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THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE ARABIAN
BA'TH SOCIALIST PARTY

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By

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Chapter I of this study of the Arabian Ba'th Socialist Party discusses the evolution of Arab nationalism and concludes that Ba'th was a natural outcome of this evolution; two intellectuals supporting Arab nationalism were Party co-founders Michael Aflaq and Salah Bitar. Part One of Chapter II summarizes their lives to facilitate understanding of their thought and its impact on Ba'th; Part Two examines the Party's first convention (source of the Ba'th constitution), the reasons for it, and the necessity of establishing Ba'th; and Part Three outlines Ba'th ideology and organization. Chapter III analyzes Ba'th's promotion of Syrian-Egyptian union and that union's resultant adverse effect upon Party cohesiveness. The Conclusion discusses the groups into which Ba'th split after 1961 and their new interpretations of Ba'th ideology.

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INTRODUCTION

What makes the Ba'th Party an interesting topic of study is its uniqueness, for it was the first party to present a comprehensive economic, social, and political program for the entire Arab world. The Party was organized according to the cell structure, which was new for an area accustomed to traditional political parties. Furthermore, the Ba'th Party was the first ideological party to achieve power in the Arabian area.

This thesis is a study of the Arabian Ba'th (Resurrection) Socialist Party and of the subsequent factionalism in it which led to the creation of new and differing versions of Ba'th. The significance of such a study is that it throws more light on the Ba'th Party's ideology, which has been changed by events and factions over the years.

In analyzing this subject, the following factors contributing to the emergence of factions within the Party must be considered:

1. The role of intellectuals, which was not strong enough to face professional politicians, although the intellectuals who started the Party were in control.
2. The lack of a clear ideology, which allowed many conflicts to develop.

3. The military, which defined Ba'th's ideology to its own benefit to justify its power and its work in politics.

4. The union with Egypt, in which Nasser abolished all political parties, including Ba'th, which helped to convert many Ba'thists to Nasserism and was thus a main cause of Ba'th's dilemma.

Although the Ba'th Party has branches in Yemen and Algeria and other parts of the Arab world, this study will concentrate primarily on Syria, as the center for the Party and the locus of its National Command, and secondarily on Iraq. With regard to the complexity of Arab politics, this paper will be concerned only with analyzing those external policies, whether Arabian or international, which actually concern the Ba'th Party's stands.

Several terms which are used in this study should be defined in advance. One of the most important to define clearly is "Arab nationalism," because the Ba'th Party is no more than the outcome of the evolution of Arab nationalism. Many definitions of this term and of the term "Arabism" have been given by Arab¹ and Western² scholars.

¹Among these Arab scholars are Sati Al-Husri, Clovis Maqsd, and Taha Husayn.

²Among these Western scholars is Raphael Patai, The Arab Mind (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), pp. 12-15.

Ba'th synthesized the views of both of these groups and defined Arabism thus in Article 10 of its constitution, Internal Policy of the Party: "An Arab is he whose language is Arabic, who has lived on Arab soil or who after having been assimilated to Arab life has faith in his belonging to the Arab nation."³ Ba'th also answered the question of Arab citizenship in its constitution, Article 20: "The rights of citizenship are granted in their totality to every citizen living on Arab soil who is devoted to the Arab fatherland and who has no connection with any factious organization."⁴

In its definition of Arabism, Ba'th excluded the Islamic religion as an element in defining the Arab and consequently, in defining Arab nationalism. In this, Ba'th's stand was similar to that of the socialist intellectuals, such as Clovis Maqsd, whose definition also excluded the Islamic religion as a qualifying element. Some Western⁵ and Arab scholars, however, believe that Islam is a strong element in both Arabism and in Arab

³Kamel S. Abou Jaber, The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: History, Ideology and Organization (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966), Appendix B--"Constitution of the Ba'th Party," p. 170.

⁴Kemal H. Karpat, ed., Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1968), pp. 59-63.

⁵See Don Peretz, The Middle East: Selected Readings (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 162.

nationalism, as the prominent Arab writer Dr. Taha Husayn maintains in his definition:

Arab nationalism. At first it was expressed in poetry but was finally consummated in the Qur'an. It then began to assert itself peacefully throughout the ancient world until it came to occupy the place of the Roman and Persian empires. Even now, after all the disasters it has met with, all the persecutions it has undergone, especially at the hands of the Turks, all the centuries of weakness and stagnation, Arab nationalism still retains its language and its own distinctive mentality and emotion. Despite all the divisions, and despite the creation of states within the Arab world, our nationalism has perserved its common sentiments, common outlook, common Islamic religion, and common aspiration.⁶

On the other hand, like Darwish Al-Jundi in his article "The Foundations and Objectives of Arab Nationalism,"⁷ Michael Aflaq, the Ba'th Party's founder and philosopher, states that a nation is distinguished by a common feeling, mentality, origin, race, language, spirit, history, and education, and not necessarily by a single religion.⁸

The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party linked Arab socialism and Arab nationalism and advanced the theory of "battle on

⁶Taha Husayn, quoted by Darwish Al-Jundi, "The Foundations and Objectives of Arab Nationalism," in Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East, p. 48.

⁷Darwish Al-Jundi, p. 44.

⁸Michael Aflaq, Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th [Toward Resurrection], 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliah, 1963), p. 77. See also Abd Al-Rahman Al-Bazzaz, Buhuth Fi Al-Qawmiyya Al-Arabiyya [Study in Arab Nationalism] (Cairo: Mahad Al-Dyrasat Al-Arabiyya, Jammiyyat Al-Dy' wal Al-Arabiyya, 1962), pp. 320-23.

two fronts," which involved the struggle against imperialism, Marxism, reactionary governments, and capitalism, and for unity, and the internal struggle against maladies such as poverty, illiteracy, and social injustice. In spite of serious internal problems, the Ba'th Party's ideology emphasized its national goals more heavily than socialism because the Arab nation was still divided; thus, Aflaq stated that unity took precedence over socialism.

Socialism as defined by Ba'th was different from Western or Eastern socialism. It was, as Aflaq stated, ". . . independent . . . [did] not follow a particular doctrine . . . but benefit[ed] from all theories and experiments of other peoples while it attempt[ed] to condition itself to the circumstances and desires of the Arab nation."⁹ It lay somewhere between capitalism and Communism.¹⁰

Imperialism was defined by Ba'th as direct or indirect political or economic influence by a foreign power to gain strategic positions in the Arab world. Imperialism, in Ba'th's opinion, tried to prevent Arab unity in order to achieve its own goals.

⁹Michael Aflaq, Ma'rakat Al-Masir Al-Wahid [Battle for the One Destiny], 4th ed. (Beirut: Moassasat Al-Arabiyyah lil Dyrasat wa Al-Nashr, 1972), p. 33.

