THE IDEAS OF ARAB NATIONALISM
THIS book is an attempt to explore the genesis, ideas, attitudes, and orientations of Arab nationalism as they are discernible in contemporary thought on the subject. The Arab peoples of the Middle East and North Africa—inhabiting a constellation of territories stretching from Syria in the north to the Sudan in the south and from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Persian Gulf in the east—include the Syrians, the Lebanese, the Palestinians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, the Sudanese, the Libyans, the Tunisians, the Algerians, the Moroccans, the Iraqis, the Saudi Arabians, the Yemenites, and the inhabitants of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms. Most of the seventy million people of these territories regard themselves as Arabs, and in their striving to reconstruct the foundations of their life after centuries of disastrous lethargy they are embracing Arab nationalism as the standard-bearer of their hopes and aspirations for the new order struggling grimly to be born.

Books and articles on the manifold activities of the Arab
world have been so abundant over the past half-century as to impose upon any new contributor to the subject the task of justifying further additions. To begin the task, let me say that the great bulk of the available literature is episodic and descriptive, whereas this book is intended as an analysis of ideas and provides descriptive material only insofar as that material contributes to the task of analysis. While a great deal is known about the outward activities of the Arab world, there is profound ignorance concerning what lies behind those stirrings and activities—what goes on in the realm of thought and belief, which, after all, are the volitional and dynamic forces in the lives of nations.

Apart from George Antonius' *The Arab Awakening*—written almost twenty years ago—there has been no serious attempt at a systematic study of the ideas of modern Arab nationalism. Western scholars well versed in the problems of the Arab and Muslim worlds are seemingly reluctant to recognize this movement as a viable, durable, and creative force. They deal with it—if at all—either as an aberration or as a European virus, transient, ephemeral, and erasable.

The claim to attention—let alone the fascination—which the classical studies of the old Arab-Islamic legacy offers to scholars is easily understandable and should by no means be disparaged. The results of these painstaking researches are a treasured achievement of modern scholarship because of the light which they have so brilliantly shed on the life, thought, and beliefs of a people whose contribution has been of signal import in the ever-expanding horizon of knowledge and the progress of human civilization.

But, are not the living Arabs of the contemporary world deserving of some of the attention which their forefathers attract in the exertions of modern scholars? While it is true that contemporary Arabs are still in the stage of muddling through and of probing their way toward a new and un-
charted order of existence and while it is a fact that they are, and for quite a while will continue to be, mainly recipients of rather than contributors to the common pool of human knowledge, they do nevertheless deserve attention and study for two reasons: (1) because they are active participants in one of those historic encounters between different civilizations, the outcome of which may well be epoch-making in the political as well as the ideological alignments of our contemporary world and (2) because it is with the living Arabs and not those of ages long past that the rest of the world has to deal. Needless to say, the thought and the beliefs of the contemporary Arabs are substantially at variance with those of their predecessors in ages past, notwithstanding that the past has thrust its characteristics upon the present in varying degrees and in manifold ways. Such being the case, the tendency—so persistent in modern Arabic scholarship—to portray the Arabs in terms of static pictures and stereotype images is unfortunate if not decidedly misleading. Is it any wonder, then, that modern Arab nationalism is misunderstood, vilified, and opposed by many people throughout the Western world?

Furthermore, nationalism per se is presently in a state of disrepute among widespread sections of opinion on account of the excesses to which it has led and the miseries which it has wrought upon millions of people throughout the world during the past few decades. It is difficult, therefore, not to be apologetic in presenting a case of nationalism, however commendable. Let me say at the outset that nationalism, like all other phenomena pertaining to human relationships, is a mixture of good and evil. It is a force for integration and co-operation as well as for dissipation and conflict. It has to its credit such praiseworthy qualities as patriotism, loyalty, and self-denial, while at the same time it must answer to certain inexcusable traits of
moral corruption and decivilizing instincts which it has evoked and nourished.

It is in recognition of the serious divergencies of opinion concerning the fundamental postulates of nationalism that I have deemed it necessary to review critically the various approaches which have been used in its study and evaluation. This study has been placed in an appendix to the book, and it will be seen that a balanced combination of the empirical and the universal approaches, referred to as the comparative approach, is recommended as the most promising procedure. Although this book is addressed to one specific nationalism and not to a systematic comparison of different ones, an attempt has been made to work out the implications of the comparative method and to heed its standards, criteria, and prerequisites.

Chapters I, II, and III are a quest for the historical genesis of Arab nationalism. Specific chronologies of events have been avoided in favor of important milestones and general trends. These, it is submitted, correspond more accurately to the actual state of affairs than does the specification of dates or of events. Contemporary Arab nationalism stems from three sources corresponding to three main periods: the pre-Islamic, the Islamic, and the modern. The division is primarily ideological rather than chronological and is not intended to be mutually exclusive or amenable to watertight differentiation.

Chapters IV and V are devoted to an exploration of the factors constituting contemporary Arab nationalism as they are expounded in the literature on the subject. The study highlights the controversial and tentative nature of the formulations, which reflect the confusions of a movement still in its embryonic stage. In the formulation of the postulates of Arab nationalism two principal sources have been used. The first is the legacy of the past as exemplified in the community of language, of tradition, and of his-
torical experiences. The second is the cultural impact of the West. The deep impress of Western concepts is evident in the treatment of such vital issues as the relationship of the temporal and the spiritual and the concepts of national interest, race, national character, and special mission.

In Chapters VI, VII, and VIII an attempt is made to canvass the political theories, attitudes, and tendencies discernible alike in theoretical expositions and in existing patterns of government. Because of the dearth of political theory in the cultural legacy of the Arabs, the discontinuity in their political life and traditions, and the diversification of their existing political systems, considerable attention is devoted to the question of political antecedents, with a view to ascertaining their relative influence in the consciousness of the present. This survey covers over a century of political theorizing and constitutional developments and is presented against a background of the historical-social milieu of which these theories are the outcome and a register.

The last two chapters deal with the ideas of contemporary Arab thought regarding the all-important problem of social change. Three attitudes are identified and discussed: (1) zealotry, which is averse to change in all its forms, (2) a selective approach, which draws a distinction between civilization and culture, between the material and the nonmaterial aspects of change, and (3) a comprehensive approach, which sees a direct link between the spirit of a culture and its outward achievements and which advocates Westernization in all its aspects.

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THE IDEAS OF ARAB NATIONALISM
THE GENESIS OF ARAB NATIONALISM

CONTEMPORARY Arab nationalism has its roots in three main sources, corresponding to three principal periods interrupted by varying intervals. These periods are the pre-Islamic, which came to a close in the seventh century of the Christian era; the Islamic, which extended up to the nineteenth century; and the modern, which began in the nineteenth century and is still continuing. These three eras are primarily ideological rather than chronological divisions, and they will be treated as such in the quest for the roots of Arab nationalism. Moreover, they are not mutually exclusive. The flow of ideas is an imperceptible process in time. Although the Islamic era is said to have given way to the modern in the nineteenth century, no implication is intended that Islamic influences ceased to be important. The nineteenth century is taken as a new era because the monistic hold of the Islamic way of life, as it had petrified during the past millennium, gave
way to a plurality of influences, with a significant trend away from the old and toward a new synthesis.

In this and the next two chapters an attempt will be made to locate the roots of Arab nationalism and to trace its development from its inchoate manifestations in pre-Islamic Arabia, through a middle period of thwarted growth, and down to the modern ongoing process of re-activation.

**Historical Background**

It is not the aim in this historical sketch to delve into the great antiquity of Arabian history or to narrate its long sequence of events. Not only would such an undertaking be hazardous on account of sparse knowledge and controversial theories; it is also unnecessary, because the object of this inquiry is the genesis and growth of Arab national consciousness rather than the biological existence of the Arab race. This background sketch, therefore, presents only a survey designed to elucidate those landmarks that are deemed to have been significant in the gradual emergence of an Arab nationality.

On the basis of the scanty and inconclusive knowledge thus far available, the history of pre-Islamic Arabia may be divided into three epochs. The first is the prehistorical. A number of theories have been propounded in an effort to explain such questions as: Where was the cradle of the Semitic race? Who were the earliest Semites to settle in Arabia and whence did they come? Were the migrations of the Semitic peoples impelled by the progressive desiccation of the Arabian Peninsula? What kind of civilization did those proto-Arabians possess? These and other related questions are significant to such branches of knowledge as anthropology, but they are inconsequential in the present inquiry.

The second epoch, for which archaeological, epigraphi-
cal, and historical records are available, reveals a highly developed civilization in South Arabia, which was organized around four main kingdoms—those of the Sabaeans, the Minaeans, the Hadramautians, and the Qatabanians. The origins of this civilization are unknown, but there are strong evidences of links with Mesopotamia from the beginning. The inscriptions—very close to the Arabic—have shed some light on the religious, political, economic, and social aspects of that civilization. They establish that South Arabia was an important center of economic life, of political power, and of high culture. What is known of the North Arabians before the Hellenistic age is far less. They appear to have led a nomadic life, save for a few settlements populated by colonists from South Arabia.

Later in this second epoch, during the third or fourth century B.C., the first North Arabian state, the Nabataean, rose to a position of international eminence. The Nabataeans succeeded the Edomites in the region between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba and the Moabites and Ammonites in Transjordan. Their inscriptions were in Aramaic although their everyday language was Arabic. In their religion Arabian and Aramaic features coexisted. Several other Arab tribes established dynasties in Syria and Mesopotamia, as in Hims (Emesa), whose royal house gave two emperors to Rome.

1 Our knowledge of South Arabian history is derived from a few passages by Greek and Roman historians; from the semilegendary traditions of early Muslim literature; and, above all, from the inscriptions discovered by Halévy and Glaser. “The earliest inscriptions found date from the sixth or seventh century B.C.,” though South Arabian civilization goes back to a much earlier age. See P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (London, 1940), pp. 49–66.

2 For a history of the Nabataeans, see ibid., pp. 67–86.

The civilization of these states achieved a commingling of diverse elements, a merging of Arab, Near Eastern, and Greek, that seems to foretell the later and greater accomplishments of Islam. But there was an important difference, and it is highly germane to our inquiry: this was the absence in these earlier states of that dynamic force of national patriotism and religious zeal which so strongly characterized their successors and enabled them to impress their language and civilization upon the whole area.

The third epoch is not only better known through literary records, but it is also the most important of the three in the development of Arab nationality. This period, which covers the few centuries before Islam, is known as al-jahiliyah ("the state of ignorance"). Although it is true that these centuries witnessed an increase in the area of nomadism, following the decline and fall of the indigenous South Arabian civilization, as well as a recession of Mesopotamian and Aramaic culture in the north, it is now generally agreed that the term ignorance, as used in the Quran and by Muslim historians, does not mean "ignorance" as much as "wildness" and that its antithesis is not ilm ("knowledge") but rather hilm ("temperance").

A thoughtful appraisal of the Arabs' national development during this period shows the achievements of early Islam, not as first blossomings in a total wilderness, but as culminations which could not have been reached without a long and solid background. Evidences of growth, integration, and vitality are discernible on manifold levels of however, that these kingdoms were Aramaean in their civilization and population; only the upper classes were of Arab stock.

For a discussion of the term, see Ahmad Amin, Fajr al-Islam ("The Dawn of Islam") (Cairo, 1928), pp. 83-84. The author is one of the foremost authorities on modern Arabic literature. As professor of Arabic literature at the University of Cairo for many years, his influence on the contemporary generation of Arabists has been considerable.
spiritual and material activity. The celebrated odes, the *Muallaqat* or "suspended poems," are the legacy of this period. The South Arabic tongue had given place to pure Arabic and Arabs all over the Peninsula talked, with slight differences of dialect, one common language. Their folkways, mores, ideas, and tastes were similar. Although each city or tribe had its own separate gods and goddesses, its separate temples and rituals, Mecca served as the center of the national as well as the religious life.

The migrations that had begun in the Hellenistic age and that culminated in the establishment of the Nabataean and other kindred Arab states were reproduced five or six centuries later during a second major move into the territories of the Fertile Crescent. They led to the establishment of the Ghassanid state in Syria and of the Lakhmids in Hira on the Euphrates, both of which served as forerunners of yet a third and greater surging forward in the seventh century A.D. under the banner of Islam.

It stands to reason that the epoch immediately preceding Islam would have been pregnant with stirrings of every sort, for no nation is ever born into unity and maturity overnight. Nations emerge gradually in a succession of activities, experiences, and events, and their spectacular emergences following extraordinary feats of some kind

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5 For the text and a discussion of these odes, see R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, Eng., 1953), esp. ch. iii.
6 It might be added that both Judaism and Christianity had penetrated into the area and that an indigenous monotheistic religion known as Hanifism and approvingly cited in the Quran, had been forming.
7 C. H. Becker gives an economic interpretation to the Islamic conquests of the seventh century: "The sudden surging forward of the Arabs was only apparently sudden. For centuries previously, the Arab migration had been in preparation. It was the last great Semitic migration connected with the economical decline of Arabia" (The *Cambridge Medieval History* [New York, 1913], II, 331).
serve to conceal the more basic albeit less perceptible process of growth.

Physical Environment

What were the potent factors in the Arabs' national development during the long span prior to Islam? The material environment was probably the most significant. In few other instances has the encounter between the physical and the social environment been such a one-sided tyranny of one over the other, of the inanimate over the human. The story of the Arab people in the pre-Islamic era is largely a register of their incessant struggle for survival, through physical and social adaptation to inhospitable surroundings or, when all such efforts had proved to no avail, through migration and expansion.

A number of questions arise in connection with the impact of geography upon the emergence of nationalities. A comparative survey shows that, though important, the claims of geographic determinism are not omnipotent. The physical environment is an efficient factor, but in combination with other factors. Moreover, it is still an open question whether a harsh environment is a blessing or a curse. While ease has in many instances been inimical to civilization, as a leading contemporary historian asserts, and while it is true that "the stimulus grows positively stronger in proportion as the environment grows more difficult," the thesis is by no means unequivocal or universal. What, for example, is to be the time perspective when we set out to ascertain the influence of the environment upon the destinies of the Arabs? If the starting point is 2000 B.C., the conclusion is inescapable that the aridity and barrenness stultified national development, integration, and progress for almost fifteen hundred years.

Only the people of Arabia Felix within the Peninsula had stepped over the threshold of civilization, thanks to the fertility of that rain-favored land, its proximity to the sea, and its strategic location on the India route.9 The other centers of Arab development during the pre-Islamic period were in the relatively well-endowed Fertile Crescent: the Nabataeans of Transjordan, the kingdoms of Palmyra and of the Ghassanids in Syria, and the Lakhmids of Hira in Iraq.

A plausible case might be made for the virtue of adversity, provided the latter was not unqualified or absolute. For adversity could reach the proportion of the calamitous, resulting in the demise rather than the stimulation of the stricken society. It is necessary to emphasize this point because, in gauging the impact of the environment upon the pre-Islamic Arabs, historians, particularly those inclined to the thesis of "virtue in adversity," refer to a phenomenon (ubiquitous in ancient and medieval times) that the modern industrial era has irrevocably left behind. It is the encounter between the nomadic and the sedentary, the eruption of nomadic hordes out of their desert and steppe redoubts into the luxury-ridden and demoralized sedentary areas. The vigorously high standard of character, the fortitude, and the mobility, which a harsh nomadic environment demands and exacts from its people, afford them an initial superiority and decide the conflict in their favor.10 This, however, is but an indirect gain, very


10 According to Ibn Khaldun, the highest stage in the development of society is urban civilization. But as soon as that stage is attained, civilization begins to decline. Under the influence of settled life and the luxury and corruption arising therefrom, the former virility and communal solidarity wane, and in course of time the processes of degeneration set in. It need hardly be pointed out that Ibn Khaldun's dictum does not apply to modern industrial societies where the urban state and solidarity have attained a high degree of fusion.
dearly acquired in centuries of wasted solitude; and if we accept Ibn Khaldun's interpretation, it is foredoomed to be short-lived, because triumph carries within itself its own seeds of destruction.

Whether a curse or a blessing, the effect of the environment was decisive. In the political arena, it rendered virtually impossible the formation of a central government to which the people could owe political obligations and around which a tradition of habitual loyalty and discipline might evolve. The political instabilities that rocked the Arab Empire to its foundations soon after its rise are directly attributable to the lack of common political traditions in the crucial formative era before Islam. Wherever they went, the Arabs carried with them their intense, jealously guarded individualism and their aversion to all authority save that of their own tribal leaders, to whom they were bound by ties of kinship.

These centrifugal tendencies, however, were paralleled by that other attribute of a desert environment, the communal sense, asabiyah ("solidarity"), which Ibn Khaldun regards as the mainstay, the élan vital of states. This communal sense, closely akin to the modern idea of patriotism (though more restricted in application), was particularly strong in pre-Islamic Arabia because, in the absence of a central political authority, it afforded the only protection to the individual amid unruly surroundings.\(^\text{11}\) It was based upon the principle of collective security and entailed both obligations and rights. If an individual was aggrieved, his tribal community undertook to redress the wrong. In consideration of this protection and support,

\(^{\text{11}}\) "A tribeless man in Arabia, like a landless man in the Middle Ages in England, was helpless. Everyone's hand was against him" (P. Kennedy, Arabian Society at the Time of Muhammad [Calcutta, 1926], p. 4).
each member pledged unconditional loyalty and devotion to the commonweal.

The bond of solidarity exercised a profound influence upon the fortunes of the Arabs at the dawn of Islam, for it considerably facilitated the task of organizing and uniting them—already half-accomplished in those highly disciplined and strongly animated phalanxes of tribes and confederations of tribes. The esprit de corps was there in ample measure; what was needed for national consolidation was a rallying point, a broadening of the horizon of allegiance. This came about directly through Islam and indirectly as a result of the Arab conquests, which brought the Arabs face to face with other peoples and thereby accentuated their feeling of nationality.

Consciousness of Race

The Arabs belong to that family of nations which, on account of their supposed descent from Shem, the son of Noah, are known as Semites. This family included the Babylonians and Assyrians, the Hebrews, the Phoenicians, the Aramaeans, the Abyssinians, and the Sabaeans. On a lower level of generalization and in accord with the arrangement of Arab genealogists the Arabs supposedly followed two separate lines of descent from their common ancestor. One was the Qahtanite, descendants of Qahtan, also called Joktan, the son of Abir (Eber), one of whose sons, Yarub, gave his name to the country and the people. The Yemenites, or South Arabs, are descended from this line and are known as al-Arab al-Aaribah (“Arabian Arabs”) to underline the seniority of their stock.

The second and younger line is descended from Ismail

12 There was a third subdivision (in point of time it was the first)—al-Arab al-Baidah (“the extinct Arabs”), under which were included the Hamitic colonies, whose abode was central Arabia.
Ishmael), son of Abraham by Hagar. The Ismailites are known as \textit{al-Arab al-Mustaribah} ("Arabicized Arabs"). They settled near Mecca and became, with the rise of Islam, the more important family of the Arabs. The Northern Arabs belong to this line, which is also known by the names of Adnan, Nizar, Mudar, and Qays.

From time immemorial, historians tell us, Arabia was divided into North and South, not only by the trackless desert, the Rub al-Khali ("solitary quarter"), but also by the opposition of two kindred races, which differed in their character and way of life.\textsuperscript{18} The consequent race consciousness delayed for generations the molding of a homogeneous nation, while after Islam it conspired to bring about the untimely collapse of the Empire through fratricidal conflict on the one hand and the alienation of non-Arab subject peoples on the other.

But to what extent was the division physiological, that is based upon genetically differentiated types, rather than environmental, that is due to exposure to distinctive environments and to participation in distinctive cultures? There seems to be no agreement on this point, and at least a part of the difficulty stems from a confusion of race as a biological category with race consciousness as a phenomenon pertaining to the field of human relationships. On the purely physiological side, modern anthropologists have found the Northerners predominantly dolichocephalic (long-headed), indicating that the racial affinities of the North are with the Mediterranean peoples, and the Southerners brachycephalic (round-headed), pointing to greater affinities with the Alpine type. It is significant that Bertram Thomas, while endorsing the views of Eduard Glaser the scholar and of Richard Burton the traveler,

\textsuperscript{18} For a discussion of the ethnology of pre-Islamic Arabia, see the article by M. J. de Goeje, in \textit{The Encyclopedia of Islam} (Leyden and London, 1913), I, 372–377.
namely, that Arabs do not present a uniform physiological type, remarks nonetheless that the physiological differences do not coincide with the traditional Qahtan-Adnan split. Moreover, admixtures between the two were sufficiently extensive to render untenable any sharp biological division.

The social and historical interpretations of this supposedly racial split seem to be more plausible. The Himyarites, according to historians, attained a high state of civilization several centuries before Islam: they possessed an organized government; they knew the art of writing and were skilled in agriculture. The Northerners, on the other hand, with the exception of the Quraysh, were nomadic and pastoral. Their lack of cohesion naturally led to their subjugation by the Himyarite kings, to whom they paid tribute, in spite of frequent wars, until late in the fifth century of the Christian era. The incessant struggle created a burning antagonism, which was kept alive by their bards.

With this emphasis upon historical and social differences, the term “racial” shifts from natural science to social science, for the clash was of the nature of the traditional feud between Sparta and Athens rather than of the struggle between Greek and barbarian. Its function was to ful-


15 In the century before the Prophet Muhammad the Quraysh tribe was undisputed master of Mecca and guardian of the Kabah. The office not only enriched the Quraysh materially but also enhanced their prestige in the eyes of the thousands of pilgrims to this national shrine. But the lasting glory of the Quraysh came after the Prophetic mission of their son, Muhammad. Henceforth, members of the tribe became empire builders and lawgivers. Their association with the Prophet has bestowed upon the Quraysh an exalted position. Even today they are respected and venerated throughout the Muslim world.

16 See Ameer Ali, A Short History of the Saracens (London, 1900), pp. 74–76.
Fill that universal trait in humanity—to co-operate with an "in-group" and to fight with an "out-group." That the demarcation between the "in" and the "out" group was flexible rather than fixed may be seen from the relational nature of their clan solidarity, which varied with the nearness of the relationship. Thus, the two divisions of a single fakhidh would be united against another fakhidh, though both might belong to one batn. Similarly, two batns of one imarah might be united against another imarah, though both imarahs belonged to a single kabilah ("tribe").

And, indeed, both Qahtanites and Adnanites united against non-Arabs, whom they called ajam ("dumb"), boasting of the superiority of their own race and language. We will elaborate later on such early manifestations of national solidarity.

Common Language

The importance of language as a factor in forming and sustaining group consciousness is obvious as it tends to promote like-mindedness and a cultural area within which a consciousness of identity and of sharing develop. Pre-Islamic Arabia was not a political entity, and yet it developed a high degree of social and cultural consciousness, akin to nationality, largely on account of its community of language. By the sixth century of the Christian era, the Himyarite dialect of the South had been superseded by the dialect of the North, the Arabic par excellence of the pre-Islamic poems. The authors of the poems, representing

17 For a description of the various clan divisions, see Jurji Zaydan, History of Islamic Civilization, tr. from Arabic by D. S. Margoliouth (London, 1907), pt. iv, pp. 2–4.

18 In a paper presented to the Colloquium on Islamic culture, called jointly by Princeton University and the Library of Congress in September 1953, Dr. Jawad Ali, president of the Iraqi Academy, subscribed to the criticisms of the use of the term Himyarite to denote the South Arabic dialect, which was used also by the Minaeans, Sa-
many different tribes and districts, used one and the same language.

R. A. Nicholson comments:

We might conclude that the poets used an artificial dialect, not such as was commonly spoken but resembling the epic dialect of Ionia. . . . When we find, however, that the language in question is employed not only by the wandering troubadours, who were often men of some culture, and the Christian Arabs of Hira on the Euphrates, but also by goat-herds, brigands, and illiterate Bedouins of every description, there can be no room for doubt that in the poetry of the sixth century we hear the Arabic language as it was then spoken throughout . . . Arabia.19

The poems, the proverbs, the traditions, the legends and mythologies, expressed in spoken literature and transmitted by oral tradition, greatly influenced the development of an Arab national consciousness; they molded the minds of the Arabs, fixed their character, and made them morally and spiritually a nation long before Muhammad welded the various conflicting groups into a single organism animated by one purpose.20

Folkways and Consciousness of Nationality

In a community without a political authority possessing a monopoly of law-enforcement agencies, folkways sustain and regulate the existing social order. The importance of folkways to the nurture and maintenance of group solidarity cannot be overestimated, for they represent the ways

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baeans, Qatabanians, and Hadramauti. As the Himyarites were the last of the Southerners to achieve prominence, he pointed out, it is an error to call the dialect after them. Until we know which group first developed the dialect, it should be called musnad, the term used by classical Arab philologists.

in which the group has become accommodated to the necessities of social life, as recognized at each stage of development. Their cohesive force is even more potent than that of stateways because, unlike the latter, which may or may not have their basis in the consent of the governed, they weld the community together by consent freely given.

The question now is: To what extent did the pre-Islamic Arabs constitute a national community on account of their shared folkways? No matter how carefully and restrictively the term community is applied, the pre-Islamic Arabs—at least those of the Peninsula—constituted a community properly so called. They possessed numerous patterns of associational activities, festivals, and rituals, clustered around common centripetal attractions, both material and spiritual. Holy places such as the Kabah wherein all the idols of the pagan Arabs were ranged, the various literary festivals including the celebrated “literary market” of Ukaz to which pilgrimage was made, the sacred months during which the Lord’s Truce reigned throughout the land—these were some of the more important institutional patterns which contributed to molding a national community of sentiment.

Of no less importance were those norms, value attitudes, and cultural traits which, to use a modern concept, constituted the “national character.” A system of myths, symbols, and “ideal types,” of which pre-Islamic literature is a promulgation and a register, embodied the values, beliefs, and notions which the pagan Arabs cherished and by which they regulated their life.

21 These were the four months of “holy truce,” recognized by the Quran, sura ix, verse 96. Three months were set aside for religious observances and the fourth for trade. During these months fighting was absolutely forbidden.
The term *muruah* ("manliness") symbolized the ideal of Arab virtue, with its three salient features: courage, loyalty, and generosity. The first of these virtues, described as bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, persistence in revenge, protection of the weak, and defiance of the strong, is personified in such hero types as Shanfara of Azd, Antarah ibn Shaddad of Abs, and Amr ibn Kalthum. The second component of virtue—loyalty and fidelity—is represented in the story of Samawal ibn Adiya. Honor required that a man should fulfill a pledge regardless of the consequence or the sacrifices which such fidelity might entail. As a member of the group, he was duty-bound to stand loyally by his people through thick and thin, in much the same way as a modern citizen feels impelled to support his country, right or wrong.

The third component of virtue—generosity—was symbolized in the life story of Hatim of Tayyi. Extravagant

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22 Shanfara of Azd was a renowned warrior as well as an excellent poet. He is best known as the author of that splendid ode *Lamiyyat al-Arab* ("the poem rhymed in the Arabic l"), in which he describes his own heroic character and achievements.

23 Antarah of the tribe of Abs was born of a slave mother. He was acknowledged by his father only after he had distinguished himself in battle. He was the hero of a celebrated romance with a cousin named Abla. Antarah was the author of a famous *muallaqa* depicting stirring battle scenes of the War of Dahis.

24 Amr ibn Kalthum belonged to the tribe of Taghlib. A warrior and poet, his *muallaqa* glorified the ideal qualities of manliness, as these were understood and cherished in pre-Islamic Arabia.

25 Samawal ibn Adiya is, according to Arab tradition, the embodiment par excellence of the virtue of loyalty and fidelity. The story is that, rather than give up five coats of mail entrusted to his keeping, he permitted his son to be slain.

26 Hatim of Tayyi was a poet of some repute, but his fame derives from the fact that he personified the Arabian ideal of generosity and hospitality.
as the many anecdotes told of him may be, they represent, nonetheless, models of ideal behavior and show the high premium placed upon generosity in the value orientations of pagan Arabia. Whether these symbols were a faithful reproduction of the actual and general experiences of the people or, as in the Homeric poems, a mere idealization of some aspects is beside the point. What is significant is that they constituted dominant and pervasive value patterns and served, therefore, as a unifying principle of life.

Nationality Not Nationalism

It will be observed that throughout the preceding discussion, the term nationalism has been avoided. The reason is that what we have been discussing is nationality and not nationalism, which is a modern fusion of patriotism and nationality with national patriotism predominating over all other human loyalties. In pagan Arabia, as in other ancient and medieval nations, patriotism was localized. Its scope rarely exceeded the limits of the tribe or the confederation of tribes.

Instances are not wanting in which the Arabs displayed an unmistakable national consciousness. The patriotic feelings aroused throughout the Peninsula by the Abyssinian invasion of Mecca fifty years before Islam; the battle of Dhu Qar A.D. 610, in which the Arabs of Hira in Mesopotamia inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Persians; the attitude of the Arabian tribes, as expressed in their literature and legends, toward the two great powers established on their borders, the Caesars and the Chosroes (as they called them)—these reflect a patriotism transcending clannish divisions. But these expressions of a common patriotism were not sufficiently numerous, sustained, or deep-rooted to merit being designated as nationalism. One point stands out clearly: a full-fledged nationalism could only have been evoked by the presence of an "out" group
sufficiently ubiquitous to stimulate it. In pre-Islamic Arabia, predominantly isolationist, largely self-sufficient, and formidable to foreign conquest, no such sustained stimulant existed. It came about in the wake of Islam, as we shall see in the next chapter.
ARAB NATIONALISM

AFTER ISLAM

INASMUCH as it is the intent of this chapter to indicate the factors in modern Arab nationalism which owe their origins to Islam, it is first necessary to define Islam. It is, of course, a religion, a body of doctrines and beliefs clustered around the principle of *tawhid* ("asserting oneness"), which teaches that God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life. It is a universal and not a national religion. Its message is addressed to mankind in its entirety and not to any one nation, even though the prophetic revelation is through the instrumentality of the Arabic language. "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. The noblest of you in the sight of God is the best in conduct." ¹ As a creed, Islam is unequivocally hostile

¹ Quran, tr. by M. M. Pickthall (New York, 1953), sura xlix, verse 13.
Islam, however, signifies more than doctrinal ideals and beliefs. It is used to designate a polity. From its inchoate and modest career as a city republic, we follow the Arab Islamic community as it expanded like a gigantic tree till its foliage overarched the greater part of the then known world. In doing so the Arab-Islamic community outgrew its beginnings. The hegemony of the Arabs, which at first had been both the mainstay and the substance of the imperial state, gave way to the universalism of the caliphate. Thus, as a polity, Islam represents several types and stages of development, sufficiently different from one another to require careful differentiation.

In a third sense, Islam refers to an area of civilization and culture which, notwithstanding its multifarious colors, bears an unmistakable impress of unity. Two processes were set in motion by the Arabs, which though intimately interrelated, were by no means identical. The first and broader process was the dissemination of Islam as a religion in various lands and among different races and cultural backgrounds. The second and narrower process was Arabization, that is, the development—principally in the Middle East and North Africa—of an Arab community of language, of race, and of culture.

The period of history to which is given the designation Islamic is long as well as complex. In exploring its influence upon contemporary Arab nationalism, we shall aim to emphasize the forces which, in their various ways, have molded the shape and affected the destiny of that nationalism. It need hardly be pointed out how hazardous and misleading generalizations can be unless the most careful distinction is observed concerning Islam in its manifold forms (as a religious creed, as a polity, and as a civilization); unless the discrepancy between the ideal and the
actual, the institutional and the informal, is kept in mind; and, finally, unless it is recognized that the march of time renders indiscriminate comparisons between the early theocracy of Medina, for example, and the Abbassid caliphate at Baghdad decidedly spurious.

Birth of a Nation

The first and foremost achievement of the Islamic movement was the unification of the Arabs for the first time in their history. Thus, in a historical setting, Arabism owes to Islam its very existence. Whatever the degree of importance that may legitimately be assigned to any one of the various “historical necessities,” such as Hugo Winckler’s theory of an Arab Völkerwanderung or Leone Caetani’s interpretation of the Arab-Islamic expansion as the last great wave of Semitic migration, dictated by the gradual desiccation of the Peninsula and climatic changes, there is no doubt that without Islam as a uniting factor and without the powerful personalities of its early leadership, the economic pressures would have spent themselves in a series of minor and inconsequential penetrations.*

By discarding the fatalistic and mechanical interpretations of social events, either on theological, economic, or other grounds, we are in a better position to gauge the contribution of Islam as a volitional and creative force in the making of an Arab nation. The historical record is unmistakable. A people torn asunder by dissensions and seemingly implacable rivalry, a people whose energies were wasted in endless internecine strife and whose mental horizons barely transcended the level of tribal consciousness, in the course of a few years were welded together into

*For an account of the various economic interpretations of Arab expansion, see P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (London, 1940), pp. 143–146.
a single community, animated by a consciousness of belonging and imbued with a common ideal. That the unifying principle was religion rather than nationality, in that initial phase, is of no practical significance, for as long as Islam was confined to the Peninsula—within which it had attained an unchallenged and monolithic hold—the terms Arab unity and Islamic unity were synonymous and recognized as such. There was no conflict in loyalties, such as developed later on, when the Arabs came into contact with other nationalities in the conquered lands.

The first contribution of Islam, therefore, was the nationalization of Arab life within the fraternity of the Muslim community.

*Birth of a State*

It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of the setting up of an organized state—the first in Arabia—to which the people in their entirety owed allegiance. The free-living, free-thinking people of the desert had always prided themselves in having fought “kings,” and their submission to the newly organized authority in Medina was indeed a revolutionary turning point, whose far-reaching consequences did not take long to unfold. “Only religion made the political organization possible,” writes C. H. Becker; “out of the community grew the

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8 "That patriotism which Islam maintained was equivalent to the bond of Arabic union whence the two terms were synonymous at this time, especially among the nations that were subject to the caliphs” (Jurji Zaydan, *History of Islamic Civilization* [London, 1907], p. 33).

4 A turning point in the emergence of this community was the charter which the Prophet drew up between the Emigrants and the Helpers and which, as Wellhausen points out, destroyed the independence of the tribe by shifting the center of power to the community. For the text of the charter, see Ibn Hisham, *Biography of Muhammad*, pp. 341–344.
state. It was, indeed, not the community but the state which used the Arab 'Volkerwanderung,' which originated independently of it, for its political ends." 5

The contrast between early Christianity's fundamentally antistate orientation and early Islam's state-affirming position is striking. "Christianity had begun as a revolutionary mass movement, and with its doctrine of the equality of men before the sight of God it had undermined the foundation of the Roman state." 6

It was a fact of the utmost importance that the Christian was inevitably bound to a twofold duty such as had been quite unknown to the ethics of pagan antiquity. He must not only render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's but also to God the things that are God's, and if the two came into conflict, there could be no doubt that he must obey God rather than man.7

Moreover, until Constantine elevated Christianity to a state religion, the Christians were a persecuted minority, cherishing an idea quite at variance with the Roman virtue of undivided obligation to the state.

The same historical circumstances which placed Christianity, as a faith, in juxtaposition with a secular state account for that dual organization and control of human society which was to dominate Europe for almost a thousand years. Augustine's City of God in which he "made the redemption of humanity dependent upon the aims of a church," stemmed from his belief that "to make the divine

6 For a discussion of religion and politics and the relations of church and state, see R. Rocker, Nationalism and Culture, tr. from the German by R. G. Chase (New York, 1937), pp. 42-78. The quotation is from pp. 64-65.
government comprehensible to men there is needed a visible power”; but since “no temporal power is fitted for this task,” “the church is the only true representative of the Divine Will on earth.” 8

Both ideologically as well as historically Islam had found itself in a different context. Like Christianity, it was a revolutionary movement in that it ran directly counter to the ideals of Arabian heathendom. Whereas the social organization of the pagan Arabs was based on blood relationship, that of Islam rested on the equality of all believers, without distinctions of rank or of pedigree. But unlike Christianity, it neither undermined nor threatened to undermine any state authority in Arabia because none was in existence. If anything, it undermined the anarchy that had been rampant on account of the absence of any political organization.

The ideological difference between early Christianity and early Islam is no less striking. The state, from the Islamic standpoint, is the means whereby the Islamic concepts of life are realized in a definite human organization. The ultimate reality, according to the Quran, is spiritual, but the life of the state consists in its temporal activity. 9 The spirit finds it opportunities in the natural, the material, the secular. As Sir Muhammad Iqbal has observed:

Christianity was founded, not as a political or civil unit, but as a monastic order in a profane world. The result was that when the state became Christian, state and church confronted each other as distinct powers with interminable boundary disputes between them. Such a thing could never happen in Islam; for Islam was from the very beginning a civil society, having received from the Qur’an a set of simple legal principles which, like the Twelve Tables of the Romans, carried as experience

8 Rocker, op. cit., p. 66.
subsequently proved, great potentialities of expansion and development by interpretation.\textsuperscript{10}

The observation is no doubt accurate, when it is referred to Islam in its founding period, at which time nationality and religion were practically synonymous and no state or church organizations existed to which Islam might have presented a threat. In the circumstances of its rise, therefore, Islam's great gift to the Arabs was the creation of a community and the establishment of a state.\textsuperscript{11}

**Birth of a National History**

The Arabs, it has been remarked, are clustered around a historical memory.\textsuperscript{12} That memory is largely the legacy of Islam. From the relatively obscure and marginal existence which had been their lot, Islam raised them to a position of pre-eminence, and a new vista of creativity in almost all walks of life opened up. This is not the place either to narrate or to sit in judgment on the substance of that legacy. What is germane to this inquiry is the meaning, the influence, and the significance which the Islamic episode holds in the life story of the Arabs.

