Anatomy of Authoritarianism in the Arab Republics

By examining the system of authoritarianism in eight Arab republics, Joseph Sassoon portrays life under these regimes and explores the mechanisms underpinning their resilience. How did the leadership in these countries create such enduring systems? What was the economic system that prolonged the regimes’ longevity, but simultaneously led to their collapse? Why did these seemingly stable regimes begin to falter? This book seeks to answer these questions by utilizing the Iraqi archives and memoirs of those who were embedded in these republics: political leaders, ministers, generals, security agency chiefs, party members, and business people. Taking a thematic approach, the book begins in 1952 with the Egyptian Revolution and ends with the Arab uprisings of 2011. It seeks to deepen our understanding of the authoritarianism and coercive systems that prevailed in these countries and the difficult process of transition from authoritarianism that began after 2011.

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JOSEPH SASSOON
To Rachey
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Notes on transliteration

For most Arabic names and words, this book uses a modified transliteration system based on the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). In the interest of making Arabic terms accessible to non-specialist readers, I have only included diacritical marks for the Arabic letters *ayn* (‘) and *hamza* (’). Otherwise, Arabic letters have been transliterated according to the IJMES system with diacritical markings omitted.

Two important exceptions have been made to this system. First, correct transliteration can have the unfortunate effect of rendering famous names unrecognizable, changing, for instance, Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasser to Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir or Béji Caïd Essebsi to Baji Qa’id al-Sabsi. Thus, for heads of state only I have broken with the IJMES system and have instead used spellings that are more easily recognizable. For presidents from North Africa, where French is widely spoken, I have used the common French rendering of names. For the others, I have used common English spellings. A list of the names of Arab presidents can be found in Table 3.1.

Second, a small number of the memoirists examined in this book published their writings in English or French, in addition to Arabic. In these cases, I consistently used the authors’ own preferred English or French spelling of their names, rather than using a “correct” transliteration of their names according to the IJMES system, even when referring to their writings in Arabic. This applies to authors such as Mohamed Mzali, Ahmed Mestiri, and Khalid Nezzar.
Glossary and abbreviations

amin shurta
amin sirr
amn al-dawla
al-ann al-ijima’i
al-ann al-qawmi
badal
dawla amniyya
dhikrayat
diwan
biwar
al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun
infítah

jidž al-ann al-khass
jidž al-mababith
jidž al-mukhabarat al-‘amma
khaliyya
al-mababith al-‘amma
majlis al-nuwawab
majlis al-sha’b
al-makatib al-‘askariyya
masirat hayat
mudhakkirat
mukhabarat
qasr al-nihaya
al-qiyada al-qutriyya
risala
wazir awwal
yaumniyyat
deputy inspector
party secretariat
state security organization
security for social affairs
national security
fee for military exemption
state dominated by security services
memories
presidential offices
dialogue
Muslim Brothers
“opening,” economic liberalization policy
special security organization
investigation bureau
general intelligence directorate
party cell
general investigative directorate
chamber of deputies
people’s council
military bureaus
autobiographies
memoirs
intelligence services
“palace of the end,” an Iraqi prison
regional command
message
prime minister in North Africa
diaries
Abbreviations

FLN  Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front) – Algeria
NDP  al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati (National Democratic Party) – Egypt
PSD  Parti Socialiste Destourien (Constitutional Socialist Party) – Tunisia
RCD  Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique (Democratic Constitutional Rally) – Tunisia
SSO  Special Security Organization – Iraq
Map of the eight Arab republics