¹⁰Abou Jaber, p. 29.

Another significant term relating to the evolution of the Ba'th Party is Nasserism, Al-Nasiryyah. This term, originated by enemies of Nasser,¹¹ refers to the movement created in the Arab world by the Egyptian leader Gamel Abdel Nasser. Nasserists believed that Arab nationalism and unity could be achieved by following Nasser; therefore, they believed that full support should be given to his policies and leadership. This movement lacked organization, and it was more an emotional trend than a cohesive force. In spite of this fact, however, the strength of the Nasserist trend is evidenced by the existence of Al-Nasiryyah outside Egypt.

Another term frequently used in this paper is "reactionary regime," Al-Raj'iyah. This refers to all anti-revolutionary regimes and classes in the Arab world.

A historical case analysis approach was utilized in this study. Research was conducted with an attempt to rely more heavily on Arabic sources than on English ones, in order to study the Ba'th Party and works written both by its members and about it in their original language. This reliance on Arabic sources was also necessitated by the scarcity of sources in English relating to the Ba'th Party.

¹¹Hisham Bashir Sharabi, Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World: The Middle East and North Africa (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1966), p. 97.

Little has been written about the Ba'th Party as an area of study, which made the survey of its history and development rather difficult. Very few Western scholars have dealt with Ba'th. Notable among those who have are Gordon H. Torrey and Patrick Seale. Most Western scholars have studied the Ba'th Party as an example in affirming a theory about the Third World in general or as a part of Arabian politics as a whole.

In the group of scholars who have written about Ba'th as an example of the Third World, John H. Kautsky explains his theory of change and modernization revolution in the third world. Kautsky's analysis of modernizers' coups and counter-coups explains the Ba'th Party's situation: "The Ba'th Party may be said to mark the modernizers' revolution in Syria. Military coups have followed each other there at the rate of nearly one per year"¹² since the Party was formed. It should be noted that, in Kautsky's definition, he uses the word "modernizers" in its broader sense, including all those who want to play an active role in turning their own societies into modern ones, who see themselves as the legitimate heirs of political and social control, and who have the qualifications to be such. Although they do not necessarily succeed in

¹²John H. Kautsky, The Political Consequences of Modernization (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1972), p. 148,

modernizing their societies, such people will be referred to as modernizers in this study. For the Ba'th Party later in its history, modernizers constituted the "vanguard," which at first meant intellectuals and more lately changed to mean workers and farmers.

Ba'th modernizers also differed from the Kautsky definition in that they did not believe in starting the modernization process until they had achieved Arabian unity.¹³ Ba'th believed that Arabian countries complement each other economically and that, since they are a single nation, they have a common history, interest, and feeling. In other words, one nation needs only people to unite it. Once it is united, the modernization process may be started. Ba'th did not realize, however, that because of the many years of division and political, economic, social, and ethnic underdevelopment Arab countries needed more extensive work and effort to reunite. Ba'th had to take into account the changes which had occurred during these years of division and imperialism and work first to abolish the resulting problems or at least alleviate them before unification could take place.¹⁴ If this was not done,

¹³This is the Old Ba'th ideology, which was later revised, as will be discussed in the conclusion of this study.

¹⁴This is the new version of the Neo-Ba'th in Syria.

the Ba'th effort towards uniting the Arab countries would not be successful.¹⁵

For decades Arab unity and nationalism have been the dominant ideas in the Arab mind. Almost all the Arab leaders and modernizers have claimed that they would achieve these dreams. Of whatever persuasion the current regime has been at any given time, whether it be traditional, military, or revolutionary, its ideological dealings and structural framework have been built on the premises of Arab unity and nationalism. The various leaders of these regimes have known that the Arabs would follow the slightest light which might lead them to a realization of these goals. The Arabs' dilemma has been that they want to be united but they do not know how to accomplish such a union. Arabs thought that after they obtained their independence they would again be one nation. When that did not happen, leaders started racing each other to be the one who would achieve Arab unity, and, in doing so, they created and deepened their conflicts and pushed the dream of union even farther away from reality.

Torrey, in his important article on the Ba'th Party, analyzes and evaluates the Party's ideology, stating that "although the Ba'th in fact has a much more developed

¹⁵The insufficient study, on the part of both Egypt and Syria, of economic, social, and political problems was one of the reasons for the failure of their union.

ideological consistency than Nasir's pragmatic Arab socialism, the Party ideologues were made to look like theorists without a system and men who had never met the demands of practical politics."¹⁶ Torrey also summarizes the Ba'th Party's dilemma: "It is beset by many enemies, the conservative and religious leaders, the Communists, military men eager for power, Nasirism, its lack of popular support, and its own doctrine."¹⁷

Sami Al-Jundi, a Ba'thist who was also the former Syrian ambassador in Paris, in describing the beginnings of Ba'th believes that Zaki Al-Arsuzi was the Party's original founder, although Aflaq established the Party and advocated its interests. Analyzing the reasons for the decline of Ba'th's popularity and outlining the struggle for power within the Party and the different factions which emerged after the breakup of 1961, Al-Jundi explains that "Ba'th became a political organization which was given different versions according to the faction or the user."¹⁸ He attacks Ba'th bitterly, saying that "all who wrote about Ba'th dealt only with the historical evolution of the Regional or National Commands, but not with

¹⁶Gordon H. Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," Middle East Journal, 23 (Autumn, 1969), 462.

¹⁷Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," p. 469.

¹⁸Sami Al-Jundi, Al-Ba'th (Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 1969), p. 10.

the real struggle which is behind the scene and the conflict and corruption among the upper ladder in the Party."¹⁹ Al-Jundi concludes that every Ba'thist was responsible for the factions which fragmented the Party and for the loss of Ba'th's popularity, and he attributes the later fragmentation of the Party to the lack of seriousness and loyalty of its members.

The fifth part of Nidal Al-Ba'th Fi Sabil Al-Wahda Al-Huriyya Al-Ishtirakiyya [The Struggle of the Ba'th for Unity, Freedom and Socialism] deals with the National Command conferences during the years 1947-1974. From the first to the fifth parts, for example, the book reviews Ba'th's stands on Iraqi issues and political problems. It analyzes the reasons for Ba'th's failure in power and gives extensive credit for that failure to the events which occurred after 1930. In addition, the book includes Aflaq's early statements and articles.

The Ba'thist Kamel S. Abou Jaber in his Ph.D. dissertation writes extensively about Ba'th's ideology and organization. He contends that "there is no doubt that competition with Nasser weakens the Ba'th Party in the entire region. Nasser, in the eyes of many Arabs, is a successful leader."²⁰ Ba'th, with its fragmentation, could not

¹⁹Sami Al-Jundi, p. 12.