There is a unique relationship between Islam and the Arabs. The identification of Islam with the Arabs is not as exclusive as is Judaism with the Jews. But there is a sense in which the Arabs hold a special position in relation to Islam, notwithstanding that its message is addressed to all mankind and is supranational in spirit.\textsuperscript{13} From its incep-

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 148.

\textsuperscript{11} "Thus the conclusion is borne in upon us that the gift of the founder of the Arab world-empire was not so much religion as world dominion to the Arabs" (Becker, in Bukhsh, op. cit., p. 14).

\textsuperscript{12} T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London, 1935), P. 40.

\textsuperscript{13} Sir William Muir and some other biographers of the Prophet have maintained that Islam was originally designed for the Arabs
tion and for several centuries thereafter, the Arabs as a people constituted the principal dependence of Islam, and they were conscious of that historic mission. Caliph Omar, during whose caliphate the foundations of the state were laid, assigned to the Arabs a dominating position "as being the substance of Islam." It would be misleading to read into his motivation those categories of thought and emotion which are generally identified with modern nationalism. It may well have been that his concern for the hegemony of the Arabs was instrumental and subservient to an overriding concern for the ascendency of his spiritual faith. But how is the line to be drawn between universal religion embodied in temporal activity and nationalistic universalism whereby the good of mankind is identified with the good of one's nation?

Whatever may have been the motivation, the actions were forthright and consistent. Social, economic, political, and military policies were keyed to the service of Arab hegemony. It was made unlawful to enslave an Arab. In the conquered territories Arabs formed an exclusive military class, living in great camps supported by public revenues. The Diwan ("Register"), instituted by Caliph Omar, was the financial instrument through which the policy of Arab rule was made effective. Subject peoples, if they embraced Islam, acquired the status of mawali ("clients") of noble Arab families and clans. The clients, who in the Umayyad period included all non-Arab Muslims, constituted a distinct order in the social strata of society. Their resentment against the disabilities of their lower status contributed in no small measure to the down-

alone. The language of the Quran in no wise supports this contention. Verse 52 in sura lxix is one of several passages unmistakably addressed to all mankind. It reads in part: "But it [the Quran] is naught else but a reminder unto all mankind" (In howa illa dhikrun lil-alamin).
fall of Arab rule and the triumph of Islamic universalism in Baghdad.

No less significant, as indicating an unmistakable Arab orientation, was the preferential treatment given by Caliph Omar to the Christian Arabs of Syria and Iraq. The case of the Arab tribe of Banu Taghlib in Mesopotamia affords an example. Omar did not treat this tribe, pure Arab as it was, in the same way that he did non-Arab subject races, even though its members obstinately refused to accept Islam and persisted in the faith of their forefathers. By a legal fiction, Omar discharged them from the obligation of paying the capitation tax, decreeing that they should pay double the amount of the poor tax.

The policy of Arab nationalism, which may have been impelled by reasons of state when the spread of Islam was, for all practical purposes, identical with the success of Arab arms, hardened under the Umayyads into an end in itself. It inevitably alienated large masses of the underprivileged: the clients, the tolerated sects, and the slaves, who, availing themselves of the schisms which had been sapping the vitality of the Arab body politic, ranged themselves behind every dissident cause. The truly Arab period in the history of Islam came to an end with the downfall of the Umayyads. The aristocratic principle of the Arab imperium (mulk) was superseded by the old oriental-state despotism, with its deification of rulers, its court etiquette, and its exploiting instruments—bureaucracy and the system of mercenary bodyguards. The principle of nationalism, which had been the mainstay of the

14 In the early centuries of Abbassid rule the anti-Arab forces, particularly among the Persians, developed a movement named al-Shuubiyah ("non-Arabs"). The movement went beyond the Islamic principles of the brotherhood and equality of all Muslims; it took to the offensive, claiming superiority for the non-Arabs. Some of the most distinguished literary figures in the Muslim domain participated in this important debate.
Empire, gave way to Islamic universalism, which did not distinguish sharply between the Arabs and the foreign converts. Henceforth the Arabs constituted merely one of the many component races in the Empire, and with the advent of the Ottoman Empire in the early part of the sixteenth century the last vestiges of the Arab caliphate finally lapsed.

The foregoing digest of Arab political fortunes reveals a somewhat tenuous and short-lived period of national hegemony. It appears rather incongruous, therefore, that modern Arab nationalism should look back complacently to that period and to the movement which, when fully developed and implemented, thwarted and eventually crushed the nationalist Arab state. Islamization, on a grand scale, only began when the Arab state principle ceased, in the main, to be operative and when conditions making for social adjustment according to the principle of nationality ended.18

There is, to be sure, a dichotomy between the aims of nationality and those of religion, even in cases where they originally were closely intertwined. The modern Arab nationalist, however, views the panorama of the Islamic period, from a somewhat different and certainly from a broader perspective. In the first place, the historical legacy to which he feels heir embraces the Abbassid period at Baghdad, the Fatimid period at Cairo, and the various domains in Spain and elsewhere, no less than the Umayyad at Damascus,16 for his conception of nationalism is not

15 See Becker, in Bukhsh, op. cit., p. 24.
16 It is noteworthy, for example, that the national anthem of the modern republic of Syria refers with equal pride to the golden periods of Arab history in Damascus and in Baghdad, even though the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbassids is generally regarded as having represented a shift in power from the Arabs to the non-Arabs.
restricted by the race-purity prerequisites of his predeces­sors. Inasmuch as Arabic was the language of life and of culture, all the principal epochs of the Islamic period, save the Ottoman, are in his estimation integral parts of his own national heritage. There is another and perhaps more im­portant reason why a modern Arab nationalist does not disown those periods in Islamic history in which the polit­ical fortunes of his own people seem to have been at an ebb. It stems from the predominant position which the Islamic period occupies in the civilization and culture of the Arabs.

**Birth of a Civilization**

Islam's role in the cultural heritage of the Arabs is para­mount. Unlike the Romans, for example, whose pagan history vied with their achievements under Christianity, the Arabs' pagan period was, except for its literary out­put, relatively barren. All that the Arabs have bequeathed in philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, the sciences, medi­cine, music, the fine arts, and other disciplines have been the legacy of the Islamic period.

Few other questions have so divided modern students of Arab-Islamic civilization as has the attempt to locate its genesis, interpret its nature, and ascribe its component parts to their supposed precursors, mainly along the lines of nationality. There are, for example, those who would painstakingly scrutinize the genealogies of the distin­guished scholars of the past to determine whether or not, on the basis of their ethnic origins, their contributions to knowledge should be included within the Arab heritage. A hard-and-fast line can be drawn for the first phase of the Empire (the Umayyad), when the Arabs and the non-­Arabs kept racially and socially apart, but how frustrating would be such an attempt for the later periods when the various ethnic groups shaded off into one another indis­tinguishably.
The attitude of an Arab nationalist is that the entire legacy of Islam, insofar as it was expressed in Arabic and arose in an Arab milieu, is his heritage. He makes no distinction between the philosopher Al-Kindi, a pure-blooded Arab, and Al-Farabi, of Turkish stock, or between them and Ibn Sina of Persian stock. All contributed to a common culture which was, not only philologically but in spirit as well, a unity, one and indivisible. Language is naught if it is not the embodiment of the mind and the soul of the culture of which it is the expression. And if one were to apply a strictly ethnological criterion in deciding who contributed what to the civilizations of the different areas and nations, what histories of cultures as we know them now would remain intact?

But in addition to the quarrel within for division of the spoils, there is an onslaught from without denying the very existence of an Arab civilization.\textsuperscript{17} Such is the claim, notwithstanding the philological, theological, and racial evidences to the contrary. What is labeled Arab civilization, it is contended, is in reality an amalgam of Greek, Aramaic-Christian, Persian, Roman, and Indian cultures. The Arabs simply accommodated themselves to the civilization they found in existence. But how did this come about? The explanation of the unity of Islamic civilization lies essentially in the world historic fact of Hellenism. It sounds strange that, without Alexander the Great, there would have been no Islamic civilization.\textsuperscript{18}

If Hellenism is the unifying principle for one theorist, Syriac civilization fills this role for another.

The Syriac Civilization has three great feats to its credit. It invented the Alphabet; it discovered the Atlantic; and it arrived at a particular conception of God which is common to Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam but alien

\textsuperscript{17} See Becker, in Bukhsh, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 28–38.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 30.
alike from the Egyptiac, Sumeric, Indic and Hellenic veins of religious thought.\textsuperscript{19}

Which of these two theorists, who are fundamentally antithetical though they cover for the most part the same geographic grounds, is the more correct? And what of those who concede to Arab-Islamic civilization an original and distinctive role?

In addition to questions about the genesis and components of this civilization, there is the question of its nature. Is it essentially classical, a mere extension of Greek thought, or is it anticlassical? These are not mere historical or intellectual exercises; they have a profound practical significance in the present phase of Arab soul-searching and national reconstruction. The importance of these questions may be gauged from the fact that almost every political movement in the contemporary Arab world is based upon, and in a large measure stems from, the answers to these questions. The Pan-Islamist believes in the supremacy and the integrity of the Islamic legacy, the Pan-Arabist in its uniquely Arab character. Other movements such as the Syrian Nationalist in the Levant\textsuperscript{20} or the Pharaonic in Egypt reject the Arab-Islamic episode as the central event of national history. The Syrian boasts of his descent from the Phoenicians—a remnant of the Canaanites—who distinguished themselves as a maritime people and who founded an overseas Syriac dominion centered on Carthage. The Pharaonic disciple draws his inspiration, of course, from the ancient indigenous civilizations of Egypt and as a corollary rejects Islam as the paramount national event.

It has been observed that Arab nationalism regards the


\textsuperscript{20} See, for example, Antoun Saaden, \textit{Nushu al-Umam} (Beirut, 1988).
legacy of Islam, at least as far as it was expressed in Arabic, as a national heritage, regardless of the racial origins of the contributors or of the sources and influences which molded its shape. It is recognized that that legacy is a bundle of many strands so intermeshed as to render their untangling well-nigh impossible. But why should they be separated into components? And who is to decide which part is more truly Arab than another?

The answers to these questions have been rendered the more difficult because of the discontinuity of this civilization. Stagnation has been pervasive for nearly five centuries. Arab contributions to knowledge, impressive and pioneering as they may have been, have long since been outstripped by the cumulative achievements of the modern era. Even Ibn Khaldun is now admired more for his originality than for the substance of his works, of which most are now out of date. Why then is the Islamic period, in the sense of a civilization, significant to Arab nationalism? It is significant because, without the assurance that stems from association with a worthy past, without the consciousness of forming a distinctive personality with, perhaps, a distinctive mission, a nation loses its basic support, its raison d'être. It is not, therefore, the appurtenances of a civilization but the consciousness of it and the pride in its possession that serves a vital national purpose. It is the feeling of "partnership between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

Quite apart from this psychological need for pooled self-esteem and the sense of usefulness, Arab nationalism requires the Arab-Islamic legacy in order to discover its own essence and its sources of strength. Although its legacy has been outstripped by the tremendous advances in the various domains of the sciences, there is still the belief that Arab civilization has not entirely spent itself as a spiritual force. The term spiritual is used in the widest connotation
and not in the narrow sense of a religion or a conglomeration of particular rituals and beliefs.

What justification is there for Arab nationalists' belief in the spiritual vitality of their legacy? It is primarily a matter of faith and secondarily disillusionment with what they regard as the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of modern civilization. There have been, as yet, no profound formulations of the latter's spiritual values in answer to the challenging problems of the modern age. Unless or until such formulations are forthcoming, the Arab-Islamic civilization is essential to the Arab nationalist because it satisfies one of the prerequisites of national consciousness, and also because he believes and contends that it can make a unique contribution toward solving the dilemmas of today.

Summary

An attempt has been made to bring out the Islamic contributions to modern Arab nationalism. To Islam is due the birth of a nation, the birth of a state, the birth of a national history, and the birth of a civilization. These events molded the structure of Islamic Arabism in new and unique ways. Not only is the end product of this era different from that of the preceding one, but it is also far more developed. Whereas the pre-Islamic period had witnessed the emergence of an Arab nationality, the Islamic—notwithstanding its essentially supranational mold—carried the Arabs far toward the development of a full-fledged national consciousness. The reasons have been discussed at some length: (1) the emergence of a community to which the innate instinct of patriotism could be applied in place of the narrow-gauged loyalty to locality and tribe; (2) the emergence of a political organization around which traditions of habitual loyalty could gather, thus supplanting the conditions of near anarchy existing hitherto; (3) the launching of the Arab people on a career of
national glory which, in a few years, put them on the political map of the world; and (4) the emergence of a civilization which they could cherish and to which they could look for inspiration and guidance.
THE structure of an Arab nationality was well developed in the two epochs we have been discussing. It then lay dormant for many centuries under the enervating weight of ignorance and stagnation. The torpor quickened into life largely as a result of the impact of the West. With the general revival came the revival of Arab national consciousness.

It need hardly be pointed out that the term modern, connoting serial time, is meaningful only in relation to the observer’s range of perspective. When applied to Europe, for example, the modern age might start with the Renaissance, the discovery of America, or the Copernican revolution. Its application to the Arab world can be no less diverse, not so much for lack of consensus as to which events were the most significant and revolutionary but because the events which represent the modern era did not follow a uniform pattern or pace in the various parts of the Arab world.

There are good reasons, however, for taking the year
1798, when Napoleon invaded Egypt, as the herald and the signpost of the new era. The Napoleonic episode did not, in itself, awaken national consciousness from its torpor in Arab countries, as it did in Europe, but it set rolling that process of direct and sustained Westernization which has since encompassed the entire world and cast it into the Western mold. It initiated a chain of events and ideas, the latter in their totality constituting modern Arab nationalism. The first and foremost result of the invasion was the general Arab awakening which it kindled; national consciousness in its modern form cannot thrive in a stationary community. A second result—a concomitant of the first—was the introduction of the printing press, which gave impetus to the revival of Arabic classics and culture and hence to national consciousness. A third result was the introduction of the European idea of nationality. To the dislike of Turkish rule and the awakened sense of pride in their past heritage was added resentment against the encroachments of the West.

Thus, it was the impact of the West, both directly and indirectly, which brought about the modern revival of the Arabic-speaking world after many centuries of stagnation. The impact was, of course, not uniform in timing or in place. Although nominally a part of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and North Africa followed a separate path from that of the Arab countries in Asia as a consequence of external as well as internal forces interacting upon one another. The Arab countries to the east of Suez came under the influence of Westernization through educational

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1 The withdrawal of the French from Egypt, for example, was followed by the emergence of Muhammad Ali, who made Egypt virtually independent of Constantinople. In North Africa the nineteenth century witnessed French encroachments in manifold ways, culminating in the occupation of Algeria (1830), Tunisia (1881), and Morocco (1911). Tripolitania was occupied by the Italians in 1912.
and missionary activities rather than through military conquest, at least up to 1918, when the moribund Ottoman Empire was finally laid to rest. The differing political fortunes of the various Arab countries account for the heterogeneity of their nationalist ideas and the unequal development of their nationhoods.

The plan of this chapter is as follows: (1) to depict the Arab world toward the end of the long interregnum which followed its decline and demise, the purpose being to find out when the renaissance vitality was due to indigenous ideas (such as the Wahhabi puritan movement, for instance) and when to Western impact; (2) to outline the process of general awakening as a result of increasing interaction with the West, resulting in such movements as modernism, Pan-Islamism, and the various parochial nationalisms; and (3) to trace the roots and the growth of a specifically Arab national consciousness, particularly in the countries of the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula.

Twilight of Isolation

A long and eventful interlude disrupted the continuity of the Arabs' national life, which had started with such promise and vitality in the first few centuries of Islam. We can only mention the main factors determining the shape of things as they existed on the eve of the modern revival. From the point of view of the present study, the most significant change during the interregnum had been the Arabs' loss of political independence and the Turkish conquests. For almost one thousand years the Arabic-speaking peoples of the Middle East were not masters of their fates. Exception must be made of the desert Arabs, who had recovered their independence during the decay of the Abbassids and never subsequently lost it.
another in tedious succession, depending for their support
upon every conceivable contrivance save the national soli-
darity of the people over whose fate they ruled. The result-
ing apathy and abject dependence can well be imagined.

With the eclipse of the political power of the Arabs
went also their culture. "Both Persian and Turkish lit-
eratures, while strongly coloured by the Arab-Islamic tra-
dition, branched out on independent . . . lines. After
Seljuq times the literary use of Arabic was confined to the
Arabic-speaking countries, except for a limited output of
theological and scientific works." 8 Thus, within the Do-
main of Islam (Dar al-Islam) the Arabs, who had originally
been the founders and the backbone of the Empire, had
become a subject people.

The second significant development was the general de-
cline of the Domain of Islam in its entirety, as compared
with the West. The relative decline had been proceeding
gradually and almost imperceptibly for centuries, but it
was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that
any systematic imitation of European techniques was
undertaken. Until then even the leaders of the governing
class were conscious of no inferiority in comparison with
Europe. 4

Whether or not the leaders were conscious of inferiority,
a static society had developed in which inertia, tradition,
and imitation became the predominant characteristics. The
economic structure had been transformed: instead of a
commercial monetary system there was a predominantly
feudal economy, in which not the welfare of the subjects

8 See Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History (London and New York,
1950), p. 159.
4 See H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West
(London: Oxford University Press, 1950), I, 19. This is an invaluable
work for an understanding of Islamic society in the eighteenth cen-
tury, i.e., just before the beginning of Western influence on Turkey
and the Arab world.
but the upkeep of the expensive military establishments of their overlords took first place. The stagnation and the loss of initiative permeated every aspect of life, both material and spiritual. As H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen have observed:

We shall never know, in any probability, whether some Arab Jacquard devised an improved loom or some Turkish Watt discovered the power of steam, but we can confidently assert that, if any such invention had occurred, it would have been entirely without result. The whole social organism, in fact, was one characteristic of, and only possible in, a stationary or retrograde civilization. It is not an exaggeration to say that after so many centuries of immobility the processes of agriculture, industry, exchange and learning had become little more than automatic, and had resulted in a species of atrophy that rendered those engaged in them all but incapable of changing their methods or outlook to the slightest degree.  

The causes of the decay are manifold. While it is possible to pinpoint some of the external symbols, events, and causes—the eruption of the Mongol hordes in the thirteenth century, for example, and the havoc which they wrought; or the opening in 1499 by Vasco da Gama of a new route from Europe to the Far East via the Cape of Good Hope, dealing thereby a mortal blow to the Levant route—the more fundamental spiritual atrophy that is at the root of all subsequent retrogressions cannot be easily ascertained. The disintegration of a civilization, like its growth, is a cumulative and ongoing process. History abounds with examples where tremendous consequences followed a very slight change in the way of looking at things. The Copernican revolution is the supreme symbol of the passage from medieval to modern times; yet it contained no great discovery, no new idea, and caused no

abrupt change even in the philosophy of its originator. The legalization of limited liability in the nineteenth century is another example of a tremendous revolution resulting from a seemingly ordinary legal squabble and readjustment. The Keynesian analysis in the 1930’s is a third example.

In the decline and petrification of the Arab world two causes may be singled out as the first links in the chain of events. One cause, to which reference has already been made, was the Arabs’ loss of power. This statement is not intended to extol Arab virtues at the expense of other peoples of the Empire. But the transfer of power from Arabs to non-Arabs brought in its wake those institutional and psychological changes which eventually led to the polarization of society into two coexisting but virtually separate groups: the governors and the governed. When the Arabs were the mainstay of the Empire, the democratic principle of government prevailed (at least insofar as the Arabs were concerned). It did so not only because of the Arabs’ deep-rooted attachment to liberty but also because they—as a people—constituted the standing army of the state. No government could survive without their consent, or at least the consent of that half of them which at any particular time or place happened to be the stronger. This naturally kept alive within them the spirit of independence, self-reliance, and initiative—qualities indispensable to a free and creative social order.

Their loss of power brought about a thorough change. A despotic system of government, in which a servile bu-

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* See Herbert Dingle, “Copernicus and the Planets,” in The History of Science (Glencoe, Ill., 1951), pp. 35-44.

† The granting of the right to limit the liability of a person subscribing capital completed the mobility of capital and thereby ushered in the modern era of corporate capitalism. See E. F. M. Durbin, The Politics of Democratic Socialism (London, 1940), pp. 120-125.
reaucracy and a mercenary army—more often than not foreign—replaced the free and spontaneous solidarity which had hitherto been the support of the state. With no natural ties binding them to the people, governments became mere instruments of exploitation; the apathy, the enervating quietism, and the indifference which consequently permeated the social order are easy to imagine.

The second cause of the stagnation may be attributed to the decline of religion into outward, formalistic forms. It is difficult for us in the modern world to gauge the true influence of religion upon the lives and destinies of mankind up to the time of the modern scientific revolution. Religion nowadays is but one of man's manifold functions and spheres of interest, coexisting on a basis of sovereign equality with rather than reigning in hierarchical superiority to the other spheres. How different it was when religion was the fountainhead of all else, the all-embracing master key to the arts and the sciences, as well as to faith!

So long as religion was dynamic, expanding, and malleable—as it was in the few formative centuries of Islam—the all-inclusive claims made on its behalf did not present any formidable problems. But once it hardened into a formal theological structure and attached its emotions and authority to certain supposed facts, the fate of each sphere of activity became inextricably bound up with the fate of the others. It is perhaps less important whether the grandiose systems constructed by the orthodox theologians were essentially sound or not than that an authoritative structure should have been constructed at all. What was at the core of the issue in the long-drawn-out fight between the freethinkers and rationalists on the one hand and the formalist scholastics on the other was the conception of finality.8 Was religion to be developmental and

8 H. A. R. Gibb interprets the struggle as one between rationalism and intuitive thought for control of the Muslim mind. The victory
expanding, or had its postulates been authoritatively fixed beyond future reinterpretation?

The same encounter had occurred in Christianity and, under the influence of Averroist Aristotelianism, had covered almost identical grounds. As in Islam, a universal synthesis, an all-embracing system, was worked out in St. Thomas Aquinas' imposing edifice, the *Summa theologica*. But the two began to part ways with the advent in the West of three important movements—the Reformation, the scientific revolution, and the Industrial Revolution—which had no equivalents in the world of Islam. What unites these three movements is aversion to inherited and unverified authority, be it that of Aristotle, revelation, or whatever else. This feature more than anything else is the watershed between the medieval and the modern world.

The only significant indigenous Arab revival was the eighteenth-century Wahhabi movement in the Nejd. It was the first throb of life of modern Islam. To its inspiration are traceable, directly or indirectly, nearly all the great modern movements of Muslim Asia and Africa, e.g., the Senusi movement in Libya, the Pan-Islamic movement, and the Babi movement, which is only an Iranian reflex of Arabian Protestantism.* Although animated by the spirit of the latter he attributes to the atomism and discreteness of the Arab imagination. The point is, however, that there need be no irreconcilable conflict between one and the other provided each is confined within its legitimate jurisdiction. The Muslim Hellenizers were not justified in questioning the truths they had set out to defend, as Gibb observes, on the pretext of accommodating religion and philosophy. But how could they have avoided entanglement in the sphere of religion when life and thought in their days was tuned to its datum? See Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago, 1947), chs. i and xi.

* See Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1934), pp. 144–145. The founder of the Wahhabi movement, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, was born in
of freedom, the Wahhabi movement was essentially conserva-
tive in spirit. Its chief aim was to remove the accretions
and the innovations that had beclouded a pure and un-
adulterated vision of Islam. It served as a revitalizing and
a cleansing influence in a corrupt world, but it did not
and could not go far enough to usher in those concepts of
life and thought which mark off the new world from the
old. This was to come during the next century under the
impact of the West.

**Impact of the West**

The modern revival in the Arab world begins with the
French occupation of Egypt in 1798. Until that event
the Arab countries had been almost wholly unaware of the
tremendous strides which the West had made in the cen-
turies intervening since their last major encounter during
the Crusades.

The revitalizing concepts, processes, and techniques of
the West, and also the recovery of Arabic classics as the
result of the introduction of the printing press, led to the
first Arab movement in the modern world, Egypt’s plan
for an Arab empire. The Wahhabi revivalist movement,
though emanating from the heart of the Peninsula, had
been motivated by a religious and not by a national im-
 pulse. 

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1700. He was the intellectual disciple of the great thirteenth-century
preacher, Ibn Taymiya, who claimed freedom of *ijtihad* ("interpretation") and rose in revolt against the finality of the systems inherited
from the legists of the past.

10 While the movement rises in revolt against the finality of the
schools, observes Iqbal, and vigorously asserts the right of private
judgment, its vision of the past is wholly uncritical, and in matters of
law it mainly falls back on the traditions of the Prophet (*ibid.*, p. 145).

11 It is, perhaps, correct to observe that the Arabs of the Peninsula,
having maintained virtual independence all along, took their nation-
ality for granted. Only where a challenge exists—a foreign control,
The failure of Egypt to unify the Arab world in the first half of the nineteenth century was more than a mere political blow to the fortunes of a people in the process of awakening. It caused an ideological divergence between the Asian and the African parts of the Arab world which even today has not been completely bridged. The divergence had far-reaching consequences because it came about at a time when the Arabs were in a most impressionable stage of development, when values and beliefs, morals and loyalties, were all in a melting pot, when the whole fabric of society was undergoing reconstruction.

Although the structural requisites of an Arab nationality were present in adequate measure, Arab nationalism as an ideological system had no solid background in the historical consciousness of the people. As the preceding chapter made clear, Arab national consciousness played a decisive role in the founding of the first Arab Empire. But it was a nationalism based largely, if not wholly, upon consciousness of race. The peoples of the Empire were classified in accordance with the accident of birth as Arabs and non-Arabs, rulers and ruled.

In the absence of a modern restatement and redefinition of Arab nationalism, how, after the passage of a millennium, was the present-day Egyptian, or Syrian, or Iraqi, or Tunisian to cast his sympathies, or to know whether his forefathers had been of the privileged rulers or the underprivileged ruled? To us the question seems largely academic and certainly unrealistic as a ground for decisions. But it must not have appeared so to the Arabs when the modern idea of nationalism (which for centuries had been nurtured in Europe and which had been defined and restated over and over again to suit its peculiar en-

threat of control, or mere animosity—does national consciousness arise, and then only where it finds anchor in the solid foundations of an over-all general awakening. This was true in Egypt.
vironment) was suddenly thrust upon the foreign and uncharted soil of the Arab world.

In the most completely Arab period of Islamic history, moreover, the line of demarcation between the Arab and the Islamic had been all too confusingly blurred. It was as plausible, therefore, to resuscitate a “Muslim nationalism” as an Arab one. In the consciousness of the people the Ottoman Empire was a continuation of general Islamic history and not an unfortunate interruption of the Arabs’ history. The Ottoman caliphate, to most people, was the legitimate successor to the orthodox caliphs, the Umayyads, and the Abbassids. Hence the appeal of the Pan-Islamic movement as preached by the great nineteenth-century reformer Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and utilized for his own political ends and ambitions by Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid.

What eventually shaped the orientations of the various movements were the external exigencies no less than the inner ideological forces set in motion by the general awakening. In Egypt the mounting pressure of European powers culminated in the British occupation of 1881. Henceforth the Egyptian masses were to be incited against “Western imperialism” rather than against the nominal suzerainty of the Ottomans, as in the Arab countries to the east of Suez. The principal aim of Afghani, who dominated the intellectual and religious awakening, was the unification and the regeneration of all Muslim peoples under the sceptor of one supreme caliph—regardless of

12 Turkish historians have been prone to assert that the caliphate passed to the Ottoman dynasty through the abdication in Cairo of the Abbassid caliph, Al-Mutawakkel, in 1517 in favor of Sultan Selim I. Sir Thomas Arnold, in his book, The Caliphate (Oxford, 1934), questions this claim. At any rate, Arab nationalists maintain that, even if the abdication occurred, it occurred after Selim’s occupation of Egypt and any such cession would have taken place under duress.

13 See pp. 119–122.
nationality, provided he was strong enough to repel Euro­
pean aggression.¹⁴ In North Africa, too, which was sub­
jected to the heavy hand of European—particularly
French—intervention, the rallying point was the Salafiyah
religious reform movement. Up to World War I the
nationalists pinned their hopes on the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵

Where, under the influence of European concepts, secu­
lar (as distinct from religious) movements arose, they gen­
erally were patriotic rather than broadly nationalist. Thus
there arose the Egyptian nationalist movement, as well as
various other nationalist movements in North Africa. The
alternative to a Pan-Islamic solidarity did not present it­
self in terms of loyalty to an inclusive Arab nation, but
rather to one's country—Egypt, Tunisia, and so forth.
Only in the eastern parts of the Arab world, particularly
in the Levant, were conditions propitious for the emer­
gence of an Arab nationalism.

The Arab National Movement

The story of the rise of a specifically Arab national
movement in the Levant has been told in a thorough and
masterly manner by George Antonius, in his *The Arab
Awakening*.¹⁶ There is no point, therefore, in covering
the same ground in this study. But while a history of the
movement is redundant, not so is the analysis of its ideas,
its basic postulates, and the factors which have molded its
form. This is an instance where a movement and an

¹⁴ See C. C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt* (London, 1933),
p. 13. This book is a comprehensive study of Islam and modernism in
Egypt, particularly of the movement set in motion by Afghani and
ably seconded by his disciple Sheikh Muhammad Abdo.

¹⁵ See Alal al-Fasi, *Al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyah fi al-Maghrib al-Arabi*
("The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa") (Cairo,
1948). A translation by the present writer was published by the Ameri­
can Council of Learned Societies in Washington, 1954.

¹⁶ Published in London in 1938.
ideology become meaningful only in the light of the conditions which accompanied them, for no a priori analysis can explain why the two parts of the Arab world—the African and the Asian—having started out with a common background, should branch out on separate courses of national orientations. The answer, it is submitted, must be sought in the structure of the situation and is discernible first of all in the choice of the “in group” and the “out group.” In a composite state such as the Ottoman Empire, it was almost inevitable that the common denominator for the Arabic-speaking peoples should have been a platform of common Arab nationalism. Notwithstanding local and regional differences, the factors making for affinity far outweighed the dissimilitudes in the related context of a multiracial state. Parochial loyalties were naturally swamped by the need to present a solid front vis-à-vis the other ethnic groups in the Empire, particularly the Turks. Needless to say, no such related choices presented themselves to homogeneous, viable, and virtually independent Egypt. In the latter, the inciting force acted from without not from within, and the response to it was the Pan-Islamic movement, to which reference has already been made.

The second determining factor in the situation was the existence of a centralized political organization embracing the Arab countries of Asia, de facto as well as de jure. The tremendous cohesive impact of a uniform system of government is difficult to overestimate and is fully recognized by those students of international organization who see in the “functional approach” the surest means for the attainment of a wider “community consensus” and integration. It may sound incongruous but it is nonetheless true that the Arabs enjoyed a greater measure of national unity under the alien but united Ottoman Empire than they do today with their independent status. The political frag-
mentation which followed the breakup of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, and the varied foreign influences which accompanied that breakup, created a multitude of parochial interests, attitudes, loyalties, and prejudices, which, according to what seems to be the "iron law of oligarchy," tend to be self-perpetuating.

These two factors, therefore, rather than supposed racial, ideological, or deep-rooted historical cleavages, account for the development of separate national movements and ideologies in the Asian and the African parts of the Arab world. And the fact that the two have latterly tended to coalesce, particularly after the setting up of the Arab League in 1944, proves how ephemeral and accidental were the differences.

What were the ideas and the basic postulates of this specifically Arab nationalism? They were, to begin with, a combination of many factors in a developing process. Each stage of development differs in certain important aspects from its predecessor and betrays all too clearly the internal as well as the external influences at work. In the course of less than half a century, five distinct stages are clearly recognizable. The first registers the impact of European expansion, exemplified in the occupation of Egypt and Algeria. The European expansion evoked an Islamic-

17 In an interesting book entitled Al-Qawmiyah al-Masriyah al-Islamiyah ("The Egyptian Islamic Nationalism") (Cairo, 1944) Dr. Ibrahim Jumah describes the emergence in Egypt of a new nationality as a result of the settlement en masse of Arab tribes, their admixture with the indigenous Copts, and the process of Arabization which followed. This is, of course, precisely what happened in other Arab countries, and it is in this sense and not on the basis of racial purity that Arabs talk of an Arab nationality.

18 See Abdullah al-Alayili, Dустur al-Arab al-Qawmi ("The National Constitution of the Arabs") (Beirut, 1941). This is one of the very few theoretical works on the ideas of Arab nationalism by an author who is deeply imbued with Western thought.
Arab reaction. But the idea of a united Islamic state was still the axis around which the movement rotated, and the religious impulse still predominated over the national. The outstanding exponent of this phase was Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi of Aleppo, Syria. Although a contemporary and a disciple of Afghani, Kawakebi branched out on his own by differentiating between the Arab movement and the general Pan-Islamic movement. He had derived the distinction between the Arab and the non-Arab Muslim peoples from the lessons of history, that is to say from the part played by Arabs in the rise . . . of Islam, from the intimate connexion between the Arab genius and the spirit of Islam, and from the special place to which the Arabs were entitled in the fortunes of Islam by their language and their descent. So that, while fully upholding the doctrine of the unity of Islam and subscribing to Afghani's campaign for the regeneration of Islam, he advocated the transfer of the caliphate to an Arab of the Quraysh tribe, with Mecca as the capital.

The second phase reflects the reformist tendencies,

10 Kawakebi was born in 1849 and obtained his education at the leading Muslim college in Aleppo. He was a great humanitarian and libertarian and served a prison term for his denunciations of tyranny. He died in 1903. His two principal works were *Umm al-Qura*, a symposium in which twenty-two fictitious characters representing the Muslim world agree on founding a society for the regeneration of Islam, and *Tabai al-Istibdad* ("Attributes of Tyranny"), a scathing denunciation of despotic government. "Both books were published anonymously in Cairo . . . and were widely read and discussed. Copies were smuggled into Syria and distributed in secret." See Antonius, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-98.

20 Antonius, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

21 Muslim legists and political theorists of earlier periods had prescribed membership in the Quraysh family as one of the qualifications of a candidate for the caliphate. See Arnold, *op. cit.*
which had been mounting to a crescendo under the impact of the repeated reverses suffered by the Ottomans in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. The Arab populations of the Empire were dismayed at the failure of the central authorities to ward off European encroachments on Arab territories. The Italian seizure of Tripolitania in 1912 was the spark which ignited the powder keg of Arab disaffection.

It was, therefore, the loss of confidence in the ability of the central government to preserve the integrity of Arab territories which gave rise to the movement for decentralization. The basic idea was that only by the creation of local situations of strength could the threatening external dangers be surmounted. There is, in this phase, an increasing emphasis upon a distinctive Islamic-Arab grouping, bound by a mere symbolic link to the High Porte.

The third phase was the Arab answer to the Turkish nationalist movement, which was beginning to assert itself under the banner of Pan-Turanianism. Clearly, the Young Turks who preached this racial creed were guilty of inconsistent thinking. For Turanianism, with its ideal of exalting the Turkish nationality and stressing the affinity of the Turks in the Ottoman Empire with their racial brothers in central Asia, was the negation of

22 The writer is indebted for information on this second phase to the books on nationalism of Sati Husari, one of the leading scholars of the contemporary Arab world. Husari is now chief of the Arab League’s cultural bureau.

23 See Husari, *Muhadarat-fi Nushu al-Fikrah al-Qawmiyah* ("Lectures on the Development of the Idea of Nationalism") (Cairo, 1951), pp. 185–187. The deputies from Tripolitania submitted a detailed report to the Istanbul parliament, indicting the authorities for willful negligence in defense of their country. At the time of the Italian conquest the military forces had been reduced to a fifth of their normal establishment, the bulk having been dispatched to fight the rebellious Arab country of Yemen.
the doctrine of Ottomanism, which aimed at uniting the dif­
ferent races of the empire into one nation on a basis of equality
for all.  

The policy of Turkification naturally alarmed the Arabs
and drove them to active opposition, both open and sub­
terranean.

The principal demand was still decentralization so that
the Arabs could pursue their own cultural and political
development unhindered. The Arabic language occupied
the chief place in the Turco-Arab controversy. Unlike
the Balkan peoples who, on account of their religious and
sectarian organizations, enjoyed complete cultural auton­
omy, Arab Muslims were compelled to attend government
schools where Turkish was the medium of instruction.
This educational policy left the Arabic language with only
one refuge, the Christian missionary establishments. Hence
their great contribution to the Arab revival.  

The three phases in the development of Arab national­
ism with which we have just dealt indicate how predomi­
nant the negative element was. The impelling force was
either fear of an advancing European imperialism and the
inability of the state to withstand it or distrust of Turkish
intentions and designs. Such external stimuli are, of course,
important factors in the development of nationalism every­
where. But no nationalism can last for long without posi­
tive and constructive factors to sustain it and to imbue it
with zeal, purpose, and direction. These positive factors
show much more clearly and forcefully in the fourth and
fifth phases of Arab nationalism, and they are unmistak­

24 See Antonius, op. cit., p. 106.
26 The contribution of the Christian missionary institutions in the
Levant, particularly the Protestant, to the revival of Arab learning is
fully acknowledged by leading Arab scholars. See, for example, Husari,
op. cit., pp. 166–169, and Antonius, op. cit., ch. iii.
ably attributable to cultural—and later political—contacts with the West.

