Audio Documentary: A Year in the History of AUC by Gehad Mahmoud

Lead-in: There are several events that took place in Egypt through 2011/2012 starting with the revolution and followed by several other events. Moreover, many other events happened in the AUC community that had a great impact on AUCians and AUC. So, what happened in Egypt and AUC and how it impacted AUCians, is what we will get to know in this documentary.

[Music Fade-in: “Ya El Midan” by Cairokee at 00:02 into the music and Fade Out at “in particular”]

[5 second into the music] 2011/2012, was not an ordinary year for Egypt and Egyptians. So, you will never know what to expect when you mention this time to someone. Some will take it as a year that they have been waiting for, for so long and others might just burst into tears. (:25)

Since January 2011 till February 2012, several events took place that literally changed the lives of so many people whether in Egypt in general or at the American University in Cairo (AUC) in particular. (:09)

[Natural Sound: “chanting for 25 seconds”]

In January 2011 and after 30 years under Mubarak’s regime through which the Egyptian people did nothing but obeying the system, they finally said no. They did not only say no but they also revolted and took the system down. (:15)

[Music fade-in: “Ya El Midan” by Cairokee at 00:55 into the music and fade-out at ‘elaborates more on this point’]

The 25th of January 2011 revolution or uprising as many prefer to call was the first time the Egyptian people stood up for their rights since the 1952 revolution. Both revolutions aimed at overthrowing king Farouk and President Mubarak, but there was only one difference between both of them, in 1952 revolution the army revolted against the king. So, the king had no option but to comply with their wishes. In 2011, the situation was bit different since the people are the ones who revolted against the system so all the forces of power were against them. Despite the odds being against the people, they held their position and refused to back down until they fulfilled their demands for former President Mubarak to step down. Khaled El Mahdy, a political science student, elaborates more on this point (:55)

[Music fade-in: “Ya El Midan” by Cairokee at 00:55 into the music and fade-out at ‘elaborates more on this point’]

El Mahdy: in 1952 it was more like a military revolution on the system; I mean they wanted to change to have a president instead of being a kingdom. However in 2011, it’s started mainly by the young youth it was the people’s revolution and not the military’s. Another difference, in 1952 the main reason that this military did this revolution was
more about the political reasons and not the situation in Egypt like in 2011 what made the youth go out in the streets and say no to the president was because of unemployment, food prices are becoming high and everything else as well. (:36)

[Natural sound fade-in: “chants of people when the president stepped down and fade-out at ‘a little bit’]

Right now it’s hard to say what the revolution achieved other than overthrowing the president but we for sure can say that the people have changed for at least a little bit. Mohamed El Badry, a mechanical engineering student at AUC, who used to participate in the protests in Tahrir Square says: (:21)

[Music Fade-in: “Ethbat Makank (Hold your Place)” by Cairokee at 00:05 in the music and fade-out at ‘think so’]

El Badry: It may have differed but it is not that apparent, not a lot of students changed. The only thing that has changed is that everybody is talking about politics, that’s the main thing. Not many people changed internally that they began to think differently not a lot, I do not think so. (:19)

[Music Fade-in: “Ethbat Makank (Hold your Place)” by Cairokee at 04:50 into the music and fade-out at ‘comments on this’]

Maybe affected by the spirit of the revolution and maybe not, the students of the American University in Cairo started their Fall 2011 semester with a strike or two. One strike was for the students’ rights and the other as a form of solidarity with the workers at AUC who were also aiming for getting some of their long lost rights. Nada Badrawi, a graduating senior majoring in economics, comments on this: (:31)

[Music Fade-in: “Ethbat Makank (Hold your Place)” by Cairokee at 04:50 into the music and fade-out at ‘comments on this’]

Badrawi: I never thought that Aucians would join or participate in the strikes and the revolution and to have a role but I liked how they did; I was amazed that they participated because I never thought that they actually could join or know what’s happening around or in Egypt. I really like that they did, many students have been to Tahrir square and some of them were injured so it showed how they defend the rights of the people and stand for their rights. (:53)

[Music Fade-in: “Bokra Elshams Tatlaa (Tomorrow the Sun will Rise)” by Cairokee at 02:53 into the music and fade out by ‘they wanted have happened’]
In fall 2011, the administration has increased the fees on both returning and new students by 9%, which triggered the students, especially the returning ones. At almost the same time, the workers were striking for the second time in the same year because of the bad conditions of work, low wages, and uncomfortable means of coming to the campus, no contracts and several other points that filled them with rage. But why did the students support them now and not in their first strike that took place in the previous semester?? El Badri comments on this saying: (:40)

*El Badri: No, the workers strike was common, we stood by them in the first one and we stood by them in the second but the difference was that the second time was directly after the revolution and the administration could not neglect it because they would be attacking the revolution if they refused our rights. Then they would be attacking, this is my point of view, the essence of the revolution that happened in Egypt while before we were still under Mubarak’s regime so it would not matter if they heard us or not, nothing was going to happen and nothing was going to change so it did not matter. This is why the outcome of the first strike was not that much, it was not because the student’s participation was not a lot but it’s because of the different regime that we were under during each one. (:47)*

But did the strikes whether the students’ or the workers strike achieve what they were aiming for?? (:11)

*Badrawi: President Lisa said that they would do some stuff that they wanted regarding their salaries, the buses, certain things regarding the workers but I do not think that they all happened. I think that she just talked and not all what they wanted have happened. (:25)*

