

القومية العربية الاعتبارات السياسية الاجتماعية

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تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التعرف على كل الاعتبارات السياسية والظروف الاجتماعية التي رافقت مولد القومية العربية وتناميها، ومراحل تطورها حتى اليوم. ويبدأ الباحث بالتمييز بين اثنين من انماط الوعي الجماهيري حدث بينهما التباس واضح. الأول وعي شعبي بطبيعته وصفاته الموروثة وتقاليده وحدوده التي يشترك فيها افراد الجماعة، وقد أطلق على هذا النوع اسم القومية. والنمط الثاني هو شعور الافراد بأنهم مجتمع واحد تضمه مقومات اللغة، التقاليد، التاريخ، العرق وعوامل أخرى. وفي هذا النمط تميل الجماعة الى العيش مستقلة عن سواها من الجماعات. وهذا هو التعريف الأدق للقومية.

وبالنسبة للعرب فقد ظلوا جزءاً من مجتمع أوسع، هو الاسلام بكل مقوماته السياسية والاجتماعية، وبذا نبعت كل القيم والقيادات السياسية والمؤسسات القانونية العربية أصلاً من النظام الاسلامي. وتحت السيطرة التركية ظل العرب في ظل نظام اسلامي موحد حتى انهيار الامبراطورية العثمانية حيث بدت في العالم العربي تطلعات أخرى، واجهت تحديات شتى في سبيل اقامة النظام السياسي على مبادئ' وأسس أخرى غير المبادئ' والأسس البنينة.

وفي البحث تقسيم الى العوامل الداخلية والخارجية التي نمت القومية العربية كوحدة سياسية. من العوامل الداخلية التجربة السياسية في الغرب، والوقوف في وجه السلطة العثمانية. ومجهودات العرب في المهجر الذين عملوا على نقل تجارب الأمم الأخرى الى العالم العربي. كذلك نحو الحركات الوطنية في البلاد العربية. وكان العامل الاقتصادي عاملاً هاماً في مراحل تطور القومية العربية، فقد عمل الأتراك على ايجاد نوع خاص من ملكية الأراضي استتبعه تسلط سياسي أدى الى تسلط عسكري أيضاً. وبذا خلقت الثروة الاقتصادية نفوذاً سياسياً. لذا نظرت الطليعة المثقفة العربية والحركات الوطنية الى وضع اقتصادي جديد مبني على أسس قومية.

ومن العوامل الخارجية الاستعمار الغربي الأوروبي الذي أدى بفعل الحركات الوطنية المناهضة له الى نمو لوعي القومي. وفي البحث اشارة الى دور الجماعات المختلفة في العالم العربي كرؤوس الاموال الوطنية والأحزاب السياسية. كما يشير الى نوع الصراع النظري - ان صح التعبير - بين التقدمية والرجعية في العالم العربي ولكل نظرياته وتطلعاته السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية.

وفي الجزء الأخير من البحث تعريج على حرب حزيران ١٩٦٧ بين العرب واسرائيل باعتبارها منعطف تاريخي هام في تطور القومية العربية جعلت العرب ينظرون جادين الى اقامة قوة عربية سياسية موحدة تعمل على تحرير الأراضي العربية من براثن الاحتلال، كما انها قد ولدت المقاومة الفلسطينية وجعلت منها قوة كبيرة في المنطقة.

وينتهي البحث بأن الثورة العربية ستواصل "دون شك" من أجل تحقيق ما فشلت في تحقيقه المؤسسات السياسية السابقة من تجسيد احلام الأمة العربية.

ARAB NATIONALISM : SOCIOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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We should, at the outset of our discussion, differentiate two types of group consciousness which have often been confused. The first is a group's consciousness of itself, of its heritage, of its traditions and other bonds which its members may share. The type of political system in which the group happens to exist has no bearing on this form of consciousness. This first type has erroneously been termed nationalism. The second type is a group's consciousness of being a community in terms of language, traditions, history, ethnicity, and the like, but in this case the members insist on living together and conducting their lives as one political community independent of all other polities. This form of consciousness is correctly identified as nationalism. Whereas the Arabs, no matter how one defines an Arab--and the literature on Arab nationalism is replete with esoteric definitions--have always been conscious of their ethnic-linguistic identity, their specific aspiration for the establishment of Arab political community that would comprehend all those who define themselves or who are defined by politically conscious nationalists as Arabs is essentially a modern phenomenon originating in the mid-nineteenth century.