The deliberations of the first Arab Congress, which convened in Paris in 1913 and which was attended by delegates from various parts of the Arab world as well as from the Americas, reveal how much the Arabs had already drunk from the springs of European nationalism. Although discretion impelled the conferees to talk with reticence and to stress the general desire to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire (provided the rights of the Arabs as equal partners were safeguarded), it was apparent that the Arabs aspired to reconstitute their life on the basis of nationalism. The removal of hindrances and disabilities, which had been the original aim of the Arab movement, was gradually giving way to nationalism as an end and a creed.27 Ahmad Tabara, a delegate from Beirut, told the conferees: “We mean by Arabs all Arabic-speaking peoples without distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim.” In an address entitled “Social Solidarity between Muslim and Christian Arabs,” Nadrah Mutran, of Lebanon, told the Congress:

If racial consciousness is a virtue [he was obviously referring to the popularity of racial theories in his day], then the Arabs possess it to an extent unequaled by other peoples. When Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah and Khalid ibn al-Walid advanced on Syria at the helm of the Arab Muslim armies, they found the Ghassanids as guardians of its doors. They were Christian Arabs led by their Christian king Jabalah ibn al-Ayham. Instead of fighting against the Muslims, on the basis of the religious and the political connections which bound them to the Romans, the Ghassanids fraternized with their Arab kinsmen and facilitated their conquest of the land. The Arab solidarity shown by the Ghassanid Christians during that critical juncture is the

strongest proof that the Arabs' pride of race takes precedence over religion. And this is indeed the virtue of living nations, the nations which refuse to die.28

It is clear from the preceding how far secularization had proceeded since the inchoate and indigenous stirrings of the Arab movement in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The direct influence of Western concepts is fully revealed in an address delivered by Abdul Ghani al-Arisi, at the second session of the Congress, and it would be worth quoting from that address if only to show the direct Western derivation of his ideas. The speaker declared:

Rights in every political system are of two kinds: the rights of individuals and the rights of collectivities. The latter take many forms, but the most important is the nation-group. And the rights of nations are quite distinct from those of individuals.

The speaker then asked whether the Arabs are entitled to rights as a nation and he answered:

In the view of political theorists, groups are entitled to the rights of nations if they possess unity of language and of race according to the German school; unity of history and of traditions according to the Italian school; and unity of political aspirations according to the French. If we consider the case of the Arabs in the light of these three schools, we will find that they have unity of language, unity of history and of traditions, and unity of political aspiration. The right of the Arabs to nationhood, therefore, finds endorsement in all schools of political theory without exception.

The speaker echoed also the racial theories which were in vogue in Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The primary factor in the constitution of the Arab nation was race, he declared.

28 Quoted in Husari, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
Our status as Arabs takes precedence over our political status [as Ottomans]. We have preserved our characteristics, our attributes, and our entity over many centuries in spite of the machinations of Constantinople, such as the attempts at political absorption, imperial domination, and racial amalgamation. All the efforts of Constantinople, however, led to one result only—adherence to our nationhood and the resuscitation of the noble instinct of race.

One of the important results of the increasing secularization of nationalism was the gradual bridging of the ideological gap between the Muslim and the Christian wings. The idea of Arab nationalism had begun among Christian intellectuals before it did among Muslims. The Christians had been more strongly exposed to Western cultural influences, and they had read Arab history through the lenses of modern Western scholarship. As might have been expected, particularly in the nineteenth century, Western oriental scholarship stressed the mundane rather than the theological aspects of Arab history. It showed that the Arab nation had developed a highly advanced civilization before as well as after Islam and that Christians had contributed to both of these civilizations. Arab civilization, therefore, had not been a purely religious venture in which the Christian Arabs could not participate. On the contrary, it had many features completely unrelated to religion, as evidenced by the fact that Europeans had drawn heavily upon it.

This was how the idea of Arab nationalism began among the Christians of the Levant. Clearly, it differed in certain fundamental respects from its counterpart among the Muslims. That the two gradually coalesced is the result of the impact of the West, first as a culture and, finally, in the fifth phase, as a direct political experience.

The fifth phase is not only better known but is also

Ibid., p. 198.
the most important. Its ideas account for all the activities—both constructive and destructive—which make news headlines. No longer is the idea of Arab nationalism the possession of a solitary intellectual, a musing poet, or a dreaming statesman. It has become a popular movement and a living force in the consciousness of the people. Martyrs in abundance have been offered at its altar, and many fought in the cause of its triumph. No longer does Arab nationalism have to fall back upon the faint memories of ages past for vindication. The living and inspiring history of the Arab Rebellion of 1916 was as worthy a title deed as any to nationhood.

No one who lived through that experience or has read its literature can fail to be impressed by the genuineness, the depth, and the idealism of its architects as well as of its rank-and-file adherents. The fact that it failed to achieve its purposes in the aftermath of World War I does not prove—as Lowell Thomas in his *With Lawrence in Arabia* seems to suggest—that it was artificial and not an innate and natural force. At all events, the Arab Rebellion marked a new milestone in the ideological development of Arab nationalism, and the currents to which it gave rise may be briefly stated as follows:

1. The first and obvious result was that it provided a living history inspired by national rather than predominantly religious motivations. This constituted a break with a millennium of religious universalism as a foundation of polity. When the Kemalist Turks abolished the Ottoman caliphate in March 1924, they merely acknowledged in theory what the Arab Rebellion had established in fact, namely, the principle of Arab nationality as a foundation of political life.

2. The political fragmentation which followed the peace settlements of the early 20's resulted also in ideological fragmentations. Internal as well as external forces con-
spired to promote localism at the expense of nationalism. In a politically divided world, localism was much more in accord with existing facts than nationalism, which, under the circumstances, had its abode in the imagination only. Moreover, localism was concrete and visible; it was embodied in such tangible symbols as special emblems, passports, armies, administrations, currencies, and the like. The nationalist idea did not possess these concrete symbols and had, therefore, to struggle against the inertia which inevitably stems from an accomplished and seemingly entrenched fact. If we add to these automatic internal forces the fact that the Arab countries had been subjected to different foreign powers, with different systems, cultures, and purposes, it becomes less surprising that regional loyalties flourished than that nationalism survived. The retreat of foreign influence resulted in a general weakening of localism—its foster child—and the resurgence of nationalism to an ascendancy similar to that of a quarter of a century ago.

3. The third result is an intangible one which, perhaps, can best be described as the growth of pessimism as a principal characteristic of the nationalist movement. In place of the buoyant, almost naïve optimism which permeated its launching, the bitter disillusionment which followed World War I and the failure of the Allies to honor their pledges to the Arabs impressed a stamp of pessimism, negativism, and cynicism upon the movement. The literature of Arab nationalism from this time is a bitter monotone distinguished more by what it opposes than by what

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30 One of the primary instruments of policy of foreign powers (of France in particular) was the stimulation of local loyalties. France hoped thereby to perpetuate its control over the Levant by isolating it from the general Pan-Arab movement. France's involuntary withdrawal from the Levant in the early 40's shows how far it had failed in that purpose.
it proposes. Western observers have sought to attribute this phenomenon to the inherent destructiveness of nationalism per se or to blame it on an instinctive anti-Westernism supposedly inseparable from the Arab mind. Quite apart from the basically untenable approach which rests upon deterministic postulates, these interpretations fail to explain why the negative traits in Arab nationalism have not always been so pronounced and why the so-called anti-Westernism does not antedate the imposition of Western imperialism, particularly after 1918. And the fact that the Arabs do not seem to be able to let bygones be bygones is not because of a dogged and unforgiving memory but because the misdeeds of the past live into the present, as we shall have occasion to see in later chapters on the various aspects of national life.
CONCERNING A NATIONAL IDEOLOGY

THE literature on the constituents and attributes of contemporary Arab nationalism is relatively meager; it is recent in time (the first systematic exposition was no earlier than 1938); and it is controversial in some of its basic concepts and formulations. There is, in fact, a perfectly understandable disagreement as to whether or not the life and thought of a nation can or should be embodied in what is known as a national philosophy. The phrase is, in a sense, a contradiction in terms, for the term philosophy denotes a search for universal truths, and it is anything but genuine philosophy which forgoes the universal for

1 See the bibliography by Dr. Nichola Ziyadeh of Beirut University in the *Middle East Journal*, VI (Autumn, 1952), 468–473. This lists eighteen items on Arab nationalism, ranging from books to pamphlets and various conference proceedings.

2 This was Costi Zurayq's book entitled *Al-Wayi al-Qawmi* ("National Consciousness") (Beirut, 1938).
the particular, save insofar as the universal pulsates within the particular. In this limited sense, and with due regard to legitimate and important exceptions, we might venture to talk about various national philosophies: British empiricism, American pragmatism, French rationalism, German idealism, Soviet materialism, Indian quietism, and so on.

What the proponents of the Arab national philosophy have in mind, however, is something more than the propagation or the nurture of any particular philosophical school. Costi Zurayq has made the formulation of a systematic, forceful, and clear-cut national philosophy a condition precedent to a genuine Arab revival. "Indeed, there is no hope for the Arab national renaissance unless it is inspired by a national philosophy which depicts its spirit, delimits its orientation, portrays its objectives, and prescribes its methods." National awakenings throughout the world have been either preceded or accompanied by spurts of intellectual fermentation, this advocate of an Arab national philosophy points out. Philosophical disputations were detrimental to the Arabs in ages past only because their themes were unconnected with the realities and needs of life. The achievements of the West, on the other hand, have been possible precisely because they were anchored to systematic thought and clear-cut ideological systems, pertaining to the needs and problems of the day.

In his *Dustur al-Arab al-Qawmi* ("The Constitution of Arab Nationalism") Abdullah al-Alayili also decries the

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4 Dr. Zurayq is obviously trying to make a distinction between philosophical disputations on such topics as the immortality of the soul, predetermination and free will, and the attributes of God, which in ages past disrupted the unity of the Arab community, and the more mundane theoretical formulations which are at the basis of modern Western civilization.
absence of a systematic formulation of an Arab national ideology. But he distinguishes sharply between nationalism as an ideology and nationalism as a program of action; and it is clear that his concern is mostly about the latter: "The Arabs have not been provided with a clear-cut nationalist ideology which could be inculcated by any one of the various mediums of communication such as schools, public instruction, or party platforms." The author thinks that any one of these mediums could win over the people to the idea of nationalism; and he cites Britain as a country where nationalism has not emanated from a particular philosophical formulation but has developed around party platforms and common experiences.

The lack of a national ideology, however, does not mean that Arab nationalism is an artificial and groundless movement, Alayili asserts. An ideology is required merely to preserve the cause from being torn asunder by hostile ideologies or inner petrification. In order to avoid such a defeat, the national ideology should satisfy three conditions, which Alayili sums up as follows: (1) It should have its cornerstone in the heart rather than in the mind, for faith is a more enduring anchor of unity than is the intellect. What settles in the heart inevitably molds the mind, which is not necessarily true if the case is reversed. (2) It should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the ever-widening intellectual horizons and to avoid a hardening of its emotional base around certain assumed truths. (3) It should be profound as a system of thought in order to attract and satisfy the intellectual yearnings of its nationalist adherents.

Raif Khouri, in a critique of Zurayq's *National Consciousness*, takes strong exception to the advocacy of a

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5 Dustur al-Arab al-Qawmi [Beirut, 1941], pp. 5-7.
6 Ibid., p. 29.
national philosophy. He ridicules the idea of formulating a national philosophy in the manner of an engineer drafting a design for a construction project. As his thesis unfolds, one gathers that he is not an empiricist, a conservative, or a Lockeian libertarian objecting to a rigid typology of nationalist orientation. His aversion is to the substance of the philosophy as outlined by Zurayq. He is against the "idealistic," the mystical, and the moralistic approach of Zurayq; and as a convinced "materialist" he proposes a down-to-earth orientation. Thus, instead of Zurayq's belief in a "special Arab mission," he prefers to talk of the Arabs' "special needs." We shall have occasion to bring out some of these controversial views as we proceed in our discussion of the various factors constituting Arab nationalism.

The question of a national ideology qua ideology has been a central issue in the literature of Arab nationalism. It is therefore necessary to give further thought to it before proceeding to a discussion of specific constituents. The two questions which immediately come to mind are: (1) What is the purpose of an ideology? (2) What should be its scope?

A glance at the history of modern nations shows that not all nationalisms have been dependent upon the formulation of specific national philosophies, even though, in almost every instance, great intellects contributed immeasurably to their enhancement. In fact, the longer the national continuity of a people, the less is the need for a national philosophy. Why? Because the long-continued

7 See his Maalim al-Wayi al-Qawmi ("The Features of National Consciousness") (Beirut, 1941).
8 Ibid., p. 55.
9 Few would underrate, for example, Rousseau's influence on the development of humanitarian nationalism; yet he is not regarded as a philosopher of nationalism, and he wrote nothing systematic on the subject.
development of a nation gives it the strength to absorb the strains of successive generations without excessive disturbance. A British national philosophy would presumably show the influence of Shakespeare, Milton, Hobbes, Locke, Adam Smith, Burke, Robert Owen, the Fabians, and the contemporary Socialists. There would be in it the libertarian, the authoritarian, the conservative, the progressive, and the individualist, as well as the collectivist, strains. All of these claim their rightful places in the British heritage, and, what is perhaps no less important, their claims are duly recognized. It need hardly be added that in a country like Britain, the formulation of a monistic national philosophy could only result in a grotesque distortion of a diversified but coherent tradition.

Nations which abruptly come into being or which undergo a metamorphosis are naturally in greater need of explicit ideological guidance, and the Arab nation belongs to this category inasmuch as it has only recently launched itself on a career of nationhood. As an Islamic community, its roots are deeply embedded in the past. Its legacy covers every field of human thought and interest. Its institutions, its symbols, its rituals, and its traditions are the work of countless generations. As a nation in the modern secular sense, the Arabs have to begin from scratch. In fact, they have to decide who an Arab is. When religion was the basis of life, an all-embracing value system prescribed the norms, the standards, and the criteria of good behavior. These criteria were accepted and applied to all times and places. Thus, to cite one example, Umayyad rule is almost universally disparaged in the Islamic historical tradition on account of its supposedly secular orientation. Quite apart from the fact that most of these historical works were written during the Abbassid period and could not therefore escape the charge of partisanship, there is no denying the fact that the Umayyads outraged the accepted norms of
Arab Muslim life because of their secular if not sacrilegious activities.

A modern Arab nationalist, if true to his nationalist creed, would have to reassess and reinterpret the historical verdict of his forefathers on the record of the Umayyads. In the light of modern nationalist categories, what was once condemned in the Umayyads as villainous secularism must now be lauded as praiseworthy nationalism, for the foundation of Umayyad policy was the Arab-state principle; and Arab fortunes went down with the demise of the Umayyads.

It would be misleading to overemphasize the rootlessness of a modern secular Arab nation or to exaggerate the dichotomy between an Arab and an Islamic tradition. In many instances little more is required than a change of epithet. Thus, instead of being referred to as a religious saint, Caliph Omar is referred to as a national hero. A process of secularization and nationalization entailing an old and rich heritage requires profound study if the result is to be other than chimerical. And what makes the assignment even harder is the fact that the reassessment has to be made in the light of the heterogeneous, ever-changing, and oft-conflicting stream of modern Western thought.

The question as to whether or not a national ideology is needed is contingent upon a multiplicity of factors and cannot, therefore, be answered dogmatically. If the purpose of such an ideology is self-discovery, then no cause could be more worthy, for it is the duty of a nation, as it is of an individual, to begin by knowing itself. In periods of transition and transformation, a nation’s vision of itself is beclouded and confused. Then most of all it needs men who by profound insight into the soul of the past heritage, by comprehension of the problems of the present, and by vision of the future can synthesize an amorphous mass of
ideas and aspirations and provide leadership in the task of reconstruction. In this sense, the Arabs need, among other things, a national philosophy. Raif Khouri may be right when he sarcastically observes that, if the leaders of thought were to devote themselves to the task of formulating a national philosophy, they would come out with a hundred philosophies! Indeed they would, but why should any harm accrue from such a spurt in intellectual activity? It is only when the formulation of a national philosophy is taken to mean the erection of a "metaphysical mausoleum," a final and "closed" statement of Arab nationalism, that there might be a disastrous loss of vitality and a rigidity stifling to evolution and progress. But this is hardly what the advocates of a national philosophy have in mind, and there is no point, therefore, in criticizing them for what they have not said or intended to say.

The critics of a national philosophy stand on more solid ground when it comes to the scope of the proposed national ideology. For the wider it casts its net the more tenuous becomes its contribution. What is a national philosophy expected to include? The spirit of the nation? its ideal institutions? its traditions? its legacy? its mission? its place under the sun? its economic structure? If a national philosophy is intended merely as an intellectual guide, then lapses of every sort might be tolerated. According to the conceptions of Zurayq, Alayili, and other proponents of a national philosophy, it should be distilled into laconic form and preached to the generality of people as a national creed, with all the emotions and the embellishments of religion.

The experiences of other nationalities show clearly how hard it is to disengage the factual from the emotional once they have been indissolubly proffered as a creed.

Hegel is, perhaps, an outstanding example of a national philosopher who cast his net widely, with the result that many of his conceptions persisted long after they had outgrown their usefulness in the changed conditions of later times. His conception of the state, for example, reflected Germany's yearning for a strong, centralized state in the wake of her national humiliation at the hands of France. In their larger social aspects, his theories applied to a situation in which the progress of industrialism and modernized government depended on a policy of protectionism. It is doubtful whether Germany's adherence to some of these concepts was in its best interest in the changed conditions of later days. And yet this seems to be the inevitable result when a national philosophy purports to answer all of the problems of the manifold aspects of life.

It is the contention of this book that if there must be a national philosophy (and we have attempted to show that a good case can be made for having one) it should be restricted to essential and noncontroversial postulates. An ideal example of a national ideology in the broad sense is the American Constitution, in its combination of the elements of fundamental stability with the possibility of change and in its emotional appeal to the American people. If a national philosophy is thus conceived, i.e., if it is restricted to a general statement of basic principles, both intellectually and emotionally satisfying, and if it is not hamstrung by cumbersome details, then one becomes highly desirable for the Arab people.

FACTORS CONSTITUTING ARAB NATIONALISM

IN THE literature on Arab nationalism considerable space is devoted to a definition of an Arab nation and an analysis of the components of such a nation. This is essential because of the multifarious connotations which the term Arab has acquired over many generations. In modern use, the term Arab stands for a political concept and has no ethnic or social significance;¹ its definition follows closely the Western concepts of nationhood. It is not to be in-

¹ After the late Abbasid period, when the Arab kingdom had been transformed into a cosmopolitan Islamic empire, the term Arab reverted to its earlier meaning of bedouin or nomad, becoming in effect a social rather than an ethnic or political term. Ibn Khaldun, himself of Arab descent, used the word in this sense. It is only since the beginning of this century, when the European idea of a nation began to make headway, that the term Arab has again acquired political connotations. For a discussion of the connotations of the term in various periods of history, see Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History (London and New York, 1950), pp. 9–17.
ferred, however, that the European concepts have been taken over slavishly and uncritically. A careful reading of Arab nationalist literature shows that the criteria of nationhood have been selected with a view to their operational suitability in the Arabic-speaking world.

In formulating the postulates of Arab nationalism, Arab writers have drawn upon two principal sources. The first one is the legacy of the past. The community of language, of tradition, and of historical experiences have all been stressed as common denominators of an Arab nation. It will be seen that the choice of these criteria has not been at random; the aim has been to underline those factors which, in the light of contemporary conditions, would be most conducive to unity and to underplay or forget those which foster antipathy. Nearly every theorist of Arab nationalism in the past two decades has been at pains to stress that the term Arab does not possess ethnic signification, and they have done so with an eye principally on Egypt, which, though the most important Arab country, would not be happy if exclusive racial prerequisites were established.

But there is a second source of inspiration, namely, the cultural impact of the West. The influence of Western thought upon the formulation of nationalist ideas may be gauged from the fact that a great majority of the writers on the subject are Western in education and orientation. Both consciously and unconsciously, their cultural backgrounds have left a deep impress upon their ideas, occasionally at the cost of independent and sound judgment. There is nothing unusual about the communication of

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2 It should be emphasized that, unless specifically stated otherwise, the term Western does not refer to the present constellation of nations united in opposition to a Soviet eastern bloc. The term Western stands for modern European civilization in its totality, and its antithesis is medieval Arab-Islamic civilization.
FACTORS IN ARAB NATIONALISM

ideas between different cultural areas; in fact, it is essential for progress, particularly for the progress of those areas which, at any particular stage of development, stand to gain most from intercultural encounters. But if the gain is to be maximized, recipients must endeavor to adapt the foreign ideas to their situations and needs. Writers on Arab nationalism have not always done this with success.

The present indecision as to the place of religion in Arab nationalism is a good example of cultural inanity. In the historical development of Western nationalism, prudence dictated the banishment of religion from the political arena after a prolonged struggle which ended in deadlock. This separation of politics and religion seems to have worked well and to have relieved Europe of one of its sorest points of friction. Moreover, this settlement was basically in accord with Western Christianity's traditional separation of the two realms, the temporal and the spiritual.

Theorists of Arab nationalism, under the spell of Western ideas, have made no serious attempt to accommodate Western experience to their own historical background and environment. In most instances they have glossed over the whole issue as being too delicate and embarrassing, or they have advocated the secularization of national life in deference to modern progressive ideas and the need to keep pace with the rest of the world. Surely a question so vital and so deep-rooted deserves far more attention than has so far been accorded to it. The masses of people, who are acquiring increasing political significance with the spread of education, will doubtless demand a better reason for the banishment of religion from public life than the fact that Europe or America or India has done so. Failure to face this problem squarely accounts in part for the popularity of religious-oriented movements in various parts of the Arab and Muslim worlds. Diffidence and am-
bigness have kept important sections of the Christian Arabs lukewarm and suspicious, for they fear, with some justification, that Arab nationalism without a more forthright reorientation along secular lines may be no more than a façade for an Islamic policy, to which they naturally could not subscribe.

The case is strong for the separation of state and religion. It will be argued in the course of this chapter as well as in the following chapters on the political ideas of Arab nationalism. It rests upon a number of considerations both of principle and of expediency. If properly argued, it stands a reasonable chance of winning substantial popular approval. But there is little chance that the present attitude of diffidence, of evasion, or of slavish imitation will do more than postpone a potentially explosive issue.

It has been pointed out that there is, as yet, no definitive statement of what constitutes an Arab nation and that all we have are the tentative and sometimes controversial views of a group of contemporary thinkers on the subject. Nonetheless, it is possible to obtain the predominant concepts and formulations from the various studies of this subject.

Language

The principal factor, concerning which there is agreement amounting to consensus, is language. Nations are distinguished from one another primarily on the basis of language, writes Sati Husari. In making this unequivocal assertion, Husari relies on the experiences of the Arab people no less than on the theoretical formulations of Western thinkers, for when the curtain fell upon the long history of Islamic universalism and the quest for a new principle of association began in earnest, it was language

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*Arawa Ahadith fi al-Wataniyah wa al-Qawmiyah* ("Opinions and Talks on Patriotism and Nationalism") (Cairo, 1944), p. 20.
first and foremost that delineated the contours of loyalty and the boundaries of identity between the congeries of social groups. No one can accurately measure the degree of racial admixture which must have taken place over the centuries; it was, according to historical records, considerable. But it availed little against the aspiration to make the political map conformable to the language map. Nor did community of religion, notwithstanding its great emotional potency, stem the tide of alienation from groups having a different language. A common language is highly important to the national idea because it is the most individual product of a people's achievement. This, at any rate, is the role of Arabic in the life history of the Arabs. It is the register of their creativeness, a symbol of their unity, and an expression of their mental and artistic aptitudes.

A language is important because it is the medium through which a people express their minds and emotions. Its prosperity and growth are inseparable from the prosperity of those who use it. The observation seems banal; yet it is warranted in view of the idealization of Arabic, discernible in some parts of Arab literature, without due regard for the influence of situational factors. Such an attitude breeds complacency and is self-defeating. In discussing the factor of language, Zurayq for example, writes:

It is the duty of the nationally conscious [Arab] to ponder his language in order to know its genesis and how it spread and to comprehend its superior qualities over other languages and the special endowments which enabled it to achieve complete mastery over these vast regions. For every language possesses a unique genius and attributes which distinguish it from other languages. And the Arabic language among all other languages has shown great vitality in its meticulous structure, the extent of its dissemination, and its flexibility, which has fitted it to serve as an efficacious instrument for expressing the various
arts and sciences. For all these reasons it behooves us to try to discover the secret of this vitality and to lay our hands on the unique powers which our language represents in order to utilize these powers in organizing our present and building our future.4

Khouri, in his criticism of Zurayq, objects to the use of such phrases as the "unique genius of a language" or "superior attributes." He objects to the use of such phrases as the "unique genius of a language" or "superior attributes." A language possesses no special qualities apart from the conditions of those who speak it—apart from the stage of their economic development and the concomitant social and political relationships arising therefrom. He cites the history of the Arabic language itself to substantiate his materialist interpretation. When the Arabs were in the nomadic phase, their language reflected the impress of nomadic life in all of the latter's aspects and ramifications. With their cultural growth during the Abbasid era, the Arabic language expanded with the expansion of life's material and moral dimensions until it became the principal medium of culture in the world. Then, with the retrogression of the Arabs, it began to shrink into its present state of inadequacy. At present it is ill equipped to cope with the terms and the concepts of the modern sciences. Clearly, therefore, Khouri concludes, the adequacy of Arabic in the periods of Arab prosperity and its later inadequacy do not result from unique genius or innate incapacity.6

The argument just cited touches upon one of the most acute problems confronting Arab nationalism. The difficulty arises from historical circumstances peculiar to late-comers to nationhood. The problem is this. The task of

national consolidation requires the mobilization of a people's loyalty around fairly fixed centripetal attractions such as language, culture, and mores. Modern nationhood, however, presupposes modernization and Westernization, which, in effect, mean the opening of the floodgates to foreign influences and techniques. In this process important landmarks are obliterated and familiar signposts are swept away. The needs of transformation and rejuvenation take a heavy toll of the factors essential for stabilization. In no area of activity is this predicament so marked as it is in the realm of language.

Language, we are told, is the pivotal factor in Arab nationalism. In its present form and notwithstanding the tremendous advances of the past half-century or so, Arabic is undernourished compared with the other living languages in the world. Five centuries of stagnation have left it virtually untouched by epoch-making discoveries in every field of knowledge. The backlog is so extensive that far greater efforts are required than are now being expended by the various academies and universities if the gap is to be filled and if Arabic is to be restored to its rightful place as the living instrument of a revitalized national life.

In the meantime, the inevitable dependence by Arabs upon foreign languages for a substantial part of their higher education raises a number of problems that go far beyond mere semantic dualities. A language is something more than a passive instrument; it is a way of life and of thought. When Arab students obtain their higher education at an English, American, French, or German institution, they consciously and unconsciously acquire there a good deal of their mental and moral outlooks. As the proportion of these students to the total population is necessarily small, they become a sort of enclave, whose outlook on major problems is often not shared by a ma-
jority of the people. And to make the confusion worse, they are not in agreement among themselves concerning these questions. An American-educated Arab is likely to have different views on such things as political theory, systems of government, forms of economic organization, and social and moral valuations than does a French-educated Arab, even though both belong to the same Western tradition. Thus a dual disharmony exists: (1) between the Western-educated elite and the masses; (2) within the ranks of the elite itself.

There are, however, mitigating factors which improve what would otherwise be an intolerable schizophrenia. The social milieu, for example, ensures that minimum degree of harmony without which no society could remain intact. The integrative impact of society operates at all levels and in all phases of an individual’s life. More will be said on this topic later in the discussion of social change.

Two important questions remain to be discussed in connection with the role of Arabic as a pivotal factor in Arab nationalism. The first one pertains to the script. Few other questions—as the Colloquium on Islamic Culture held in Princeton in the summer of 1953 showed—stir as much acrimonious debate as do proposals to reform, revise, or supplant Arabic script. The shortcomings of Arabic script are readily recognized. Arabic script, for example, indicates general rather than exact meaning. As a Semitic language Arabic is composed of consonants. Supplementary short vowel letters (fathah, kasrah, dammah) are occasionally inserted above or below the consonants which they follow, but in informal writing and in the press these are normally omitted. One reform suggested was that the short vowel letters should be incorporated as integral parts of written words. This would require the addition of three

new letters to the Arabic alphabet. As Arabic consonants are changed in writing according to their position at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, printing and typing costs are thereby increased. Other difficulties include the absence of both capital letters and standardized punctuation and the use of tiny dots, placed just above or below individual letters, to give distinct meanings to the symbol to which they are related. The lack of uniformity in spelling foreign terms or names in Arabic, coupled with the absence of complete and generally accepted Arabic dictionaries of technical and scientific terms, hampers the much-needed interchange of ideas among researchers in the various Arab countries. The handicap in the way of exchanging the fruits of research with other peoples is, of course, much greater.

All these technical and structural weaknesses are readily admitted. But the hold of Arabic—both the script and the language—is such that the adoption of either the Latin alphabet or a purely phonetic script stands little chance of winning general or even significant endorsement. The most powerful argument against a change in the script is that the sacred character of the divinely revealed Quran places Arabic and its script in a special category. Of course those who advance this argument are, by and large, Arabs; non-Arab Muslim peoples such as the Turks have few inhibitions on this score, and Turkish speakers at the Colloquium were definitely pleased with the results of their country's adoption of the Latin script in the 1920's, in spite

8 See the summary of an introductory address on "Aspects of Literary and Linguistic Problems in Modern Egypt" by Muhammad Khalfalah, dean of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Alexandria (ibid., p. 18).
9 Ibid., p. 25.
10 Ibid. Arguments on the other side included emphasis upon the aesthetic beauty of the Arabic script and the preservation of the artistic values of its calligraphy.
of the tremendous chasm which it created temporarily with their past heritage. The original incompatibility between the Arabic script and Turkish vowels and consonants was stressed as an often-overlooked factor in these comparisons. The decisive factors in the debate were emotional and subjective rather than technical and objective.\textsuperscript{11}

A no less important problem is the chasm between colloquial and classical Arabic. The decline of Arab national life resulted—as was to be expected—in an impoverishment, corruption, and vulgarization of Arabic speech and writing. Colloquial dialects flourished in the various parts of the Arab world at the expense of the classical. The consequences of this situation are manifold. In the first place, a gap has been created between the educated elite, well versed in classical Arabic, and the masses, whose vernacular is colloquial. In the second place, colloquial and classical Arabic exist side by side, the one for informal daily use, the other for carrying on formal or business activities. The duality exists in every sphere of life, creating difficulties in education, in the writing of books for school children and the populace, and in public communication of every sort.

Moreover, the differences between colloquial dialects of the various Arab countries have inevitably given rise to varying degrees of provincial consciousness and have thus militated against national consciousness. The trend, however, is toward a nationalization of the language, and it is

\textsuperscript{11} It is revealing in this connection to quote from an address to the Colloquium by Professor Minovi of the University of Teheran. He said: "Although the Arabic script is used in Iran, it is not well adapted to the needs of Persian writing. There are many Arabic words incorporated into the Persian language, but the majority of the words are Indo-European and they cannot be perfectly written with a Semitic script. On the other hand, because of the Arabic and Islamic heritage shared by Iran, it is unrealistic to think of adopting any new script or of trying to replace the Arabic terms with Persian equivalents" (ibid., p. 21).
only a question of time before a modus vivendi is reached. The features of the medium-to-be are already taking shape. They stem from a recognition that language is an organism that must grow incessantly if it is not to stagnate. The so-called purity of a language is a fiction. Proponents of the evolutionary thesis find a counterpart between the development of Arabic as the result of recent contact with the literatures of other nations and that resulting from exposure to new languages and cultures following the exit from the Peninsula. The linguists of the past, fearful of these contacts, strove to arrest the process, with a view to preserving the purity and the cohesion of the language. There was a prolific outpouring of books on etymology, orthography, and grammar. Linguists maintained a vigilant watch to ensure the proper use of newly coined words. They succeeded in their main purpose, namely, in preserving the foundations of Arabic and in averting a branching out into a multiplicity of derivative vernaculars, as befell ancient Latin, but they did not succeed in arresting the evolution and growth of Arabic. Many colloquial phrases invaded the language. Local environments left their impress upon the literature of the various Arab countries. Many words have entered the language which have not been mentioned in the lexicons, and a considerable number of such words will be encountered in such classics as the works of Al-Jahiz or the great Kitab al-Aghani ("The Book of Songs").

12 See "Modern Literary Trends in Islamic Countries" by Chafiq Jabri, dean of the Faculty of Letters of the Syrian University (ibid., pp. 19-21).

13 Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz (d. 869) of Basra in Iraq was the author of numerous books of a literary and entertaining character. His finest works are Kitab al-Hayawan ("Book of Animals"), and Kitab al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin ("Book of Eloquence and Exposition"). The latter book is widely used in Arab schools as a textbook on style and rhetoric.

14 One of the most celebrated masterpieces in Arabic literature, Kitab al-Aghani was written by Abu al-Faraj of Isfahan (d. 967). The
The parallel is drawn in order to show that the celebrities of the past did not shun the natural law of evolution and that their incorporation of new terms enriched rather than undermined the language. What is at stake, however, is not change or no change but the pace and the intensity of change, in view of the urgency of catching up with the ever-widening horizons in every branch of learning.

The proposal to adopt colloquial in place of classical Arabic as a way out of the dilemma is now virtually discarded. It is doubtful whether Arab nationalism could have survived otherwise; it would have meant the injection of a new factor of dissipation on top of the already existing political, economic, and social factors of disunity.

The nation-forming factor in the Arab world at present is not a central organization in the political sense or a favorable geography. It is social communication. The modern press, radio, and cinema are doing a more effective job in forming an Arab nation than all other factors put together. The Arab world does not have a recognized political or economic leadership, but it has an intellectual leadership whose authority recognizes no political boundaries. Poets like Ahmad Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim of Egypt; Khalil Mutran, Amin Rihani, and Bishara al-Khoury of Lebanon; Maruf al-Rassafi, Jamil Sidki al-

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book was dedicated to Sayf al-Dawla, the renowned ruler of Syria and a great patron of learning, who, it is said, bestowed upon the author a gift of one thousand pieces of gold.

18 The Arab League is close to being such a central political organization, but its role is more akin to that of a regional co-operative organization than to that of a central national organization.

18 The Arab countries are separated by great desert stretches which create formidable communication problems. Modern facilities are reducing these difficulties, but the creation of Israel in 1948 has had the effect of dividing the Arab world into two parts as far as easy land communication is concerned.
Zahawi, and Muhammad Rida al-Shabibi of Iraq; and Umar abu Rishah and Sulayman Ahmad of Syria are read with equal zeal in every country in which Arabic is the mother tongue. The same may be said of dramatists, novelists, social scientists, historians, essayists, and journalists.\(^7\) It is these people who in spite of the various factors of dissipation have been building up that uniform consciousness and behavior from which a nation is made. In recognition of this fact the theorists of Arab nationalism have assigned to language the first place as a factor constituting the Arab nation.

**Historical Traditions**

The second most important factor among the constituents of Arab nationalism is historical tradition, according to Husari, who describes it as the living memory of the nation. “The unity of this [Arab] history generates uniform sympathies and inclinations; it leads to a sharing of pride in the glories of the past and of collective sorrow over past misfortunes; and consequently, it creates identity of aspirations for the future.”\(^8\) Nichola Ziyadeh, Yusef Haykal, and Nabih Faris also give to history an influence second only to that of language.\(^9\) Zurayq places history in third place, i.e., after language and culture. But since language and culture are used by other writers to denote the same thing, there is, in fact, no difference between their views and those of Zurayq. Of the well-known theorists, only Alayili relegates history to a fifth position, plac-

\(^7\) It is difficult to overestimate the influence of such Egyptian leaders of thought as Taha Husayn, Abbas Mahmoud Aqqad. Abdul-Qader Mazini, Ahmad Zayyat, and Tawfiq al-Hakim.

\(^8\) Husari, *Arawa Ahadith fi al-Wataniyah wa al-Qawmiyah*, ch. ii.

\(^9\) Nichola Ziyadeh and Nabib Faris are professors of history at the American University of Beirut. Dr. Yusef Haykal is the ambassador of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan to Paris. All these men are Palestinian Arabs.
ing before it language, interest, geographical environment, and race.

In what sense is historical consciousness a vital part of national consciousness and what kind of history do the theorists of Arab nationalism have in mind? Analyzing the structure of national consciousness, Zurayq writes:

And finally, national consciousness, drawing its inspiration from the past, requires that we sense the spirit of our history and comprehend the elements which have gone into its making. It is of utmost importance that we understand the basic factors which have contributed to our past greatness as well as to our retrenchment. We are particularly in need of discovering the latent forces within the hearts of the Arabs; because circumstances and external conditions—important as they are—are insignificant in the making of history as compared with the inner forces of a nation. For how many nations have collapsed, seemingly at the hands of foreign conquerors, while in fact they had already disintegrated from within prior to any onslaught from without.²⁰

As a repository of a nation's total experiences, history is indispensable for building the present and planning for the future upon the foundations of the past. The communion of past and present is recognizably a source of strength. Considering the many pitfalls of the historical method, how much of what is called historical tradition is in fact an objective rendering of the past? In fact, may we not agree with Ernest Renan that oblivion, even historical error, are essential factors in the creation of a nation? For this reason, said Renan, historical studies are often a danger for the nation.