[Natural Sound fade-in: “chants of the students during the strikes and fade-out at ‘lots critics’”]

The students kept on striking for more than 2 weeks during which they did not attend their classes and spend most of the time moving around the campus expressing their disappointment and anger with the administration. Now they are addressing other students saying, “wake up and demand you rights and do not let the administration do whatever it wants.” Most of the chanting took place in front of the Administration Building. (:35)

Although the fact that the strikes were aiming at helping the students and giving them some voice in the decision making process of the administration plus giving the workers some of their rights, the strikes were met with lots critics, (:18)

[Music Fade-in: “Bokra Elshams Tatlaa (Tomorrow the Sun will Rise)” by Cairokee at 02:53 into the music and fade out by “bother myself”]
El Badry: They were against the strike because it was a big hassle, it’s not the point that people do not care but it’s that they do not care enough to participate. It’s the problem that most of the people hate to bother themselves with a problem that concerns somebody else even if they care. So it’s the part of the hassle not the whole goal of the strike itself and how it happened and how people acted during the strike like attacking the classes and taking people outside the classes and stuff. (30)

Could there be other reasons!! (03)

Badrawi: their parents were involved as people called “feloll”, people do not like change. People are resistant to change. They are happy, they are fine. They are traveling; they are getting educated so why look at other people. We are enjoying and we do not need to look at others. That is the mentality of most of AUCians not to generalize but mainly they think about themselves, so what I am saying is that they do not want change, not motivated enough, why should I participate in the revolution and it’s not benefiting me and at the same time it’s not harming me. I am not harmed by the current situation so why bother myself. (65)

[Music Fade-in: “Bahabk Ya Bladi (I love you my country)” by Ramy Gamal at 00:10 into the music and fade-out at ‘the man he was’]

The strikes and the effects of the revolution were not the only thing that happened during 2011/2012 and really impacted AUC and AUCians. All the hassle and the mess that happened during the revolution and the strikes had someone in common who were lost in February 2012 in one of the saddest events that followed the revolution and the absence of order and police. Omar Mohsen, a senior student who was about to graduate with a bachelor in economics in Fall 2011 passed away in the clashes between Al Ahly and Al Masri club. (40)

Mohsen was the kind of person who was loved by everyone whether you ask a student at AUC or a worker. No matter who you ask will tell you about the man he was. (13)

[Music Fade-in: “Bahabk Ya Bladi (I love you my country)” by Ramy Gamal at 00:10 into the music and fade-out at ‘the man he was’]

Badrawi: I really liked how Omar Participated in Tahrir and in the strikes, in AUC strikes. He thought that we are all equal, we should have freedom, and the workers should have their rights equally. He was an amazing person, he was the kindest hearted ever. He was perfect in everything for example in school he used to teach his classmates psychology, math, he is good in everything. He was not the highest GPA but he was smart, he knew that if he concentrates that he would do well. He was loyal to his friends, he was strong, had a sense of humor, he was funny. He wanted a free Egypt, he wanted freedom, he wanted people to be happy, and he was always smiling whatever the circumstances. He was a great friend, a great brother, a friend who could stand by your
side when you need him. I can never stop talking about him. He had this charisma, this personality that you can never forget. (:90)

[Music Fade-in: “Ethbat Makank (Hold your Place)” by Cairokee at 01:50 into the music and face-out at ‘I do not know’]

Hard to believe that someone would go to watch a match and do not come back, hard to believe that someone like Omar is gone because …. Because of what, still his family and friends wonder why they lost him, why did he go to stand by something that he loved and did not come back. Is that what happens to the people who believe in something and support it? Is a question that everyone ever knew Omar asks…(:35)

*Badrawi: it was unfair; no one is going to feel the relief and the calm inside us until we can see justice. Until we see justice, we can see that those who killed Omar are in jail or sentenced to death or anything but this is unfair, this unfair to his family, friends, everyone. Why could someone go watch a match and never come back because of security and police issues? Why? Why? I still ask myself this question why is that I do not know!! (:35)*

[Music Fade-in: “Ethbat Makank (Hold your Place)” by Cairokee at 03:25 in to the music at fade-out few seconds after ‘and be free’]

Omar is gone, yeah he is gone but what he stood for and believed in is still here and all the people he loved and who loved him back are still here. His friends believe that the only way to take his revenge is to keep on protesting to keep on saying their opinions freely and be able to enjoy their freedom that Omar died believing in. (:26)

The revolution did not end, freedom can still be reached. And we cannot just forget about Omar, we cannot do this till we get his rights back. (:12)

The revolution, the AUC strikes and Omar all have one thing in common, all happened in 2011/2012 and they all passed but one thing cannot just pass. One thing should always last, the idea after all these events, Omar has died, the strikes are over, there are so many people trying to end the revolution but no one can kill freedom as they killed Omar.. No one can restrict ideas as they restrict protests. No one can longer censor you so do not censor yourself and be free….(:47)
**CREDITS:**

**INTERVIEWEES:-**

- Interviewee 1: Khaled El Mahdy.
- Interviewee 2: Mohamed El Badry.
- Interviewee 3: Nada Badrawi.

**MUSIC:-**

- Ya El Midan by Cairokee band.
- Ethbat Makank (Hold your Place) by Cairokee band.
- BahabkYa Blady (I love you my Country) by Ramy Gamal.
- Bokra Elshams Tatlaa (Tomorrow the Sun will Rise) by Cairokee Band.