²⁰Abou Jaber, p. 334.

challenge or equal him. Abou Jaber explains that Ba'th differentiated between the local Communists who fought for power and the Soviet Union, with whom the Party tried to maintain friendly relations. Ba'th, however, condemned Soviet interference in the internal Arab conflict,²¹ and that is the reason why Abou Jaber states that the "Ba'th Party found itself 'more' sympathetic to the 'national' Communism of Tito,"²² which respected the nationality and internal affairs of other countries.

The Ba'th Party's struggle for unity, freedom, and socialism is more easily comprehended in the light of its background; thus, with the purpose of providing this background, the first chapter of this study will discuss the evolution of Arab nationalism.

²¹The Soviet Union sided with the Ali Saleh Al-Saadi group in Iraq, calling them "progressive" and condemning the Ba'th and Aflaq as "reactionary."

²²Abou Jaber, p. 337.

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF ARAB NATIONALISM

To place the resurrection of a unified Arab nation into perspective, it is necessary to summarize the evolution of the nationalist movement in the Arabian area and to reveal the part played by common geographical, historical, and religious elements in creating a common feeling among the Arab people. From this perspective, the development of the notion of Ba'th--a resurrection of a unified Arab nation like that which once existed under Islam--may be better understood. More specifically, this summary will include an analysis of Arab nationalism in terms of the three major factors which gave it its present shape--the Young Turk revolution in 1908 and the subsequent political reforms in the Ottoman Empire, Balkan nations which were breaking away from Turkey in the early twentieth century, and Arab intellectuals who were working to modernize their countries as a result of the direct consequences for the Arabian area of the First and Second World Wars.

Geographically the Arabian lands lie in two continents, Africa and Asia. These lands are closely linked and constitute a single region, which is located in the

center of the world and thus comprises an area often used for transportation and communication between Europe and the rest of the Eastern Hemisphere. Including the water passages it possesses (the Suez Canal, Bab Al-Mandab, Homs on the Persian Gulf, and Tangier in Morocco), the region extends from the Arabian (Persian) Gulf and the Indian Ocean in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and from the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea in the north to Central Africa in the south. The only natural barriers in the area are the Red Sea and the Western Egyptian Desert. The Red Sea, a relatively narrow waterway, separates Africa from Asia but does not prevent communication between the two continents at this point, especially since modern means of transportation have been developed. The Western Egyptian Desert is not extensively inhabited except by Bedouins, who do not consider the desert to be a problem or barrier to movement to other areas. The entire region is bordered by natural confines such as oceans, mountains, and deserts.¹

The Arabian area is also bound to the three continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia by sea and land. Until the 1800's, its "geo-strategic uniqueness"² made it an

¹Darwish Al-Jundi, p. 43.

²Benjamin Rivlin and Joseph S. Szyliowicz, eds., "Introduction" to The Contemporary Middle East: Tradition and Innovation (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 17.

important region to be controlled to ensure routes to the East; in more recent times its economic wealth--raw materials and markets--has made it an object of attention from great powers such as Britain, France, Italy, and Germany in the nineteenth century and the United States and the Soviet Union in the twentieth. The area has become one of conflict for all these great powers, resulting in "political instability and weakened ability of Middle Easterners to shape their own destiny."³ Although the Middle East's strategic position has created exogenous problems for its people, the absence of geographical barriers, facilitating communication between the people, has been a significant element stimulating the Arabs to unify themselves, to master their destiny, and to liberate themselves from external influences.

The origins of the Arab people are deeply rooted in history. The Arabs are originally from the Arabian Peninsula,⁴ but, over three thousand years ago, for economic reasons many tribes went west through the Sinai to Nile Valley Egypt, others to the Euphrates Valley and other areas of the Fertile Crescent. During the pre-Islamic period in the Al-Jahilia age, the "age of ignorance," the

³Rivlin and Szyliowicz, "Introduction," p. 17.

⁴Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 10.

Arabs remaining in the Arabian Peninsula, mainly nomadic Bedouins, lived a life dominated by raids and fights over pastures and water. Al-Assabiya, loyalty to the tribe only, was the prevailing practice in their society, and tribalism fragmented the people to the extent that a coalition between two or three tribes, usually based on clan relationships, was only formed to oppose one strong tribe or another coalition. These different tribes did, however, help each other if one of them faced foreign invasion and asked for assistance from other tribes, supporting the old Arabian saying, "Me and my brother against our cousin and my cousin and me against the stranger." One important such occasion took place in 610 when Hira, an Arabian tribe bordering Persia, was threatened by Persian invasion. Hira asked for help from other tribes, who responded to the appeal and conquered the Persians in the battle of Dhukar.⁵ That was the first victory for the Arabs and the first time the Arabian tribes united and fought together against external danger.

In addition to their common geographical and historical origins, another important unifying factor for

⁵Abd Al-Aziz Al-Duri, "Historical Roots of Arab Nationalism," in Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East, p. 34. For Arab history before and after Islam, see Joel Carmichael, The Shaping of the Arabs: A Study in Ethnic Identity (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967), pp. 1-104.

the Arab nation was the Prophet Mohammed and his new religion, Islam, which, beginning in the early 600's, organized Arab social and political life. Islam provided the people, by means of religion, with a political system and the organization and guidance that they had previously lacked. In his teachings, Mohammed advocated the rejection of tribalism, fragmentation, and Al-Assabiya. Thus the Moslems became united under the banner of Islam.

Islam was carried on by the Caliph, the secular and religious head of the Moslem state,⁶ and under this leadership the Islamic conquest was extended to China in the east and to Spain in the west. In their expansion Moslems tried to apply two policies, Islamization and Arabinization,⁷ with special emphasis upon the former. Islam spread in most of the conquered areas, but the Arabinization policy was not very successful, especially in countries such as Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan, which followed Islam without adopting the Arabinization

⁶As defined in The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, ed. William Morris (Boston: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., and Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), p. 190, col. 2.

⁷George Antonius, The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1939), pp. 3-4. Islamization refers to the attempt to convince people to follow Islam; Arabinization means an attempt to convert non-Arab people to adopt the Arabic language and culture.

process. In the west, Arabization was more effective in North Africa.

In spite of such resistance to the Arabization policy, the Moslem Arabs retained control of their empire until the fifteenth century, when it started to collapse after the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. After the fourth Caliphate, the Umayyad, which represented the Sunni or orthodox forces, the Abbasid dynasty took power, headed by the Shi'ah, a group in opposition to the Sunni.⁸ During this dynasty the Persians entered into the rule along with the Arabs; before this time, although the Koran viewed all races as equal, the Arabs alone had ruled their empire. In addition, the Abbasids moved their capital from Damascus to Baghdad. This was the Golden Age for the Arabs, when economic, social, administrative, and intellectual progress reached every aspect of life.