There are many things in the history of the Arab peoples that could be disruptive to their unity as a nation. What a holocaust, for example, would follow a resuscita-

tion of the Qays-Yemen (North-South) feud! Or the bitter struggle between the Umayyad Syrians and the Iraqi Abbassids! Or, to go no further back than the nineteenth century, the bloody sectarian strife which rent the Levant! The truth is that historical tradition is a factor contributing to integration provided it is presented in the right way. That is to say, it is not so much a question of creating the present in the image of the past as it is the re-creation of the past in the image of the present. The pretense of this mental debauchery claiming to be history rather than political propaganda becomes less sinful when we take into account the sincerity of those who preach it and the formidable difficulties inherent in preaching absolute historical truth. When a theorist of nationalism applies himself to the task of discovering the "innate" forces of his nation, its "national character," its "genius," or its supposed mission, he inevitably introduces his own concepts and images of what that nation is or should be. In his *French Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, Roger Soltau describes how Maurice Barrès constructed his image of the "true" France:

Barrès reveals in fact to a striking if not unique degree the extraordinary subjectivism of this would-be objective traditionalism. He begins by wiping out or ignoring over a century of French development, life, and thought, of French tradition in a word, because it does not fit in with his conception of the course French life should have taken. But having gone back to the Ancien regime he then proceeds to eliminate all that does not square with what we would have liked the Ancien regime to be, the France of Voltaire and Fontenelle, the France of disastrous wars and humiliating peace treaties, the France allied to Turk or Protestant against the most Christian Kings

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21 See p. 10.
22 The story of this strife is described at length in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London, 1938), pp. 55–60.
Thus, it is clear that historical traditions are in themselves a two-edged weapon: they contribute to solidarity by keeping alive memories of common historical antecedents and to dissipation by resuscitating unsavory episodes in which every history abounds. When the theorists of nationalism, therefore, place historical traditions as the second most important factor in nationalism, they envisage a selective presentation, thoroughly cleansed of disruptive overtones.

There are, of course, degrees of manipulation and a limit beyond which the selectivity becomes obnoxious. There is no harm, for example, in ignoring, or at least underplaying, sore spots in a nation’s antecedents. Why should the present generation continue to suffer from the follies of those which preceded it? But this is different from willful misrepresentation, which knowingly falsifies historical records to serve partisan ends. It is fortunate, however, that none of the Arab theorists contemplate any such course, even while they recognize that Arab history must be rewritten to suit the modern age.

The question of historical traditions was one of the principal topics discussed at the Colloquium on Islamic Culture at Princeton. The discussions highlighted the dichotomy which now confronts Arab (and other Muslim nationalisms) in connection with historical consciousness. In the first place, Arab-Muslim history is largely medieval in spirit as well as in method. It could hardly have been

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88 London, 1931, p. 385. Soltau was for many years chairman of the Department of Politics of the American University of Beirut.
otherwise because the bulk of it had already been written a thousand years ago, and it covered an age which is radically different from our own. A modern Arab historian has to consider two principal factors in rewriting history. The first one is that his work should conform to the strict standards of the modern scientific method of historiography. The criteria of the scientific method in historiography are universally recognized, and they need not be repeated here. It is significant and heartening that theorists on Arab nationalism, even those who, like Faris, regard historical education as the second pillar of nationalism, are vehemently opposed to any deviations from the strict rules of the scientific method to serve the ends of nationalism. Faris, for example, is highly critical of modern Arab historiography for what he considers its appeal to popular vanity and emotions at the expense of sound judgment. In this criticism, he echoes an observation which Western orientalists have all too often made, namely, that modern Arab writers are apologetic romanticists.

The reason is that an Arab historian is caught between the two horns of the dilemma of the modern age. On the one hand, he must observe the tenets of modern scholarship. On the other hand, he is the standard-bearer of the advancing creed of nationalism which, among other things, depends upon inculcation of the proper kind of historical consciousness. Moreover, as Dr. Ishtiyaq Husayn Qurashi, minister of education in Pakistan, told the Colloquium:

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24 See Nabih Faris, "How to Increase the Interest of the Muslim Youth in Their History," Colloquium, pp. 26–27. Two other criticisms were: (1) modern history is superficial, listing great names instead of trying to determine, in a detailed manner, specific cultural contributions; (2) it avoids a scientific study of the place of Arab culture in relation to human history as a whole.

It should be remembered that this romanticism and glorification alike were the result of a strong reaction against the hostile, even unscientific writings of some of the Western orientalists who wrote very often to revile and condemn even what was praiseworthy in the achievements of the Muslims.  

Quite apart from the apologetic and the romantic imperatives, the task of reconstructing historical traditions is a formidable one because of the chasm which separates the old age and the new. There are two ways of reinterpreting the past for the purposes of nationalism. The first and the most popular is to read into the past the thought processes and the motivations of the present. Thus Omar would be depicted, not so much as a devout caliph (a role now out of fashion), but as an ardent nationalist whose primary concern was for the hegemony of the Arab race. Any evidences to this effect—and they are by no means lacking—would be magnified, and their opposites either underplayed or suppressed. The process of secularization and of nationalization would be extended to every facet and period until the entire past had been recast in the image of the present. Modern nationalism could then pose as the venerable residuary legatee of a long-established tradition.  

The second and certainly more honest line of approach is to recognize—as does Zurayq—that nationalism is, in its real sense, a product of the modern age. In Chapter VI of his National Consciousness, Zurayq writes:

Muhammad is first of all the prophet of Islam. This religion has permeated every phase of our Arab culture. We cannot, today, understand our old Arab legacy without understanding the Muslim religion. And this Arab legacy is a part of our present culture; in fact it is the foundation upon which it rests. It is, therefore, the duty of every Arab, regardless of his religious faith, to study Islam. But the Prophet Muhammad is also the architect of Arab unity. Some might say that the bond of re-

26 Colloquium, p. 27.
ligion, at that time, was predominant over the bond of nationalism, and that Islam was stronger than Arabism. The answer is that it could not have been otherwise in the Middle Ages, and this is equally true in both the Islamic East and the Christian West. We know that nationalism, in its true sense, is the offspring of the modern era and the political, economic, and social forces to which it has given rise. But in spite of this, we find a strong Arab consciousness, even in the first phase, when the religious sentiment was still at its boiling point. For the Muslims treated the Christians of Taghlib [an Arab tribe] and other Arabs differently from the non-Arab Christians, and some of the Christian tribes participated in the early campaigns on the side of the Muslims. This Arab consciousness became stronger following contacts with the non-Arab races and in reaction to the anti-Arab Shuubiyyah movements. It intensified further as the Arabs rallied together to repel the attacks of Persians, Turks, and other peoples.27

Zurayq concludes his remarks as follows:

It will be seen that these manifestations of Arab national consciousness are slight in comparison with the national consciousness which permeates modern nations. But, if we take into consideration the intellectual environment of the Middle Ages, when religious sentiments predominated over every phase of life, we find in these inchoate manifestations fitting seeds for the Arabs' national life. These seeds had been slowly and gradually growing, until in the present day the bond of nationalism is supreme over every other.28

This long quotation is needed to throw light on the question of historical tradition as a constituent factor of modern Arab nationalism. This line of thought is decidedly better than the first in attitude inasmuch as it recognizes the uniqueness and the evolutionary nature of historical developments without, at the same time, dis-

28 Ibid., p. 132.
Carding the unity and continuum of Arab history and civilization. It does not pressure, cajole, or distort historical evidence, and in so forthrightly dealing with the past it emphasizes the principle of movement and of creativity for the present and the future.

**Community of Interest**

The third factor constituting Arab nationalism, according to modern writers, is community of interest. This factor is emphasized by Zurayq, Alayili, and Haykal; it is overlooked by Husari and criticized by Khouri. Alayili declares:

Since common interests exist between the various parts of the spacious Arab world, religions, which have in the past been the guarantor of interests, have become functionless save in the moral and ethical spheres. Agreement, in spite of differences on account of religion, is dictated by community of interests in the Arab homeland. What objection is there to our having one national creed and differing religions?  

Khouri is closer to contemporary thought on the issue of so-called national interest by refusing to give it blanket endorsement as a prerequisite of nationhood. In his criticism of Zurayq’s reference to “present and future interests,” Khouri wonders what Zurayq means by the phrase. “Are we to deduce from his argument that if interests clashed between the various sections of any nation, that nation would thereby cease to be one?” A more scientific appraisal of the concept, Khouri concludes, would show that dogmatic statements about present and future interests are unjustified; only about interests in which the

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29 See Dustur al-Arab al-Qawmi ("The National Constitution of the Arabs") (Beirut, 1941), pp. 87–95. Alayili regards community of interest as the second most important factor, following language.

majority of a nation partake at any specific phase of national development can discussion be bold.\footnote{Op. cit., pp. 55–60.}

The controversy as to whether or not common interests are an ingredient of nationalism raises the broader issue of the objective versus the subjective concepts of nationalism, which are discussed in the Appendix. It is there argued that the phenomenon of nationalism is explicable only on the basis of a combination of both objective and subjective factors. The same combination of objective self-interest and subjective altruism are involved in the concept of national interest, and it would be well, therefore, to elaborate on some of the ramifications of this concept.

To begin with, national or common interests have too often been identified with economic interests. Charles A. Beard's \textit{The Idea of National Interest} is the best-known exposition of this thesis as it pertains to America. As Beard studied American history, he saw a significant contrast between the agrarian or Jeffersonian concept of national interest and the industrial-commercial concept of Hamilton. But while stressing the economic factors, Beard did not exclude other considerations such as strategic necessities or moral obligations. The fact is that so many factors are involved in the concept of national interest that the only realistic way of defining it is in terms of the values cherished by any particular nation or its spokesmen in relation to costs and the available resources.\footnote{See George Lundberg, "Conflicting Concepts of National Interest," in \textit{American Perspective} (symposium of 1950).} These values could well be moral, nonmoral, or immoral. If they are the desire for security, liberty, equality, and fraternity, as defined by the nation in question, the national interest is served by whatever is conducive to these ends. If the end is expansion by war or ideology, the pursuit of these objec
tives constitutes the national interest. Moreover, the national interest, as defined above, practically means the assumed interest of the most numerous or the most powerful part of the people. It usually represents a compromise or a harmonizing of numerous special interests.

In the light of these often-overlooked considerations, the concept of national interest should undoubtedly be regarded as a factor in Arab nationalism, even though some theorists have been reluctant to include it because of its elusive, indefinable, and changeable nature. It has often been observed that a true nationalist would willingly give up his life for the honor, glory, or survival of his nation, but he would hardly risk a scratch if the issue were presented to him in terms of objective material gains.

In its broader connotation as embodying a synthesis of the values (material and moral) cherished by a majority of the nation—both consciously and unconsciously—the concept of a community of interests can be said to constitute a factor of nationalism. In what proportion the self-regarding and other-regarding elements are combined is difficult to answer. Numerous examples can be cited to show that Arab nationalism has acted in utter disregard of material considerations. For example, let me cite the unflinching hostility of Palestine Arabs over the past quarter-century to Jewish settlement in Palestine, in complete disregard of the material gains that would accrue to them (at least in the short run) from a policy of co-operation; or Iraq's cutting off its petroleum from the terminal refinery at Haifa, following Israeli control of the city in 1948, with an annual loss to Iraq of twenty-five to thirty million dollars; or Egypt's insistence upon the withdrawal of British troops from the Canal Zone, which involved the loss to Egypt of millions of pounds sterling in British purchases and of employment of thousands of Egyptian workers; or Syria's refusal to accept financial aid from any foreign power, notwithstanding her dire need for such capital. One may add to these collective sacrifices the deprivations and ordeals of individual nationalists in their
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may, on further examination, prove to be a sublimation of an instinctive sense of self-preservation and self-interest. A good deal of the *raison d'être* of nationalism derives from factors external to it, that is, from the existence of other nations and their self-seeking pursuits. The minimum common interest, therefore, is survival as a viable and free people amid an assemblage of other nations. What is attained by some nations in the way of greater prosperity or prestige or power necessarily sets in motion among the have-nots (as soon as they become sufficiently aware of their status) the desire and the will to achieve the same. Hence national self-determination is meaningless without the fact of imperialism, which is its antithesis.

The negative impulse in nationalism, namely, the desire to remove impediments and disabilities arising from the policies of other nations, has been emphasized as a basic denominator of common interest. There is less certainty with regard to the alleged positive gains. It is true, for example, that a national community, which provides a wider market for the unhindered exchange of goods and services, is a sounder economic arrangement than smaller units. But if the free flow of goods and services is to be the criterion, does not the national community fall short of what is best and feasible? Furthermore, it is by no means a foregone conclusion that the economic, political, or social benefits which, it is assumed, would accrue from national unity would be distributed equally among the various localities, regions, or classes. The nineteenth-century tug of war between agricultural and industrial interests, in both the United States and Britain, is a case where important regional interests came into the sharpest conflict with national interest. In the Arab world today struggle against foreign control, which in many cases has meant spending years in prison or in exile and enduring great hardship and suffering.
as it aspires to national unity, the internal conflicts on the basis of narrow-gauged interests are numerous.

The fact is that national interest cannot be measured by money. Pride, prejudice, and all the other attributes of human frailty are of its very essence. Sacrifice and self-denial are no less its companion than are the callous calculations of material gain. Is the inclusion of national interest as a factor of Arab nationalism, therefore, a self-delusion, a miscalculation, or a fraud? No, it is none of these, for if properly defined to include subjective as well as objective considerations and if qualified so as to refer to the interests of the great majority, rather than to the totality, of the Arab peoples, then common interest does indeed constitute a factor—an important factor—of Arab nationalism.

Controversial Factors

We have discussed the main constituents of Arab nationalism as presented by most theorists on the subject. Does this presentation exhaust all the issues involved? No, it does not, and one is tempted to liken it in this form to Macbeth without the ghost of Banquo or to Hamlet with Hamlet left out. In addition to the factors previously cited and acknowledged, there are the ghosts of race and religion, which, until the advent of the modern era, fared exceedingly well. These and other less important factors, such as national character and geography, are not altogether neglected; they are raised, discussed, and generally discarded. It would be well, therefore, to touch upon some of the observations made in regard to them in order to complete the picture.

The first of the discarded factors is race. The previous chapters on the genesis of Arab nationalism have indicated the importance of race consciousness, particularly in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods of Arab history. The con-
temporary approach to the question of race is radically
different. Is the fact of a common racial origin a factor
of nationalism? asks Husari. His answer is in the negative
because "What is important in racial kinship is not the
tie of blood in itself but the belief in its existence." 34 The
relationships between the citizens of a nation are moral
and psychological rather than physiological and material.
Belief in a common origin stems primarily from unity of
language and participation in a common history. Haykal
underlines the social content of the word Arab, which he
defines as "anyone whose national language is Arabic and
who thinks and expresses his thoughts through its media,
regardless of the racial origins of his parents." 35

Alayili belongs to the minority when he recognizes that
common descent has been and still is a factor contributing
to consciousness of national unity. We, in the Arab home­
land, he declares, combine in our common racial stock
several secondary lineages. But since the Arab strain pre­
dominates over all the others and since it has imposed its
characteristics, customs, mental outlook, and language
upon the whole, it is right and proper to call the amalgam
Arab.33

Zurayq is not unmindful of the influence of race in the
making of nationalities, even though he rejects the factor
of race—in the biological sense—as a prerequisite of na­t­
nationalism. In a lecture devoted to a refutation of separatist
claims in Lebanon based on supposed Phoenician descent,

34 Arawa Ahadith fi al-Wataniyah wa al-Qawmiyah, p. 20.
35 Nahwa al-Wahdah al-Arabiyyah (Cairo, 1943), ch. i. The author
cites a number of distinguished scholars, poets, legists, and other
writers, such as Abu Hanifah, Ibn al-Muqaffa, Ibn al-Rumi, and
Ahmad Shawqi, from the past as well as the present, to support his
point that an Arab is not necessarily racially pure. The celebrities
whom he mentions were all racially non-Arab, but their work is al­
ways regarded as part of the Arabic heritage.
Zurayq demands a more scientific observance of the term race. Taking Lebanon as an example, he makes the following observations: (1) The inhabitants of Lebanon, like those of neighboring countries, are descended not from one but from several races and peoples. (2) The predominant races in the admixture are Semitic: Phoenicians, Aramaeans, Arabs. All of these races originated in the Arabian Peninsula. (3) The racial composition of these territories includes to a lesser extent such Aryan races as Persians, Greeks, Romans, Franks, and lastly Mongol Turks.

But what is the race of the Lebanese today? Zurayq answers that division of the Lebanonese into Arab, Phoenician, and Aramaean peoples runs counter to what the present-day ethnologist means by the term race. Furthermore, even if the Arabs and the Phoenicians belong to two branches of one common stock or to two different stocks, why should this prevent them from forming one nationality? Nationalism, he concludes, has never been founded upon the cephalic index but on social, mental, and spiritual affinities. Let us then look to language, culture, customs, historical memories, and interests present and future.

The second of the discarded constituents is religion. No other factor has given rise to so much controversy, and it is hardly surprising that this is so. Not only is Islam the greatest fact in the Arabs' national history thus far, but their entire civilization has arisen and has developed within its all-embracing doctrines. The problem, therefore, of disentangling religious from secular influences


Zurayq cites the case of France to show that national solidarity does not depend upon racial affiliation. France combines the Nordic strain in the north, the Alpine in the center, and the Mediterranean in the south; yet no questions are raised as to its homogeneous nationality.
poses particularly serious difficulties. The arguments raised on this rather delicate issue are multiple and varied; some are indigenous; others betray the interaction of Western and Arab thought. And of no less importance than theories and concepts are the situational factors and the practical realities of modern conditions. One of these factors is the existence of an important Christian Arab element in the more populous and advanced areas of the Arab world. The influence of this element far exceeds its numerical strength, and its contribution to the nationalist movement has been exceedingly important. It is now realized—at least by the leaders of thought—that in order to forge a progressive and homogeneous nation religion must be taken out of politics, as was done in the West after the Reformation. On no other terms can the non-Muslim elements be persuaded to participate actively and wholeheartedly in the nation-forming process. It is not merely a question of tolerating non-Muslims, as the literature of the Muslim Brotherhood seems to indicate. The principle of tolerance has always been recognized, and there is no reason to assume or to fear that it will not be even more meticulously observed in the future. What is involved is whether or not the non-Muslims are to participate as full citizens and without any disabilities on account of their creeds, in the conduct of national life. This they cannot do if religion is the axis around which public life revolves.

There are other reasons for rejecting religion as a factor

40 George Antonius' account of the rise of the nationalist movement shows unmistakably the preponderant role of the Christian Arabs, particularly in the early phase. At least half the works on Arab nationalism cited in the present book are by Christian Arabs.

41 In the Ottoman Empire, for example, the inhabitants were classified according to their religion and not their nationality. The non-Muslims formed independent sectarian enclaves, within which their entire lives were organized. Only Muslims were called to military service, the non-Muslims being asked to pay a tax instead. This may
of nationalism. One is fear on the part of many Western-educated Arabs that inclusion of religion might tie their hands in the task of modernization. A second is sensitivity to modern thought on the subject.

These and other points can best be brought out by quoting from the leading theorists. In a lecture on the relationship between Arab nationalism and religion, Zurayq has stated:

True nationalism can in no case be incompatible with true religion, because in its essence it is naught but a spiritual movement which aims at the regeneration of the inner forces of a nation and the realization of its mental and spiritual potentialities. Nationalism, being a spiritual movement, must go hand in hand with religion and derive from it strength and life. Such is the case with Arab nationalism in its true sense: it neither opposes nor contradicts any religion, but accepts them all. If nationalism is opposed to anything, it is not to religious spirituality, but to the disruptive partisanship which places communal solidarity above the bonds of nationality and which refuses to be assimilated within the framework of the nation. The upholders of this partisanship are the enemies of Arab nationalism and the destroyers of its unity. As for true religion, it emanates, with nationalism, from the same spring.42

Faris urges the separation of state and religion as the first item in a program of reforms:

have worked well in the Balkans, where the religious basis of alienation was reinforced by racial, linguistic, and other differences. But in the Arab countries, the religious criterion cut across the identity of language, of history, and of culture which bound the Muslims and the Christians together. The result was that the Christian Arabs of the Ottoman Empire did not feel any sense of belonging to the state at all. They were tolerated; but their hearts and souls were completely untouched by what went on in the Empire.

All the elements of discord which have afflicted the Arabs for well over a thousand years are attributable to the fact that Islam—as a polity—did not provide for the concept of the one nation, where all the subjects of the caliph stand on equal footing before the law and enjoy equality of civil rights and duties. As a result of the denial of this idea, the non-Muslims have endeavored to evade the obligations of citizenship, giving rise to various dissident movements. The solution, however, is not the creation of a Christian theocracy in addition to the Islamic, nor the dependence upon the foreigner. It is the separation of state and religion.\(^4\)

Haykal warns against confusion of Arab unity and Islamic unity. The Islamic world, he explains, has wider dimensions and is also far more heterogeneous and diversified as regards geographic location, customs, languages, and historical memories than is the Arabic world. But, while advocating Arab unity and rejecting Pan-Islamism as unrealistic and farfetched, Haykal stresses that Arab unity does not mean a diminution of brotherly feeling toward non-Arab Islamic countries. Indeed, he advocates the strengthening of cultural and religious relationships with them.\(^4\)

Khouri lauds Zurayq for excluding both race and religion from the factors constituting Arab nationalism. He defines a nation as “a group of people who have lived together over a long period of time, and whose national edifice is reinforced by language, a common homeland, economic life, culture, customs and traditions.” \(^4\)

There is one other theorist whose views deserve to be mentioned on account of their profound influence upon a

\(^4\) The Living Arabs (Beirut, 1947). In the passage quoted here Faris reflects the state of affairs in Lebanon where sectarian quotas are the basis of public life. The situation is much less acute in other parts of the Arab world.


significant body of opinion, particularly in the period between the two World Wars. Amir Shakib Arslan was not a nationalist in the modern secular sense. His views fall somewhere between Afghani's outright Pan-Islamism and Kawakebi's vision of an Islamic revival based upon the Arab race. In a chapter addressed to the advocates of a national revival without religion, he writes:

Some people say: why refer to the Quran in urging the Muslims to devote themselves to learning; the renaissance should not be religiously oriented but national, as was the case in Europe. We reply that the primary aim should be a renaissance regardless of whether it is national or religious, provided it leads to an assiduous and unremitting devotion to learning. But we fear that if the renaissance is divested of the message of the Quran, it may lead to disbelief, license, and sensuality, evils which outweigh the expected benefits. There should, therefore, be religious instruction side by side with secular education. And do our people in the East think that Europe's renaissances occurred without religious instruction? Moreover, when Europeans talk about various national renaissances, they do not mean by national, the earth, the water, and the trees; nor by a nation, a race descended from one common blood. Nation and homeland, according to Europeans, are two concepts denoting factors of geography, history, culture, religion, ethics, and customs, taken in toto.46

In concluding this chapter, we should refer to a tendency, discernible in almost all nationalistic literatures, to personify the nation and to assign to it a national character, a group mind, and a special mission. This is usually achieved by garnering historic traditions, idealizing them, and then projecting them into the future with a view to

discovering something eternal and unique about one's nation.

Zurayq sets the keynote when he states:

It is unthinkable that a nation like this [the Arab nation] should not possess a unique character and a special mission to perform toward the furtherance of human civilization. But if we are to define this mission and to comprehend its true essence, we must engage in profound studies and contemplation entailing the physical environment, heredity, social evolution, and the cultural legacy. Nay, we must go beyond these manifestations in an endeavor to discover the "spirit" of the nation and its "personality." It is a shameful delinquency that our leaders and thinkers have not as yet performed this crucial task in our national life, and have not depicted our special mission in a forthright and unambiguous manner.47

In a later passage, Zurayq spells out in more concrete terms his conception of the Arabs' mission:

Perhaps we shall not be amiss if we say that the task of the Arab nation in the future will not be unlike its role in the past. As the Arabs in ages past have succeeded in assimilating the civilizations of the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, and the Indians and of creating out of these a synthesis, rich in material and of dazzling luster, so will the mission of the Arabs be in ages to come: to absorb the learning of the West and to combine with it the manifold currents which have arisen in reaction to it in both East and West; then to harmonize these varying currents into a new synthesis which will be the beacon of the future and which the Arabs can give to the world as they have given their great civilization in the past.48

Khouri, in his criticism of Zurayq, makes the pertinent observation that conditions in the world today are different from those of the Middle Ages when the Arabs made their contribution. He points out that the West then was in abject and general backwardness. The Arabs can per-

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form the mission which Zurayq assigns to them only if the West in the years to come should relapse into something like a new Middle Ages.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to present the main factors constituting modern Arab nationalism as they are listed by the leading Arab theorists on the subject. The presentation has shown the controversial and tentative nature of these formulations, reflecting the uncertainties and the confusions of a movement still in its embryonic stage.

The differences which exist among the small elite of Arab nationalism’s intellectual vanguard are even more pronounced as between them and the masses of people. This is hardly surprising considering the intellectual gap which separates the two. But the differences have not been such as to impair common action. The masses of the contemporary Arab world are not noted for quietism, apathy, or docility. In fact, they have been in the forefront of the struggle, first against foreign control and later in support of reformist agitation. The politics of the Middle East are inexplicable without reference to the phenomenon of the mob. What goes on in the minds of the people when they demonstrate and get killed is not always uniform or articulate. Religious zeal, national patriotism, suspicion of foreigners, economic grievances, the urge for revolutionary activism—these are a few of the motivations moving the masses to action. In their totality they might be designated nationalism, and this is the term actually in vogue to describe them. Pending the development of a more articulate and uniform national consciousness, might it not be more correct to ascribe the mounting activism to an increasing general awareness, rather than to national consciousness specifically?

Theorists of nationalism have been prone to stress that
the existence of a uniform political organization or the aspiration to achieve one are of utmost importance in any nationalist movement. Arab nationalism is no exception, for its aim is to make the state and the nation commensurate with each other. However, in the present condition of political division, theorists cannot stipulate the existence of a uniform political system as one of the factors or prerequisites of Arab nationalism. Nevertheless, no other subject has commanded equal attention, not only in the relatively few theoretical expositions but in popular patriotic literature, which is so important in molding the minds of the people. The issue is so important and yet so distinctly political that it seems best to postpone discussion of it to the chapters on political theory which follow.

The permanent Congress of Arab University Alumni, which met at Jerusalem in the latter part of September 1955 with nearly five hundred delegates representing the Arab world, adopted a program for a federated Arab world. A constitution was drawn up and unanimously accepted by the conferees. The delegates pledged themselves to strive for the implementation of the program.
FOREMOST in the aims of Arab nationalism is the unification of the Arabic-speaking world under one political organization. That the boundaries of government and of nationality should coincide is an objective which the people of almost every nationality aspire to attain or to preserve. Considerable disagreement exists concerning the fundamental character of the proposed Arab government. Herein lies one of the main obstacles in the way of the realization of such a government.

Concrete historical-social causes lie behind this political plurality. Unequal progress in political, economic, and social development over the past two centuries of widespread transformations is reflected in the bewildering variety of political systems coexisting in various parts of the Arab world. Constitutional monarchy, absolute monarchy, democratic republicanism, autocracy, theocracy, statism, militarism, colonialism—all these and other less
definable forms are to be found in the life and order of one or another Arab country at the present time.

Not all of these systems, however, have fought their battles with theoretical weapons. In fact, the literature of Arab nationalism is noted for its dearth of political theory, the more serious in its consequences when viewed against the background of an impoverished and disconnected political tradition. Rather than leave unrepresented an important segment of existing political life for no better reason than that it has not been expressed in articulate form, these chapters will canvass the governmental concepts, attitudes, and tendencies discernible both in theoretical expositions and in existing systems.

Furthermore, the study will not be restricted to specifically nationalist literature. There is good reason (beside the already-cited dearth of theory) for this. It derives from an assumption, maintained in this book, that nationalism is more than a narrow-gauged, ideological doctrine, although at certain stages in its development it could assume such a form. In a wider sense, it embodies the whole web of human relationships, including the political, within any given nation and is therefore coterminous with a people's national life. If the implications of this assumption are to be worked out in political as well as in economic and social theory, the terms of reference must perforce draw upon sources other than those specifically nationalist. What these chapters seek to find out is how the Arab peoples, professing allegiance to the principle of nationalism and striving toward its embodiment in a concrete political system, are thinking and acting concerning the problem of government.

It is definitely within the province of this book to find out what an Egyptian political theorist, a Syrian journalist, or an Iraqi constitutional lawyer thinks the principles of political obligation are or ought to be, regardless of
whether or not his views have any direct bearing on the ideas of Arab nationalism. The present extravagant diversification of practice and theory is impeding the process of national integration, and out of this maze a new formula for a national state will eventually have to be worked out. Consequently, every significant political trend (theoretical or practical) in any part of the Arab world is germane to the present study, even though it may not be expressed in terms of nationalist doctrine properly so-called.

**Political Antecedents: Significant and Nonsignificant**

In addition to the meagerness of political theory in the cultural legacy of the Arabs, there is a discontinuity in their political life and traditions. This is a fact of the utmost importance in any study of potent factors in the political consciousness of contemporary Arabs. While it is axiomatic that the present is conditioned by the past, it is pertinent, nevertheless, to make a sharp distinction between significant and nonsignificant antecedents. What are the criteria? There are several, but they can be reduced to one major question: To what extent are the historical antecedents a living force in the consciousness of the present? This is a question which cuts across time, duration, and other mechanical considerations; it can only be answered satisfactorily by following the accepted norms and procedures of empirical investigation.

It is immaterial (except for purely historical interest) what the theories or practices of a certain people were, even over a period of one thousand or five thousand years, if through some upheaval these practices were superseded by new ones. What matters is not how long the old concepts lasted or how recent the new ones are, but what is the relative weight of each in the components of present-day consciousness?

The consequences of epistemological lapses are reflected
in a good deal of current literature on contemporary political trends in the Arab world. It is worth considering two recent studies, picked at random, to show how even the experts are likely to go astray because of failure in approach. In the first of these studies, a distinguished Arabist, Albert Hourani, makes the observation that the regimes in Egypt and Syria seem to be reverting to the patterns which existed in Mamluk and Ottoman days before the coming of the West. The democratic regimes which the national governments modeled on those of Western nations have not shown themselves capable of producing efficient and responsible governments. In Syria and Egypt political life seems to be returning to its old pattern, which was formed by the co-operation of three groups: (1) a military oligarchy in whose hands lay final authority, with a rapidly changing personnel but also with a certain continuity given it by the military corps; (2) the permanent officials who carried on the daily business of government in spite of the political changes going on above them; and (3) the learned class, who provided the principle of social morality by which the government was guided.

This description might be an accurate rendering of the system of government under the Mamluks and the Ottomans. The analogy which is drawn between that system and the present one is, however, doubtful, notwithstanding the ostensible and attractive similarities between the two. In what sense are we to understand Hourani's observation that political life was returning to something like the Mamluk and Ottoman patterns? Have the experiences of

1 A British citizen of Syrian descent, who is a well-known lecturer and author on problems of the contemporary Arab world. He was at one time associated with the Arab Office, which presented the Palestine Arab case before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946.

2 "The Decline of the West in the Middle East," International Affairs, XXIX (April 1953), 180.
the past century and a half in Egypt, or of the past half-century in Syria, been thoroughly erased from the consciousness of present-day Egyptians and Syrians, as though by a cataclysmic brain washing? Furthermore, even if we accept the implication that the Western experiences were ephemeral and therefore easily erasable, the return to the Mamluk and the Ottoman patterns would be conceivable under only two conditions: (1) either that in spite of the time lapse and the introduction of Western institutions and techniques there had been a continuity of tradition with Mamluk and Ottoman times, through one or several mediums of transmission, or (2) that an identical social setting had given rise to an identical pattern of government.

Neither of these conditions is present. The Mamluk system is the least known of all those in the historical legacy, and the Ottoman is receding into little more than a faint and tarnished memory. In regard to the social setting, Arab society has been literally transformed by Westernization.

3 That is, since Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798 and the consequent opening of the country to uninterrupted Western contacts and influences. One of the principal results has been the overthrow of the Mamluk system of government and its replacement by Western institutions.

4 Although the Ottoman regime in Syria came to an end in 1918, the movement for reform and modernization had started a quarter-century earlier, so that Syria's modern orientation may be said to have started half a century ago.

5 The Mamluks were, as the name indicates, a dynasty of slaves of varied races and nationalities forming a military oligarchy. These slave sultans cleared their Syrian-Egyptian domain of the remnant of the Crusaders. They checked forever the advance of the redoubtable Mongol hordes of Hulagu and of Timur. For an interesting account of the remarkable career of the Mamluks, see P. K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (London, 1940), pp. 671-705.

6 Compare, for example, the account of Islamic society in the eighteenth century, that is, just before the advent of the West, in Gibb and
The fact is that these militarist regimes, instead of being a reaction from the West, are the product of forces generated by the process of Westernization. Their roots are to be found in the conditions, exigencies, fears, needs, and aspirations of a complex modern life. We will discuss the militarist system of government later on, as one of the current trends toward authoritarianism in the Arab world. The purpose of this chapter is merely to bring out the danger attendant upon superficial and hasty analogies in dealing with historical antecedents.

Another and more serious misuse of historical antecedents is evident in a recent article by Bernard Lewis entitled "Communism and Islam." Lewis explores those "qualities or tendencies in Islamic civilization and society which might facilitate or impede the advance of Communism." In selecting those factors which he considers favorable to the success of communism in the Islamic world, he makes a distinction between what he calls accidentals—those that are part of the present historical situation—and the essentials—those that are innate or inherent in the very quality of Islamic institutions and ideas.

The substance of the writer's conclusions is not of immediate concern to us at this point. What we are interested in are the thought processes by which he arrived at them. "Except for the early caliphate when the anarchic individualism of tribal Arabia was still effective," writes Lewis, "the political history of Islam is one of almost unrelieved autocracy. I say autocracy not despotism since the sovereign was bound by the authority of the Holy Law."  

Owen's *Islamic Society of the West* with modern conditions, and the total effect of Westernization appears in its full magnitude.

*International Affairs, XXX* (January 1954), 1-12.

The accidentals, for example, include reaction against colonialism, economic, social, and political grievances, and upheavals resulting from the impact of the West.

*Loc. cit., p. 7.*
In support of his thesis, Lewis quotes the following paragraph from a fourteenth-century Syrian jurist, Ibn Jamaah:

Forced homage. This happens when a chief seizes power by force, in a time of civil disorders, and it becomes necessary to recognize him in order to avoid further troubles. That he may have none of the qualifications of sovereignty, that he be illiterate, unjust or vicious, that he be even a slave or a woman, is of no consequence. He is a sovereign in fact until such time as another, stronger than he, drives him from the throne and seizes power. He will then be sovereign by the same title, and should be recognized in order not to increase strife. Whoever has effective power has the right to obedience, for a government, even the worst one, is better than anarchy, and of two evils one should choose the lesser.\(^\text{10}\)

Lewis concludes in the following words:

A community brought up on such doctrines, will not be shocked by Communist disregard of political liberty or human rights.

It is not difficult to drive both carriage and horse through this reasoning. To begin with, Lewis comes out with a sweeping generalization, based upon the statement of a single jurist, writing—as he explicitly states—on abnormal conditions resulting from civil strife. Ibn Jamaah represents only one shade of Islamic jurisprudence, its final phase of decline. He no more represents the entire tradition than does Hobbes the British. Both, in effect, based their conception of sovereignty upon the utilitarian ground that any government is better than anarchy. Other jurists and political theorists have steadfastly refused to sacrifice principle to expediency, and their place in the Islamic legacy far outweighs Ibn Jamaah's. It would

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 8. Ibn Jamaah, a Syrian from Damascus, held the post of chief justice of Cairo. He died A.D. 1333.
scarcely be an improvement on Lewis’ procedure to present in opposition to the views of Ibn Jamaah those of the eminent philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi, as worked out in his *Risalah fi Ara Ahl al-Madinah al-Fadilah* (“A Treatise Concerning the Views of the People of the Virtuous City”). The treatise is decidedly Platonic in its inspiration and, what is no less pertinent, it failed to strike roots in the Arab political tradition. Equally unrepresentative of Arab political tradition are the extremely libertarian, egalitarian, and almost anarchical theories of the Khawarij (“Dissentient”) party, important as their role was in the first few centuries of the Arab Empire.

To be valid, a generalization must be based upon the majority views of jurists and political theorists over the longest possible span of time. In the Islamic tradition, such views may be found in the theories of the Sunnah (orthodox) schools, formulated by a long line of eminent savants. The impression that these convey is totally at variance with that of Ibn Jamaah. We need only refer to one of the most luminous orthodox theoreticians, Al-Mawardi (d. 1058), whose views on the prerequisites and

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11 Abu Nasr al-Farabi of Turkish stock was born in the town of Farab in Transoxiana A.D. 874. He received his education in Baghdad and in the course of his life made lengthy sojourns in Egypt and Syria. Farabi was known as the Second Master for his staunch discipleship of Aristotle. His prolific output on philosophy, theology, politics, and music amount to one hundred works. He died in Damascus A.D. 950.

