the democracy movement. So we had that space and this was the space we worked in up to the revolution. And actually it's still the space that large number of people are working through, not to establish parties or formal spaces, but this physical and conceptual spaces.

It seems that during the 18 days, everyone felt part of one big movement. Do you still feel part of a wider movement?

Not everyone felt there was... The 18 days, it was one movement in the sense that it had its mechanism of really consulting, very informal, very inefficient. But actually, functional, in terms of supplies and support even if in terms of defense and reacting to the maneuvers and proposals of the regime. How to react. Within that there were lots and lots of groupings. People who knew each other of years before coming together. The most prominent was Youth Coalition , which was a collective of people who knew each other and worked with each other on the demand of democracy movements of years before, on the [name] campaign. The Brotherhood youth we worked with, the revolutionist socialists in 2005 and 2006. So you had these normal ties of people who worked together in a non-bureaucratic way and to actually came together and did not call themselves anything. We were happy with the youth coalition. But there were also movements of salvation and actually also is still on now. Still informal, we try to form things. Some succeed and some fail. So currently most of the Brotherhood who were part of the 18 days, are now outside the Brotherhood. Most of the youth we knew were activists, but the formal members are very much with the government. We try to wide, to maintain this phase of finding common grounds and finding consensus. But I think that phase eroded with the Brotherhood. Before the presidential elections you could see a collective against the continuum of the military rule. And the SCAF was very much on the defensive and was invaded by liberals, secular activists, socialists, and human rights activists. There has been very much mobilizing against the SCAF in the second part of its presence when they feared that SCAF might really be contemplating with the idea of remaining in power. So we had this consensus, a ground were we could work on what was common. I think this now is still there, but not with the Islamists. Not all, but the vast majority of Islamists are now around the government. The rest of us are still trying to... The way in my opinion on how this works is that there's a series of agreements and disagreements so you find yourself agreeing with the liberals or something, so you can mobilize together against something like the constitutional declaration of Morsi in December. You could see a current that was not sitting people together and deciding. But ideas occurring and moving in the right direction, and then differences appearing and people are building other installations around the idea. To give you an example: I can find myself closer to groups like 6th of April, the Revolutionary Socialists. [details deleted]. The Revolutionary Socialists, 6th of April, some parts of the left Islamists, but not very much, close to the liberals for instance, the National Salvation Front or some of them. On some of the issues how tolerant we are on some of the issues or how much tolerant we are towards the things of the old regime. Things like that, so sometimes they appear very strong and very cohesive, when the target or the aim or the enemy is clear. So it's much easier in common to say we're against this. Much more than when you're trying to synthesize a program or where to go or where to move forward. And I think part of the difficulty of this formal, really flat, loose ties it's when it's close to act actively, rather than in a reaction to an attack by the regime. We've seen that under Mubarak, with Kefaya for instance, after the decline of the movement. Not the decline, but when it came against Mubarak in 2005 it was clear that there was no new term for Mubarak. This was really impossible. It has to be done. And this was an ongoing question. We asked ourselves in 2006 and 2007 and 2008 and 2010. It was always the question because the format really proving functional and effective is a very insufficient one so we thought, we need formal organizations. But this is not to come about. It's not just an decision. You cannot appreciate that. Unless you have this ideology or even... The Brotherhood are holding that by really hiding the max...[interruption to order drink]. So there is still the concept of movement and of people really picking up the phone, consulting with each other, setting up meetings. I don't think we have a successful movement. That has this idea of the 6th of April we can talk to them and I think... The 6th of April is about the activity more than anything else. The amount of political- and I'm not being cynical - but it's really a part of view of them. It's really about the use of energy. It's the political background that's going through the difficulty of formulating or balancing whether they like the revolutionary part versus the reformist part. It's like that as long there's activity, it will exist. But it's becoming more... I'm not saying we all should be formalized. I'm part of this and I've tried. We set up, back up in December, a group that wasn't very political. Well not hardcore political. I was with the well name. The others elected liberals and the Salafists [details deleted]. We tried to set up some formalized way. The difficulty was that we didn't agree on the politics. So I'm saying it's still looking for the formal. Everyone is part of Leninist this group that really had formalized. Still they use it, but they had some direct...And you had the Leninists, which I still think is important and valuable. But the kinds, when you have 100.000s of people you look for something to do. Or even hundreds. It's not real that the heads compass all those... I think we're still looking. I don't know what's happening elsewhere. But at this day I don't think we have ended this discussion yet.

During the 18 days, there were different slogans, what was the most meaningful to you?