The administration of the entire empire was a very complex process for the Caliphate, which was considered to be the leader of secular as well as of religious affairs. Because it was so difficult for the Caliphate to supervise both religious and non-religious matters, during the rule of the Umayyads and more particularly that of the Abbasids, the need to separate church from state became a pressing reality. However, in Labib

⁸For further details see Antonius, and Hitti, pp. 245-46.

Zuyiyya Yamak's words, "whereas it is legitimate to speak for the separation of church and state in Islam it must be remembered that this separation is functional, not organic."⁹ As H. A. R. Gibb says,

In Islamic thought, the state should be only the public exponent of Islamic ideology, ensuring the security and well-being of the Muslim peoples and enforcing the law of Islam but itself subject to that law; and its authority derives wholly from the degree to which it is considered to do so.¹⁰

The power of the Abbasids declined in the fifteenth century, especially in North Africa, where strong leaders established dynasties for themselves and separated from the Abbasid rule. The Islamic Empire was divided into many dynasties; its power declined gradually until the Mongol invasion which destroyed Damascus and Baghdad in 1258. A counterattack was headed by the Mamluk, who ruled Egypt, and the Mongols were ousted from the Islamic lands. These lands were so fragmented, however, that they afterward fell easily under Ottoman domination.

By the seventeenth century all the Arabs' land was annexed to the Ottoman Empire except Morocco and Central Arabian "Najd." Ottoman rule lasted four hundred

⁹Labib Zuyiyya Yamak, The Syrian Social Nationalist Party: An Ideological Analysis (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 11.

¹⁰H. A. R. Gibb, quoted in Yamak, p. 11.

years.¹¹ The Arabs lived with the Turks under Islam during this period, not considering the Ottoman rule to be alien because the Arabs looked to the Turks as their Islamic leaders; they even worked with the Young Turks to fight the Sultan Abdal-Hamid's despotism and corruption. The Arabs lived in a period of Takalf, "backwardness," and yet they did not consider Turkey to be a foreign state.

Before the Young Turk revolution, the Ottoman Empire consisted of various nationalities pursuing different ways of life, together constituting the majority of the population. Dr. Majid Khadduri argues that, even though Islam was the majority religion of the Ottoman Empire and there were three minorities who practiced other religions, Islam did not impose conformity on them. Because the Ottoman Empire inherited the ecumenical character of Islamic society in which non-Moslems were given a good deal of religious freedom, Ottoman "minorities" enjoyed considerable freedom in exercising religious and civil rights which were denied to minorities in the contemporary society of Europe.¹²

¹¹For details of Ottoman rule and domination, see Sharabi; Hitti; Antonius; and Sir John Bagot Glubb, Syria; Lebanon; Jordan (New York: Walker and Company, 1967).

¹²Majid Khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab World: The Role of Ideas and Ideals in Politics (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 9-10.

This situation changed as a result of the Young Turk revolution in 1908.¹³ After the Young Turks seized power, they effected reforms with a threefold purpose: to glorify Turkish nationalism at the expense of other nationalities, to organize a centralized form of administration in order to tighten their grip on the Empire, and to initiate a secular state. Together these reforms gave rise to Arab nationalist agitation. The Arabs realized that in this glorification of the Turkish nationality they would become second-class citizens. The emphasis on Turkish nationalism threatened their Arabic identity.

In addition, secularization of the state, which diminished the common religious element between the Arabs and the Turks, made the Arabs feel that they were no longer tied to Turkey. They had accepted Turkish domination in the past because they believed that together they constituted one Islamic state. Arabs felt that "the Ottoman empire was essentially a religious state, and Turks and Arabs, the primary ethno-cultural groups of the empire, found spiritual satisfaction under the rule of sultans who proved to be worthy successors to the Arab

¹³G. L. Lewis, "The Young Turks," in The Political Awakening in the Middle East, ed. George Lenczowski (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 50-54.

caliphs."¹⁴ The Young Turks, on the other hand, believed that Islam stood in the way of progress and that secularization was necessary for a program of modernization to begin.

The Arab provinces under Ottoman control had previously enjoyed a degree of autonomy and decentralization of administration for quite some time. Now the Young Turks wanted a centralized administration to control all provinces tightly in order to strengthen their country. They planned to extend their control as far as Al-Hijaz, an area in the Arabian Peninsula. The Arab leaders and intellectuals both in Turkey and in other provinces resisted these policies and protested against them, which caused the Young Turk government to suppress such dissidents.

The Arabs reacted to the reforms enacted by the Young Turks by organizing a number of societies to protect the Arab interest. In June of 1913 the first Arab Congress, held in Paris, formulated the Arabs' demands for a degree of autonomy and a decentralized form of administration and a request to the Turks to stop Ottomanization policies. The Young Turk government ignored these demands and instead oppressed the Arabs and their societies. As a result, the Arabs took their activities

¹⁴Lewis, p. 10.

underground and formed secret societies such as Al-Qahtaniyya and Al-Muntada Al-Adabi (the literary club),¹⁵ consisting of army officers in Istanbul after the Young Turk revolution in 1908 and of Arab students and intelligentsia. Consequently, the political thought of Arab modernizers in the nineteenth century developed primarily among Arab intellectuals in Istanbul, Turkey, because Turkey was influenced by Western concepts of democracy and social and economic reforms at that time. Thus, Young Turk political reforms played a role in motivating Arab nationalism.

The second factor in the rise of Arab nationalism was the upsurge of Balkan nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. Bulgaria, for example, declared its independence from Turkey in 1908, and Albania was to do the same in 1912. The victory of Balkan nationalities caused the other provinces under Ottoman control, including the Arabian ones, to look for independence for themselves.

In the nineteenth century, Moslem intellectuals were concerned about the decline of Islamic power and tried to adopt reforms to enable their religion to keep pace with the modernization of life. They became annoyed by the Sultan's despotic and inadequate policies. These

¹⁵George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 66-69.

intellectual Arab thinkers may be classified into three categories: Pan-Islamists, regional nationalists, and Arab nationalists.

The first group were intellectuals who advocated Pan-Islamism and believed that Moslem society could be modernized and adapted to contemporary life and to realities in the world without losing its Islamic character. They tried to explain that not Islam but "religious obscurantism"¹⁶ in general was responsible for the backwardness of the Islamic nation. They reasoned that Islam had established a great civilization in the past and had given the Arabs their enlightened Golden Age when Europe was still in the midst of its Dark Ages and that the Arab people could build their nation again if they employed Islamic principles. This group stressed the importance of scientific thinking and the need for the freedom of inquiry, Al-Ijtihad. For these thinkers, Islam did not prevent progress; on the contrary, it was the promoter of progress, as proven by Islamic civilization in the past.