To those unfamiliar with Farabi’s work it may be helpful if I quote a passage that appears in *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, sponsored by the Indian Ministry of Education (London, 1953), II, 140: “If at a given time it happens that philosophy has no share in the government, though every other qualification for rule may be present, the ideal state will remain rulerless, the actual head of the state will be no true being, and the state will head for destruction; and if no wise man is to be found and associated with the acting head of the state, then after a certain interval the state will undoubtedly perish.”
the qualifications of a sovereign are generally acknowledged to be most authoritative. In his principle work, Mawardi formulated a system of politics which, while not ignoring accomplished facts, was remarkable for its scientific detachment and rigorous consistency. After stressing the contractual nature of the caliphate, Mawardi outlined the qualifications which must be present in the candidates to this office. These were (1) spotless integrity, (2) requisite juridic-theological knowledge, (3) freedom from defects of hearing, sight, and speech, (4) freedom from physical infirmities, (5) necessary insight for governing the people and conducting state affairs, (6) courage and boldness in defending Muslim realms, (7) and descent from the Quraysh tribe.

Not only is the caliphate a contract (igd), stated Mawardi, but it is also a revokable one. Acceptance of the bayah ("election") imposed upon the caliph definite obligations, failure to honor which meant forfeiture of office. The chief causes of forfeiture, according to Mawardi, were injustice and mental or physical infirmity.

There is another and even more serious fallacy in Lewis' approach. It will be recalled that the purpose of his study "is to consider those qualities or tendencies in Islamic civilization and society which might facilitate or impede the advance of Communism." And he proceeds to select and discuss a few of what seem to him to be "the most important elements favoring the success of Communism in the Islamic World." Clearly, then, his study should have been oriented toward the interrelationship between the legacy and its legatee with a view to discover

\[12\] Kitab al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah ("The Book of Government Laws") (Cairo, 1909). A comprehensive account of Mawardi's political theory is contained in S. K. Bukhsh's English translation of Von Kremer's The Orient under the Caliphs.

\[13\] Von Kremer, op. cit., p. 260.

\[14\] Loc. cit., p. 3.
ing the type of individual and the type of society to which that relationship is giving rise.

One looks in vain for the connecting link in that relationship. Both the legacy as well as the legatee are viewed as changeless, mechanical patterns, closed and sealed off from the torrents and the disturbances of current life. There is, in fact, a basic error in the writer's initial distinction between what he calls "accidentals" and "essentials." For why should the theories or the practices of a thousand years ago be regarded as more essential or innate, "in the very quality of Islamic institutions and ideas," than those of this century? What justification is there for regarding Ibn Jamaah's political quietism as more representative of the Islamic tradition than say Afghani's revolutionary activism of the past century?

As pointed out earlier, it is not important whether or not the practices of the past centuries were authoritarian, libertarian, or equalitarian. What is relevant to this study is the extent to which the attitudes of the past are potent influences in molding the minds of the contemporary generations. This Lewis overlooks, with the result that his study—whatever its other merits—has little to tell us on the political views, attitudes, and tendencies of present-day generations.

**Situational Determinants of Political Thought**

The alternative to the aforementioned approaches is to canvass the multiple interconnections between thought and action as they appear in the works of modern political theorists and in governmental patterns. That is to say, instead of making sweeping and tenuous generalizations on the basis of so-called "innate characteristics" and "pure logical possibilities" pertaining to Arab ideas and institutions, researchers should focus upon the live theories of living people.
As in other spheres of national life, contemporary political thought in the Arab world is the product of an interaction between indigenous Arab ideas and Western influences. The Western influences, being the more dynamic, have usually been the initiators in the encounter, evoking a variety of responses both favorable and unfavorable. The ideas and the events of the French Revolution, for example, left an indelible impress upon Arab thought of that period. The debt owed to the French is discernible throughout the modern political literature of the Arabs. The effect began almost inadvertently when Napoleon issued a proclamation—in broken Arabic—exhorting the Egyptians to rally to his support against the tyranny and the exploitation of Mamluk rule. The proclamation, issued in the name of the French people, embodied references to the principles enunciated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. A contemporary Arab historian, writing of the French expedition, observes that the tone of the proclamation was unfamiliar to Egyptian ears.

The Napoleonic excursion awakened Egypt from its long torpor. Shortly thereafter, Egypt launched herself upon a bold program of modernization. This included the dispatch of student missions to France for advanced training. A member of one of these missions, Rafaah Raft al-Tahtawi left a remarkable record of his sojourn in France, in which he gave his reflections on the French political system. He translated into Arabic the constitution of Charles X as well as the amendments introduced in the reign of Louis Philippe. Tahtawi participated also in the

15 See Raif Khouri, *Al-Fikr al-Arabi al-Hadith* ("Modern Arab Thought") (Beirut, 1943). The author analyzes the impact of the French Revolution upon the political and social orientation of Arab thought.

translation of the French civil code as part of a project sponsored by the government for translating the entire French legal system into Arabic.

Tahtawi was probably the first modern Arab thinker to attempt a reconciliation of Arab and Western political thought. His presentation of French concepts was accompanied by Arabic proverbs, terms, and concepts of identical or similar connotations. A great admirer of the French political tradition, Tahtawi sought to make it palatable to his countrymen by showing that its ideas were in essential harmony with those of the Arab tradition. His efforts naturally entailed a selective process, but no violence was done to either of the two traditions. In discussing, for example, the principles of constitutional limitations, Tahtawi conceded at the outset that most of those principles "have no exact equivalents in the Book of God or in the Traditions of His Prophet." 17 Nevertheless, he proceeded to make numerous citations from the Arab tradition in praise of those same principles.

This is a procedure which one encounters all too frequently in modern Arab political writings. Thus, to give a well-known example, comparison is often made between Caliph Omar's celebrated question—Whence have you enslaved people when their mothers gave birth to them free?—and the opening words of Rousseau's Social Contract.18 Similar comparisons are drawn between the democratic concepts of government and the Quranic principles of shura ("consultation"); citations from the Quran and from other Arab works (particularly of the early caliphate) are made to show that such principles as freedom of belief and of conscience, the right to resist despotic rulers, and

17 Quoted from Khouri, Al-Fikr al-Arabi al-Hadith, p. 84.
18 "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains" (J. J. Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses, tr. by G. D. H. Cole [New York, 1950], p. 3).
The ideas of Arab nationalism hatred of absolutism in all its forms are prefigured by Arab tradition.

This seems a cumbersome, indirect way of assimilating new ideas. Considering all the factors involved, it was probably the most feasible course and the one most likely to achieve its purpose, for it must not be forgotten that by the nineteenth century the distance between the West and the long-static East was so great that bridging the gap was a most formidable task indeed. Not only was the Arab East almost untouched by the torrents of modern Western thought: it was also out of touch with its own great tradition. No wonder, then, the small vanguard of intermediaries had to move slowly and carefully in order to avoid shocking their countrymen, either into violent revulsion and recoil from menacing innovations or into suicidal disintegration, the latter being as serious in its consequences as the former.

Egypt was the first but not the only channel through which Western political thought converged upon the Arab world. Constantinople could not for long withstand the onrush of Western ideas. The onslaught upon this conservative redoubt took place simultaneously from within as well as from without. The fermentations in the Balkans (motivated primarily by an incipient national consciousness), reverses on the battlefield,¹⁹ an empty treasury, pressure from European powers for reforms in the administration—these and other causes of disaffection strengthened the hands of Ottoman reformers, led by Midhat Pasha, in pressing for the introduction of constitutional government.²⁰ The constitution of 1876, upon which such high hopes had been pinned, was, however, suspended

¹⁹ The Russo-Turkish War of 1877 ended with the arrival of the Russian armies at the outskirts of Constantinople.

after a few months. It remained in suspension for thirty-one years, and an era began which for tyranny and corrupt abuse of power has scarcely been surpassed.\(^{21}\)

The Arab provinces were deeply and intimately affected by these developments. When at long last (July 1908) a military revolution organized by the Young Turks forced Abdul Hamid to grant a new constitution (identical with that of 1876), "the news was greeted with enthusiasm, and nowhere, perhaps, was the jubilation greater than among Arab nationalists, who in the first flush of deliverance had mistaken it as a sign of real liberty. There was rejoicing all over the Empire, in which Turks fraternized deliriously with Arabs, and Muslims with Christians, in the genuine belief that the constitution would meet everybody's wants."\(^{22}\)

Such is the background of all subsequent political developments (at least up to World War I). The currents generated during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be listed under four major classifications: (1) Westernization generally, growing into a crescendo as the century drew to its close; (2) Islamic revivalism, combining nationalism, reformism, and revolutionary activism; (3) constitutionalism, kindled largely by the revolutionary winds blowing from Europe; and (4) nationalism in its modern sense, that is, on the basis of language, race, and culture in contradistinction to Pan-Islamism or Ottomanism. It is not always possible to differentiate between each of these four currents, for they often shade off into one another, even in the writings of one man. The differences in emphasis are, however, sufficiently pronounced to afford a valid and meaningful distinction.

The views of leading political theorists on the first and most important phase in the development of modern Arab political thought will be presented and discussed. They

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 64.  \(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 102.
constitute, in fact, the really significant political antecedents, not only because of their close proximity to the present but also because their emergence was coterminous with the rise of modern Arab nationalism. If the Arab countries had not been partitioned and occupied by some of their former allies after World War I, the views of many of these theorists and statesmen would, in all probability, have been realized in concrete political systems. Things turned out differently, however, and the history of the period between the two World Wars is largely, if not wholly, preoccupied by the struggle for independence and the termination of foreign control.

There is a widespread impression that the period of foreign tutelage aided the development of mature political thinking and attitudes in the Arab world. The impression seems to be based upon a confusion of administration and government, which, it need hardly be said, are not quite the same thing. The foreign mandates undoubtedly produced efficient administrations, public services, health improvements, and the like. These contributions, however, were more than offset by the injury inflicted upon the development of orderly and mature political processes. The reason is that political life, in the final analysis, consists in the adoption and implementation of decisions involving the allocation of values. An administration is merely a mechanism, albeit indispensable, for carrying out those authoritative allocations in any particular society.

Under the mandatory regimes, the basic policy decisions were made without either the participation or the consent of the people concerned. There were, of course, varying degrees of dependence and independence, but by and large no decisions on fundamental issues could be made without the shadow, the advice or the veto, of a pre-eminent foreign power. A glance at constitutional developments in the Arab countries in the period between the two World
Wars points unmistakably to the hand of one foreign power or another.\textsuperscript{23}

The deleterious effects of this relationship can be summed up in the following points: (1) The national political leadership was denied the experience that would have accompanied the assumption of responsibility. All national efforts had previously been dissipated in revolutionary activities, which, while necessary for liberation, were either unrelated or detrimental to the frame of mind required for the conduct of government. (2) The mandatory regimes perpetuated the attitude of distrust of established authority. After many years of identifying government with imperialism, it was hard for the people to adopt those attitudes of loyalty and co-operation upon which the orderly processes of government must depend. (3) The period of tutelage blurred the vision of the people concerning the fundamental issues of government. It resulted in the growth of an almost naïve belief that removal of imperialism was the ultimate end to be pursued and, of itself, sufficient to ensure prosperity. The literature of this second phase (between the World Wars) is little more than a violent denunciation of imperialism; it lacks the acute and incisive perception of such issues as freedom, accountability, and constitutional limitations, which had figured so prominently in the first phase.\textsuperscript{24} (4) So long as

\textsuperscript{23} See, for example, Majid Khadduri, "Constitutional Development in Syria," \textit{Middle East Journal}, V (Spring, 1951), 137–160. Thus, the constitution of 1920, drawn up by the Syrian Congress, was suspended by French action after the San Remo Conference of 1920. The constitution of 1930, drawn up by a constituent assembly representing the free will of the Syrian people, was also abandoned by French action. The High Commission objected to six articles which, in the opinion of the assembly, were the most important ones, deletion of which would have left nothing significant in the constitution.

\textsuperscript{24} See, for example, Anis E. Khuri al-Maqdisi, \textit{Al-Awamel al-Faalah fi al-Adab al-Arabi al-Hadith: Fi al-Awamel al-Siyasiyah} ("Background
ultimate sovereignty was in the hands of foreign powers, the people had no chance to test their ability or willingness to effect an orderly and peaceful change of government. This vital ability (to change the government without violence) is principally a result of mutual confidence and trust; the latter can only be cultivated by experience in self-government over a long period of time. Such essential experience could not be acquired under dependency status.

The waning of foreign influence over the shape and composition of governments after World War II marked, therefore, a third phase in the political development of the Arab countries. It meant that vital policy decisions, as well as the assumption and relinquishment of power, were now left to the uninhibited choice of the peoples concerned. Foreign powers could no longer, in fairness, be blamed for the ends or the means of political life. Such questions as freedom, due process of law, the division of powers, free elections and cabinet responsibility began to assume a real and intimate reality.

A basic change in the location of power and of responsibility involves many hazards, even under the most favorable conditions. How much more difficult is it when conditions are far from favorable! It is not always sufficiently realized that the dawn of independence in the Arab world has coincided with the stupendous revolution in the social, economic, and technological spheres of life which the entire world is now undergoing. Not only do the Arab governments have to shoulder the political responsibilities of office, they are also expected to make up for the tremendous Arab lag in social and economic development. This welfare

of Modern Arabic Literature: Political Influences") (Cairo, 1939). The book deals with the most potent factors in the orientation of modern Arabic literature, particularly the political influences, in Egypt, Iraq, and the Levant from the middle of the last century to the present.
role of the state is a relatively recent phenomenon; it is assuming greater significance and urgency as better communication facilities provide more standards of comparison. Hence the instabilities, the revolutions, and the military regimes which have afflicted the Middle East in the post-war era. The demands, the pressures, the hopes, the expectations, and the fears have proved to be too great a strain upon the legal frameworks and the orderly processes of Arab governments.
ARAB POLITICAL THOUGHT
(1800 -1918)

THE situational determinants of Arab political thought were discussed in the preceding chapter. We will now turn to the thought itself as it has been formulated by Arab political writers since 1800.

Western Political Impact

A major ideological current during the first phase of this study (1800–1918) was Westernization.¹ In literature the process seems to have followed a number of different forms. One of these consisted in translating important Western political works, with or without comment, and in describing existing Western governmental patterns.

An early and distinguished author of such books was Rafaah Rafi al-Tahtawi, to whom reference has already been made. Tahtawi not only translated such political documents as the charter by which Louis XVIII had

¹ See p. 111 for the other three major currents.
heralded his return; he also made a critical appraisal of the entire French political system in the light of his own Arab tradition. In the introduction to his translation of the charter, for example, he comments:

It [the charter] contains points which no reasonable being would fail to recognize as pertaining to justice. We will, therefore, bring it to your attention even though most of it is not in the Quran or the Traditions, so that you will know how their [French] reason had come to the conclusion that justice and equity are the cornerstone of civilization and of the well-being of the inhabitants. And how both rulers and ruled had come to believe in these principles, with the result that their country developed, their learning increased, their prosperity multiplied and their hearts dwelt at peace. For you hardly ever hear anyone complaining of injustice; justice is indeed the foundation of civilization.²

Tahtawi was particularly impressed by the provisions concerning equality before the law, due process of law including trial by jury, the independence of the judiciary, freedom of belief, and the inviolability of private property (except where public interest might be involved). He stresses that French laws are secular and not divine. He describes at length the system of representation, with its two houses of parliament and its intricate electoral laws. In short, he gives a faithful, detached, but sympathetic rendering of French political processes, in a language which his countrymen could understand.

What is the significance of Tahtawi’s contribution and in what sense is it related to the present inquiry? In the first place, the work begun by Tahtawi and his school highlights a fact sometimes overlooked (as we have seen in the study by Lewis), namely, that from the nineteenth century onward it is erroneous and misleading to study Arab po-

political thought as a closed system independent of Western influence. To the extent that Western concepts have been incorporated into Arab political thought and institutions, they must be said to form an integral part of the Arab tradition, unless it can be shown that they were later repudiated or abandoned.

We learn something else from Tahtawi's pioneering contribution. In the course of his comparative study he makes a point of stressing the similarities as well as the differences between his own Arab tradition and that of France. It is significant that insofar as basic principles are concerned—freedom, equality, justice—the two traditions are in fundamental accord. Where then does the difference lie? It lies primarily in the fact that the French had embodied their principles in concrete mechanisms of enforcement; secondarily, in the existence of an agile public opinion to ensure observance of these principles.

One further contribution—an indirect one—deserves to be mentioned. The Arab tradition, like all other great traditions, is many-sided in its theoretical formulations and varied in the nature of its past experiences. What makes modern Westernizers, as well as revivalists and reformers like Afghani, resuscitate one phase of that tradition rather than another? What makes them turn to the era of the orthodox caliphs for inspiration and guidance? It is certainly true that this early period is important as being more representative of the ideal spirit of Arab life than any other period. But this is hardly sufficient to explain why sensitivity to its virtues should have developed in the nineteenth century rather than in the seventeenth or eighteenth.

It is clear that the answer must be sought in Western influence. The principles of freedom, equality, and justice, the rule of law, representative institutions, and the like
were rediscovered in the Arab tradition through the inspiration of the West. As Gibb has stated:

Modernism is primarily a function of Western liberalism. It is only to be expected, in consequence, that the general tendency of modernists would be to interpret Islam in terms of liberal humanitarian ideas and values. In the first stage they contended that Islam was not opposed to these ideas; but they soon went on to claim that Islam was the embodiment of them in their highest and most perfect form.*

It should be noted that Tahtawi and the early Westernizers were not apologists, controversialists, or propagandists. Their eyes were not jaundiced by the sort of inhibitions and enmities which developed later in reaction against the political imperialism of the West. It is unfortunate that the renewed contacts between the East and the West, which had started under such friendly auspices, should have been made to suffer the strains of power politics resulting from the nineteenth-century expansionism of European nations. Ideas, ideals, and systems were not judged according to their intrinsic merits, but, rather, as to whether they tended to discredit or exalt the disputants.


tically all of the Islamic world and parts of Europe. He was, as E. G. Browne has said of him,

a man of enormous force of character, prodigious learning, untiring activity, dauntless courage, extraordinary eloquence both in speech and in writing, and an appearance equally striking and majestic. He was at once philosopher, writer, orator, and journalist, but above all, politician, and was regarded by his admirers as a great patriot and by his antagonists as a dangerous agitator.

Afghani's only systemic work, Al-Radd ala al-Dahriyin (“Refutation of the Materialists”),\(^*\) deals primarily with philosophical, theological, and ethical issues, but his tremendous influence must be sought in what he said and did rather than in what he wrote. He molded a whole generation of political thinkers and statesmen including such luminaries as Sheikh Muhammad Abdo, Sad Zaghloul, Mustafa Kamel, Abdullah al-Nadim, Adib Ishaq, and Kawakebi. And though most of these men branched out on their own,\(^4\) the influence of their prime mover was never entirely discarded.

What, then, were the main features of his political doctrine? First and foremost he was the founder of the modern Pan-Islamic movement combining a nationalist interpretation of Islam with modernism and reformism. His principal political aim, to quote the words of his illustrious disciple and colleague Muhammad Abdo, was “to achieve

\(^*\) This book was written in Persian and translated into Arabic by Sheikh Muhammad Abdo (Cairo, 1925). Afghani's inclusion among Arab political thinkers overlooks the fact that there has been considerable disagreement as to whether he was Iranian or Afghan. His family is claimed to be related to the family of the Prophet, which, if true, would classify him as racially Arab. At all events his influence on contemporary Arab thought and leadership has been so great that it is impossible to overlook him. See Muhammad Salam Madkur, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (Cairo, 1937).

\(^4\) See Madkur, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 106.
the regeneration and the strengthening of one of the Islamic States so that it may reach the level of the great powers and thereby restore Islam to its past glory." This included the unification of the whole Islamic world under one caliphate. In his day the Ottoman Empire seemed the best-qualified candidate for the role.

Gibb has expressed the view that there was a deep spiritual cleavage between the ideals of Islamic universalism and Afghani’s Pan-Islamism:

Although Islamic theory recognized the unity of church and state under the rule of the caliphate, that recognition assumed and was dependent on the function of the caliph as the instrument and representative of the sacred law. When the political systems in the Muslim World diverged from the theocratic ideal, the loyalty of Muslims to the political head was no longer absolute. Their first loyalty was to the ideals and institutions of Islam, and this might involve a negative attitude, or even demand a hostile attitude, to the secular rulers.7

It is true that primary loyalty, according to Islamic theory, is to the ideals and institutions of Islam. But it is equally true that Muslims are entitled to reinterpret and readjust those ideals and institutions in the light of their changing needs and changing times. This they can do through *ijtihad* ("exercise of judgment" or "interpretation"), which Muhammad Iqbal has called the "principle of movement in Islam," 8 and through *ijma* ("consensus of opinion"), closely akin to the concept of the general will at any particular time and in any particular place.

If this is so, it is hard to endorse Gibb’s view on this matter. Afghani’s Pan-Islamism was not at variance with

8 *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (London, 1934), pp. 139–170. The right to reinterpret is, however, not unlimited, and Iqbal categorically asserts that *ijma* may not repeal the Quran (p. 165).
Islamic universalism; rather was it an attempted embodiment of that universalism in a form suited to the changed conditions of his own day. It failed during World War I, not solely because the Ottoman caliphate had been moving away from the principles of theocracy toward pure secularism, but because everybody else was also doing so. By and large the impulse of the Arab Rebellion of 1916 was national and not actuated primarily as a protest against the increasing secularization of the Ottomans. The Rebellion was itself a secular movement, or at least a combination of secular as well as religious impulses which in their plurality ran counter to the strict monistic ideals of Islamic universalism. Viewed in retrospect, Afghani’s Pan-Islamism was the last great attempt to dam the torrent of secular nationalism converging upon the East from the West. The attempt failed and was, perhaps, bound to fail. And though Islamic universalism, as an ideal, still remains a potent force, it is no longer pure and unadulterated universalism.

The failure of modern Pan-Islamism is further proof that, in an age of literacy, religion alone is helpless in a competition with nationalism. This does not mean that nationalism is the most natural or the most rational of loyalties. It merely means that, if people are to partake in a common loyalty, they must first be able to communicate effectively with one another and to understand one another. If a religion brings about the adoption of a common language among its followers, then the creation of communal sentiment becomes a feasible objective. In that case, religion will have performed a function associated with the factors constituting nationalism. In his undivided loyalty to Islam, Afghani seems to have overlooked the growing dichotomy between the demands of a concrete national consciousness and the farfetched ideals of an age long past.
Afghani, as we stated earlier, did no more than reformulate the ideals of Islamic universalism in the light of nineteenth-century conditions. His title to fame, however, rests largely on the means by which he proposed to bring about the desired end. He was a staunch advocate of tyrannicide. He had at one time become a Freemason, in the belief, popular in his day, that Masonry was a proponent of revolutionary activities; he withdrew when he found that this was not so. He was impatient to see his program realized in his own lifetime, and his criterion concerning any given means was whether or not it was capable of achieving the end.

It is, therefore, difficult to state categorically what his theory of government was. He was a fervent champion of freedom, equality, and fraternity. He was against autocratic rulers everywhere, and yet he was not opposed to benevolent despots whenever the pressure of events proves too great a strain upon the democratic processes of government.

He was also an advocate of a form of constitutional government in which the executive branch would be preponderant and subject only to the basic law of the land. His views on the efficacy of representative institutions seem prophetic when viewed against the current constitutional crises in the Arab world. The crises revolved around the definition of democracy and its worth if suitable conditions for the application of democratic forms are wanting. In concrete terms, the question is: Can representative forms of government realize democracy in countries like Egypt or Iraq where the feudal elements are certain to perpetuate their stranglehold through precisely those mechanisms? In the early 1870's Afghani answered this question in the course of commenting on the khedive's promise to introduce representative institutions in Egypt.
Your deputy will be, a true reflection of the prevailing conditions in Egypt at this time [the 1870's]: a notable who has ruthlessly sucked the earnings of the fellah; a coward least likely to oppose an unjust ruler; a man who sees in the will of the tyrant wisdom and foresight and regards defense of nation and opposition to those in power indiscretion, inexperience, and recklessness. These, unfortunately, will be the qualities of the deputies to the so-called representative assembly.9

President Nasser might well claim Afghani on his side for his recently promulgated constitution which postpones the restoration of multiple-party life until the prerequisites for the success of such a life are met.

Another leading representative of Islamic revivalism was Muhammad Rashid Rida, whose book The Caliphate10 is the most systematic and the most authoritative exposition of the Islamic theory of government since Mawardi’s Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyah almost nine hundred years ago. Rida, a Syrian living in Egypt, was a Pan-Islamist and not a Pan-Arabist, although he was fully appreciative of the Arabs’ central position in the destiny of Islam and endorsed in theory the provision, accepted by most legists, that the caliph should be an Arab and more specifically a member of the Quraysh tribe. Rida is best known as the editor of Al-Manar, a periodical founded by him for the propagation of Muhammad Abdo’s reformist doctrines.11

The Caliphate consists of two parts, one theoretical, the other practical. The practical covers the disputes that arose after World War I as to the fate of the caliphate in view of its abolition in Turkey, the respective rights of the

10 Al-Khilafah aw al-Imamah al-Uzma (“The Caliphate, or the Great Imamah”) (Cairo, 1922); tr. into French by Henri Laoust, Le Caliphate dans la doctrine de Rashid Rida (Beirut, 1938).
11 For a full account of Rida’s life, see Adams, op. cit., pp. 175–247.
Arabs and the Turks in it, and so forth. These were of transient importance and are of little consequence now. The theoretical part, however, has more permanent value and deserves to be explored because of its influence upon contemporary political thought.

Islam, as Rida observes in the introduction, is at once a spiritual as well as a sociopolitical institution. With regard to its social and political aspects, it laid down only fundamental principles, leaving to the people the right and the duty to exercise their judgment concerning them, because needs and forms differ according to different times and places and necessarily undergo a developmental process with the progress of civilization.

One of the fundamental political principles in Islam is popular sovereignty and consultative government. Its concept of government is a form of republicanism, and the Khalifah [successor] to the Prophet has no greater rights before its laws than the most humble of the citizenry. He [the caliph] is merely an administrator of the shariah law and the decisions of the people. The duties of government include the preservation of religion and the protection of worldly interests. The State should represent moral virtues as well as material interests. It should strive toward human brotherhood by striving toward the moral unity of mankind. When weakness befell the Muslims, they failed to uphold those principles. If they had observed them, they would have devised for every age what suits it best in the way of institutions and regulations.12

The author then presents the theories of prominent legists, as well as his own interpretation, concerning the institution of the caliphate. The election of a caliph is not merely optional or dictated by prudence as some Mutazilites have suggested; it is mandatory.13 Nomination and election to the office must be preceded by consultations among Muslims in general and is consummated by the

12 Rida, op. cit., p. 5. 13 Ibid., p. 10.
choice of those in a position "to loose and bind." These he describes as "the representatives of the people and the ones capable of enlisting public support for whatever decisions government might take." Nowhere does Rida spell out the implications of his concept of popular representation in terms of universal suffrage. His concept is, in fact, akin to an electoral college, a caucus of leading citizens, such as ulema members, notables, governors of important provinces, and military commanders.

Equally ambiguous is Rida's definition of popular sovereignty and the meaning of the concept jamaah ("community"). Its nearest analogy in Western political theory is Rousseau's concept of the general will. Each individual is constrained to abide by the decisions of the community because those decisions are made by one of its members, whose title to obedience is the confidence which the jamaah has vested in him. Moreover, the general will of the community, as a Tradition of the Prophet states, is always right. What are the dimensions of the jamaah upon whose confidence government depends? Fakhr al-Din al-Razi had suggested that it was coterminous with the entire people to whom sovereignty properly belongs. Rida, however, endorses the more restricted interpretation of the jamaah proffered by some legists. He states that by the authority of the people is meant the authority of those who represent the people.

Rida then proceeds to specify the qualifications for candidates to the office of caliph, the provisions of the contract by virtue of which a caliph is installed, the rights and the duties of each party to the contract, and the limitations on

14 Ibid., p. 11.

15 Known in the West as Rhazes, Razi (850–923) was a Persian and one of the greatest and most original of the Muslim physicians and philosophers. See History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, sponsored by the Indian Ministry of Education (London, 1953), esp. pp. 133–135.

16 Rida, op. cit., p. 15.
the sovereignty of the caliph.\textsuperscript{17} Rida belongs to the idealistic school in that he refuses to compromise principles for expediency. He quotes approvingly the distinction made by the founding theorists between the \textit{Dar al-Adl} ("The Abode of Justice"), and the \textit{Dar al-Baghyi wa al-Jur} ("The Abode of Tyranny and Usurpation").\textsuperscript{18} The former is a country where a legitimate caliph, possessed of all the necessary qualifications, is installed. Obedience to him is mandatory and unqualified so long as he remains faithful to the law. The Abode of Tyranny is an area where government has fallen to the strongest party without regard to the legal provisions governing the office of caliph. Obedience to government in this Abode is not obligatory and should be limited to the absolute minimum required by the exigencies of the situation.\textsuperscript{19}

These, in brief, are Rida's concepts of government under the Islamic tradition. Presumably they represent the views of those who, like the Ikhwan al-Muslimin, seek a form of government conforming to this framework. Is it suitable for the present? Did it work well in the past? One looks in vain in Rida's discussion for those mechanisms and processes, simple as they may be, which nevertheless constitute the very foundations of modern government. We have seen how vague were Rida's definitions of such pivotal concepts as popular sovereignty, consultative government, and community. Yet the very nature of government is con-

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 15–30.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 42. This is different from the larger distinction between the \textit{Dar al-Islam} ("the Abode of Islam") and the \textit{Dar al-Harb} ("the Abode of War").

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.} The author points out that residents of the Abode of Tyranny should emigrate to the Abode of Justice if they are subjected to persecution, if they are prevented from performing their religious duties, and, above all, if they are required to fight against the Abode of Justice. Rida criticizes Ibn Khaldun's concept of solidarity as the foundation of polity and calls it contrary to Islam (pp. 134–137).
tingent upon the minute working out of the implications of these concepts. If the jamaah comprises the relatively few leaders and if sovereignty is vested in them—as he suggests it should be—then government would be a kind of aristocracy, if not an oligarchy. To describe such a government as a democracy is to overstrain the term democracy. It is true that the jamaah must be the true representative of the people; it must be in a position to command the allegiance of the public. But how is the degree of support, which it claims to command, to be gauged? What should be the scope of the suffrage? What should be the electoral laws? What are the boundaries between the jurisdiction of executive, legislature, and judiciary? The solution of these and related questions constitutes the watershed between democracy and autocracy, between orderly processes and anarchy.

Rida fails to grasp the real significance of democratic processes. Is it surprising, therefore, that when the founders of modern Arab governments came to grips with the issues of government they should have discarded Islamic theories altogether and opted for Western systems? By failing to systematize and modernize their concepts and processes, the representatives of the Islamic political tradition impelled the modernizers to look elsewhere for answers to governmental problems.

As to the past, Rida makes no attempt to cover up its failures, although there are good grounds of questioning the causes to which he ascribes the blame. He condemns the failure of the founding legislators to draw up an organic law for the caliphate along the lines of basic modern constitutional law. The caliphate, he points out, was allowed to fall into the hands of the strongest in partisan solidarity (the Umayyads), who transformed it from an elective office to a hereditary kingship. The legislators should have circumscribed the real significance of democratic processes. Is it surprising, therefore, that when the founders of modern Arab governments came to grips with the issues of government they should have discarded Islamic theories altogether and opted for Western systems? By failing to systematize and modernize their concepts and processes, the representatives of the Islamic political tradition impelled the modernizers to look elsewhere for answers to governmental problems.

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20 Ibid., p. 133.
scribed the jurisdiction of the caliph by making it sub-
servient to the rule of the shariah and the principle of 
consultation. They should have proscribed the principle 
of hereditary succession and vested ultimate sovereignty 
in the people; if they had solidified these points into an 
established procedure, the Muslims would not have stum-
bled as they did.  

In presenting this explanation, Rida underrates the inti-
mate interrelatedness of theory and practice in the matrix 
of any social system. While not underestimating the im-
portance of theory, one finds it difficult to believe that 
history would have taken a different course had the legists 
written a book delimiting the jurisdiction of the caliphate. 
The Quran, the Traditions of the Prophet, and also the 
precedents established by the orthodox caliphs were, after 
all, explicit enough on such pivotal issues as the rule of 
law rather than of men, the principle of consultation, 
and the elective basis of the supreme office. These prin-
ciples, however, were flouted when their injunctions ran 
counter to the configuration of power relationships at any 
particular time or place. 

It is with a sense of relief that one comes to the works 
of Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi, the third leading repre-
sentative of modern Islamic revivalism. Kawakebi was the 
product of more than one school, and the multiple 
influences are reflected in the breadth of his vision and 
the depth of his tolerance. He combines the four principal 
ideological currents which prevailed in his era: Islamic 
revivalism, Arab nationalism, Westernization, and con-
stitutionalism. We have already referred to his contribution 
to the ideas of Arab nationalism, particularly in his dif-
ferentiation between the Arab movement and the general 
Pan-Islamic revival of Afghani. We will now take up his 
contribution to the theory of government as expressed in 

21 Ibid.  
22 See p. 48.
his book entitled *Tabai al-Istibdad* ("Attributes of Tyranny").

Kawakebi defines tyranny as "the acts of individuals or collectivities relating to the rights of others without fear of responsibility or respect for laws, human or divine."

Tyranny originates under two sets of conditions: Under one set, a government is not bound to make its acts conformable to law, precedents, or the will of the people. Such a situation obtains in despotic governments which have freed themselves from the restrictions of law through the ignorance of their citizens. Under the other set, governments are not, in theory, absolute but, observes Kawakebi, by exploiting their power they have rescinded and suspended the limitations of law. This is the case with most governments which call themselves "limited." The truth is that man has not, as yet, succeeded in devising a constitutional government which governs by consultation with the people in the true sense of consultation.\(^{28}\)

Kawakebi asserts that the forms of despotic government are varied, but this is not the place to discuss them in detail. It suffices to state here that the quality of despotism applies not only to the government of the single despot who had seized power by force and usurpation, but includes also the government of a limited and legitimate ruler by hereditary succession or by election, in cases where such ruler is not held accountable. The term despotism applies also to the government of the group even though that group was elected to office, because the mere fact of deliberation preceding a decision does not make a decision any the less despotic. It may modify it somewhat, but it may also be more tyrannical and more injurious than the tyranny of a lone despot.

\(^{28}\) If Kawakebi means by "true consultation" a direct democracy, then the objective is clearly unattainable except on the city level. This problem perplexed Rousseau so much that it blurred his vision concerning the efficacy of representative institutions.
Kawakebi includes in the classification of despotic governments those constitutional systems in which the executive branch of government is not accountable to the legislature. The best form of government, he declares, is one in which the executive is accountable to the legislature, which in turn is accountable to the people. In short, a government of whatever type may be tyrannical unless it is subject to the strictest and the most uncompromising supervision and control, as was the case in the dawn of Islam when Caliph Uthman was discredited for showing favoritism to his relatives at the expense of Muslims in general.

Kawakebi, like Lord Acton, took no chances with the temptations of power. He believed that power corrupts and tends to perpetuate itself unless checked.

It is an established fact that no just government, finding itself beyond the shade of accountability by reason of the nation's ignorance or inertia, would fail speedily to succumb to tyranny. Further, it would not forgo tyranny once it had resorted to it, so long as it had at its service two potent weapons: (a) the ignorance of the people, (b) the organized soldiery.

Kawakebi found in education the only savior from tyranny. There is a perpetual war between tyranny and learning. The learning at which the tyrant shudders is that dealing with the problems of life, Kawakebi declares. It includes theoretical speculations and rationalist philosophy, the rights of peoples, the foundations of civilization, history, rhetoric, and other related subjects. These are the kinds of knowledge that broaden the mind and teach a

24 Uthman was the third of the orthodox caliphs. He was pious and well-meaning but weak. His clan, the Umayyads, the most powerful of the Quraysh tribe, took advantage of his weakness for their own self-seeking purposes. This outraged public opinion. He was attacked in his home and killed. His violent death initiated a chain of events which profoundly influenced the course of Arab history.
man concerning his humanity and his rights. He learns how to tell whether or not he is the victim of injustice and, if he is, how best to recover his usurped rights and to preserve them.

The coveted prize in the tug of war between the men of learning and the tyrants is the *awam* ("common people"). But who are the common people?

They are the ones whose ignorance leads to fear and whose fear leads to surrender. It is they who speak out once they know, and follow their words with deeds. The common people are the fodder of the tyrant. He dictates to them and through them. He captivates them and they hail his might; he plunders their properties and they are grateful that he has spared their lives; he plays them off one against the other and they admire his machinations. If he squanders their money [the public treasury], they call him generous; if he kills and abstains from mutilation of the victim, they consider him merciful; he leads them toward the perils of death and they obey him for fear of his castigation. If some among them show disaffection toward him, they are set upon by their own folks as though they had committed an aggression.

In short, the common people commit suicide because of fear resulting from ignorance. Once ignorance has been removed, fear also will have been removed. The situation undergoes a fundamental alteration: the tyrant, in spite of his nature, becomes an honest agent mindful of the necessity of accounting for his acts and a just ruler finding pleasure in seeking good will and friendship. Then will the nation live a happy and tranquil life—a life of progress, prosperity, and dignity. The ruler stands to gain the most from such a change, because as a tyrant he is most wretched surrounded on all sides by enemies and living under the shadow of death.