I was politically active for maybe the first 5 or 6 days. I was odd, I was just watching. We used to make demonstrations, we were taking by the waves. I think that the main slogans of the "Bread, freedom and human dignity." I think this was very simple. People and myself were really passionate about it, because we knew what we were talking about. It meant something to me. But also [Arabic slogan], was very strong as well. Which was "We don't want more of this." Not necessarily that everyone had the same idea. As a Marxist to bring down the system might be something, but I think here as well in Tunisia it means saying “enough of this”. The way the same Kefaya used to be very telling and a really good brand back in 2004 and 2005. It's like 'enough'. [Arabic slogan] was really strong. It wasn't the thinking of any activist, but it came out from stories that came from more than one place. Because the levels of the first day. Were really not in one place. I think part of the unrest remained now is actually both continuum power, both the SCAF or the Brotherhood, really didn't take this slogan seriously. And part of the political milieu where liberals controlled more or less opinion pages and the TV. They would come and say "Of course we don't want to take down the regime." I don't think that everyone who was shouting that had a modernist understanding and how Morsi and capitalism works. It was more than Mubarak. It was the way things are and the way things were when Mubarak was. I think it was very clever, because bringing down Mubarak was a really tough challenge. And for the square with humans, any concession. And this was really not discussed. I remember sitting there and there were many initiatives. I remembered someone telling "Look no one will leave the square with Mubarak in power." This was my gut feeling that I was not leaving this square with Mubarak in power. I think for many it was like that. But also, and I don't regret that at all, the military fell to leave the square. Some said don't leave. I remember discussing it on the 11th, when it was announced with an activist on the square on that day. I told him I really feel like people will leave tomorrow. We were holding our breaths. And it's very difficult to say "We're going to stay to achieve other things that we're not really know how to do them." This time the energy what was really undefeatable. You really feel that the Tantawi should go. And I'm one of the people who don't see that leaving on the 11th was meant to be, because we came back and the fought back on several occasions and we won the battle. The battle of ideas and narratives. The gutters of Mohammed Mahmoud that these are thugs not our revolutionaries. And the whole confrontation with the SCAF was like, we kept coming back. And enhancing, clashing out, what is it we don't want. It wasn't only Mubarak it was the brutal force of the state. This terminant attack of killing our culture. I think SCAF lost the battle when it killed people. Before, many of us would say others are incompetent, they like the experience. But I think it turned into a confrontation and having that, when they killed people not by mistake. It was in a sense the old regime that "You’re a guy and we tell you the reality". I remember a really confrontation with the SCAF after the Maspero. We saw what happened, the killing and the people on the ground. The videos were there. And that we had the audacity, 'oh, the self illusion.' The government said "we never killed any Egyptian." And they kept on doing that. So I think the problem with SCAF, and the Brotherhood as well - And I'm someone who supported Morsi in the second round openly. And I got politically criticized for that. But for me it was really the old regime and anything else. But when they came to power it's like their perception of change is that the problem with the old regime not in the relationship with power and the people. In terms of rights, knowledge, wisdom and understanding. So they considered themselves as stable and this is how they worked. They know what's better. They know what's best. And they're just themselves, because they are good people. So it's the replacement of the old regime of bad people with good people. We knew that there were reformers. But even this is not reformist. They left everything intact. Everything. I'm not speaking of on their behalf, but their vision of the state is very identical with the parts with good people. Corruption to them is just taking money in your pockets, not really overlooking what's best for the people's interest. And I think this is party what's the problem now. Even the national salvation front, part of the criticism for it in my opinion, is that it's really not putting forward a different form of relationships. They're saying the Muslim Brotherhood are bad. "We want more freedom." But when it comes to the police, they're not really hard against the police brutality. All the military, the weak status in terms of economy. They don't come and say that. That's taboo. For me that's not alienate. So in a sense I'm a veteran, but I cannot say I was naive, but I had simple hopes after the revolution. Regarding even how the street is organized and how people are treated, the normal citizens, the relationship between the governed and the government in the largest sense. I think one of my frustrations and of many of us is that Morsi, he faced this window of opportunity. Of really bringing about... We talked about police brutality. And this is essential, this is really a good example. And ironical as well, because the 25th was against the police. And many of us knew it was more than the police, but this was the one thing that stood out. The Khaled Said was a very important example of what regime we want to bring down. And it's ironical and tragic that until now this impact with the SCAF and Morsi, feels intimidated. "Oh! His vision of the universe and the police is good for the people." The concept of your interest and mobility is actually not that much entrenched as we would like. I remember talking to someone from his staff, very early, Morsi's staff. And they said "Well, they appall them. They are struggling with many pressures; They have been attacked by everyone." And it was a private discussion. But no, you don't give them credits now. Maybe later, maybe when we really have done some cleansing and you say the good people are still paying the price of the bad ones, etc.