The originator of Pan-Islamism was Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani (1839-1897); another prominent thinker in this category was Muhammed Abdullah (1849-1905).¹⁷ Both of these

¹⁶Yamak, p. 79.

¹⁷Karpat, "Introduction" to Political and Social Thought in the Contemporary Middle East, pp. 26-27.

men were concerned about the Islamic community and were not interested in any other nationality except the Moslems as one nation. Rashid Rida (1865-1935), another member of the Afghani school of thought, touched on Arab nationalism in his beliefs that the Arabs were better than the Turks, but he did not emphasize this idea. Abdul Rahman Kawakabi (1849-1902) crystallized the thought of Pan-Islamism. Kawakabi acknowledged the different nationalities which belonged to Islam, but he believed that Islam should unite them rather than diffuse them; he felt that if Istanbul prevailed the Islamic nation would never be strong again.

The second group of thinkers who were searching for remedies for the decline of Islamic power represented and advocated regional nationalism. These younger intellectuals emphasized this concept in their struggle against the colonial powers. The movement for regional nationalism started in Egypt, which, under the leadership of Muhammed Ali, had developed its national entity long before any other Arabian state. Members of this militant class were Abdallah Al-Nadim (1843-1893) and the journalist Mustafa Kamil (1874-1908).¹⁸ These leaders spurred the

¹⁸For further details of these intellectuals' opinions see Yamak, pp. 6-10; Nasrollah S. Fatemi, "The Roots of Arab Nationalism," in The Contemporary Middle East: Tradition and Innovation, pp. 230-39; Karpas, "Introduction," pp. 23-28; and Majid Khadduri, Arab Muasyron: Adwar Al-Qada

people to wage war against the imperialist powers. Following them came the modernizers who advanced the idea of nationalism, such as Ahmad Lutfi Al-Sayyid (1872-1964), Taha Husayn (b. 1889), Muhammad Husayn Haykel (1889-1956), Tawfiq Al-Hakim (b. 1889), and the socialist Salaman Musa (1887-1959).¹⁹ This school of thought presented Western concepts of constitutionalism and democracy as a model and tried to apply such concepts to bring about modernization in Arab society. Lutfi Al-Sayyid went further in his view of national issues to be more flexible in order to meet and cope with problems; he advocated the need for the secularization of the state, which influenced the Christian and liberal intellectuals to adopt his thinking.²⁰

The third category of Moslem intellectuals was the group of thinkers on Arab nationalism specifically. Nationalism among the Arab-speaking territories was born in the Fertile Crescent, especially in Syria and Iraq; although "neither Syria nor Iraq had ever experienced a separate political existence in the past . . . both had

Fi Al-Syiasia [The Contemporary Arabs: The Role of the Leaders in Politics] (Beirut: Dar Al-Mutahyda lil Nashr, 1973).

¹⁹Karpat, "Introduction," p. 29.

²⁰For further study of these thinkers, see Khadduri, Arab Muasyron, pp. 311-73.

been the centers consecutively of the two greatest Arab empires, the Umayyad and the Abbasid."²¹ Arab nationalists in this area had not shown any interest in separating from the Ottoman Empire until after the Young Turk revolution in 1908. Partly because of this, Arab nationalism had remained vague and ambiguous before the time of the revolution.²² Intellectuals and reformists such as Butrus Al-Bustani, Khalil Ghanim, Jurji Zaydan, and Nagib Azuri were Christian Arabs who promoted Arab nationalism and blamed the Turks for Arab backwardness. The Christian thinkers demanded Arab independence but gradually limited their demands to Great Syria; then they demanded the independence of Lebanon with strong relations toward the West. In this context, in 1919 after World War I, these intellectuals developed well-defined ideas about Arab nationalism, emphasizing Arabian rather than Islamic unity. Their basic argument was that the Arabs constituted one single nation, a political entity sharing the same culture, language, race, and history--the view presented by Abdallah Al-Alayli and Sati Al-Husri. Arab nationalism took on a new dimension when Christian modernizers excluded the Islamic religion in defining Arab nationalism and emphasized that common heritage, language, and culture were the forces unifying this nation.

²¹ Sharabi, p. 9.

²² Khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab World, p. 17.

In defining Arabian nationalism, Western and even Arabian scholars were puzzling over whether or not to include Islam,²³ since exclusion of the religion's role would eliminate a significant element which had united the Arabs in the past and which could still motivate the Moslem people. If Islam were included, other religions, such as those of the Christian and Jewish Arabs, had to be considered as well. Some prominent thinkers, such as Rashid Rida, gave Islam priority; he condemned regional nationalism and declared that Islam should prevail over these regional feelings. On the other hand, Abd Al-Rahman Al-Bazzaz²⁴ contended that there was not really any contradiction between the two, since Islam was a national religion and paralleled Arab nationalism. Indeed, the difficulty of understanding and defining Arab nationalism is stated by Malcolm Kerr: "Why the idea of unity is strong among Arabs--so much more than among Latin Americans, for instance, or the English-speaking nations--is a mystery that neither Arab nor Western historians have satisfactorily explained."²⁵

²³Arab Christians wished to exclude it; some Moslems, such as Taha Husayn, still emphasized it.

²⁴An Iraqi Ba'thist intellectual; he was the Prime Minister of Iraq in 1962.

²⁵Malcolm Kerr, The Arab Cold War 1958-1967 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 1.

Although the factors involved in Arab unity cannot be completely explained, the Young Turk revolution, the rise of Balkan nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, and the thought of intellectuals and modernizers did interweave to create an enthusiastic atmosphere against colonization and to develop national feeling. This nationalist atmosphere led Sharif Husayn to agree with the British to revolt in 1916 against the Ottoman Empire; in return the Arabs received their independence.

After World War I, however, the Arabian lands were divided between the British and the French according to the declaration of November of 1918. The French established a mandate over Syria and Lebanon, and the British established a mandate over Iraq, Palestine, and Trans-Jordan. In addition, the British promised to facilitate Jewish immigration into Palestine and to establish a Jewish National Home there. According to Arthur Balfour's Declaration of 1917, only Hijaz was free from domination. This disintegration of the Arab world disappointed the Arab people, especially the intellectuals who had studied in the West, admiring and adopting its political thought. The nationalists in this period were thus occupied by the struggle to liberate their countries from foreign domination. The experience of colonizers which the Arab peoples shared after World War I gave further impetus to national

feeling among them and strengthened the belief that if they were one united state they could face the imperialistic powers; thus, nationalism became necessary to preserve the Arab entity and its independence. Two goals in this inter-war era were emphasized: the gaining of independence and the solving of the Palestinian problem, which grew out of the nationalists' agitation as a result of Balfour's Declaration and their consequent desire to oppose Jewish immigration.