Many will recall that the Arab people, even when they exercised hegemony and dominance, were part of a universal community of Muslims. Arab values, self-definitions, norms of political conduct, and legal institutions were derived from and shaped by the religious system of Islam. Thus, until 1250 the Arab people existed in an Islamic polity in which members of their community played critical roles; until 1516 they lived in a system which was politically fragmented but dominated by a host of Turkish and Mamluk dynasties; and until the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, subsequent to the First World War, they lived in an Islamic system that was somewhat unified but Turkish-Ottoman dominated. Not until the mid-nineteenth century did disgruntled spokesmen representing the Arab people begin to challenge the universal assumptions of the Islamic polity and demand the organization of a political system that would be based on principles other than religious ones. It is only in the context of the changing climate of the nineteenth century that one can speak of the emergence of a distinct Arab national consciousness with political aspirations.

II

Several forces at work in the nineteenth century posed a serious challenge to the existing Islamic-Ottoman system and its basic universalistic premises. In the first place there had grown an important intelligentsia that had been affected by the European

intellectual and political experience and which had witnessed the effectiveness of the new system of nation-states; this group comprised Egyptians, Tunisians, and Syrian-Lebanese who had lived in Europe or studied at European-American institutions in the Arab world. They were the Modernizers of the time, skilled in new techniques; and their visions of the Arab future were quite different from those of the traditional politicians and bureaucrats of the time. To a large extent, this group had acquired its training at the behest or under the sponsorship of a new political power elite precisely to organize more effective political systems and establish modern state structures. Tahtawi and his disciples in Egypt, Ahmad Bey and Khayr al-Din in Tunisia, Yazigi and Bustani in Syria are members of that intelligentsia who readily come to mind. These and others like them began to plead of the organization of a new political system whose basic principles would not be religious ones. Therefore, in any discussion of nationalism in the Arab world — and please note that avoid the term **Arab nationalism** in describing what they pleaded for — their contribution to the circulation of ideas about the new political systems cannot be ignored.

The second significant force was essentially sociopolitical. Increasing European penetration and power, as well as internal decay of Ottoman institutions, had enabled local dynasties and rulers to assume greater autonomy, initiative, and de facto sovereignty, and had thereby contributed to the growth of territorial loyalties. Thus, Algeria (prior to its occupation by France), Egypt (under Muhammad Ali), and Tunisia (from the mid-1830s) were increasing their independence and emphasizing their national personalities. The ethnically alien dynasties that were in control were anxious to keep the authority of the central government in Istanbul at arm's length. In their efforts to maintain their autonomy, if not their independence, they generated a process of social and national integration of extreme significance for the rise of nationalism in the Arab world and for the increasing Arab political consciousness.

At this point it is appropriate to depict some of the realities of the distribution of power that characterized the Islamic system. At the apex stood the caliph-sultan's representative who was usually assisted in the provinces by a praetorian guard and by a political elite that was alien, normally Turko-Circassian. As provincial dynasties asserted their control, the local ruler--dey, bey, or khedive--had to develop an elite power base that was different from the previous imperial one. The struggle that ensued, accompanied by other social processes, resulted in the assimilation or destruction of the Turko-Circassian elite that had been dominant in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and its replacement by an indigenous elite whose loyalty was to the local ruler and the province. It was increasingly an Arabic-speaking elite, familiar with local conditions and eager to exercise greater economic and political control. The efforts of the local dynasties for greater autonomy from the central government in Istanbul were thus reinforced by the increasing pressures of the indigenous Arabic-speaking elites — first of Algeria, then of Tunisia, Egypt, and, eventually, Iraq — for greater control. Naturally, the Arabic-speaking elites stressed the importance of ethnic-linguistic affinities in politics in contradistinction to religious principles of state organization. And by the latter part of the nineteenth century, Arab elites were in de facto control of the governmental apparatus of the Arab provinces or constituted the upper

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social and economic class. Arabic became the official state language in Tunisia, Egypt, and Iraq. The elite transformation, symptomatic of the altered power realities, helped in the process of increasing Arab political consciousness.