In Aleppo, his home town, Kawakebi was nicknamed *Abu al-Duafa* ("father of the weak"), a title which he earned in years of unremitting effort on behalf of the common
people and against injustice of every kind. He was averse to the pomp and the luxury of courtly life. The nature of a polity, he pointed out, might be discerned from its architecture and from the idiom of its speech. The Arabs' deep-rooted traditions of freedom are reflected in the scarcity of high-flown titles in their speech, while the Persians, if judged by the abundance of flattering and submissive idioms in their language, are an example of a contrary tradition.

Kawakebi was acutely aware of the demoralizing impact of tyranny upon human society. The key to morals, he declares, is the will. The existence of the will is what distinguishes the animal from inanimate objects. The victim of tyranny, shorn of his will, is bereft of his animal, let alone his human, attributes because he acts at the behest of the wills of others. Thus did the fugaha ("legists") provide that "a slave cannot be said to have willed most of his acts because his will is a satellite of the will of his overlord."

Kawakebi's incisive mind shows itself in his discussion of the ways and means of combating unethical practices in an age of tyranny. In the first place, he draws a distinction between personal immoralities, which, he states, are not of fundamental consequence, and ethical issues pertaining to public life, which under despotic regimes are handled by flatterers and dishonest men. Kawakebi's practicality is discernible in his grasp of the fact that the morals of the elite in society must be reformed before all else. He advocated complete freedom of speech, writing, and printing, subject only to the rules of libel. The excesses of freedom


Kawakebi's point applies with greater truth in societies where the gap between the upper and the lower classes is greater than it is in highly advanced societies and particularly in democracies. The Fabians in England worked on much the same assumption, namely, to influence those who are strategically placed in society. We might also mention Harold D. Lasswell's Politics: Who Gets What, When,
are preferable to restrictions, because there is no guarantee that those in power will not transform "the thread of restriction into an iron chain, by means of which they might stifle their natural enemy, freedom." Like Tahtawi before him, Kawakebi quotes from the Quran to show that not only did it guarantee complete freedom of speech but that it urged exercise of this freedom as a duty of those qualified to impart their learning and experience to the community.

What is impressive about Kawakebi is that, while not departing from his own Arab tradition or showing the slightest disorientation, he was so modern, so receptive to good ideas wherever he found them, so keen as an observer of human nature. His analysis of the crowd mentality is incisive, realistic, and relentless. Kawakebi dedicated his life to the service of the masses, but his sympathies did not becloud his vision of their frailties as well as of their tremendous potentialities for good. His influence was considerable and well directed in the service of freedom.

Between the two World Wars imperialism overshadowed all else; politics was reduced to an endless tirade against this or that foreign power. The universal element in such burning political issues as freedom, responsibility, and human nature had been so particularized as to be shorn of all meaning or reality apart from the ephemeral woes of the present. We will return to this later after presenting the two other currents in contemporary Arab political thought, namely constitutionalism and nationalism.

**Constitutionalism**

While a wave of liberalism was sweeping the continent of Europe from one end to the other and splashing across...
the territories of the Ottoman Empire itself, the ruling monarch at Istanbul was Abdul Hamid II. The dichotomy could not have been more glaring, and yet Abdul Hamid's reign lasted thirty-three years. He inaugurated his accession in 1876 by the grant of a constitution to his subjects. This he annulled a few months later, and his autocratic rule continued until 1908, when a revolt of army officers compelled him to restore constitutional rule.

The chief features of the Hamidian despotism were not unlike those prevailing in Turkey's next-door neighbor, the Russia of the tsars. Its foundations were espionage, repression, bribery, corruption, the stifling of thought and expression—in short, an atmosphere in which conspiracy was the only alternative to abject inertia. A despotism so blatantly dependent upon force, coercion, and guile needs no theoretical explanation for its existence. Nevertheless, there is a book by a Lebanese author, Dr. Shaker Khouri, which, though not intended to be either a defense or an explanation, is in fact both.27

The tenets of the book are briefly as follows: in every social system there must be some political authority responsible for the administration of law, both private and public. Sovereignty should be vested in one person in order to avoid a disruption of the polity. Khouri, like Marsilius of Padua, likens the state to a "living being," composed of parts which perform the functions necessary to its life. Thus the king is equated with the head whose duty it is to discriminate between the useful and the prejudicial; the sadr al-azam ("prime minister") to the lung because, as the lung inhales fresh air and thereby purifies the blood, so it is the duty of the prime minister to introduce reforms; the minister of finance to the heart because he supplies the necessary funds in much the same way as the heart

27 Majmaal-Masarrat ("Collection of Pleasant Readings") (Beirut, 1908).
distributes the blood throughout the body. The nerves are the governors of the various provinces, the limbs represent the soldiery, the senses are equated with the ambassadors, and so on.

Not only are the functions different; they are also unequal in their relative importance. The disparities are ordained by God's laws of nature. Justice lies in a recognition of the inequalities of functions and of rewards. In short, the author's analogy is a depiction, as well as a blanket endorsement, of the Hamidian governmental hierarchy as being in conformity with nature.

This rationalization of Ottoman autocracy was not only untenable in theory but also out of step with the trend of political ideas and events. Its publication in 1908 coincided with the fall of Abdul Hamid and the restoration of constitutional life. Among Khouri's contemporaries (though not all of the same generation) were an impressive list of liberals and reformers, including Midhat Pasha, Francis Fathallah Marrash al-Halabi, Adib Ishaq, Abdullah al-Nadim, Shibli al-Shumayyil, Mustafa Kamel, Amin Rihani, Kawakebi, and Jubran Khalil Jubran. They were far from accepting, let alone endorsing, the autocratic government prevailing in their day. Rather they were firmly convinced that liberalization of the government was indispensable to the welfare and the progress of their fellow citizens.

The views of two representatives of the liberal group, Francis Fathallah Marrash al-Halabi and Shibli al-Shumayyil, will show how far behind the times Khouri was, and how well in advance they were of the conditions which prevailed in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. Utopian and unrealistic as their views on government may have sounded then, they undoubtedly show the incipient phase of the movement of liberalism which grew into a crescendo as the century came to a close.

Marrash was profoundly influenced by French thought
and culture. In a book entitled *Ghabat al-Haq* ("The Forest of Justice"), he reveals an optimism, which he shared with other nineteenth-century reformers, concerning the triumph of justice, enlightenment, and the rule of reason. The book is a dialogue on freedom. It purports to be the record of a trial in which the kingdom of slavery is prosecuted before the kingdom of liberty after fighting a losing war. In the course of the imaginary proceedings, one of the fictitious characters has this to say on the question of freedom:

We have concluded that unlimited freedom is unattainable; and that all things, being in a state of interdependence with one another, are also mutually restrictive. But, when such a limitation is void of any benefit or prejudicial to welfare, it is not only necessary but mandatory that it should be removed.

There must, at any rate, be some government in existence. The idea of living a lonely and unrestricted life is unnatural and impossible of attainment, save in isolated instances which are the exception rather than the rule. Besides, when an individual obeys the laws of a civilized and progressive state, his obedience does not constitute a negation of freedom but is a confirmation of it. The case is different in a despotic regime where obedience to its laws tends merely to perpetuate the corruption and the demoralization of the body-politic.**

In conclusion, the speaker pleads for a relentless fight against tyranny, which he describes as inimical to nature as well as to reason.

Like other contemporary reformers, Marrash was disillusioned by the shallowness of the reform measures instituted by Sultan Abdul Aziz.*9 He became acutely aware

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*8 Beirut, 1881.

*9 Abdul Aziz ascended the throne in 1861. He was an erratic and extravagant monarch, and his reign ended with his deposition fifteen years later. However, the administrative reorganization which had begun in the late thirties of the nineteenth century was carried several steps forward during his reign. See Antonius, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
that fundamental reforms take long to mature and strike roots. Moreover, he realized that if they are to be lasting and effective, they must encompass the manifold activities and pursuits of the people as a whole. The most important aim of political life should be the vigilant service of public welfare. No matter how wise or well conceived a policy may be, it cannot avert the eventual disintegration of society if it fails to promote prosperity and welfare for the people both individually and collectively. The five pillars of welfare are increased aid to education, the promotion of trade, the strengthening of industries, assistance to agriculture, and, lastly, the maintenance of security, which includes the protection of life and property.

Furthermore, a fundamental prerequisite of sound polity is the establishment of equality before the law. There should not be the slightest discrimination among citizens on account of wealth, power, or rank. Rich and poor alike have their useful parts to play, and nothing is more likely to upset the equipoise of society than discriminatory treatment in questions pertaining to rights and laws.

Marrash betrays his indebtedness to Rousseau in his acceptance of the myth of a natural and goodly primitivism, alloyed and debased by society. The individual, impelled to fend for himself in the milieu of intricate social relationships, has had to forgo his simple and goodly nature and to acquire the characteristics which seemed to him to contribute to his safety and self-preservation. As the centuries have rolled by, he has lost well-nigh all of his primitive nature, becoming instead, one of the most mischievous and savage of all creatures. Hence man is no longer fit to live in a state of civilization, which requires unadulterated and simple nature, except when he is armed with an educated mind. This mind Marrash calls the great instrument through which every human being can recover his original nature and surmount his acquired savagery.
Shibli al-Shumayyil is another distinguished but younger representative of the school of constitutional reform. Like Marrash, he was deeply influenced by the principles of the French Revolution, but he regarded the Revolution as merely a phase in the unfolding of human development, which he thought was progressing toward socialism.

Shumayyil was firmly convinced that the form of government was a basic factor in the progress and retrogression of a nation. The governments of the East were responsible, he maintained, for the degeneration of moral scruples in their countries. The difference between the nations of the West and those of the East is that the former are governed by their laws, the latter by their rulers. He described the constitutional reforms which were taking place in some of the Eastern states in his days as superficial and not real. The kings of the East, he thought, were still above their laws, and by their despotic rule and the perpetuation of ignorance they had quenched in the hearts of the people the noble qualities of pride and initiative.

Shumayyil believed in the eventual triumph of popular sovereignty and the downfall of absolutism. This would come about, he thought, in the wake of the increasing enlightenment, particularly in Europe. His views on state and society show a profound understanding of these pivotal concepts in politics. Governments are but one aspect of nations and differ according to the differences existing among various nations. The more a nation progresses along the path of civilization, the higher is its form of government. This is the meaning of the saying that a people get the

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80 Shumayyil left two manuscripts in which he embodied his political and social philosophy. These were published by the Muqtataf magazine as Falsafat al-Nushu wa al-Irtiqa ("The Philosophy of Evolution"), vol. I, and Majmouat al-Shumayyil, vol. II (Cairo, 1910).
government that they deserve; it is not to be expected that a government will be any better than the nation from which it springs.  

The importance of an alert public opinion is stressed in the field of reform:

He who expects spontaneous and uncalled for reforms from governments reveals a dismal ignorance concerning the rise of nations and civilizations. History shows that governments, in every time and place, were the last to submit to the call for reforms. Would the nations of Europe have attained to their present-day civilization by the efforts of their governments? No they would not. They have accomplished what they have thanks to their united action, their refusal to bend before their rulers, and the limitations which they had imposed upon the authority of their governments. Nations which were powerless to bring about such a relationship between government and the governed perished in the oblivion of a dead past.

Shumayyil's faith in the great power of the masses is reflected in his views on revolution. The leaders of thought had been agitated and surprised at the failure of the 1908 revolution to bring about a basic improvement in the situation. The revolution, it will be recalled, had not only restricted drastically the powers of Abdul Hamid II, it had also resulted in the promulgation of a democratic constitution, which recognized popular sovereignty, representative institutions, human rights, and the like. The situation, nevertheless, remained basically unchanged. A profound disillusionment set in, and the question most commonly asked was: What accounts for the failure? Shumayyil's explanation is:

The failure of the Ottoman revolution of 1908 was due to the fact that popular participation in it was confined to verbal gestures when it was in progress, and now, after it is over, to

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 213.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
loud complaints. Our revolution so far has been a military affair, and the change has not entailed more than the outward forms. It has not changed our characters, and it has not extended to our learning, our industry, and our commerce.84

At this point, Shumayyil expounds his views on revolution:

A society may find it imperative under certain conditions to resort to revolution in order to extricate itself from some imminent perdition. A revolution, however, must be in response to an inner and profound prompting shared by a generality of the people if it is to be lawful; otherwise it may result in harm. A people's revolution is unconquerable and irresistible because it is not the work of a handful but amounts to a natural bodily secretion of unnecessary elements which had accumulated and over-burdened it.

Nationalism

The roots and the factors constituting Arab nationalism have been discussed at length in preceding chapters. In this section we will study the impact of nationalism upon concepts of government. A comparative study of nationalism in various modern countries shows that it is not possible to deduce a hard-and-fast rule concerning the mutual influence of nationalism and government. In certain cases, such as France, nationalism resulted from the uniquely modern fusion of nation and state, spurred by the breakdown of feudalism and traditionalism, a surging avalanche of democracy, and secularization. In others—Germany for example—it centered on monarchy and militarism, and it still retains the strong mark of authoritarianism in its concepts of government.

Modern Arab nationalism owes its birth to a movement which had, as its principal aim, the overthrow of autocratic rule. It started as a protest against centralization and

84 Ibid., p. 119.
as a plea for the introduction of democratic processes. As late as the second decade of the present century, Arab nationalism was only incidental to the more pervasive movement for constitutional reforms. Only after hopes for genuine reforms had been rudely shattered did reformism begin to give way to separatism. In its beginnings, therefore, Arab nationalism and nineteenth-century liberal democracy were closely intertwined.

One of the earliest exponents of Arab nationalism was Adib Ishaq.85 He was also one of the staunchest advocates of liberalism and constitutionalism. In his discussion of patriotism, for example, Ishaq says:

Homeland means literally one's natal land, a terra patria where a people make their abode. As a political concept it denotes the place to which a person belongs, in which his rights are preserved and to which, in turn, he owes certain obligations. It is the place in which the safety of one's life, family, and property are secured. However, there is no terra patria apart from freedom, no terra patria where tyranny prevails.86

Ishaq quotes approvingly an old Roman definition of homeland as being "the place where a person enjoys political rights and obligations."

The stipulation concerning obligations, he explains, does not contradict the earlier assertion "that there can be no homeland without freedom"; both are, in fact, comple-

85 Ishaq, a Christian, was born in Damascus in 1856. His short but active literary career included the publication of a number of newspapers in Beirut, Cairo, and Paris. He died in the Lebanese village of Al-Hadath in the year 1885. His literary output included the translation of several French novels as well as his writings on nationalism and patriotism, which were probably the earliest systematic treatment of these subjects in Arabic. His advocacy of a specifically Arab nationalism was, however, inhibited by a general Pan-Ottoman loyalty. His works have been collected in a book entitled Al-Durar ("Pearls") which was published by his brother in Beirut, in 1909.

86 Al-Durar, ed. by Awni Ishaq, pp. 200–203.
mentary. Freedom is essentially the right to perform certain well-defined duties; the nonexistence of such political rights and duties negates the very essence of homeland—the homeland for which a citizen sacrifices life and property, and love of which takes precedence over all else. As for the home in which the dweller enjoys no rights or security, the most that can be said about it is that it is the refuge of the impotent and the dwelling place of him who has nowhere else to go. 87

Ishaq was acutely conscious of the obstacles which stood in the way of a free democratic society, without at the same time wavering in his loyalty to it as an ideal to be striven for. Its successful operation is contingent upon a multiplicity of factors such as customs, laws, circumstances, and social ethics. 88 He discusses at length the relationship of ethics and politics even while he recognizes that each has its own separate domain. He gives two reasons for the close affinities of ethics and politics: (1) that political philosophy is synonymous with ethical and moral valuations in the sense that both seek to discover justice as the measure and criterion of virtue; (2) that no nation or state can exist without moral self-discipline and general education.

Freedom, which is the ultimate goal of political life and civil perfection, is incomplete and unattainable without virtue. A free kingdom is one in which many things are allowed to its citizens which are denied to those of non-free countries. These include freedom of assembly, of speech, of writing, of movement, etc. Now, if such freedoms are granted in countries where moral standards are low and ignorance rampant, the result will be dislocation, loss of rights, and indiscriminate competition in which the strong usurp the rights of the weak. Freedom turns into tyranny in the hands of the strong; partisanship prevails at the expense of the general welfare. In short, there can be no sound polity unless it is built upon a foundation of freedom, and freedom is unattainable without virtue. 89

87 Ibid., pp. 100–103. 88 Ibid., p. 49. 89 Ibid., p. 149.
Like other liberal reformers of his period, Ishaq was skeptical about the usefulness of democratic forms and institutions that did not have a solid basis in the support of the people. He criticized the participation of Arab deputies in the Mabuthan (the Ottoman parliament). The fact that it was granted from above, he thought, seriously impaired its efficacy. Those who brought it forth could and would suspend its operations without fear of public censure as they were not accountable to anyone.

Ishaq was also an advocate of equality, which he considered indispensable to the success of a democratic system of government. He stressed, however, that what he had in mind was equality before the law and not equality of condition. He disapproved of the views of the extreme equalitarians who advocated the abolition of classes and the removal of preferential rewards. Inequalities there always will be so long as human beings remain what they are. The real equality consists in the absence of discrimination, the impartiality of laws, and equality of opportunity.

What concepts of government did Ishaq uphold and advocate? He was a relativist, wary of generalizations that purported to apply in all places and at all times.

A republic does not work in China any more than does an autocratic monarchy in England. Republicanism, which in essence is government by the people and for the people, will not work in a country stricken with ignorance; while an absolute monarchy is ill-suited for a people who have attained a high degree of civilization and learning. If such a government is attempted, it will meet the same fate as that which befell the governments of Louis XVI, Charles X, and Napoleon III in France.40

The prosperity of a country, according to Ishaq, is conditional upon the promulgation of good laws and imparti-

40 Ibid., p. 194.
ality in their implementation. Every government that has the welfare and the progress of its people at heart should enact such laws as are best fitted for their peculiar conditions. Government by *shura* ("consultation") is not an innovation; both history and reason prove that its origins are deeply rooted in the past. Its universal triumph, he believed, was not in doubt. Such was the guarded optimism of one of the architects of modern Arab political thought.

Another prominent exponent of nationalism was Mustafa Kamel of Egypt, who in the early years of the twentieth century rejuvenated Al-Hizb al-Watani ("The Nationalist Party"). Kamel was not a political theorist but a statesman who in the course of a short but active career in the service of Egyptian nationalism pondered various aspects of government. Egyptian nationalism during this early phase was not Arab-oriented but territorial. Its motivation was reaction against foreign, particularly British, control. It stood for secular nationalism, although according to *Al-Manar* magazine it excluded all Egyptians who were not Muslims.

The fact that Egypt had long been a separate political

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42 Mustafa Kamel, son of a well-to-do engineer, Ali Muhammad, was born in Cairo in 1874. After completing his law studies, he made extensive tours of the European continent and of Britain in advocacy of Egyptian independence. He published a newspaper by the name of *Al-Liwa* ("The Banner") with editions in English and French, as a mouthpiece of the cause. A gifted orator and writer, he was the author of a number of books, including a book on the Eastern Question. When he died in 1908 at the age of thirty-four, he was mourned throughout Egypt as a national hero. See Fatimi Alami, *Mustafa Kamel Pasha fi Arbaah wa Thalathin Rabian* ("Mustafa Kamel Pasha in 34 Years"), 9 vols. (Cairo, 1908–1911).

43 See Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 184. Mustafa Kamel's nationalism did not exclude Pan-Islamic ideals; and when he found that he could not obtain European help in the struggle for independence, he turned toward Turkey and the Pan-Islamic movement.
unit accounts for the emergence of a parochial Egyptian nationalism, separate from the general Pan-Arab revival. To the Egyptians, the Ottoman Empire stood as the concrete embodiment of Pan-Islamism, from which they hoped to obtain support in the struggle for independence. The constitutional and nationality struggles within that Empire had had no direct bearing upon Egypt's pressing problems and did not, therefore, evoke any articulate or partisan response.44

Kamel's views are, however, germane to this inquiry for two reasons: (1) because of their influence upon the concepts of government in the largest and most important Arab country, Egypt; (2) because his writings influenced nationalist thought not only in Egypt but throughout the Arab world. His speeches, his statements, his writings, are well known to Arab readers of the present day.

Kamel was an ardent supporter of popular sovereignty. He believed that participation of the people in their own government was a prerequisite to progress.

Some nations entrust their affairs to their governments and follow its will; others place limitations upon the jurisdiction and powers of their governments, maintaining a close and vigilant watch upon their operations. They reward a government which has performed well and remove that which has not. The peoples of the East are of the first type, those of the West are of the second. That is why the East has fallen behind while the West has progressed. The truth is that the people are the owners of the country, its master and its guardian against all dangers. Government is no more than an agent of the people.48

44 This does not mean that Egyptians were indifferent to what went on within the Empire. On the contrary, they were much interested, as one gathers from the literature of the period. But their interest was mainly in the strength and the integrity of the Empire as a power in the world.

48 Quoted from R. Khouri, Al-Fikr al-Arabi al-Hadith, p. 245.
Kamel spells out the reasons for his belief that the people are the only genuine force, but the reader is left in doubt as to whether he means they are or that they ought to be. However, if we ponder for a while the great accomplishments in this country, we find that the people are their founders. The "little man," for whom the great care not, is in reality the backbone of Egypt and the producer of its wealth. He forms its army, its police force, he produces its wealth, he provides the livelihood of the princes and the great. How then are his rights infringed, and how is he subjected to ill-treatment? Don't you see that the great are enjoying their present status because the peoples themselves carry them over their heads and obey their orders? Suppose the people turn against them, what will they do? Can they resist the people or stand in their way? No, they cannot! The people are indeed the only real force; they are the power before whose will the most exalted and the strongest must submit.44

Upon his return to Egypt in 1906, after a publicity tour in Europe on behalf of the cause of independence, Kamel reactivated Al-Hizb al-Watani, the first party to be formed in modern Egypt, and was elected chairman. The party's program gave the cause of constitutional government a priority second only to that of independence. Point two in the program called for the promulgation of a constitution which would make the executive branch of the government responsible to a fully sovereign house of representatives, as in European parliamentary systems.47 Kamel's democratic platform found embodiment in concrete legislation in the Egyptian constitution of 1923.48

44 Ibid., p. 246.
48 For further discussion of this constitution, see p. 156.
The buoyant optimism and idealism of modern Arab political thought faced its severest testing after World War I. This is not the place to recount the tragic events that so drastically affected the destiny of the Arab world after the war. A few salient facts, however, should be mentioned for an understanding of the political thought of this interwar period. In the first place, the net result of the war, in which the Arabs fought on the side of the victorious Allies, was the transformation of the Arab peoples from the status of citizens to that of subjects.

On the surface, this assertion seems incongruous. Had not the Arabs rebelled against the Ottoman Empire with a view to achieving national liberation? The fact remains that the Arabs within the Ottoman Empire were partners and citizens, not subjects. Until the turn of the century when nationalism began to raise its head, the Arabs were
conscious of no disabilities vis-à-vis the Turks or anyone else. They could attain—and many did—to the highest positions in the state.\^1

No sooner had World War I been terminated than most of the Arab countries found themselves occupied, controlled, and dismembered by their wartime allies. A system of colonial rule, masquerading in the guise of mandatory trusts, was imposed on them against their wishes.

Equally serious was the bewildering vivisection of the eastern Arab world and particularly geographic Syria.\^2 Hitherto the whole area except certain territories on the coastal fringe of the Peninsula had formed part of the Ottoman Empire and, because they had been organized into “a system of provinces which were equally dependent on the central administration,” they “had enjoyed a uniform political status.” As a result of the postwar settlement a multiplicity of new states and regimes had come into being whose political status ranged all the way from partial independence to complete dependence.\^3 Arab constitutional theories and practices of this period reflected this state of fragmentation and were inseparably bound up with external factors, which, in their turn, were equally variegated. Thus, where Britain was the principal outside factor, governments were patterned after parliamentary constitutional monarchy. In areas where French influence predominated, republican parliamentary forms emerged. It is always hazardous to calculate such intangible but important influences as temperament in the approach to politics, but it is a safe guess that on this score, too, divergent influences were imported. The constitutional experi-

\^1 See George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London, 1938), p. 71, for a description of the position of the Arabs before World War I.

\^2 Geographic Syria includes Palestine and Lebanon.

\^3 Antonius, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
ences of the Arab world in the interwar period can be evaluated only against the background of external menace and internal dismemberment.

**The Two Planes of Reality**

Notwithstanding the impediments due to only partial independence, the Arab countries set about devising such forms and mechanisms of government as were deemed suitable to their peculiar needs and ideas. In almost every case, the choice did not involve much soul searching or debate. An examination of the various constitutions enacted during the interwar period reveals unequivocally their origin and orientation. They were, in fact, a faithful, almost literal reproduction of European political institutions and concepts.

The weakness of the resistance to the introduction into one Arab country after another of constitutions, administrations, and penal, commercial, and civil codes based on European models has not passed unobserved by authorities on the modern Arab world. Gibb has given one of the most plausible explanations:

Although the [Islamic] law embraced, in theory and in the exposition of the jurists, every branch and aspect of social relations, yet there were large areas in the life of the community where it was in practice ignored. The political and administrative institutions, a large part of penal jurisdiction, and most large-scale commerce lay outside its range of effective action, even if their procedures might sometimes be accommodated within its framework by means of legal fictions. Now it was precisely in these areas and among the classes concerned with

*Only Saudi Arabia and Yemen still preserve the old legal system. But there are indications that even these two countries will before long adopt some aspects of European legislation. In Saudi Arabia, for example, a modern labor code is in the making to cope with the expanding labor force in the oil industry.*
them that European influences were first felt and have been most enduring and pervasive.  

Another explanation is that by the beginning of the present century, political leadership had passed into the hands of a relatively small but powerful group of Western-educated statesmen and politicians. This group was convinced that the adoption of Western institutions was the only way to overcome the weaknesses and the inferiorities which characterized certain aspects of life in the East. There was little time to patch up the old garment, and so the taking over in toto of ready-made Western institutions seemed the most feasible course of action.

There is one basic difference—largely psychological—between the Arabs' way of Westernization and that of the Kemalist Turks. With the Arabs, the introduction of Western institutions, mechanisms, and concepts was brought about without hostility to the past legacy. On the contrary, the utmost deference was maintained toward that past, with an underlying assumption—not always justified by the facts of the case—that what was being done was not supplanting or repudiating but merely supplementing the old with the new. Turkey's Westernization in the wake of the Kemalist revolution, on the other hand, was inspired by a deliberate hostility—emotional as well as intellectual—toward its Eastern past.

This psychological difference in approach accounts for the widespread, though erroneous, belief that the secularization of political institutions, legal systems,* and adminis-


* Westernization of legal systems in the Arab countries does not cover matters pertaining to personal status. These include such questions as marriage and divorce, alimony, and confirmation of wills, and have been left to the jurisdiction of religious courts.
trative machinery was methodical only in Turkey. The fact is, however, that in almost all fundamental respects secularization in the Arab countries has been no less thorough. It is true that the constitutions of most of the Arab countries, unlike that of Turkey, contain articles to the effect that Islam is the religion of the state or, at least, of the head of the state. It is also true that some constitutions—the Syrian constitution of 1950, for example (Article 3)—provide that Islamic jurisprudence shall be the main source of legislation. But such provisions are largely of deferential rather than substantive import. There is no attempt to work out their implications in legislation.

As a result of this schizophrenia in thought and emotion, there developed two separate planes of reality: one was the Arabic-Islamic tradition refusing to yield ground, even at the cost of being altogether banished from everyday life; the other was the actual pattern of government derived from European models. The former catered to the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of the community; the latter provided a framework of government suitable to the complex conditions of modern life. The two coexisted in a state of mutual recognition and jurisdictional autonomy. The penalty attendant upon a violation of this implicit demarcation was brought to the fore in 1925 in the case of Ali Abdul Raziq, whose views on the caliphate

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7 See Majid Khadduri, “Constitutional Development in Syria,” Middle East Journal, V (Spring, 1951), 153. The Syrian constitution of 1953, drawn up by the militarist regime which was overthrown in March 1955, also carried a provision to this effect. For the full text, see Middle East Journal, VII (Autumn, 1955), 521–538.

8 Raziq was born in a village of middle Egypt in 1888. He received his education at Al-Azhar University in Cairo and later at the Egyptian University. In 1912 he went to England, where he spent two years in London and Oxford. The outbreak of World War I compelled him to return to Egypt before completing his program of study in economics and political science.
touched off one of the most acrimonious debates in the modern Arab world. In a book entitled \textit{Al-Islam wa Usul al Hukm} ("Islam and the Fundamentals of Authority"), Raziq advocated the abolition of the caliphate, which, he maintained, was not an integral part of the Islamic creed. The first two source books of Islamic law—the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet—were, he declared, not categorical on the subject. The third source of law—consensus of Muslim public opinion—has never been solidly and consistently behind the caliphate. Movements of rebellion against it, varying in importance and intensity, can be traced back to a period as early as that of the fourth caliph, Ali, and can be found as recently as the era of the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkey. Therefore, Raziq argues, the general will of the Muslim community cannot be claimed in support of this institution. The fourth proof proffered by the legists in support of the caliphate, namely that it serves the material and spiritual welfare of Muslims, is true only in the sense that some form of government is necessary, but it need not take the form of the caliphate as defined by the Muslim doctors of jurisprudence. "We have no need, then," the author concludes, "for this caliphate, neither in the affairs of our religious life, nor in those of our civil life. For the caliphate has always been, and continues to be, a misfortune to Islam and to the Muslims, and the source of evil and corruption."

Moreover, the idea of the caliphate, as being a succession to the Prophet in matters both civil and religious, is based upon a misconception of the nature of the Apostolic mission.

Muhammad was but an apostle, sent on behalf of a religious summons, one pertaining entirely to religion and unmarred by any taint of monarchy or of summons to a political state; and he possessed neither kingly rule nor government, and he was not charged with the task of founding a kingdom in the
political sense, as this word and its synonyms are generally understood.

The authority of the Prophet, according to Raziq, is derived from his prophetic office and should not be confused with that of kings, sultans, or princes. Since the authority of the Prophet was spiritual and not secular, the idea of a succession—which is what the caliphate is supposed to be—falls of itself.

Similarly, Raziq attempts to prove that the *shariah* ("divine law") which the Prophet brought forth was concerned only with religious affairs, intended to regulate the relations between God and man; it did not have in view the regulation of civil affairs.

All that Islam prescribed as law, and all that the Prophet imposed upon the Muslims in the way of regulations and moral principles, had nothing at all to do with principles of political obligation, nor with the regulation of a civil state. Thus, the Muslims could throw overboard the vast body of canon law and replace it with the most up-to-date principles of government which the experiences of other nations have shown to be the best.

A judge in the *shariah* courts and an *alim,* Raziq was summoned before a court, consisting of twenty-four members of the ulema of Azhar University. The court found him guilty of departure from the tenets of Islam and dismissed him from the ulema and from his *shariah* judiciary office.

The ulema members of Al-Azhar were right in thinking that Raziq's theory was a misconception of Islam. Raziq might have been on less tenuous ground if he had come out openly and said that the Islamic concept of the inseparability of secular and religious affairs had not served

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*An alim is a scholar of Islamic divinities. He is a life-long student and preacher of Islamic tenets and practices. He is also an administrator of *shariah* law.*
Arabs well and they would be well advised to abandon it. Instead, he indulged in an analysis of Islamic theory which does little credit either to his powers of discernment or to his intellectual integrity. We have already discussed the Islamic concepts in regard to the relationship of the spiritual and the temporal and have cited the views of leading authorities—both Arab and non-Arab—concerning them. The consensus of scholars is that, according to authoritative formulations of the Islamic tradition, the two spheres are not separable.

But what is truly remarkable about this episode, and lends support to what we said earlier about the two separate planes of reality in the life and thought of the Arabs, is that the furor should have arisen at the time that it did and with such intensity. Only two years earlier Egypt had adopted a modern secular constitution which in every respect separated religion from civil life and confined the authority of the shariah to the sphere of personal status. The ulema should have made their stand against secularization at the time of the promulgation of the constitution and not after the issue had been practically resolved beyond amendment. The fact that unorthodoxy came from within the ranks of the ulema accounts, no doubt, for the gravity with which the custodians of the religious tradition treated the episode. But a further fact emerged from the incident, namely, that contemporary ulemas were much less worried about the abandonment of Islamic institutions and concepts than about theoretical tamperings with them. The former may be tolerated as an unavoidable evil; the latter can never be tolerated or condoned.

Ideals and Mechanisms

Except for the controversy over Raziq's book on the caliphate, the Arab states proceeded without much ado to introduce Western-type constitutions and mechanisms.
Egypt promulgated the constitution of 1923, which declared the regime a hereditary monarchy and its form of government representative. The constitution, based upon the most up-to-date principles, survived the vicissitudes through which Egypt passed until 1952, when an army revolution overthrew the regime in its entirety. In 1925 Iraq promulgated a constitution which, according to Article 2 of the preamble, also declared the government a hereditary monarchy and its form representative.¹⁰

Syria's constitutional career was more turbulent on account of foreign aggression. The Syrian Congress, representing the whole of Syria (including Palestine, Transjordan, and Lebanon) drew up a constitution in 1920 which provided for a limited monarchy, a bicameral legislature, and a responsible ministry. Provisions for the structure of the central government followed the usual pattern of Western European constitutional monarchies. The constitution included a bill of rights guaranteeing civil liberties, freedom of thought and of religion, and an independent judiciary.

The British and French governments, however, announced that they would not recognize the validity of the Congress' proceedings. They called a meeting of the Allied Supreme Council at San Remo, which decided on April 25, 1920, to place "the whole of the Arab rectangle lying between the Mediterranean and the Persian frontier" under mandatory rule. "Syria was to be broken up into three separate fractions: Palestine, the Lebanon, and a reduced 'Syria' consisting of what was left." "A rider was added to the effect that the mandate for Palestine would carry with it an obligation to apply the Balfour Declaration" for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.¹¹

¹¹ See Antonius, op. cit., p. 305.
It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to recount the events which followed the San Remo decisions. It is, however, pertinent to recall that, as a result of the French occupation of Damascus and the collapse of the constitutional monarchy set up under King Faysal I, eight years were to elapse before the struggle between the mandatory power and the Syrian nationalists was sufficiently resolved to permit the formulation of a constitution even remotely agreeable to both parties; and never during the period of the mandate was any constitution consistently in full force.\textsuperscript{12}

The constitution of 1930 was based on the constitutions of Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, France, and Belgium. It was drawn up under the shadow of the French mandate and involved, therefore, attempts to formulate treaty relations with France. The constitution of 1950 made use of no less than fifteen European and Asiatic constitutions (including Arab constitutions) and received proposals from both individuals and organizations in Syria.\textsuperscript{13} It did not introduce any basic alterations in the structure of government. The most interesting innovation is to be found in its general articles expressing the hopes and the aspirations of the Syrian people, in a detailed bill of rights (of twenty-eight articles) which spells out the fundamental principles of freedom and the social and economic rights of the individual citizen. The detailed provisions on the rights and liberties of citizens were deemed necessary in view of the authoritarian tendencies that had been manifested in the national administration.

The constitutional evolution of Lebanon is also a register of her transformation from a mandated status to independence. The first constitution, promulgated on May 23, 1926, was amended by the constitutional laws of October 1927 and May 1929. The most drastic change occurred on

\textsuperscript{12} See Khadduri, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 151.  
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
November 5, 1943, and it heralded the popular rebellion which culminated in the ouster of the French. A law was promulgated by the Lebanese chamber of deputies modifying and abrogating certain articles in the constitution which had restricted Lebanese sovereignty. Henceforth, not only the structures, but also the functions of government devolved upon the Lebanese themselves.

The constitutional evolution of Transjordan reflects not only the country’s growth to statehood but also to nationhood. The structures of democratic institutions and mechanisms were introduced in the organic law of Transjordan of April 16, 1928, but the power of the executive was such as to deprive the democratic mechanisms of real substance.

The parliament elected in 1950 following the unification of Transjordan and the eastern parts of Palestine under the name of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan proceeded to draft a new constitution. The new constitution, promulgated in January 1952, made the cabinet responsible to parliament. Article 53 provided that a vote of confidence may be taken in the chamber of deputies; if a two-thirds majority in the chamber registers nonconfidence in the government, the cabinet must resign.

In 1954 the chamber of deputies adopted an amendment—to become operative as of November 1955—whereby

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14 The law modified Articles 1, 11, 52, 95, and 102, which gave to France a privileged position in Lebanon as a mandatory power, and abrogated Articles 99, 91, 92, and 94, which restricted the country’s external sovereignty. For the text of the constitution as well as the modifications of 1943 (Law no. 93 of Nov. 5, 1943), see Davis, op. cit. pp. 170–186.

15 For the text of this law, see Davis, op. cit., pp. 303–315.

16 In Part II, for example, Article 16 declares: “Subject to the provisions herein, powers of legislation and administration are vested in Amir (later King) Abdullah ibn Al Husayn and his heirs after him” (ibid., p. 305).
an effective vote of nonconfidence in a government was reduced from the two-thirds majority hitherto required to a simple majority. The amendment also provided that a government which recommends dissolution of parliament must automatically resign. The act has already been ratified by His Majesty King Husayn.