Ignoring the fact that the divided Arabian states were suffering from economic, social, and administrative backwardness, the nationalists did not present any solution or programs to alleviate these problems or to modernize their countries. Khadduri confesses that

Social and economic ideals had not yet captured the imagination of nationalist leaders although some parties, like the Wafd of Egypt, inserted into their programs planks dealing with social questions. In the eyes of nationalist leaders at that time questions of security and national freedom deserved priority over social and economic needs. Only after World War II did social and economic ideals attract public attention and become national aims.²⁶

After the Second World War, nationalism became the slogan of various parties among the Arabs, and nationalist sentiment was further intensified by the Arab defeat in the war of 1948-1949 with Israel and the failure to create an effective union between the Arabian states. Contributing

²⁶Khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab World, p. 22.

to this failure was the feeling of mistrust existing between the Arabian masses and their governments, which they regarded as "imperialist agents." The Arabs' suspicions both of their governments and of the West increased when the Baghdad government agreed on the Baghdad Pact in 1955. The Arab League, organized in 1945, failed to unite the Arab states or to play a significant role in any issue, thus decreasing its importance.

In a survey of the phenomenon of Arab nationalism, Syria is of considerable importance, since it has been the hotbed of Arab nationalistic sentiments for more than one hundred years. During the period from 1860 to 1914, Syria led the other colonialized Arab states into a reawakening of national pride. This fervent patriotism was partially due to a recognition of the Biblical definition of the land of Syria, which before World War I included parts of what is today Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine (Israel),²⁷ and partially due to the fact that Damascus was the capital of the Umayyad dynasty which was in power during the Arabs' glorious past. This search for Arab unity caused Syria to be preoccupied with Arab problems in general more than with its own.

²⁷Stephen Oren, "Syria's Options," World Today, 30 (November 1974), 473.

Syria, the political center of the Arab national movement, embodied both the ideals and the weaknesses of that movement. Proud of its heritage, Syria has always yearned to return to its Al-Amjad, its "glorious past." Frustrated by the numerous problems which prevented it from attaining its goals, Syria has become politically unstable. It suffers from bitter and turbulent internal political conflicts and faces an uncertain future. Because the concerned Syrian parties were preoccupied with external goals, with working to achieve Arab unity and to withstand an Israeli military buildup, the country's accumulating internal problems have been overlooked. Syria is in effect sacrificing its economic and social welfare to attain its two goals, the elimination of Israel and the establishment of an Arab union. To the Western man, Syria is sick, but to many Arabs it represents the epitome of Arab virtues.²⁸

After the First World War Syria's hopes for independence were disappointed when it came under the French mandate. France reorganized the political map of the area and applied the principle of divide-and-rule to facilitate its domination of the country by creating fragmentation. First, France separated Mount Lebanon, which was inhabited

²⁸W. F. Abboushi, Political Systems of the Middle East in the 20th Century (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1970), pp. 318-19.

by Christians (Maronites), then added to this Moslem areas in the west, north, and south, and called this area "Greater Lebanon," thus creating the country of Lebanon. The remaining section of the area was Syria, which France divided into

five distinct units, the State of Latakia (the 'Alawi district in the northwest), the State of Jabal Al-Druze (the Druze district south of Damascus), the State of Aleppo (northern Syria), the State of Syria (the districts of Damascus, Homs, and Hama), and the Sanjaq of Alexandretta (the region west of Aleppo, ceded to Turkey in 1938).²⁹

This artificial division of the area was an attempt to intensify the religious, social, ethnic, and local differences among the districts. These divisions did not, however, prevent the national movement from striving for independence:

This shortsighted policy provoked a violent reaction from Arab nationalists. Damascus became the center of revolts, uprisings, and demonstrations against "Western imperialism." The French retaliated with harsh repression. Many Arab leaders were imprisoned or exiled. . . . From this point on, Syria became the hub of nationalist agitation in the Arab world.³⁰

The French violently suppressed the nationalists and rebels with military action, and French control of the area, especially Syria, was exercised by the imposition of military rule. Under French supervision Lebanon had

²⁹Sharabi, pp. 31-32. The Alawi and the Druz--especially the Alawi--are the two groups which are now playing a leading part in the New Ba'th.

³⁰Fatemi, p. 234.

a constitution in 1926 and Syria in 1930, but these constitutions were frequently suspended by the mandatory power to tighten France's grip on the area. The nationalist powers in Syria, resisting this control, worked to terminate the mandate which had been imposed on their land by the Europeans and by the League of Nations.³¹

The various parties which emerged in the inter-war era agreed to leave all their differences behind and united to challenge the French mandate. Members of this new movement tried to run in parliamentary elections, but they were prevented from doing so by the French, an action which escalated nationalist resistance and made the French goal of colonization in Syria difficult to achieve. In 1939 nationalist leaders from Syria and Lebanon went to Paris to negotiate with the French government to grant autonomy to both of their republics, but the French refused to agree to their request. This refusal was disappointing to the Arabs, and the nationalists responded with more violence. In 1941 Free France declared the termination of the mandate, but its withdrawal did not take place until 1945, when both Lebanon and Syria obtained their independence and became members of the United Nations.

³¹Patrick Seale, The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Politics, 1945-1958 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 24.

In the post-First World War period, the concept of Arab unity crystallized and became a goal for the Arab people. The leading party which advocated Arab unity and earned the credit for turning it from a movement of the elite and intellectuals into a mass movement and thereby making it the dream of most Arabs was the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, founded by Michael Aflaq and Salah Bitar.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS AND THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF THE BA'TH PARTY

The Ba'th Party, which originated in response to the nationalistic feeling accompanying the Arab awakening after the First World War, was the first party in the Arabian region to present a comprehensive program of economic, social, and political modernization for all the Arab countries. This program for Arab unity stemmed from Ba'th's belief that a modernization program in a single Arab country would be only partially successful and might hurt its neighbors, since all Arabian countries are economically complementary. Unity was, therefore, a necessity, but the centuries of backwardness which the Arab nation had passed through had resulted in many problems, such as division created by different interests, opinions, and Al-Assabiya. The great powers, realizing the strategic and economic importance of these countries, either directly or indirectly pursued their various policies to increase the diversity of the countries and thereby achieve their own objectives at less cost. Ba'th believed that the Arabs' major problem was division; therefore, unity was an important goal which

had to be achieved by Inqilab, "revolution," in all aspects of life, both in the Arab countries and in the Arabian man's personality. This Inqilab would be led by the Al-Taliyah, the "vanguard."