The third force was economic. One of the results of attempts to modernize the Ottoman Empire was the reorganization of its economic system. Most important to note are, first, the implementation and acceptance of the principle of freehold in the land system and, second, the rationalization of the system of land registration. These two factors contributed to the emergence, throughout the Ottoman system, of a landed aristocracy which eventually began to use its economic power for political control. There was, consequently, a perceptible shift in the power base away from the pure military and toward this group of landed aristocrats. Whereas military strength had previously resulted in economic-political control, in the new system economic wealth resulted in political power. This shift had two important implications for national consciousness. First, the elite's insistence on a political system based on «constitutionalism,» thereby limiting the absolute power of the executive, led to conceptions of popular sovereignties closer to the nation-state principle than to the premises of the Islamic polity. Second, this indigenous economic elite's strong resentment of the conspicuous economic power of the European or European affiliated elite, which had acquired important privileges as a result of the system of capitulations granted them by the Ottoman government, led its members to mobilize internal forces in the name of nationalism. The national economic elite resented the fact that it had to pay higher taxes while European economic enterprises were exempt from local taxation and jurisdiction; at the same time, the European elite perceived in this national elite a serious economic — and political — threat to its own privileged position. In the process of economic competition the national elite, in order to obtain greater support for its position within the system, employed national symbols and stressed national loyalties, thereby strengthening the emerging national consciousness.

While this process was common to most Arabic-speaking countries, the situation was somewhat different in Syria-Lebanon. There the control by the Turkish government was more direct, more authoritarian, and increasingly subject to manipulation by the advocates of Turkish nationalism. Furthermore, the presence of an articulate Christian Arab intelligentsia, anxious to establish a position of equality for itself within a system based on religious loyalty, meant that the negative reaction to the greater authoritarianism of the Ottomans, together with the positive search for equality, produced the appeal for an ethnic-linguistic principle of state membership and, in due course, led to the emergence of Arab nationalism.

III

The processes discussed above, essentially processes of internal change, can partially account for the rise of political consciousness in the Arab world, but external factors were to play their role as well. It is therefore appropriate to assess the effect that European colonialism had on the emerging national consciousness. It will be recalled that European powers, in their perennial combat with the Ottoman Empire, were at

first successful in containing that empire and eventually began to absorb certain parts of it, ultimately subjugating them. We need not discuss the main motives behind European imperialism, for they have been analyzed sufficiently elsewhere. What concerns here is the effect of European imperialism on the transformed consciousness of the Arab people. Algeria was colonized in 1832, followed by Aden in 1839 and eventually all of the Arabian Gulf territories, then Tunisia and Egypt in 1881-82, Libya and Morocco in 1912-14, and finally the Fertile Crescent countries of Iraq, Transjordan, Syria-Lebanon, and Palestine. In all instances European control was effected by force, and it was natural that the national population should resist the advent of colonialism. Although the dialectics of this struggle is often described in «nationalistic» terms, we must differentiate the types of national consciousness that developed in the process of resisting the colonial occupation. Where European colonialism was imposed on areas in which the internal processes of change had not been consummated, the national aspect on the struggle has been described in terms of traditional loyalties. In Aden and Algeria, and to a great extent in Libya and Morocco, the type of national consciousness that characterized the struggle was essentially Islamic-Arab. The imposition, in due course, of administrative colonial frontiers produced a specifically territorial consciousness, which stressed, in response to colonialism, territorial loyalties. Where the direct struggle was launched after the national political consciousness had matured, as in Syria-Lebanon, and Palestine, the response was characterized by an ethnic-linguistic appeal. Thus it is safe to accept the three types of nationalism which Albert Hourani has suggested are prevalent in the Arab world — namely, religious, territorial, and ethnic-linguistic. The Arab people combated colonialism and mobilized their forces in the name of one or another of these three types of consciousness. Thus in Algeria, the Arabian Gulf territories, Libya, and Morocco, nationalism had a greater religious content and was predominantly Islamic in formulation. In Tunisia and Egypt, the national struggle was waged in territorial terms. And in the Fertile Crescent countries, it was an ethnic-linguistic Arab consciousness that inspired the national struggle. All three, however, had components that were clearly Arab.

