

Revolutionary justice: special courts and the formation of republican Egypt

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Abstrak

Revolutionary Justice narrates the power struggle between the free officers and their adversaries in the aftermath of Egypt's July revolution of 1952 by studying trials held at the revolution's court and the people's court. The establishment of these tribunals coincided with the most serious political crisis between the new regime and the opposition, primarily the Muslim Brothers and the Wafd Party, but also senior officials in the previous government. By this point, the initial euphoria and the unbridled adoration for the free officers had worn off, and the focus of the public debate shifted to the legitimacy of the army's continued rule.

Revolutionary Justice focuses on what happened both within and outside the courtroom. The tribunals' transcripts, which constitute the prime source of this study, afford a rare glimpse of the direct dialogue between opposing parties. The book's principal argument is that the rhetoric generated by Egypt's special courts played a crucial role in the denouement of the country's political struggles, the creation of new historical narratives, and the shaping of both the regime and the opposition's public image. The courtroom deliberations perpetuated the prevailing emergency atmosphere, which helped the junta tighten its grip on the helm and advance its plans for a new dispensation. At the same time, the responses of defendants and witnesses during the trials exposed weaknesses in the official hegemonic narrative. Paradoxically, oppositional views that the regime tirelessly endeavored to silence were tolerated and recorded in the courtroom.