Thus, by the end of the second quarter of the present century, all the independent Arab countries—with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Yemen—had accepted in principle as well as in practice modern Western democratic forms of government. They accepted those forms, not at the prompting of controlling foreign powers, but, in most cases, in spite of them. The record of constitutional developments in the Arab countries shows that for a time progress toward real democracy went hand in hand with advance toward greater independence.
CURRENT POLITICAL TRENDS

THE claims and the attractions of democratic forms have not always passed unchallenged; what is more, the challengers include men whose insight and experience have earned them a receptive hearing. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as we saw earlier, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani expressed strong doubts about the efficacy of parliamentary forms, Lord Cromer, who as British High Commissioner in Egypt stood on the opposite side of the fence, was equally skeptical.¹ Both were of the view that democratic forms were in advance of the Arabs’ political maturity. In the conditions of their day, their finding was essentially sound.

What is more difficult to account for, however, is the persistence of a strong antidemocratic strain three-quarters of a century later, when the social structure was drastically changed. This trend finds support not among incorrigible autocrats of the Hamidian type—for those have largely

¹ See E. B. Cromer, Modern Egypt (London, 1908), II, 278.
disappeared—but among Western-educated and well-meaning reformers whose genuine patriotism is respected and recognized.

The dichotomy is essentially one between democratic self-government and efficient government, or at least this is how it is expressed. Writing in 1936, Dr. Abdul Rahman al-Shahbandar, a leading Syrian thinker and statesman, declared:

If an Arab country achieves complete independence, then the best government for it would be an authoritarian but just one, which would deliver it from the chaos in which most nations currently find themselves, particularly those nations who, like ourselves, have had little experience with constitutional forms, and whose citizens have not as yet received the necessary training in the intricacies of this [parliamentary] form of government.  

Nations still struggling for their independence, however, should insist upon full parliamentary institutions:

A truly representative form of government, based upon free elections to the maximum degree possible, is the best form for peoples whose independence is restricted by mandate, protectorate, one-sided treaty or any other form of foreign interference.

This is so, the author explains, because a freely elected parliament would include a nationalist bloc opposed to the acts of the government which is obliged to submit to foreign control.

But is the supposed inefficiency of democratic government the only cause of the disfavor in which it is held by large sections of opinion? The answer is no. And actually the Arab peoples have not as yet tested the efficiency or

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Ibid., p. 92.
lack of efficiency of democratic government over a sufficiently long period of time and in an atmosphere sufficiently free from foreign impediments and crisis situations to enable them to judge such governments.

The crisis in the theories of government in the period after World War II stems from two principal considerations. The first is: What form of government is most suitable to the Arab peoples at the present stage of their development? This relativist approach disregards those theories of the state which claim universality irrespective of time and place. The second consideration is: What should be the nature and functions of the state? This question involves the ultimate values of society's constitution. The liberal, the Muslim, the socialist, and the Communist have widely divergent notions as to the ends to be served. In this final chapter on political theory we will discuss the two considerations just outlined as they appear in the interaction of ideas and events.

Validity of the Democratic Hypothesis

The Arab revolt against democratic institutions and procedures which occurred after World War II was ignited, no doubt, by such events as the loss of Palestine, the failure to arrive at a more satisfactory redefinition of relationships with the Western powers, and the economic hardships which, in the more populated territories of the Arab world, accompanied the readjustments from wartime to peacetime economies. But these events were only symptoms of a deeper malaise—of the pains and the stresses of a society in a process of transformation from one social order to another.

There was no question of attempting to stave off the ongoing process of transformation. The only problem was how best to control the changes and who was to act as
the handmaid of the new order. Apart from the Communists, whose objectives and methods went far beyond the acceptable norms of the majority of the people, and the Muslim Brotherhood, whose theocratic principles seemed to run counter to the prevailing trend for modernization —apart from these two organized movements, there were no political parties with sufficient mass backing and a comprehensive program of action to carry out the impending social reforms.

The weakness of organized political parties explains in large part the emergence of militarist regimes as the exponents of revolutionary expectations. It is true that modern Arabs had had recourse to militarist reformism before: the Arabi Rebellion of 1881 in Egypt; the revolution of July 1908 in Constantinople in which Arab and Turkish officers co-operated in the overthrow of the sultan's despotism; the series of military coup d'états in Iraq between the years 1936 and 1941. These form a living part of the modern political tradition. Nevertheless, the decisive factor in the militarist regimes of the current era seems to be the vacuum occasioned by weakness in the

*Communist parties are illicit organizations in all the Arab countries. They could have seized power only by force and not through the ordinary constitutional channels.


* See Majid Khadduri, *Nizam al-Hukm fi al-Iraq* ("The System of Government in Iraq") (Baghdad, 1946). It is interesting that Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman, the instigator of the first army coup d'état in Iraq, is the brother of Mahmoud Shawkat Pasha, who, as commander of the army corps in Salonika in 1908, marched on Constantinople and restored the authority of the Committee of Union and Progress (p. 122).
organization of political parties, with a resulting degeneration of political life into sordid squabbles among cliques of self-seeking, inefficient, or complacent politicians.

The case for parliamentary institutions and procedures is the same as when it was expounded by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century liberals. The principles underlying the system have been incorporated into the constitutions of the Arab countries. Its main features include a bill of rights, popular sovereignty, cabinet responsibility before parliament, rule by majority, an independent judiciary, and an accepted mechanism for the peaceful change of government.

The case against democracy is less formalized and should therefore be given fuller exposition. It is based upon a distinction between formal political democracy and real democracy which takes into account the complex of economic and social relationships in society. There is no such thing as pure law, the opponents of democracy maintain. Law in a feudal state is made to serve the feudal landlords; the end it seeks to fulfill is the landlords’ conception of what that end should be.

The opponents of formal democracy concede that universal suffrage has—at least theoretically—put the underprivileged majority in a position to alter the structure of relationships in their favor, through orderly constitutional channels. But the social and economic structure being what it is, the gain is nominal rather than real. The masses of the people—particularly where feudal privileges are entrenched—are in no position to benefit from their potential

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8 See, for example, Rashid al-Barawi, *The Military Coup in Egypt: An Analytic Study* (Cairo, 1952). The author interprets the militarist coup which overthrew the monarchy in Egypt in terms of class struggle. He accepts the revolution as the true expression of the people's will because the army is recruited from the masses.
political preponderance. Ignorance is one principal handicap; the poor fellah is in no position to decide how his interests could best be served. Social and economic disabilities are other basic handicaps. So long as the livelihood of the peasant is in the hands of his landlord, his exercise of political rights is subject to duress. Inertia and the failure of the numerical majority to combine for collective action in defense of its rights and interests enables the economic and social oligarchy to perpetuate its stranglehold upon society.

The validity of the democratic case is not denied. At the same time, it is pointed out that a period of transition is required for the education of the masses and the amelioration of their social and economic position, so that they may be in a position to exercise their rights and to perform their duties. The idea of a transition period in politics is closely akin to that of an "educational tariff" in the realm of economic development. But there is the danger, alike in economics and in politics, that the legitimate purport of protection, namely, to help the infant weather the initial period of experimentation, may harden into an end in itself. A vigorous party life is the most feasible alternative, but its emergence must await a broadening of the social base from which effective political support for reforms can be solicited and obtained.

Reassessment of Values

The second factor in the crisis over theories of government is even more basic than the first inasmuch as it involves the ultimate values of society and not merely the procedures and the mechanisms of administration. The Arab world was profoundly affected by the social, political, and economic upheavals throughout the world during and following World War II. The Beveridge report on full
employment was widely publicized during the war; the victory of the British Labour party in 1945 led to an upsurge of interest in socialism as a remedy for social and economic ills. Socialist parties sprang up in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. The enhanced status of the Soviet Union strengthened the hands of the small but highly organized Communist parties. And last but not least was the emergence of the United States as the champion of international welfare economics.

The inequities of the social and economic system appeared the more glaring in proportion as awareness increased of the possibility of amelioration. Al-adalah al-ijtimaiyah ("social justice") became the most popular theme in the various mediums of mass communication. The grievances as well as the hopes for betterment eventually crystallized around concrete movements and ideologies. One of these trends represented what might be called "benevolent feudalism." Its proponents did not envisage any basic realignments in society and no major disturbance in the existing system of relationships. A considerable portion of the literature of the postwar period belongs to this category.

A second and more systematic exposition was embodied in a restatement of the Islamic theory of life and society, with particular emphasis upon the nature, foundations, and methods of social justice in Islam. The chief exponent of this orientation is Sayyid Qutb in his Al-Adalah al-Ijtimaaiyah fial-Islam (Social Justice in Islam). His basic


10 The Bath ("Resurrection") parties in Syria and Jordan, the Socialist Progressive party of Kamal Jumblat in Lebanon, and the Socialist parties of Egypt and Iraq led by Ahmad Husayn and Salih Jabr, respectively, are among the many socialist organizations which came into being during and after World War II.

11 Qutb, a well-known writer, was implicated in the conspiracy or-
premise is that such questions as the relationship of individual and society, concepts of government, economic theories, and social organization are related and indivisible parts within the framework of the superhuman whole. Life is a unity in which the spiritual and the material are indissolubly combined.

Islam stands for the unity of worship and work, of faith and worldly activity, of spiritual and material realities, of economic and moral values, of this world and the afterworld. From this pervasive unity there issue all Islamic laws, political and economic theories and the allocation of rights and obligations.

Justice according to Islam has far greater dimensions than mere economic equality. In the Islamic view, values are so manifold and composite that justice must encompass them all. A narrow-gauged economic equality is at variance with human nature and with the unequal endowment of individuals. It inhibits incentive and denies to society the achievement of pre-eminence through hard work. Absolute justice requires, not equality of reward, but of opportunity. Thus there should be no discrimination or obstacles on account of rank, upbringing, class, or race.12

Unlike communism, Islam accepts co-operation rather than conflict as its point of departure. It believes that there is a basic identity of interests among individuals and societies as well as among all races of mankind. The foundations of justice are: (1) absolute freedom of conscience, (2) absolute human equality, and (3) a balancing of rights and obligations as the basis of social solidarity.13

Qutb's chapter on economic theory is pivotal, not only organized by the Muslim Brotherhood against the regime of Premier Jamal Abdul Nasser in November 1954. He was tried along with other leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and sentenced to imprisonment.

12 Al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah fi al-Islam, p. 28.
13 Ibid., pp. 29-68.
because it provides the concrete groundwork for the discussion on social justice, but also because the greatest challenge to the Islamic system centers around its economic premises. As in other fields of life, Islamic economic theory attempts to strike a balance between the welfare of the individual and the welfare of society. In pursuance of its aims, it relies upon two instruments: legislation and guidance. The right to individual property and inheritance is sanctioned and protected. The institution of private property is in accord with human nature as well as beneficial to society on account of the incentive which it provides.

The right to private possession is not, however, absolute or unrestricted. It is circumscribed by considerations of public welfare, which reduce it to a mere nominal right. Thus, the individual must realize that he is no more than the steward of his property and that its primary owner is society. This makes him more amenable to the restrictions which society may decide to impose upon his rights of disposal. It also emboldens society in prescribing whatever rules and regulations it deems necessary in the public interest.

Other principles relating to private property include the right of the community to recover wasted or misused property, abhorrence of hoarding, aversion to extremes of wealth and poverty, outlawry of monopolistic practices, outlawry of usury, and moderation in the disposal of the earnings from property.

And finally there is the institution of zakat (a poor box to which donations are compulsory), which the author calls the “pivotal social pillar of Islam” and the most important part of Islamic economic theory. The poor box is a tax which the community claims from the individual as a program of social security. Islam, according to Qutb,

14 Ibid., p. 101.  
18 Ibid., p. 106.  
16 Zakat literally means “purification.”
disapproves of poverty and need. It attaches a religious significance to work and rates work above all formal worship. But while recognizing that every man should earn his living by his own work so long as he can, it insists that he is entitled to a share from the public treasury when for any legitimate reason he is no longer able to work.

It was not long before these views received their most formidable challenge, from one who belongs to the Muslim ulema. In a book published in 1950 and entitled *Min Huna Nabda* ("From Here We Start"), Sheikh Khalid Muhammad Khalid advocates an outright socialist program as the only adequate solution for the Arab world's pressing problems. There is nothing unusual about advocating a socialist program in the Arab world, particularly after World War II, when it became almost a fashion for even middle-of-the-road parties to adopt socialist platforms. What is unusual, however, is that the advocacy should have spread to the conservative ulema class.

There is a very close parallel between Ali Abdul Raziq's revolt on behalf of secular constitutional government a quarter of a century ago and Khalid Muhammad Khalid's revolt on behalf of secular economic organization in 1950. Both men belonged to the religious class. Both advocated separation of secular and temporal affairs. Both infringed upon the implicit demarcation between the two planes of reality which we discussed earlier, and in so doing evoked a storm.

Khalid's book is divided into four sections corresponding to four of the basic issues of Arab thought and society.


18 *Ibid.*, p. 134. The author explains, however, that the zakat is a minimum tax on property, and that if it should prove insufficient, the government is entitled to assign levies on capital consonant with the public interest.

19 See pp. 158-155.

20 Khalid was prosecuted on charges of antireligious agitation. The district court of Cairo, however, acquitted him and removed the
The first one is entitled, "Religion not Priesthood." It is the most scathing attack upon the religious ulemas in modern Arab literature. It is analogous—indeed it was inspired—by Voltaire's fulminations against the Church. In theory, of course, Islam has no priesthood; in actual fact, however, there have always been powerful bodies, ulemas (men of religion), whose functions range from leading congregations in prayer to judicial functions, particularly in issues of personal status.

Khalid accuses the men of religion of complicity in the maintenance of an intolerable social order. They have done so either through ignorance and inflexibility or through willful machination. In a paragraph entitled "The Socialism of Alms," he writes:

It is not fair to describe priesthood as inflexible. In fact it can summon extraordinary powers of flexibility in order to meet the changing needs of an evolving society. What do the people want? Do they want Socialism and justice? Very well, answers the priesthood, and it produces a made-to-order Socialism to be generously bestowed upon the people. It produces the "socialism of alms." Charity, in the view of the priesthood, constitutes an adequate economic system, an efficacious way of fighting poverty and of ensuring the happiness and well-being of the people. You hear the appeal to charity on every occasion, so much so that one begins to wonder whether he is living in a society or in an orphanage? 21

The idea of charity, Khalid maintains, is repugnant to the spirit of Islam and is only sanctioned as a final resort when every other means of earning a living has failed.

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21 Ibid., p. 37. Page references are to the English translation although the translation is mine.
Khalid is equally critical of those who would subordinate the material to the spiritual. There can be no moral behaviors with privation, he declares emphatically. What do the misguided simpletons mean by morality? If they mean ascetic abstinence, then they refer to a phenomenon which is on its way to extinction.

The times of asceticism and of fatal resignation are forever gone. We are now living in times of life-affirmation. If the ascetics insist on having their fake philosophy, they may do so provided they advocate it in the name of priesthood and not of religion. Religion has not come to transform the glorious and happy life into a lifeless mausoleum, in whose corners and crannies life shall be wasted. Rather, it has come to us with glad tidings, tolling the bells and calling on all slumberers: yours are the joys of life.22

But if the proponents of morality mean by it nobility of soul and moral virtues which lead to tolerance, faithfulness, altruism, and love of peace, then, Khalid declares, they have a case more deserving of discussion. And he asks the advocates of this type of spirituality:

Is the lacerated and anguished soul capable of finding spiritual happiness? Is a person whose body is disease-ridden and who has never had an opportunity to educate and discipline his soul capable of moral conduct? The diseased person whose nervous capacity has degenerated on account of under-nourishment and the ignorant who has had no adequate education, cannot be expected to behave morally, less still to show virtuous and enlightened spirituality.23

In the second section, entitled “Bread Is Peace,” Khalid defines the term social justice as “a set of principles and regulations which experience has shown to yield the maximum amount of social utility and which are recognized as

22 Ibid., p. 43.  
23 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
sufficiently important to outweigh all considerations of expediency.”

Social justice, according to Khalid, is not of Marxian or Russian origin. It is a natural instinct which humanity has entertained since the dawn of time. He decries those who regard every plea for equality and justice as Communist inspired. The history of mankind is a continuous record of attempts by the human reason to devise a more perfect order of justice. The lives of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad are glorious chapters in that eternal struggle.

Khalid declares that the whole civilized world has now recognized that socialism is the system in which social utility attains its optimum achievement. The examples which he cites make it clear, however, that his definition of social justice includes enlightened capitalism and that in his opinion social justice does not necessarily require total nationalization of the means of production. He sums up his case as follows: (1) Social justice is an indispensable necessity that has been advocated by both people and government. It expresses, therefore, the general will of the community. (2) Social justice is the system under which social utility reaches its optimum. (3) The system which at the present juncture realizes social justice more than any other is socialism and nothing else.

In the third section, called “The Rationalization of Government,” Khalid advocates the secularization of government. Theocracies have proved a failure, and their restoration means a relapse to burdensome autocratic rule. True religion does not need a state to defend its cause. Religion consists of a set of eternal verities, while a state is subject to the natural laws of evolution and therefore changes constantly.

Khalid enumerates seven obnoxious features of a theocratic government: (1) lack of clarity regarding the source

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24 Ibid., pp. 94-95.
25 Ibid., p. 96.
and location of authority, (2) distrust of human reason, (3) appeal to the weaker part of human nature in its bid for support by depicting every reformer as an enemy of God and of religion, (4) conceit, which makes a theocracy impatient of criticism or even of advice, (5) totalitarianism and aversion to the existence of any opposition parties, (6) a deep-seated immobility and reluctance to countenance chance, and (7) brutality, which thrives upon the confusion as to the proper limits of authority.26

It is true, Khalid states, that secular governments may commit the same cruelties and abuses; but a corrupt secular government cannot last too long because there is an agile public opinion capable of throwing it out of office, as well as powerful legislative and judicial powers in a position to challenge its authority. In a secular regime opposition is a patriotic duty and a political verity sanctioned by the constitution. Under a theocracy, opposition is a criminal heresy. The duty of the religious leader is something other than the duty of the statesman, and the difference is no less true of means than of ends. Progress and civilization, he concludes, are contingent upon a clear recognition of the separateness of the two spheres.27

The final section of the book, entitled "The Incapacitated Lung," is a plea for the complete emancipation of women. The movements and the ideologies thus far presented in this chapter are related in varying degrees to the Arabs' cultural heritage. Whether radical or conservative, liberal or authoritarian, secular or religious, their categories of thought, loyalties, and moral valuations form a continuum with an indigenous past. Some go far in an effort to accommodate, assimilate, and harmonize past and present, but the common denominator in all these works is that they do not contemplate a complete break with the past.

The one exception to this general rule in the political

26 Ibid., pp. 129-134. 27 Ibid., p. 143.
and the ideological landscape of the Arab world is communism. Communist parties are illicit associations in every Arab land. Because they operate clandestinely, it is difficult to gauge the extent of their public support. Even where a rough estimate can be made, it is hard to know whether such support stems from genuine conviction or merely expresses a protest against national or international exigencies. At all events, the Communist ideology is being propagated by a highly organized and devoted hard core in every Arab land. The Communist political, social, and economic concepts are potent influences and must be examined as constituents of contemporary Arab political thought.

The Communist view of existing problems in the Arab countries is succinctly and authoritatively stated in a report delivered in 1951 before the plenary session of the Central Command of the Communist party in the Levant by its leader, Khalid Bakdash. Point three of the report outlines the immediate objectives as follows:

Our land and party is now in the phase of the democratic national liberation. Our goals in this phase can be summarized as: (a) putting an end to imperialist political and economic domination and to its agents, (b) liquidation of the remnants of feudalism in our country, (c) establishment of a popular democratic regime. Slogans in this phase: Peace, National Independence and Democracy.28

When these goals have been obtained, the report adds, a new phase will begin which will require: (1) the strengthening of the popular democratic regime and (2) the creation of conditions necessary for the realization of socialism in the country. “Our job during the present stage is to muster

28 The report appeared in an abridged translation by Harold W. Glidden in *Middle East Journal*, VII (Spring, 1953), 206-221. The quotation is from p. 206.
the broad masses and especially the workers and peasants. We must get them to embrace these slogans effectively and prepare for the struggle, to the highest degree, in order to realize them." On the surface, at least, the objectives of nationalism and of communism apparently coincide. But the section immediately following dispels any illusions that this is so.

To bring this about, the principal orientation of our effort and activity must be toward isolating the nationalist bourgeoisie and ending its influence among the people. For this bourgeoisie, no matter how much the names of its parties may vary, uses its influence to deceive the people and turn it away from the revolutionary struggle; it works also for an understanding with imperialism.

In conformity with the standard Communist approach elsewhere, the report has few kind words about Arab socialists. Point nine in the program states:

We must work constantly also to unmask groups and parties claiming to be “socialist,” such as the Arab Socialist Party, the Islamic Socialist Front, and Bath (“Resurrection”) Party in Syria; and the Socialist Progressive Party of Jumblat, etc., in Lebanon . . . for through their seductive propaganda they constitute a danger to the growing democratic national movement against war and imperialism, feudalism and exploitation. They try to exploit the increasing popular orientation toward socialism; . . . they especially destroy the effectiveness of our slogans of “distribution of the lands of the feudalists and big landowners to the peasants,” and they advocate the buying out of foreign companies . . . and the placing of these companies under the control of the reactionary feudalistic government which serves imperialism. This they call nationalization.

Bakdash attaches considerable importance to the task of clarifying theoretical formulations.

Ibid., p. 206.  
Ibid.  
Ibid., p. 207.
Among our most important successes has been the progress made in working to clarify our theoretical and intellectual position with regard to a number of important questions on the basis of Marxist-Leninist teachings: the problems of peace and national independence; the democratic national revolution and the transition from it to the struggle for socialism; the role of leadership of the working class; the alliance between workers and fellahin; our position vis-à-vis the national bourgeoisie; the meaning of the Communist Party; the meaning of its role of leadership in the revolution.  

Although publications in Arabic on theory are scarce, Bakdash states, "It cannot be denied that we now have an Arabic library of translated Marxist-Leninist publications which can be the basis of theoretical education to a great extent." In conclusion, he declares:

We must understand thoroughly that if we do not deal with the problem of theoretical education and make it a normal and continuing thing in Party life alongside our endeavor continually to increase the number of Arabic-language Marxist-Leninist publications, we shall never make any progress.

This, in brief, is the present Communist statement of policy in the Arab countries. The statement is such a faithful replica of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine that but for a few Arabic names and places it would be virtually impossible to identify it as having any special relevance to Syria. There is not a single reference to the Arabs' past heritage.

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82 Ibid., p. 209.
83 Bakdash lists the following works as being available in Arabic: the complete History of the Bolshevik Party in 12 fascicles each containing one chapter, chapters from Stalin's Foundations of Leninism, his Dialectical and Historical Materialism, the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, Marx's Wages, Prices and Profits, a translation of The Life of Comrade Stalin, Stalin's speeches and declarations during and after World War II, and other works (ibid., 220–221).
84 Ibid., p. 221.
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or to their peculiar national problems. The question of nationalism is dealt with, not as a desirable end in itself but merely as aid toward creating the necessary conditions for the successful application of socialism.

Whether due to shortsightedness or to deliberate design, the program makes no serious attempt to accommodate itself to Arab nationalism. Of nationalism generally it is acutely aware; but it is a stereotype of nationalism, an abstract, lifeless, colorless phenomenon, related only incidentally and casually to the aspirations of a specific people inhabiting a specific geographic territory and sharing a unique cultural heritage. The fact is that no Arab can embrace this kind of ideology and retain his Arabism. The Communist creed is so monolithic that conversion to it involves much more than a mere ideological attachment. It acquires a totalitarian hold and embraces every aspect of thought and belief. Nationalism and communism cannot coexist under the same roof; one will eventually squeeze the other out.

Conclusion

It is tempting, though hazardous, to conclude this chapter by predicting the direction of political thought in the Arab world. There are many variables to reckon with and the unknown area is considerable. Nonetheless, it is possible to make a few general observations in the light not only of Arab experience but of political trends in the world generally. The first is that Arab political thought is now irrevocably committed to positivism as the proper conception of the state. The increasing complexity of social organization has rendered wholly obsolete the earlier conception of the state as a limited agency. This is particularly true in underdeveloped areas where governments represent the largest constellations of talents, skills, and resources
and find themselves impelled to undertake responsibilities which in more developed countries depend upon private initiative.

A corollary to the widening sphere of the state is the increasing involvement of man's total valuations in the processes of the state. Hence political concepts and behavior can no longer be isolated from the nexus of social relationships as a whole. Whether the Arab states will evolve along democratic, authoritarian, individualistic, or collectivist patterns will depend upon a multiplicity of influences, above all, the economic form of organization and its concomitant social relationships. It is no longer possible, with the high degree of social consciousness today, to maintain a formal political democracy without an acceptable minimum of economic democracy.

A third general observation derives from the peculiar historical circumstances surrounding contemporary Arab political thought. It stems from the fact that there are two great areas of human experience and of human activity: culture and civilization. The first refers to values, styles, emotional attachments, and intellectual pursuits; the second denotes utilitarian instruments and basic technology. In the experiences of countries like the United States and Britain, substantial political traditions accumulated and acquired respect over a long period of time, not only as the means of government, but for their own sake, as the embodiment of the cultural heritage. By the time the technological revolution came into full swing, these political traditions had become sufficiently entrenched as a cultural legacy to weather the dislocations of a rapidly changing civilization. Hence the relative stability and the orderly processes of political life were maintained in spite of a continuing technological revolution.

In the Arab countries, as we observed earlier, a cata-

strophic break of social continuity occurred. The result was that there was no living culture to dam the avalanche of an advancing and turbulent civilization. On the contrary, the two areas of human activity were mutually reinforced in their concerted onslaught. Not only did the Arabs import new technology, but also new ideas, which, in many instances, did not correspond to their existing social conditions or needs and served, therefore, only to intensify the dislocation.

With culture and civilization in such a state of disequilibrium, it is hardly surprising that political theories and relationships are similarly afflicted. The concepts and patterns of political relationships, therefore, will be determined as part and parcel of the wider societal order which is now emerging. But society also is a process; it is never entirely stagnant; it is constantly undergoing change. We cannot, therefore, discuss the trends and the prospects of Arab society in its present nationalist phase without reference to the all-important factor of social change. The contours of social and economic change and values—these are the paramount issues and the ones that will determine the fundamental nature of Arab nationalism in the years ahead. It is fitting, therefore, that the concluding chapters should be devoted to them.
THREE different attitudes toward the problem of social change are manifest in the Arab world. The first is the attitude of zealotry; it is antagonistic to all change and attaches symbolic value not only to the past cultural heritage but also to the utilitarian techniques inherited from the past. The attitude of zealotry is fast disappearing and is, therefore, the least significant of the three. A spirit of archaism there will always be, and like conservatism everywhere, it will be averse to change in all its forms. But, zealotry—as distinct from mere conservatism—has been unable to withstand the impact of modern civilization. The introduction of one modern technique has almost inevitably led to the introduction of another, opening the floodgates to unfathomable change.

The second and by far the more important approach is based upon a distinction closely analogous to that between culture and civilization. This approach is discrete, atom-
istic, and selective; it regards the disparities between the developed and the underdeveloped countries as a consequence of industrialization, and industrialization alone. Neither the social doctrines nor the ethical postulates have, in themselves, any direct bearing upon the level of material development. In the United States, industrialization has been developed by a democracy; in Japan, it was combined with Shintoism; in Russia, it has been applied by a dictatorship.

The implication of this approach is clear. The Arab world need take from the West only those mechanical and scientific techniques which would enable it to operate the economy upon a higher level of energy. Its cultural values need not be unduly disturbed in the process. The proponents of this approach have a valid case when they distinguish between culture and civilization. But they are on less solid ground when they interpret the latter in a narrow-gauged technological sense and to the exclusion of social technology.

It is easy to understand the reluctance of the proponents of this approach to give a wider interpretation to the functions and implications of basic technology. They rightly apprehend that it would lead to serious trespassing upon the domain of cultural values that they are anxious to preserve as uncontaminated as possible. The feasibility of their selective approach is open to grave doubts in view of the close interrelatedness of technology and social organization. Industrialization is something more than using a high form of energy in the processes of production and distribution. It is equally dependent upon a high level of economic and social organization, a suitable corpus of social ethics, a minimum level of education, a rational and discri-

1 See, for example, Muhammad Ali, *Iqbal Journal* (Lahore), I (July 1952), 1–19. This article is representative of a vast body of opinion in modern Arabic literature.
plined frame of mind, and a good many other prerequisites, which Max Weber and other students of modern industrial society have enumerated. The borderline between technology, social organization, and culture is not easy to delimit because it is constantly undergoing change. Nevertheless, such a distinction is basically sound and is deserving of the most serious consideration.

The third approach rejects any distinction between the material and the nonmaterial aspects of civilization and culture. It sees a direct link between the spirit of a culture and its outward creative manifestations. Among the outstanding proponents of this approach are Dr. Taha Husayn of Egypt and Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon. Westernization in all its aspects is their remedy for the malaise of Arab national life. Like all extreme remedies, this approach is highly controversial. Its critics regard it as a movement of alienation that is at variance with a nationalist orientation. Its proponents believe that it is the only avenue to national survival.

The controversy, in fact, rages at two different planes; and because it starts from different premises, it inevitably leads to different conclusions. One premise involves value judgments and is not, therefore, amenable to objective measurement. It is not possible, for example, to prove or disprove the thesis that Western culture is superior or more


* See his *Mustaqbal al-Thaqafah fi Misr* ("The Future of Culture in Egypt") (Cairo, 1938). Dr. Husayn is one of the foremost educators in Egypt.

* Malik, for many years ambassador of Lebanon to the United States and permanent representative at the United Nations, has recently relinquished his diplomatic assignments and returned to Lebanon.
human than other cultures. Civilization, however, is measurable according to efficiency standards. Electric energy is manifestly more efficient than human or animal muscle.

It is precisely in the confusion of the two concepts, culture and civilization, that the proponents of complete Westernization are most vulnerable. An address by Malik three years ago deserves to be scrutinized for the light it sheds on the attitude of Westernizers toward social change in the Arab world. In a criticism of foreign students who go to Western institutions to study their own history and background “without first grounding . . . [themselves] deeply in Western thought, religion, and general outlook on life” and who content themselves with the most superficial knowledge of Western civilization; or who spend their time editing or translating some ancient manuscript to satisfy the requirement of scholarship—in a criticism of such students, Malik declares:

Is it any wonder that when these men go back home they have not truly comprehended what this whole business of civilization is about? Without prolonged apprenticeship at the feet of the great masters, both living and dead, without humble inner appropriation of the spiritual secret of Western thought—namely, that wonderful goading of the soul by the truth and for the sake of the truth alone—and without responsible participation in the cumulative positive tradition, the foreign student can never hope to understand and evaluate his own culture.8

Other foreign students, Malik continues, come to Western institutions to learn positive science and technology. They rightly sense that science means control of nature and that control of nature spells great power and wealth to

themselves as well as to their nation. However, as Malik observes:

Very few of them have any inkling of the price that must be paid, both personal and national, in order really to belong to and help create in the movement of science. Science and technology answer to a profound love of nature, to an infinite tenderness towards the object, to a schooling for thousands of years in the Graeco-Roman concept of law and order, and to the quest of responsible theory based on first principles. Many a foreign student wants to use the external techniques of the West by grafting them externally onto his own culture. But while techniques can be used, the spirit which created them can only be earned by sustained humility and love.*

Malik, it will be observed, argues the case for Western culture, not in terms of its own intrinsic excellence—although, of course, he is a fervent believer in that—but as a necessary condition for the attainment of the various desirable national objectives, such as power, wealth, advanced technology, and so forth. The conditions which he lays down, however, raise issues which go beyond the interrelationship of diverse cultures. He is advocating a type of liberal education which, on account of its exacting nature, can be attained by only a few individuals. It is a modern version of Plato's philosopher-king concept, made the more unattainable by the requirement that it should be undertaken by a much larger number of people than Plato's small elite of guardians. In a sense, it is also a medieval ideal of the philosopher, physician, alchemist, and theologian all in one mortal individual. Obviously, it is an anachronism, considering the colossal mass of material available to the modern scholar and the high degree of specialization which is required in every branch of learning.

Malik apparently wants an Arab student of professional

branches, such as medicine, agriculture, engineering, and industrial chemistry, not only to master his own specialty but also to realize that "science and technology answer to a profound love of nature, to an infinite tenderness towards the object, to a schooling for thousands of years in the Graeco-Roman concept of law and order, and to the quest of responsible theory based on first principles" as the price for belonging to, and helping to create in, the scientific movement.

But, surely, modern science depends as much on the exertions of those who attempt to work out the implications of first principles—in their modest ways—as on the fundamental researchers. What justification is there for imputing superiority or inferiority to either of the two pursuits or for implying that one is more in the spirit of science than the other? Is it not also safe to assume that a foreign student who has been through the grinding and disciplined experience afforded by any qualified institution of learning will have learned and acquired as much concerning the ways of science—in its full implications—as any other student? He obviously has neither time nor need for the type of cultural schooling that Malik thinks is indispensable for a genuine immersion in the world of science.

Malik, nonetheless, points to a very important truth, namely, that modern science is a way of life and not merely a set of tools and techniques and that mastery of the former is indispensable to a firm mastery of the other. He can support his thesis by contrasting the meagerness of scientific achievement in the contemporary Arab East with the limitless fertility of scientific achievement in the West. What accounts for the contrast? Is it because Arab scientists have not mastered the methods, the techniques, and the spirit of science? It is hardly fair to impute the cause to the shortcomings of individuals or groups of individuals;
society as a whole must share the blame for not providing a propitious atmosphere for the advancement of science and technology.

But why does science flourish in one society rather than in another? And what is the dynamic factor in social change? Is it environmental (or more specifically economic, as the Marxists would have it)? The answers to these questions will largely determine the type of culture and the type of civilization which will emerge in the wake of social change.

**Deterministic Theories**

The three approaches to social change which we have just outlined have one common characteristic, namely, an antideterministic orientation. The zealot is averse to change and thinks he can stave it off. The advocates of the second approach believe that it is possible to be highly selective in benefiting from other civilizations and cultures; they place particular stress upon the distinction between material and nonmaterial aspects. The advocates of the third approach, namely, Westernization *in toto*, are no less discretionary in their ordering of priorities and in their emphasis upon mind rather than matter as the volitional and dynamic initiator of social change.

In contrast to these antideterministic approaches are the various deterministic theories of society which regard human relationships as primarily to be explained by external or material conditions. These, of course, are as much an outcome of Westernization as are the "spiritualists" of Malik's approach; and they both have in common an appreciation of the interrelatedness of mind and matter, civilization and culture. Where they differ—and it is a fundamental difference—is in their estimate of the relative weight of each category.

It is significant and by no means fortuitous that the two
extreme approaches toward social change in Arabic litera-
ture, namely, unqualified Westernization and Marxism,
are the two points of view most remote from Arab national-
ism: the former because it sees few intrinsic virtues in a
uniquely Arab orientation and supports Arab nationalism
only as the present alternative to subjugation to foreign
domination; the second because it regards the struggle for
national emancipation as a milestone on the road to social-
ism and is quite definitely hostile to nationalism per se. At
the same time, they are the only secularist approaches whose
vision encompasses the manifold aspects of life. A Marxist
or a proponent of complete Westernization knows what
the implications are in terms of concrete structures and
functions, because each can look to concrete prototypes for
guidance and demonstration.

The proponents of a distinct national orientation, on the
other hand, must traverse a largely uncharted territory
in the socioeconomic area, inasmuch as they have to make
up for a tremendous backlog without, at the same time,
becoming a mere replica of other nations. Arab national-
ism, therefore, has to cater to two different, sometimes ir-
reconcilable, needs: (1) to bring out and inculcate what
are thought to be unique national attributes; and (2),
equally important, to transform archaic concepts and insti-
tutions into viable and efficient organs.

Values versus Laws

In the vital task of preserving what merits preservation
from the legacy of the past and of incorporating new tech-
niques and concepts, serious difficulties are encountered
on account of the confusion of scientific and value con-
cepts. The fact is that modern Arabic literature is seriously
deficient in those branches of learning which come under
the term social sciences. The literature is oriented primarily
toward the humanities, with the result that subjective
valuations and ethical preconceptions occupy a position of pre-eminence at the expense of causal postulates. A casual glance at the names and the works of modern Arabic writers is sufficient to show how preponderant has been the influence of the humanities and how peripheral the impact of the social sciences. Taha Husayn, Aqqad, Al-Mazini, Al-Hakim, Mutran, Rihani, Jubran, Bishara al-Khoury, Rassafi, Zahawi, Shabibi, and others are not regarded as masters of belles-lettres only; they are leaders of thought and provide the social ethics of the community. They are expected to guide on such pivotal social issues as the status of women, family relationships, birth control, and economic and social valuations.

The influences now surrounding Arab thinkers are not conducive to the adoption of scientific as distinct from valuational attitudes. The Arab literary legacy to which present-day writers owe a part of their mental and moral armory is a product of the prescientific age, and even the Western influence, to which they are indebted also, has been stronger in literature than in social science. Thus, the most popular foreign names are those of Anatole France, Hugo, Gorki, Oscar Wilde, Byron, Kipling, Bernard Shaw, and other literary celebrities, and not those of Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Max Weber, and Pareto.