What do you think the high point of the movement was. The 18 days or later, or still to come?

The 18 days will be... There's something magical about them and anyone will live through them before and after. And when you're part of something like that. The Egyptians are very simple. More or less we showed up every day. We assembled in this place, making history, is actually very simple if you're looking at the details. So I think, and everyone who talks about the utopian era, is not exaggerating. But many of us got caught in the nostalgia of the 18 days and I hold in a really high place, but I don't look back in this nostalgia. Because I really know that we are in a different position now, and that what united us then... I believe there is time for unity and time for polarization and standing to others. For fighting for freedom, human rights, liberties or against something. So for me, the 18 days have a sacred place. But I think I took great courage in the demonstrations and battles after, because they were tougher battles. Battles that you were fighting a less clear animal. The battles around Mohammed Mahmoud, only the physical battle, but also the propaganda battle. The battle of ideas, the battle of hegemony. And we were up against the regime, with the local media, with the TVs, because it's easier to be labeled a thug. Because if you are labeled a thug, you're not really a revolutionarist, so they abandon you. So the fight against SCAF, I think it was very tough. The fight against Shafik and the old regime was very hard I think, because I think losing people in elections to send a really negative message. I think this a resolution defeated. I think the various battles and the kind of articulation and polarization that happened around SCAF, or whether it's about religious rights, the constitution or the need for a stronger social message. In a sense, even with the 18 days you had similar patterns of confusion and division. After Mubarak's second speech that this should be nothing and there were division and being minorities. There were two days we felt like the whole street was really frustrated. It wasn't true, but it was very loud and very noisy. So this confusion and division and then consolidation and then stand in confidence and then victory. This kind of name. I think we’re going to see more of that on social questions. On the question of wealth and social justice. It's common now to find people from all sides to talk about the market or investments. And to me, I'm not as a socialist, that's not the problem. It's the fallacy. I’m not coming with a solution It's a difficult time, it's an unorthodox. All the time, unorthodox is that the army is sick and fight them. I remember telling someone. For instance, if you look at the No More Military Trail, which is one of the most successful movements. But I remember having a discussion with one of them, very early. I was telling him or her that I fear that propaganda against SCAF will be much more difficult because people would feel defeated of really disappointed that the army has turned out to be the villain. We got into the point of ok, the police are the villains, but the army is the good people. The old story about the 18 days, and one hand and the SCAF. And we knew it was not true, and that during the 18 days they arrested people and beaten up people. They prevented supplies from entering. But as a people we decided to forget that. It was easy to forget that and to think that they're the good guys. I think it's not even a question of villain or not. It's a question on how they see power and how they regarding civilians and the normal Egyptians. And the citizens. The relationship between them. Now they see themselves as leaders. We have a word in Arabic we used against Mubarak "We own the country." The army thinks they're the owner of the country. So what I'm trying to say is that there are battles to come. And they are important in clashing out what we mean by [Arabic words]. And it's really hard and laborious, because for better or for worse, we don't have a leader. Every idea gets through really primitive accumulation and building and starting to make sense and winning over those who really don't believe it. I think this is even happening regarding the Yuem and the Islamists as such. No they wouldn't, they just hate them because of the Islam. And then the first hand learning about how much. And in a sense there's an impossible element, because we knew Islamists would come to power and that they would be the ones. We fought against those who put that high pressure. I never feared an Iranian scenario. I expect them to be longer than few months. Of course, we have to give credit to the Brotherhood for their... seriously. They really worry was the liberal reforms on one hand, and then get the other on the liberties. But they are really not much deliberating at all. And not coming up even with a reasonable or clever propaganda. I think that these people are learning. We are learning. I had this discussion, and it's about Islamists. And that Islamists is not an enough definition. They can be Islamists and corrupt and you can be Islamist in a right way. You can be Islamist and left and think in a democratically way. And you have people say "No there's Islam and the right way to do things. You know there's Islam wherever you go. Whether you live in the sewage, so you know this is a priority." And he knew this lost division or the polarization of the cross line of something.

Do you think it's a working class revolution or a middle class revolution?