From a slightly different perspective, one might suggest that where the Ottoman Turkish presence was strongly felt, the struggle of the Arab people was for the establishment of an independent Arab political community; this eventually was the case in the Fertile Crescent countries and, to some extent, in the Arabian Peninsula. Where the struggle was against the European powers, there was syncretic nationalism combining various elements — religious, territorial, and ethnic — as in Egypt, Algeria, etc. It is interesting to note that up to the First World War the call for an independent unified Arab state was made only by the Arab nationalists of the Fertile Crescent, who had in the meantime effected an alliance with the Sharif Hussein of Arabia, who, in turn, had political ambitions of his own. The other nationalists sought independence for their own countries. The Arab Revolt of the First World War symbolizes the triumph of the nationalist appeal together with the appeal of traditional legitimacy. The outcome of that revolt is well known. Those Arab countries that had fought for an independent Arab state fell under European control and domination; and from then on the struggle against European colonialism was common to all Arab countries. The Arab world had

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to develop bonds of consciousness that were less ambiguous in their content than they had been in the past. Increasingly, Arab nationalism emerged as the major force inspiring the struggle of the Arab community against colonialism. While each of the countries that had been carved out by the colonizer sought its own independence, there was an increasing consciousness of the fate of other Arab territories. It is only in the period between the two world wars that one can legitimately begin to speak of the emergence of political movements and parties with Pan-Arab tendencies and consciousness. Thus the most important political parties of the interwar period, such as the Wafd, the Neo-Destour, the Independence and the Nationalists, and eventually the Bathis, had these two aspirations clearly formulated.

IV

The change in the emphasis and conception of the nationalist struggle is obvious related to the altered political realities in the Arab world. But equally important to note are the major proponents and leaders of the struggle who had, by their thoughts and actions, stamped the nationalist movement with a particular imprint. It is reasonably well known that the nineteenth-century struggle for a political community and for self-assertion was led by an upper class of landlords who had recently acquired economic wealth, which they wanted to convert to political power. Hence, their emphasis was not only on severing the ties that bound their province to the central government but on reducing the strength of the European economic elite as well. Their vision of the polity was essentially parochial, and they thought that their economic interests would be best served in a territorially limited *patrie*. They were concerned with the establishment of some form of constitutional government in which their power would be exercised to protect and enhance their interests. Their struggle was, in the final analysis, a class struggle for dominance against the established bey, sultan, khedive, or Turkish governor. And in the process they helped consolidate specific types of loyalties to the *patrie* in which they functioned. Thus we can suggest that their contribution was a matter of weakening the bonds which previously bound the population to other Ottomans, and intensifying territorial consciousness — Egyptian, Tunisian, etc. It would not be accurate to say that class believed in a secular society, though it did not actively oppose those trends that ultimately helped to establish secular bonds in society.

The landholding class had lost the struggle by the First World War. It would be reasonable to suggest that at that time the national struggle, and therefore the basic formulation of nationalist doctrine, passed on to the bourgeoisie, which had benefited from the previous periods and from the increasing modernization of the Arab world. This is not to suggest that the landed aristocracy had passed into oblivion, but that members of the bourgeois class increasingly came to dominate politics, incorporating previously dominant elements. It was the bourgeois class in the Arab world that was essentially responsible for the formulation of the major components and aspirations of Arab nationalism. While members of this class believed in constitutionalism, independence, and, to some extent, secularism, they were more conscious of the bonds that united the Arab world as a whole. Thus, their drive for the independence of their own countries was joined with an equal insistence on independence for the rest of the Arab

World. By the 1940s there was no doubt in the Arab world that there was an Arab nation; momentarily fragmented by European colonialism, but a nation that should ultimately gain independence and unity. It was this class, in the course of the anticolonial struggle, which spelled out the overall concept of Arabism and formulated the specifically political aspiration for an Arab political community.