The social sciences are not neglected altogether; they are taught at universities; the important works are available in Arabic translations. But their influence is felt by a much smaller circle than that which literary works can command. It seems that ideas can secure a hearing in the Arabic language only if they are expressed in the vehicle of poetry or a high literary style. Commendable as the art of fine expression is, its emphasis to the neglect of concepts which are based on scientific data is disastrous in the complex conditions of modern life.
In reference to this phenomenon, Zurayq has written:

Nothing causes me greater apprehension than this literary deluge which inundates our intellectual life; for it brings to us an assortment of literary names from the West, together with a conglomerate of disconnected ideas which absorb our attention, and distract us from the great intellectual systems which shape the existing world. It deflects us from the natural and the social sciences which are addressed to the problems of man.7

The cultivation of scientific attitudes and concepts in regard to social as well as to physical phenomena is essential for an orderly and integrated policy of social change. Valuations, prejudices, and preferences will always have a place in judgments on social issues. But if they are to do the least harm, they must be recognized for what they are and not confused with social reality, as they often are at present.

The Whole and the Part

The acceptance of scientific data rather than subjective valuations as the arbiter of social issues has the added advantage of revealing the interdependence of the factors underlying social reality. This is particularly important in periods of transition and of encounters between different civilizations and cultures. One of the stark weaknesses in a good deal of modern Arabic literature on social issues is the selectivity discernible in the treatment and evaluation of particular social issues without regard to the over-all situation. A few examples of this serious shortcoming in the approach to social reality and change follow:

Family and kinship patterns are a recurring social problem. Acrimonious discussions occur concerning the relative merits of the small conjugal unit versus the large and

old-style "trustee family"; the role of women, old people, and youth in society; arranged marriages versus romantic love; and similar problems. These are important questions and they deserve the utmost attention, but nothing can be more misleading than to single out particular aspects of life for commendation or condemnation in isolation from the whole. An American woman, for example, is able to combine outside work with home duties because: (1) the small conjugal unit is the general pattern, (2) she has at her disposal the help which the processes and the techniques of a highly industrialized society can provide, and (3) her husband has few mental or emotional reservations about helping with house-keeping duties. (There are other reasons, no doubt, but it is unnecessary to enter into them here.) It is obvious that no comparison with other social systems, with a view to imputing superiority or inferiority, could be valid except within the framework of the total social pattern obtaining in each society.

The operation of cause and effect can be detected in attitudes which were formerly ascribed to the intrinsic and immutable laws of human nature. In Arab society, for example, reverence toward old people is a moral duty, and age is an important consideration (other things being equal) in the bestowal of prestige and rewards. What Arab society regards as an ethical imperative pertaining to the essence of human nature may be viewed differently by another society, under different sets of conditions, as may be judged from the following passage by an American sociologist:

Reverence for the old was a phase of a society that placed strong emphasis upon family life. . . . A society that has shaped its ideals about progress can never place its affair in the hands of the old and give them the reverence that a society does that lives in the past. . . . The decline of ancestor-worship, the competitive character of modern economic life, democratic government, individualism and the cult of progress, have
thus all conspired to reduce to a marked degree the functions and rank possessed by the aged in earlier society.8

Another example is the endless debate between the opponents and the proponents of romantic love as the basis of marriage. Considerations of utility as well as of ethics are arranged in support of the opposing views. Examples from the experiences of other countries are cited, as though social issues can be resolved by scoring a numerical majority. One rarely finds, however, the kind of analysis which seeks to show, not which one is absolutely better than the other, but the relative suitability of each to the set of conditions of which it is a part. Thus, to quote from another American sociologist:

The great emphasis in American culture upon idealizing romantic love depends closely upon certain features of the basic family system. With the diminution of the extended family and the correlated loss of many previous functions of the nuclear unit, the family's chief "Function" has come to be that of providing affection and security. When choice of mates is relatively free, personal attraction bulks larger in marriage than it could under any system of arranged marriages; it is a commonplace hypothesis in the sociological literature that our emphasis upon romantic love is in part an equivalent for the group support and regulation of marriage in the less diffuse and mobile systems of many other societies.9

We are not making a plea for moral relativity or suggesting that life can be reduced to a series of mathematical equations. Far from it, provided the "what is" and "what ought to be" are clearly distinguished.

There is nothing reprehensible about expressing a preference or holding to an ethical belief. What is blame-

worthy and fraught with dangers in matters of social policy is to judge a particular feature out of its proper context and to assume that it can be implemented in a totally different setting. This is precisely the weakness of many writings on social reforms in contemporary Arabic literature.

One further observation is necessary, and it is this: In suggesting that the part and the whole should be compatible in the processes of social change, allowance has to be made for the phenomenon of cultural lag, a favorite concept of sociologists. Briefly, the concept underlines the fact that when changes occur in the material culture, these stimulate changes in the nonmaterial culture, particularly in what W. F. Ogburn terms the "adaptive" culture, or the ways of rendering more serviceable the material changes. The lag stems from the fact that the adaptive culture may be slow to respond, thus giving rise to disequilibrium and maladjustment within the processes of social change. Some degree of maladjustment is unavoidable because society is an endless process of becoming. But when the interdependent parts of a system fail to function harmoniously together over an extended period, thereby impeding the working of the system, lowering its efficiency, and disturbing its co-ordination, then the malaise may be more than a mere cultural lag, and the question arises as to whether the proposed change is not altogether incompatible with the system and should therefore be discarded.

WE WILL now proceed to a discussion of the specific factors underlying social change. The factors are partly man-made and partly beyond human control. The scientific achievements of the modern age have blurred our vision of the power of the nonhuman element as a determinant of our destiny. Nevertheless, the economic orientation of any country is largely decided by nonhuman environmental facts. Such things as natural resources, soils, forests, topography, water resources, and temperatures cause differences in production in various countries.

Switzerland has been cited as an example where a not too favorable environment is not a fatal obstacle to development. Geographic location, such as proximity to foreign markets, and, above all, the quality of the human resources compensate for meager natural resources.¹ This is no doubt

true, but while the physical environment may not be the only factor, its importance can scarcely be overstressed. It is certainly the proper starting point in any discussion of social change and constitutes the substructure in relation to which the social or man-made environment is largely an attempt at adaptation.

The Physical Environment

The stark fact about the physical environment of the Arab countries is the predominance of desert or semidesert land. The areas of settlement along the Mediterranean and around the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile are relatively small in the midst of the vast expanse of desert. Less than 10 per cent of the land is cultivated, and this small percentage has to support eight-tenths of the inhabitants. The result is abject poverty, with all its concomitant ills, for a large proportion of the people. The desert is largely the product of climatic conditions which lie outside man's control and responsibility.

There has also been a long process of desiccation and soil impoverishment all around the eastern Mediterranean due in part to man's action or inaction. Modern techniques of conservation, reclamation of the soil, scientific agriculture, flood control, proper utilization of irrigation potentials, and the like have now made possible a fundamental reversal of the downward trend.

No adequate geological survey has so far been carried out except, perhaps, for oil. Only one deposit of iron ore is known and there is practically no coal. This means, of

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The Arab countries contain the largest oil deposits in the world. The oil is estimated at about eighty billion barrels.

In the Aswan district of Egypt.
course, that the basic raw materials indispensable to full-fledged industrialization are wanting. Various other minerals, such as copper, manganese, ocher, gypsum, industrial clays, building stone, and marble, have, however, been unearthed in varying quantities. There are considerable deposits of phosphates in Jordan, and potash may be obtained from the Dead Sea. The potentialities are promising for chemical and agriculture-supported industries. In brief, while the future of heavy industry seems limited, the scope for expansion of light industry is great.

The question now is: What are the prospects for social and economic betterment insofar as the physical environment is the determinant? A number of economic facts are often overlooked in discussions of riches and poverty, development and underdevelopment of various countries. The error stems from neglect of the relational context of the various economic factors in any particular situation. In the first place, any discussion of economic development assumes limited and scarce resources which must be husbanded with care. If sufficient mechanization and capital are brought to bear upon the agricultural development of even a desert territory, the exertion would not be entirely wasted, but such indiscriminate lavishness would be highly uneconomical.

The imperative need for selectivity is the core of the classical doctrine of comparative costs. According to this doctrine, it will always pay a country to export the goods in the production of which its comparative costs in real resources are low and to import those goods in which its comparative costs in real resources are high. Thus, a country like Kuwait should concentrate on the production of oil and should import its requirements of wheat, textiles, and the like.

Modifications of this doctrine arise from noneconomic national objectives. Armaments industries, for example, may be justified even though in certain cases their existence runs counter to the theory of comparative costs. Social policies of full employment are another legitimate consideration. The utilization of idle resources, the necessity of reckoning with monopoly and monopolistic practices within modern trading nations, and the ever-changing pressure of international demand, which, as John Stuart Mill was the first to recognize, may determine comparative cost differences, are other important factors to be considered in the economic orientation of any country.

Judged by strictly economic criteria, the Arab world is grossly underdeveloped. Professor Viner has defined an underdeveloped country as one "which has good potential prospects for using more capital or more labor or more available natural resources, or all of these, to support its population on a higher level of living, or, if its per capita income level is already fairly high, to support a larger population on a not lower level of living." Thus, a country may be underdeveloped whether it is densely or sparsely populated; whether it is capital rich or capital poor, whether it has a high income or a low income per capita; whether it is industrial or agricultural.

The basic criterion is the possibility of raising the per-capita income. This, it should be added, is not necessarily synonymous with the reduction of mass poverty, which may be the result of a maldistribution of income and would not be automatically solved by an increase in aggregate wealth. We are not concerned at this juncture with social

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values; we seek merely to ascertain the potential of aggregate productivity on the basis of the available physical resources.

There is little doubt that the potentialities for development are tremendous. Agriculture can be expanded many times in every Arab country, thereby providing a stable groundwork for greater industrial expansion, higher living standards, and improved social conditions. A point of great contention in contemporary Arabic writing is whether development should be agriculturally or industrially oriented. Industrialization has the edge in most nationalist literature, on three main grounds. The first is that it is associated with power. Emerging from a long lethargy, the Arab peoples were shocked to find themselves at such a power disadvantage. As they saw it, what made foreign powers arbiters of their fate were their steel-plated tanks and cannons. At first the Arabs probably underestimated the prerequisites of industrialization. Even now there is insufficient realization of the over-all social implications of industrialization—of the fact that it is a way of life that must be mastered at all levels and that it is not possible overnight to impose an industrial apparatus upon an agri-

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8 See Final Report of U.N. Economic Survey Mission for M.E. The report shows that in northern Iraq, for example, out of a total of 10,000,000 acres of cultivable land, only 1,500,000 acres are actually cultivated, leaving 8,500,000 available for future development. In the south, with better utilization of the Tigris and Euphrates, the present acreage of 3,200,000 can be doubled. In Syria, out of a total area of some 18,000,000 hectares only 12 per cent is under cultivation. Pastures account for 4,000,000 hectares and forests for 4,000,000. Cultivable waste is estimated at 3,400,000 hectares or one and one-half times the area now cultivated. Lebanon has possibilities of doubling the present 110,000 acres of irrigated land. In Jordan, out of a total area of 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 hectares, fewer than 600,000 are cultivated. The trouble here is that cultivation is predominantly rain-fed, though possibilities exist for utilizing the two largest rivers, the Jordan and the Yarmuk.
culturally oriented social system without failure of the former or disintegration of the latter.

The second ground for advocating industrialization is partly political, partly economic, and stems from the fact that the prices of primary commodities fluctuate more widely than do those of manufactured products. There is also an underlying assumption that the terms of trade of countries exporting primary products with countries exporting manufactures favor the latter. This is hardly true of those Arab countries whose principal export is oil, but it seems to be true in Egypt, where cotton is the principal export, and it is in Egypt (and to a lesser extent in the Levant), rather than in the oil-producing Gulf region, that economic ideas and attitudes are formed and popularized.

The assumption that the terms of trade are moving in a direction adverse to producers of primary products is not unassailable. During a boom, for example, the prices of primary products rise more than those of manufactured goods. Immediately after the outbreak of the Korean War, Australian wool, Egyptian cotton, Malayan rubber, and Pakistani jute netted such handsome profits that serious inflationary pressures became the major concern. In the absence of wise fiscal policies saving the surplus of the good years for the lean ones, the almost inevitable cyclical fluctuations may be disruptive in the extreme. Inasmuch as the harm can be mitigated or avoided by human action, the occurrence of fluctuations is, in itself, no argument for or against a predominantly agricultural orientation.

There is a less equivocal case against agriculture and in favor of industrialization where—as in Egypt—the well-being of the economy hinges upon one primary commodity. Such countries are under the mercy of foreign economic forces over which they have no control; worse still, they

can be subjected to political pressures on account of their vulnerable economic position. The Egyptian cotton slump during the past few years, for example, could have been due in part to political as distinct from purely economic forces. It is immaterial for the purposes of this analysis whether the suspicions of foul political play are true or not. What is pertinent is the fact that economic pressure could be made an instrument for political ends.

The remedy need not, however, be sought in the abandonment of agriculture but, rather, in a diversification of the economic structure, with a view to achieving greater balance. Only by a sound and effective integration of agriculture and industry can the Arab world attain its maximum stability and employment.

The third ground is purely utilitarian in that it tends to correlate industrialization with a high per-capita income. It assumes that industry—particularly heavy industry—is more lucrative than light industry or efficient agriculture. It is true that agriculture is a precarious and often-times unrewarding pursuit. But in spite of the serious fluctuations in prices and demand, there seems to be no justification for gloom over the long-range prospects of agriculture. The rate of increase in the world's population is keeping well ahead of increased productivity. Social and economic reforms are taking place all over the world, which means a greater demand for food and other agricultural fibers. What is needed is regulation of production on a world-wide basis, with some arrangement for farm-price support, as in the United States, to sustain the prosperity of this basic industry.

The Human Environment

The preceding section has been devoted to an exploration of the prospects for social and economic change on the basis of material resources. It is now time to take up the
human factors which, it need hardly be stressed, are the dynamic factors in social change. There are tangible and intangible forces, operating overtly as well as subtly, in the life of nations. While the institutional patterns can be evaluated with some degree of precision, the attitudes of mind and spirit cannot.

In a recent study entitled “The Arab East at the Economic Crossroads,” the question is asked whether the Arab world would follow in the doomed footsteps of imperial Spain or in the prosperous route of mercantilist England. The two great opposites of the early modern era—sixteenth-century Spain and England under the Tudor and Stuart monarchs—furnish guideposts for the Arab East today, the writer maintains.

The spice trading merchants and Mesta land-owners [in Spain] who influenced public policy were totally unable to work into their nation’s economic life the two hundred tons of gold and eighteen thousand tons of silver from Mexico and Peru. Instead of manufacturing enterprise, jobs for more people, and a generally higher standard of existence, their legacy was price inflation, continuance of the rigid class structure and perpetuation of an apathetic peasantry. As the economists say, the “multiplier” did not work in Spain, while northern Europe was getting the greatest transfusion of mobile capital of all time.¹⁰

Capitalism and national cohesion were the two principal factors contributing to the growth of Britain. To the extent that these two forces bring about a greater mobility of capital and of human resources, they are equally important to the future of the Arab nation.

Nationalism is vital to the Arab world in two ways. One is due to the correlation of nationalism and the nationalization of life. Under nationalization social, political, and economic policies are keyed to the requisites of popular

¹⁰ A. J. Meyer, in Al-Kulliyah (Beirut), XXIX (March 1953), 5.
welfare as distinct from class privilege. Arab countries have already done a lot for social welfare. Drastic land reforms,\textsuperscript{11} social welfare investments, compulsory education, planned economic developments, and the like are transforming the social landscape beyond recognition. There is no danger, therefore, that development and growth may be throttled on account of narrow social policies. The nationalization of life within the various Arab countries is uneradicably progressing.

Nationalism is vital to the future of the Arab nation in another way, and on this score the outlook is less propitious. Nationalism, as we stated earlier, aims at the unification of the Arabic-speaking world under one political organization. In spite of substantial progress toward unity as exemplified by the Arab League, it is not certain that unification will come soon enough to influence the orientation of economic and social development at the present crucial turning point. A quick glance at the physical and the human resources of the Arab countries shows that just about everything needed by a nation for sound and far-reaching economic development is present. Taken as a whole, there is adequate capital, a sufficient labor force, abundant physical resources, and a fairly large pool of technical know-how. But a closer look reveals a less favorable prospect because of the lack of functional unity. Thus, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar, which, with Iraq and Saudi Arabia, receive more than one-half billion dollars yearly in oil royalties, offer—with the exception of Iraq—the least opportunities for putting their surplus capital to effective work. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, on the other

hand, possess far more favorable social and economic structures, but their chief problem is lack of sufficient capital.

The answer, of course, is nationalism. It may not be the ultimate answer in our shrunken world. Europe is already moving toward a supranational system, with a view to achieving a market large enough to sustain greater prosperity. But the first logical step for the Arabs to take is the removal from their midst of the "chain of iron curtains" which separates them from one another. In other words, nationalism must precede internationalism if the Arabs, as a people, are to participate in supranational activities on terms of relative equality with other nations.

The other vital prerequisite of social and economic transformation is the adoption of those sociopsychological attitudes which are the foundations of a rationalistic civilization. Though originally the cultural complement of the capitalist economy, they are no less essential for the working of all other modern economic systems such as socialism, communism, and statism. Their antithesis is the mental and the emotional outlook of the precapitalist era.12

No matter how one looks at it, there exists a dilemma analogous to the vicious circle of the hen and the egg. How can a modern economy be operated without a schema of motives, attitudes, and institutions favorable to the operation of such an economy? But since a schema is the natural outgrowth of a modern economy, how can the effect be developed before the cause? Create first the industrial and the financial apparatus and the sociopsychological adjustments will follow as surely as the day follows the night or the night the day.

The demographic problems in the Arab countries offer

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12 See, for example, J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York, 1950), esp. pt. II, chs. xi and xii. Two elements of this attitude are particularly important: the "collective" and the "affective" nature of the primitive mental process (p. 121).
a striking demonstration of the difficulties inherent in a juxtaposition of such claims to priority. In brief, the population difficulties stem from a maldistribution of people, with dense populations in some areas and sparse populations in other. In theory, the situation can be remedied by migration from the densely populated to the sparsely populated areas and by birth control. In actual fact, however, the two solutions are impossible of attainment within the context of the existing socioeconomic order. Aversion to mobility is a deep-rooted attribute of peasantry; birth control (quite apart from religious considerations) requires a degree of social sophistication that is wanting in a predominantly agricultural society. Thus, every increase in productivity is absorbed by an increase in numbers rather than by higher standards of living.

What should be done about it? Here is the same vicious circle encountered earlier. One possible approach is public indoctrination. The masses could be told that birth control is to their best interest, at least in the long run. The second approach is to bring about higher living standards and thereby induce a greater propensity to consume, which in turn leads to birth control.

The Gordian knot can be untied only if there is less insistence on piecemeal solutions and greater appreciation of the interdependence of the various factors. There is a further reason for advocating the comprehensive rather than the piecemeal approach, namely, the dire need for "basic developments" as prerequisites of economic developments proper. Housing and health facilities, adequate power and transport, an educated labor force, reasonably

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18 See Said B. Himadeh, "Economic Factors Underlying Social Problems in the Arab Middle East," Middle East Journal, VI (Summer, 1951), 269-283. The writer, professor of economics at the American University of Beirut, urges comprehensive planning for a solution of the manifold social and economic problems.
up-to-date arrangements for credit and marketing, recreational facilities, and so forth must be provided if firms and industries (whether national or international) are to be attracted. Sometimes an undertaking may seem so lucrative and certain that a company will consider it worth while to invest in public improvements prior to, or simultaneously with, its major investments. But such cases are the exception rather than the rule.

Upon whom, then, will the task of broadening the area of basic developments devolve? The scope of such developments may be gauged from the fact that in a highly developed country like the United States, almost 40 per cent of all productive capital assets are found in public utilities, transportation systems, and the like. The underdeveloped countries would need to allocate an even higher percentage of their outlays for these basic necessities. The problem, however, is how to secure the necessary allocations. Foreign investors are not likely to be attracted to such low-profit ventures, particularly when investment opportunities elsewhere are buoyant and when potent deterrents as nationalization, inconvertibility of currencies, and instabilities of various forms must be taken into account. Capital formation within these countries, meager as it is, is inadequately mobilized for such investment. Savings go into real-estate properties, highly profitable commercial ventures, private hoards of gold, and even usury, though the latter is illegal. Welfare internationalism as exemplified in various foreign-aid programs is a relatively new phenomenon. If extensively carried out, and so far it is on a modest scale in the Arab world, its economic and social ramifications can hardly be underestimated.

The Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) has done just that in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Modern housing, air conditioning, swimming pools, playgrounds, and libraries are available, and transportation over a wide area has been expanded and modernized.
Under existing conditions, however, the governments of the Arab countries will of necessity be called upon to shoulder substantial responsibilities in both economic and social developments. Private enterprise, pure and unadulterated, is totally out of the question. All-out socialism or statism is no less impractical. The administrative machineries would simply break down under the colossal burden of a socialist experiment.  

The pattern which seems to be emerging is mixed enterprises combining private interests and public holdings. It is a pattern which answers, not to socioeconomic doctrines, but to the present needs of the Arab countries. Neither the public nor the private sector is sufficiently strong by itself to carry the entire load.

In a sense it is fortunate that the Arabs' approach to various forms of economic enterprise is empirical rather than doctrinaire. It gives them latitude in experimenting with alternative forms and in benefiting from the experiences of other nations. At the same time, there is danger

15 Even in a country like Great Britain, which has a civil service second to none, considerable strain was imposed on the machinery of administration in the course of the nationalization experiment of the postwar period. For an excellent account of the practical as distinct from the theoretical problems of nationalization, see Problems of Nationalized Industry, ed. by William A. Robson (London, 1951).

16 Exception to this statement should be made in the case of Communists and die-hard socialists; these two groups have very definite ideological views which make them inflexible.

17 It is often overlooked that economic enterprises need not be rigidly confined to public versus private enterprise. Human ingenuity can and has devised intermediate forms which conform to neither pattern. In the statement of policy and principles issued by the British Labour party in October 1950 and entitled, "Labour and the New Society," alternative methods are mentioned. These include competitive public enterprises within industries; the consumers' co-operative movement; producers' co-operatives; the leasing of publicly owned factories and equipment to private manufacturers; and municipal enterprise (Robson, op. cit., p. 357).
that an attitude of ideological neutrality in the vital sector of economic and social policy may lead to a situation in which instrumental efficiency will remain the only guiding post. Ideas about improvement of many aspects of national life are abundant, but they are scattered and unconnected. What is needed most of all is a synthesis of current ideas into a coherent whole, a total conception of ideology conformable to the fundamental unity of human existence. This is a lesson which Arab nationalism might well learn from its progenitor, religion, as it steers across the turbulent waters of social change.

The task of reintegration has not yet begun. Until it does, Arab national life will continue to suffer from a profound disintegration, oftentimes bordering on schizophrenia. The reaffirmation of life’s unity need not, indeed should not, take the form of a metaphysical mausoleum, timeless and unchanging. The Arabs’ own experience shows how costly this complacent vision of finality can be. At the same time, the acceptance of life and thought as a process of becoming should always aim at the restoration of an equilibrium between the component parts. The spiritual and the material, the political, the economic, and the social are interrelated and inseparable aspects of a people’s life. Whoever succeeds in rehabilitating this essential unity for the Arab people will be the greatest of benefactors.
NATIONALISM is the principal movement through which the Arab peoples are seeking to reconstruct the foundations of their life, after centuries of suspended animation. If Arab nationalism were an isolated and unique phenomenon, a straightforward delving into its literature would be all that is required in order to study its genesis, ideas, attitudes, and orientations. The fact is, however, that it is not, for there are generic principles behind the observable differences between various nationalisms. The "unique" and the "generic" have all too often been overlooked or confused by writers on the subject. The confusion has resulted in the highlighting either of surface similarities, which can be misleading in the extreme, or of apparent dichotomies, which upon more incisive consideration may be shown to be differences in degree rather than in kind.

One of the principal causes of error is partisanship, so widespread in popular treatments and images of nationalism in various mediums of communication, including political pamphleteering. The criteria of approbation or disapprobation shifts like sand to suit the partisan attitudes of the contenders.
What is extolled as good, healthy patriotism in one country is unabashedly condemned as chauvinism and a menace to world tranquility in another. A partisan—and this includes both protagonist and antagonist—manipulates all the standard tools and techniques of inquiry and expression with a view to defending whatever ideas or beliefs he happens to hold. His aim is to vindicate his own a priori presuppositions against both the waverer and the adversary. Unfortunately, not much can be done to rectify the errors of willful partisanship except, perhaps, to recognize them for what they are.

Another and more serious type of error is one that stems from a genuine disagreement as to fundamental postulates. A margin of disagreement is to be expected in a study of a phenomenon pertaining to human relationships. But the margin has been so wide as to raise the question whether students of modern nationalism have been talking about the same thing.

In order to understand the nature and scope of modern nationalism, it is helpful to review some of the approaches and orienting concepts that have been used in the study and evaluation of this force. Such an inquiry should render more meaningful the distinguishing features of Arab nationalism, even while allowance is made for their uniqueness and individuality. And the effort will have served its purpose if it enables us to remove, or at least to reduce, the accumulated misconceptions and to accent the need for a re-examination, which must necessarily precede any attempt at reconstruction.

In a study of nationalism we must naturally search for those aspects, attributes, and relationships which either uniquely or preponderately mark off nationalism from other types of social phenomena. The question uppermost is whether or not there is something *sui generis* about the phenomenon of nationalism. Failure to explore this basic question results in imputing to nationalism qualities which are merely incidental to it or which it shares with a host of other forms of human association. The conclusions will then suffer from logical inadequacy, because they will have been referred to phenomena which may be broader or narrower than the class to which the attributes are ascribed.
Failure to delimit and identify the nature and the scope of nationalism has resulted in another serious fallacy, namely, the imputation of false theories of causality, with the attendant phenomenon of displacement. This consists in the transference of one's aversions, fears, or sympathies from the true object to a secondary one. Thus, in his eloquent essays on nationalism, Rabindranath Tagore equates nationalism with iniquities that should more properly be ascribed to the machine age, its organized efficiency, its impersonal organization, and its materialistic orientation.\(^1\) In point of fact, nationalism per se has little to do with one's preference for the simple, personal, agrarian type of society as against the intricate, impersonal, and machinelike.

It is no less erroneous to orient research into the phenomenon of nationalism along the path of any particular set of formal institutions or unchangeable doctrines, notwithstanding the fact that these institutions and doctrines have considerable bearing upon the varying shades and intensities of nationalism as it develops from one phase to another. Nationalism has flourished in the matrix of a liberal parliamentary democracy no less than under the iron fist and regimentation of an autocracy or a dictatorship.

What then is nationalism? There are three concrete factors—heredity, physical environment, and social environment—the interaction of which, as a matter of course and in varying degrees, brings about a division of humankind into different racial, geographic, and cultural areas. These concrete and seemingly pervasive factors of differentiation do not necessarily coincide with national divisions, as they are understood and cherished in modern times. At the same time, no case of nationalism is explicable without the presence, in a substantial degree, of one or more of these objective factors. Indeed, variations in the strength and combination of these factors account, at least in part, for the disparities in relative intensity of national consciousness and solidarity observable in various nations.

Reinforcing the objective factors of differentiation, which

\(^1\) Nationalism (New York, 1917), esp. pp. 11–63.
provide only prima-facie support for the existing heterogeneity of mankind, are the subjective and intangible imperatives that seem to derive their sustenance from the inner springs of human nature. Human beings seem to be inclined toward the twofold process of co-operation and conflict; this fact must be reckoned with in any effort to understand the structuring and functioning of human relationships. Man is a social animal and can ill afford to live in isolation from his fellow men. The aggregate of individuals in any group life must, however, be permeated by a consciousness of fraternity if they are to preserve their social cohesion and to lead a meaningful and purposive existence. This is achieved by a sharing of a common life over a sufficiently long period to allow a uniformity of thinking and feeling about the manifold aspects of life to develop.

But of no less importance to the formation of a positive feeling of community consensus is awareness of the existence of other communities. This leads to distinctions being made between the “in” and the “out” groups, of the “we” and the “they.” And if divergent attitudes and conflicting interests cut across harmonious relationships, even in the most intimate associations such as the family, how much more pronounced will they be in the relations of different communities? Furthermore, the instinct of pugnacity, which has undergone refinement and displacement within communities (at least those fairly well developed), is still expressed by collective combat in dealings between communities.* What is more, there is a widespread school of thought which, far from disparaging collective pugnacity as an evil to be eventually eradicated, stresses its value for the survival of communities and nations.† There is, of course, no reason to assume that, because human beings are innately conditioned toward co-operation and strife, the line of demarcation for the operation of these forces need necessarily be drawn around the principle of nationality, or that

† For a discussion of various attitudes toward the sociology of war, see P. Sorokin, *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (New York, 1928).
solidarity and conflict are the exclusive attributes of nationalism and of nationalism alone.

The preceding discussion has emphasized the multiplicity of factors which, in combination, contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon of nationalism. A theory of nationalism is a theory of human life. Nationalism encompasses the total experiences, aspirations, and strivings of nations. It must account for the motivations, the desires, the needs, and the fears that spur nations to action. Nations, for example, strive for as great a share of prestige as they can possibly attain. This striving has been aptly described as "pooled self-respect," and it is often inexplicable save through the categories of psychological analysis. Nations also aspire to exercise power and influence in their dealings with other nations. Such power may be cherished as a value in itself or merely as a vehicle for the attainment of other values. In short, no atomistic or single causation can explain satisfactorily the ideas and ideals of any particular nation.

It is because of recognition of the similarities as well as of the diversities between one nationalism and another that the comparative approach to the study of nationalism is suggested. There has been, as yet, no systematic or sustained attempt at a comparative study of the phenomenon of nationalism. Indeed, it would be a premature and unwise venture until the different nationalisms in the world today—as many of them as possible—have been adequately studied and the findings made available. For the comparative method is not a magic formula or a substitute for the grinding work-a-day efforts of empirical research. Without such groundwork, a comparative approach would merely result in comparisons of the type to which the partisan is prone or in romantic speculative systems where facts are made to fit or adorn a preconceived framework.

A comparative investigation is a twofold process designed, on the one hand, to elucidate specific problems by empirical research and, on the other, to discover through an analysis of

*A report by a study group of members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs entitled Nationalism (London, 1939) is the nearest to such an attempt.
the findings some generic principles of cause and effect common to all under similar settings and situations. The two aspects, namely, the gathering of significant data and the task of comparison with a view to deducing generic principles, are mutually reinforcing. The efficacy and value of the comparative method are heightened or diminished in proportion to the degree of success achieved in the pursuit of each aspect. If the facts are faulty, the ensuing comparison will be faulty, and failure to devise a useful frame of reference and to adhere to it consistently and meticulously in the comparative work will result in false analogies, which project the author's subjective presuppositions rather than a body of systematically related knowledge, controlled by a determinate set of guiding principles.

As in all humanistic studies, the influence of the researcher's moral frame of reference cannot be altogether avoided. And the question to which we must address ourselves is: Should one's views concerning the ultimate validity of moral conceptions be brought to bear in the act of comparison, and, if not, what should be the standard of comparison? Two explanatory remarks are necessary in connection with this vital problem. The first is that the researcher should refrain from the temptation to regard the moral patterns with which he is familiar as the ideal or the only conceivable patterns of moral valuation. He cannot, for obvious reasons, divest himself of his own moral preference. What he can and should do, however, is to view with an open mind moral propositions other than his own, if only because he must reckon with the contingency that those views might contain some truth or, conversely, that his own views might not be beyond error. The second remark is that wherever the case warrants, distinctions should be formulated in terms of differences in degree rather than of kind, that is to

5 The history of moral theory has been marked by dogmatic and absolutist assertions that were subsequently shown to be untenable. A stark example is Aristotle's explanation of slavery on the basis of psychic qualities: "From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule" (Politics, tr. by B. Jowett [Cleveland, 1952], bk. 1, ch. v).
say, as marking the extremes of a continuous range of the character in question and not as eternally and irrevocably distinct from one another and separable into fixed species.

In order to work out the implications of the comparative approach, four conditions must be observed:

1. The avoidance of erroneous or equivocal use of terms. It is revealing to observe the collection of satellite descriptions which have evolved around the term nationalism, providing thereby an escape from the strictures and the responsibilities of forthright and unprejudiced research. Thus, a dislike for the views or policies of some other country is expressed by labeling its nationalism xenophobia, jingoism, or chauvinism, often without reference to impartial empirical facts. What is good nationalism and what is bad nationalism? Is the insistence of Egypt, for example, on the withdrawal of foreign troops from its soil nationalism in the "bad" sense or is it patriotism in the praiseworthy sense? The confusion, it need hardly be stated, arises not merely on account of semantic inexactitudes but also from problems viewed with jaundiced eyes. This can and should be avoided by the reputable researcher aspiring to attain reliable knowledge. The task is admittedly more difficult in a comparative study where concepts—no matter how precisely formulated—cannot have identical meanings when applied to different times and places. But, while admitting the difficulty of exactitude in the formulation of definitions in the manner obtaining in the hypotheses of the natural sciences, we may legitimately expect two things: the first is that the substance, properties, and characteristics of any term should be spelled out as clearly and explicitly as possible if it is to serve as a satisfactory instrument for inquiry. The second, and perhaps more important, point is the need for consistency in the use of terms. Once the properties of a term have been spelled out in definition, they should be adhered to scrupulously in the comparative study and evaluation of the various cases.

2. The recognition that in a comparative study of nationalism full credence must be given to the different contexts within which it operates, because the variables assume different magnitudes. The nationalism of any particular country is intelligible
only in terms of its physical habitat, its resources (or lack of them), its topography, its special location (such as contiguity to a hostile neighbor), and other so-called objective factors. Attention must also be given to the modes of thought, activity, and social organization of the nation in question, for it is as important to know what goes on in the minds of a nation as it is to know the material factors conditioning its life.

3. The orientation of research toward the interdetermination of the multitude of variables, with a view to unraveling their impact on action. The need to harness all the relevant disciplines of the social sciences in the study of nationalism is underscored by the complex motivations which animate nations and determine their behavior. These are in a constant process of interaction with the internal as well as the external settings. Grading of the various factors in accordance with their relative weight and importance must be guided by the specific patterns of activity rather than by a priori speculation. Thus, in a study of modern nationalist wars, we must ascertain by empirical investigation the relative importance of the various causes in each particular instance. It might well be found that in some instances—the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, for example—the primary though by no means the solitary cause was political, while in World War I the economic background was fully as important as the political. But the way to ascertain the magnitude of the different causes is to study their impact upon the decisional process, in each particular case, on the basis of the available evidence and through "retrodicting" and recreating what the past must have been.

4. The need to study nationalism from the developmental standpoint and not in terms of any particular set of formal structures and institutions or in terms of invariant ideas and ideologies. For neither its institutions nor its doctrines are timeless or uniform. It is associated with liberalism no less strongly than with authoritarianism. The focus should be upon patterns of succession of events as they are revealed in the behavior of nations. Thus, the degree of affective significance with which a nation invests a particular course of action is much more indicative of what it conceives to be its national interest than is
abstract speculation on so-called deterministic objective factors. Investment of affective significance is a process in time, which may gather or lose momentum along the way. It may be expressed in words no less than in deeds, as, for example, when an ideology invades the minds and loyalties of a people over a period of years, conditioning them to a new outlook, which finds expression in patterns of action later on.

In short, the comparative study of nationalism from the developmental standpoint is grounded in the recognition that differences between one nationalism and another are largely due to different phases in the development of the common principle and not to basic dichotomies. That the various nationalisms, being of a common principle, will eventually become identical cannot be taken for granted. Nationalism represents the totality of any people's experiences, and unless the experiences of one nation are closely akin to those of another, their respective nationalisms would necessarily assume different forms.

How does the comparative approach, which it has been suggested is the most promising, apply to the present study? Although this book has been devoted to the ideas of Arab nationalism and not to a systematic comparison of various nationalisms, an attempt has been made to utilize the standards, criteria, and spirit of the comparative approach. Thus, in the quest for the genesis of Arab nationalism, specific dates have been avoided, for we can hardly speak of the birth of nationalism as a viable and determinable event in the same sense that we refer to the Battle of Waterloo as having occurred on June 18, 1815. The controversy between Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair of France over the latter's taxation and anticlerical policies undoubtedly had nationalist overtones, but how different was that incipient and vague nationalism from its more fully developed expression in the wake of the French Revolution! The distinctions, therefore, between one phase and another have been taken as marking extremes in a continuing range of the phenomenon in question and not fundamental dichotomies.

A similar flexibility has been observed in regard to the fac-
tors constituting nationalism. Thus, analysis of the historical background has shown that certain factors—a common language, common ideals and mores, and a vague consciousness of affinity—existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. Strict adherence to a rigid typology of nationalism—particularly if modeled after contemporary patterns—would lead to a dismissal of those manifestations as inadequate evidence of nationalism in pre-Islamic Arabia. Such a dismissal, though justified on other grounds, would hardly have facilitated search for the historical roots of Arab nationalism, for a developmental conception obviously assumes an incipient phase, an undeveloped status, extending back into the past. And without that initial phase, imperfect as it may be, the terminal—or at any rate the farthest point which has yet been reached—would be largely unintelligible.

In short, the underlying assumptions, criteria, and standards of the comparative approach have been observed, even though no actual comparison has been intended except as a marginal by-product of the main work. Comparative study is no substitute for facts—facts obtained by patient research in specific areas of study. On the basis of such specific studies, conceived and carried out in the spirit and with the tools of the comparative approach, it may be possible, eventually, to attempt the elucidation and formulation of more reliable propositions concerning nationalism. This book has been an endeavor to contribute to this eventual goal through the study of a specific case, largely unexplored and sufficiently different from other comparable units to justify study.
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