I'm left, many members of my socialist organization would come and say if it were not for the strikes of the 9th and 10th of February... And I think it was effective. I don't think it was the middle class because I saw that the first time. On the 28th my main worry was, because I came from this Mohandiseen demonstration got in this fight on the Kasr al-Nile bridge. And I was part of the wave that was defeated. The 4 o'clock in the afternoon wave that tried to... I went home that day, not being able to get in Tahrir. And only when I got at home I learned that some people got to Tahrir and the police withdrew, and I really didn't understand what was happening. And I thought should I go now? And I decided to go the following morning. My worry on that date was that those middle class or upper middle class from Mohandiseen they were really part of the mobilization. And this is one of Mubarak's big failures. He really didn't have any class as a whole supporting him, even those who were well-off. I had my CEO and his boss joining, because they were frustrated of everything. So I can remember a friend, he said: when I saw that demo in the morning of the 28th, with the CEO and whatever public discontent, I felt Mubarak was falling down. So on that on the 28th my main worry, is that if we got defeated today, on the 28th, we are not able to reach Tahrir, that the people would go home and say we did our best. And the people, because of the apathy and people who are not joining are not worthy of us. And it was really a scenario that went through my head. And on the 29th, when I saw that the square was being filled by activists, working class and lower middle class and poor and Salafists. Joining in because this was the place to be. And I think we need to really go around and ask why did you go there? And this were the people who spent the night in tents around the square. Many of them came from outside Cairo and they couldn't afford... So I would walk back and actually for a couple of days I took my car and parked it outside. Many people did this. To me the working class did participate, but as citizens, not as an organized working class. So I'm sure that they got frustrated with the fans of the facebook revolution. Because those in Tahrir were not the facebook people. You cannot claim credit to one element. Usually a revolution is victorious, because many people participated in it, coming from different places. And from there on, I felt that this merit, I know without the politically activists... We have the credits. Without the facebook group and Khaled Said and the people of the organizations. People who said: we are a political. Which was audience not really touched by the bigger movements of Kefaya and so on. And I appreciate that. And those people who mobilized... And I appreciate those who torched the police station. Because it is not the middle-class that ended up in the police station. It was the Islam areas collecting and going out in many places attacking police stations because they a grievance with the police at one point or another. Who thought that we are in debt of the … and the thugs who did that. For whatever reasons. Because that helped the revolution succeeded. So really trying to find one answer is hard. And I think that the collective Islamists who had a very big hand in making this revolution successful. To bring down Mubarak. But not really to have a revolution in the sense let's bring the regime down.

At the moment there's an image in the West of Egypt completely divided between secular and Islamist forces. How accurate do you think this picture is?

There is a strong division or polarization. But it's really in my opinion living through it. The real divide happened in November. Not only by the Ikhwan doing that civil declaration but really going on a propaganda offensive on everyone else. The supporters of the old regime or... Having said that, I think that any way to tell the story politically. How the Islamists hijacked the revolution and they're sitting with their Koran once again. We are finding out the recent of the Islamist. They were strong because they were working abroad and they were the only constellation that was organized. But this war, that people think they have is very much exaggerated. I wouldn't call Morsi a dictator. Dictatorship is much more than this. It's not even equal to that. Of course I don't think Morsi is trying to be a dictator. At times they are thinking maybe to harass. But I don't think they can be dictator. So there's a division, of course. But that's not the only division. And that everyone secular agrees, and everyone on the Islamist side agrees. The large lines, the clearer lines are around this. But also, you can find out as the thing we are talking about now, which is what state are we talking about? Because I believe there are Secularists who wouldn't mind a military rule that stood between the Islamists. Or they didn't mind the secular dictatorship of the region, of Turkey or the …, which was a secular dictatorship. We don't have, in my opinion a universal human rights respect. You can find problems talking about terrorists in Sinai, not the suspects. And using that narrative. So there is a part of Islamophobia in the society as well. And of course the least clear, which I think is part of our failure. Is the class division. The real problem is that it doesn't really bring about the change of this division. Or that does not recognize the majority's rights. They are using the same metaphor that's large the violence of course. And part of this failure is that many people of the opposition were controlling the media. I'm not saying controlling the media in any totalitarian way, I mean in a normal way. They come up with their worries and their anxieties. So many of those, their anxieties are the change of lifestyle and not Islamists enforcing pressure. Really the discussion of what states. I was talking to someone, and it was clever. Because it was: what do you want? What is the division. I think we, as a collective, have not spent enough energy and time in really articulating that. When someone would come and say "People are social statable in the revolution." If people are frustrated by the revolution, then they would demonstrate for Mubarak, which is not happening. But we haven't really explained what the revolution is, since the fall of Mubarak.

What does democracy mean to you? What is it's the core value?