In tracing the emergence of Ba'th, it is useful to divide its history into three parts. The first part deals with the origins of the Ba'th Party, its characteristics, and the ideas which formulated and affected the Party's life. The second part concerns the events which assisted in establishing the Party. The third part describes the circumstances surrounding the first convention in 1947, the first formal meeting of the Party; the Party's ideology; and its organization in its early years. Political developments and other events which occurred in the Arab world other than Syria will be discussed only insofar as they concern Ba'th.

Michael Aflaq and Salah Bitar, the co-founders of the Hizb Al-Ba'th Al-Arabi Al-Ishtiraki, the Arab Ba'th (Resurrection) Socialist Party, along with other Arabian modernizers, shared with the modernizers in other developing countries a strong Western influence. They had studied in the West or in Western institutions in their homelands and were thus influenced by the Western political thought that they had come to admire. Democracy, freedom, socialism, a constitutional parliament, a unified country--

Syrian intellectuals hoped that they could apply all of these concepts in their country. Their admiration of Western ideas made them realize the backwardness of the seemingly static societies in which they lived, and a comparison of those societies with the West was agony to them. This agony increased when they returned to their country to confront the reality of the increasing Ta'akhar, "retardation"; poverty; suppression by mandates; corruption; and, most importantly, the effect of the separation of the country into different districts with different interests, visions, and goals. Many of these intellectuals found themselves overqualified or even unemployed in their own country,¹ a common pattern in developing areas.

The intellectuals knew that any modernization of their country would not be successful while it was under the French mandate. The French mandate power did little to develop Syria, even though this was one of the tasks which had been assigned to it by the League of Nations, resulting instead in attempts at exploitative colonization, suppression, and terror. Consequently, the first and essential step for the modernizers was to liberate their country and free it from any foreign influence.

¹Richard Voyles Burks, The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 191.

In this liberation struggle, movements and parties,² even though differing ideologically, joined their efforts to achieve their independence. Although Aflaq and Bitar were involved in this struggle against imperialism, they differed from other modernizers in the underdeveloped world in that they questioned the very goal of independence for Syria if the other Arabian countries were still occupied by European mandate powers. They felt that the war should not stop with the achievement of Syrian independence because all the Arabian lands were considered to be one nation; Ba'th did not recognize the artificial division which was imposed by the "foreigners."³ Unlike other modernizers, they believed that any attempt to develop Syria would be a failure unless it occurred throughout all the Arabian countries. They insisted on Arab unity first; then the process of modernization could take place.

The Founders of the Ba'th Party

Michael Aflaq is considered by the Ba'thists to be the principal thinker and philosopher of the Party. Since he

²The formal parties before independence in Syria were the Nationalistic Bloc led by Dr. Abd-al-Rahman Shahbandar, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) led by Autun Sa'ada, and the Communist Party led by Khalid Bakdash. Other movements also existed, such as the Ba'th Muslim Brotherhood.

³See Gordon H. Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military, 1945-1958 (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1964), pp. 51-62.

was the Party's Secretary General for many terms, it is worthwhile to analyze his life, personality, and thought, which doubtless have played a significant role not only in the life of the Party but also in the life of Syria and of the entire Arabian nation.

Michael Aflaq was born in 1910 to a Greek Orthodox, middle class family. His father was a merchant dealing in grain. Aflaq's early involvement in politics was partially a result of his membership in the Orthodox Church, which was considered to be national rather than religious because of its role in the nationalist movement and liberation war. The fact that Aflaq belonged to this church gave him its image of trustworthiness and national consciousness; thus, he was welcomed by the nationalists. In addition, Aflaq's parents were, like others, involved in politics and in the struggle for Syrian independence; in fact, his father was arrested for his activity by the French. Aflaq's political interests were motivated by this specific incident as well as by his parents' attitudes and political enthusiasm in general. A third factor contributing to Aflaq's early involvement in politics was his upbringing in the Maydan district, which was considered to be the center of the nationalist movement in Damascus. When Aflaq started his schooling, he began to live with and adhere to the nationalist movement. In school, where

the education was mixed with nationalism, Aflaq's political education increased, but he was still a shy, lonely person. He was also interested in literature and wrote and published many articles. In 1928 he left Syria to continue his studies in France.

The time which he spent in Paris could be considered the turning point of Aflaq's life. In France he developed the intellectuality which led him later to become the philosopher of the Hizb Al-Ba'th. Aflaq studied history at the Sorbonne; he had always been fond of literature and philosophy as well, and in Paris he had the opportunity to pursue his interest in exploring European thought, especially in these two fields. He read Anatole France, André Gide, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy; he also admired Marx and Nietzsche. Works by these thinkers showed him the importance of the social problems facing humanity.⁴

Aflaq admired the style as well as the substance of these writers, especially that of Gide. Their stamp may be seen in Aflaq's own romantic, lively writing. He mixed the rebelliousness of Nietzsche and the literary polish of Gide with his romanticism and sensitivity, thus creating his own distinguished style.

⁴Abou Jaber, p. 29.

Continuing his political activity, Aflaq established an Arab Students Union where he met with other Arab students and discussed the conditions in their countries. These meetings were the beginning of Aflaq's turning to the other countries, as Abou Jaber states: "Through meeting with students of other Arab countries, his 'Syrian' nationalism expanded to 'Arab' nationalism."⁵ These meetings enabled him to conclude that all the Arab countries were suffering from the same problems which troubled Syria. He realized the necessity of contacting other Arab nationalists, coordinating their activities against imperialism, and then solving the problems which the Arabs faced in modernizing their countries. In France, Aflaq developed two basic ideas which later became the slogan of the Ba'th Party, freedom and Arab unity.

His contact with the Communists in Paris during the period 1928-1932 also contributed to the development of Aflaq's socialist thinking. Communists extended invitations to him and convinced him to attend their meetings. Aflaq was enchanted by Marx and the Communist ideology, but he was not Marxist or Communist.⁶ As Abou Jaber writes, "He was too much a humanist for that."⁷ He

⁵Ibid., p. 28.

⁶Khadduri, Arab Muasyron, p. 376.

⁷Abou Jaber, p. 28.

supported the Communists in Paris and the Communist Party in Syria after his return home, but even so he was not a Communist himself.