Unfortunately for the advocates of Arab unity, the eventual triumph of this class within each of the Arab countries placed the class in a position of absolute power. Concerned with the preservation of its own power and privileges, and fearing the possible loss of that power should an all encompassing union be effected, this class compromised its earlier demand for an Arab union by accepting sovereignty of each Arab state. Thus the nationalist aspiration for an Arab political community was betrayed by its former advocates, and an ensuing struggle between those in power and more radical nationalists came to characterize political relations subsequent to the Second World War. It was only in the 1950s that one could begin to speak of the seizure of power by antibourgeois elements who were in theory more committed to the concept of an Arab political community independent, formally and really, from external constraints. Proponents of Nasserism and members of the Ba'th parties of Iraq and Syria are perhaps the best representatives of this antibourgeois class of nationalists who were more willing to intervene in the affairs of other Arab states in order to achieve the goal of Arab unity. And it is in the context of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and their opponents that other formulas for unity emerged. For while the antibourgeois nationalists actively campaigned for unity the others spoke of confederations or greater regional cooperation. The more and more frequent discussions concerning the Maghrib, the Nile Valley, and the Greater Syria as natural regions within the Arab world indicate the presence of competing theories of Arabism. But these competing theories are based on the reality of class control of the Arab world.

this theoretical struggle had its political counterpart in terms of state behavior and policy. The increasing polarization within the Arab states came to be viewed as a struggle between progressives and conservatives. The progressives were thought of as strong supporters of distributive justice, land redistribution, industrialization, nationalization of capital, greater collaboration with the socialist system of power, and Arab political unity. They were Arab nationalists par excellence. On the other hand the conservatives came to be viewed as supporters of a laissez faire system of production and economics; they were considered gradualist in approach, more religiously inclined, not concerned with the redistribution of wealth, more open to collaboration with the capitalist system of power, and lukewarm to the concept of immediate Arab unity. And whereas progressives advocated the participation of the masses in politics, the conservatives were more restrictive.

While both groups can claim certain successes and failures, it is evident that the conservatives are under extreme pressure. But the antibourgeois elements who seized control beginning in the 1950s and came to dominate the progressive sector of Arab politics have also failed. Radical opinion in the Arab world holds that the antibourgeois groups have failed in two important respects : they have failed to achieve Arab unity, still one of the greatest Arab aspirations (thanks to the politicization and cultural revival

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supported by the Arab bourgeoisie); and they have failed to modernize the Arab system sufficiently to withstand Israeli aggression and expansion.

A new belief gaining ground in the Arab world, and especially notable since the 1967 war, is anchored in a concept of revolutionary nationalism and change essentially through armed struggle not only against the external threat to the Arabs, symbolized by Israel and its supporters in the West, but against internal oppressors as well. While this new belief is intimately connected with the rise of the Palestinian resistance, it is to be found throughout the Arab world. In its simplest form this new belief contends that Arab national integration will be effected only by organized violence carried out by a new Pan-Arab revolutionary movement committed to the radical transformation and liberation of the Arab world. This new belief takes for granted the existence of an Arab political community that is trying to overcome the inheritance of its colonial fragmentation and backwardness. And it takes for granted the inability and unwillingness of Arab regimes, from whatever class they may have stemmed, to undertake radical measures for the liberation and unification of the Arabs. Hence, revolutionary nationalism — which is integrative in nature, modernizing, and mass based — is increasingly being viewed as the new panacea.

It is hazardous to speculate on the future. But one can safely say that previous nationalists, irrespective of their failures, contributed significantly to the rise and development of Arab nationalism. That Arabs discuss means of unification indicates quite clearly a genuine belief in their existence as a cultural unit based on language, ethnicity, traditions,

It is hazardous to speculate on the future. But one can safely say that previous nationalists, irrespective of their failures, contributed significantly to the rise and development of Arab nationalism. That Arabs discuss means of unification indicates quite clearly a genuine belief in their existence as a cultural unit based on language, ethnicity, traditions, and interests. It indicates that competing universalist norms — such as those derived from Islam — or provincial ones rooted in the specific state or regional structure — Maghribi, Syrian, or Pharonic — have lost out intellectually and as bonds of attraction and definition of the community. Whether the revolutionary nationalists will succeed in translating this consummated cultural unit into one political organism remains to be seen. But revolutionary nationalists undoubtedly will continue their struggle in the light of the failure of their predecessors to give substance to the dream of an Arab **Ummah**.

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