I think it was the slogan; freedom, bread and dignity. I think in a call in April in 2011, 60 something % participated because of there was economical issues. In worsening conditions, I think it's a combination of economically and being arrested in the streets by police men. So in a country like Egypt any attempt towards change has led to that. Democracy is not a ballot box only. Not that I disregarded the ballot box but as a collective learning people have tried the ballot box. And it's actually not enough. Because election is a choice between offers, divided alternatives. So it's not only that. When I say "Oh the ballot box! Let's go to the ballot box!" More and more people are feeling, well it's not all that. It was about democracy, but really democracy. Or democracy that incarnates society. I'm not talking about new forms of democracy, but democracy that must come with reforms to allow you to influence seriously. How decisions of your life are being taken. So for instance, according to the Brotherhood democracy means the ballot box. I went to a workshop in 2011. It was from Europeans and Americans. And I remembered, I said: you're so cynical about democracy. And I understand why. That why I think is that actually part of the narrative of unity and part of the dream that we need to articulate is democracy that is more effective than what's happening in Europe and North America. It's not simply of democracy of balancy leaders. Democracy of rich millionaires. When politics is decided by unelected leaders. And I think because of the conditions in the past three year, a change must really challenge those living under Mubarak, for being the same, but with a ballot box. The problem is that they are not careful about what they're doing. They tried so quickly to become Mubarak. I once joked it but it was really is that their ambition is to be a better Mubarak.

What would you think constitute democratic practices?

I was talking about organizations and how difficult it is to form organizations. I think it's not about democratic practices. I think they are the majority of people. In an organization they would like things to run this way. When I was in the popular committee in 2002, someone came and said "Maybe we need an election". An my worry was that we had to have charter, a really register of who's a member and who's not. And the ability to use the electoral mobilization and get people to register. Not that I didn't trust democracy. It's really difficult to organize movements that operate democratically though elections. For me, at one point, the race was ran by three people who are actually the work, so you show up from the meeting. And you're out through the work, you have a better chance of influencing the outcome. Because you're actually participating in bringing about this outcome. So if you like to come and participate and anything else, and then you can say: why don't you do that? But of course, this works very well on smaller scales. But you don't have that all the time. So I don't think in this regard. The part of the problem is in the linguistics and the running of such organizations. So it's not a disregard for democracy, but more about the difficulty of running such movement. One of the problems also, is fundraising and the legal framework is something that really has not changed. I remember after Mubarak. How openly we are we legally. We work in the margins of the law, and when they come, fine. This was actually the main stance of the Brotherhood, an organization that can exchange huge amounts of money. Whether with the state or with each other. There's difficulty in formalizing. The problem is not only legal. There are other problems in elements in setting up such movements and working.

Do you think what is been happening in the past years, do you see it as a Cairo movement, an Egyptian movement, a pan-Arabic movement or even a global movement?

Cairo I believe. This is one of the large cities and nurturing the population. Not only that, but the main activities are happening in Cairo. More or less. But in the chronicle thought of the 18 days. Actually the first two days were primarily in Suez. In the sense I think there is a sense that would say Egypt and the Arab World. There is a sense of the part that Egypt plays, but I cannot say Tunisia was for me a big inspiration. I think Tunisia stands out in the incentives of "Yes we can". I think there's an Egyptian and Arab way. And I hope it can influence. For the past three years we have been taken our inspiration of Europe. I'm talking about the anti-globalization and the anti war. This was important. I think we have a chance to, and this is still in the making and takes the question of democracy. Are we able to bring about a democracy that we used to have. You know the democracy programs of Europe and the Bush administration come to the third world an Egypt to give people democracy. I think it was ironic in a sense to see the level of the scale. I thought: we got killed and it's totally irrelevant. And the other day, I was on Tahrir and saw the leader of who is in Tahrir, who is in a tent. For testing something. And I thought this was really interesting, because they tried. Which my problem is I struggle with right or leftists, it replaces the people, it substitutes the yourself. I think this part of many years contests, like Islamic terrorism, Islamic uprising or whatever, it was important, it is important phenomena. It's actually coming out of one of the things from the 18 days. They were shocking in the kind of imagery. That they showed. It was really contradictory about the whole hardcore extremisms … When Western analysis is like: the Islamists have taken over because this is common ground. This region is controlled by the Islamists, so the same story. This is not true. It's an ongoing fight and a bit more complex than we would like it to be. It has many aspects. I remember in 2004 and 2005, I remember those who wished for democracy. This election was agitated by the Egyptians. Let's deal with the local politics. It's this traditional of lazy look at the region. Oh that's were Islamists are. But it's much more complex.

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