

# January 25: Research and Testimonies

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The book "January 25: Research and Testimonies" published by the ACRPS in 2013 sheds light on the Egyptian revolution. Its publication marks the completion of a project initiated by the ACRPS to document the Egyptian revolution, following its publication of "The Egyptian Revolution: Motivations, Trends and Challenges". This book constitutes an important intellectual achievement in that it offers a microscopic study of a phenomenon that constitutes a turning point in contemporary Egyptian history..

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The 11 analytical essays written by young researchers and Egyptian academics who personally witnessed the revolution are integrated and interlinked. Almost every one of these chapters leads naturally to the next thus offering a true archive of events. Collectively, the research studies presented in this book not only document and chronicle the events of the Egyptian revolution but also focus on the preliminaries, facts, lessons, and repercussions of the revolution. These give the reader an opportunity to review critical scenes from the revolution and details that may not have been otherwise explored. The latter chapters of the book present creative and artistic images drawn by young revolutionaries across the squares of Egyptian cities.

In Chapter 1, Ahmed Bahaeddin in "From Trickle to Revolution" reads the events with the eye of a participant and expert who firmly maintains that the Egyptian youth revolution was a popular revolution of a new kind. It was a revolution, says Bahaeddin, that restored dignity to the people and established its self-confidence. He notes that for decades some

had resigned themselves to the notion that for historical reasons the Egyptian people had become an obedient and submissive people. The revolution proved otherwise. Bahadeddin goes on to discuss the Egyptian uprisings that broke out after the defeat of 1967, especially the student uprisings, leading up to the January 25 revolution.

Next, Abdel-Qadir Yassin addresses the economic and social causes that paved the way for the outbreak of the revolution and lists some important triggers of January 25. The Taxation Law, for instance, issued in 2005 was openly unfair and contributed to transforming the Egyptian regime into a broker for US and Israeli companies, resulting in increased inflation, a decline in the production of food supplies and wheat, and a drop in per capita income. Yassin also recounts the privatization policies that finished off the remnants of the public sector, which increased Egypt's level of external debt and the accompanying manifestations of corruption.

In Chapter 2, Muhammad Faraj discusses the political precursors to the revolution. He holds that Egypt's

exit from the Arab-Israeli conflict under late President Anwar Sadat was the most important turning point bringing his presidency to an end. Faraj considers that the uprooting of politics from society and its removal from daily life, such as the prevention of political forces being active among students, workers and public sector employees, led to political tyranny, in addition to electoral fraud and the attempt to consolidate the inheritance of power, closing the doors to democratic change. All of this, he explains, was a prelude to the explosion and the outbreak of the January 25 revolution.

In Chapter 3, Shaaban Yusuf notes how the outbreak of the revolution was unexpected and that in the beginning the well-known political parties did not participate until they decided to jump on board. Yusuf also discusses Egyptian classics that dealt with daily life in Egypt and that were critical of the Egyptian regime, such as *The Yacoubian Building, Chicago* by Alaa al-Aswani and *Taxi* by Khaled Ismail, and others. In the same vein, in Chapter 4, “Art and the January 25 Revolution”, Magda Maurice casts light on the role of art, more specifically that of cinema. She explores a series of Egyptian films that criticized circumstances in Egypt including Youssef Chahine’s *Cairo Mnawarra Biahliha* [Cairo as Told by Youssef Chahine] and *Hiya Fawda* [Chaos]. She also talks about other films made by dissident directors and TV drama serials that exposed the alliance of businessmen and politicians.

Mohammad Qayati, in Chapter 5, takes a cinematic view of the 72 hours prior to the fall of Hosni Mubarak. He focuses on the emergence of movements demanding change on the Egyptian street, such as *Kifaya* and the April 6 Youth. In Chapter 7, “Rhetoric of the Egyptian revolution: Reflections and Features”, Emad Abdel-Latif writes

about linguistic tampering and the new rhetoric that contributed to revolutionizing political discourse and then revolutionizing society.

Sayed Daifallah then provides us with an analysis of political opposition in Egypt and focuses on the political gambles and the details of the political positions of opposition party movements. He presents these results in two illustrative tables. In the latter chapters (“Arab echoes”, “Israeli echoes”, and “International echoes”) Nasser Hijazi, Khalid Saeed, and Mohammed Hosni respectively look at the Arab and international reactions, and discuss the changing positions and alignments.

Overall, this book presents a multidimensional documentary analytical reading of the Egyptian revolution. It is marked by zest and depth and is of help to researchers who want to delve into the circumstances surrounding the January 25 revolution. It also gives the ordinary reader a good chance to learn about the causes of the revolution, the conceptual frameworks that help to make it understandable, the political, social, and cultural dimensions and trends that frame it, and the positions and actions of the international forces.

The events, facts, and dates found in this book are of particular benefit to researchers, especially the political and economic background that led to the revolution. Events that took place during the revolution are here narrated by multiple voices and from various angles. The book also represents a record of the facts and an important analysis of the course of the revolution and the current Egyptian scene while attempting to provide objective answers to necessary and significant questions. Importantly, it does so without falling into the trap of sanctification or belittlement