A debate exists between the Western and Arab schools of thought on this point, however. Some members of the Western school, Walter Z. Laqueur, for example, claim that Aflaq was in fact a Communist and, furthermore, that he was one of the leaders of the Syrian Communist Party but left it in 1943 to found his own party. According to Gordon H. Torrey and John Devlin, Aflaq became a Communist while he was studying in Paris but left the party when he returned to Syria. However, Arab scholars, as well as Aflaq himself, have denied this. Aflaq and Bitar admitted their admiration of the Communist ideology, but their divergence from it was basic and essential-- they were nationalists, and the Communists were not.⁸ As Michael W. Suleiman says, "They clearly and loudly abandoned any sympathy for the Communists upon discovering their opportunism and lack of interest in Arab welfare."⁹ Aflaq stated in an interview, "I was never a Communist for one moment in my life."¹⁰ Khadduri agrees with Abou Jaber

⁸Michael W. Suleiman, Political Parties in Lebanon: The Challenge of a Fragmented Political Culture (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 122.

⁹Suleiman, p. 122.

¹⁰Abou Jaber, p. 29.

when he says, "Aflaq did not join the Communist Party; yet he seemed to admire very much the Marxists and the discipline and solidarity of the Communist Party as a political party organized magnificently."¹¹

This admiration caused Aflaq later to adopt the Communist Party's type of organization and structure for the Ba'th Party. He approved of Marx and of his criticism and analysis of social and economic conditions. Nevertheless, Aflaq was a nationalist and thus opposed the concept of internationalism. For some time, he fluctuated between Marxism and nationalism before he arrived at the possibility of merging them into one ideology of Arab nationalism.

In 1932 Aflaq returned to Syria and worked as a high school teacher with Salah Bitar, with whom he developed a close friendship. During this period both Aflaq and Bitar began to criticize social and political conditions in Syria, views which found a place in the student milieu. At the same time they contacted nationalist leaders. In 1940 both resigned from their teaching positions, protesting against the intervention of the state in the freedom of educational institutions.

Aflaq preferred and supported the national bloc rather than the left wing in Syria. His unsuccessful

¹¹Khadduri, Arab Muasyron, pp. 376-77.

campaign in the parliamentary election of 1942, however, caused him to turn politically to the left. He believed that the nationalist bloc did not support him, but the left was no better for him; in 1947 he failed again in the parliamentary election.¹² It seems that this defeat was one of the motives for his formal establishment of the Ba'th Party. In 1949 Aflaq ran as a Ba'th representative in yet another parliamentary election and failed a third time. These successive failures, three times in less than six years, engendered his belief in the hopelessness of the democratic process, in spite of the fact that these last elections had been "fixed" by the government in power. After these failures, Aflaq advocated the need for revolution and struggle to activate social and political change and, from that time on, refused to run again in any election.

Aflaq was, like other active nationalists, imprisoned many times. He was jailed in 1939 by the French and in 1948, 1949,¹³ 1952, and 1954 by the governments of the

¹²Ibid., p. 376.

¹³Aflaq's jailing in 1949 was a significant event in the Party's life because some believed that while he was in prison he wrote to the president Hussni Al-Zaim asking for a pardon; in return he promised to stay away from the political scene. This letter, which was later published by the Al-Zaim regime, shook Aflaq's and the Party's image. The Ba'thists criticized and denied it; yet the Party took no action with regard to it. Aflaq ignored it and avoided talking about it. This silence

various regimes which succeeded the French in the course of Syrian political history. In spite of frequent imprisonment, Aflaq became a hero. In fact, his prison experiences and troubles enhanced his status because jail and exile were considered to be a kind of lofty striving against a system which lacked public support, a struggle which even indirectly helped to overthrow that system.¹⁴

Aflaq's only official position was as Minister of Education in 1949, and not more than three months after he assumed this post he realized that he was not suited to an executive position. He decided not to accept any other office; instead he would maintain his political role in the Party as adviser and his directive role as Secretary General and Party philosopher without assuming any direct responsibility in the political life of Syria or Iraq. This made him the Party philosopher rather than the Party leader. Another possible reason for Aflaq's refusal of

caused some Party members to lose some of their "togetherness" and some of their respect for the Party command. Many people felt that Ba'th began to be like any other party, accepting compromises and political games. See Sami Al-Jundi, p. 55. For the Aflaq letter see Mohammed Abd-Al-Rahim, Ghiyadat Hizb Al-Ba'th Al-Murtada [The Defection of the Ba'th Party Command] (Cairo: Al-Dar Al-Qawmiyyah li Al-Tiba'ah Al-Nashr, 1963), pp. 6-7. Concerning the possibility that this letter was forged and that Aflaq was forced to sign it, see Sami Al-Jundi, pp. 52-56. See also Khadduri, Arab Muasyron, pp. 378-79 on the same subject.

¹⁴Khadduri, Arab Muasyron, p. 379.

leadership was the fact that, although he was a prominent personality, he was not an effective speaker.¹⁵ His reluctance to take sides on issues and his refusal to accept responsibility left the Party an area of conflict and struggle for prominence among other Ba'thists. Some scholars believe that one of the main reasons the Ba'thists sought union with the Nasser regime in 1958 was the lack of strong leadership in the Party¹⁶ and a desire to publicize their Party on a national level through an association with the dynamic, well-known, and powerful figure of Nasser.

In spite of Aflaq's apparent lack of leadership ability, the respect and admiration of Ba'thists for him enabled him to control the Party as adviser and philosopher. Eventually, however, after the breakup with Egypt in 1961, he lost that control. He was in favor of union, but the other two Ba'th leaders, Bitar and Akram Al-Hourani,¹⁷ supported the breakup, which split the Ba'th leadership and confused the lower levels in the Party.

¹⁵The importance of speaking ability is obvious for any leader, especially among the Arabs and the Syrians in particular, who prefer leaders with a good knowledge of and skill in handling the spoken Arabic language.

¹⁶Khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab World, pp. 169-70.

¹⁷Founder of the Arab Socialist Party, which merged with the Ba'th Party in 1953.

Aflaq perhaps rejected sole leadership because he believed in the "collective leadership"¹⁸ of the Party. In 1964 he felt that this leadership in the National Command had lost control over the Party, so he resigned from his position as Secretary General and left for Brazil.

Aflaq opposed military control in the Party and in the country as a whole, although he believed in the importance of the role of the military in stabilizing any regime in the Arab world. He declared that if a military man wanted to work in politics he should resign from his post in the army.

Aflaq returned to Iraq in 1968 at the command of the civilian regime which had been established there. He tried to contact Ba'thists in Syria, ignoring the Party Regional Command leadership which was in power at that time; this, perhaps, was one of the reasons why the Syrian regime sentenced him to death in 1971, a decision which was later rescinded.

A significant shift in Aflaq's concepts which had occurred from the time of his departure to Brazil to his return to Iraq was his view of the "vanguard." Until the early sixties, Aflaq's opinion was that the intellectuals--teachers and students--should guide the population. He

¹⁸In spite of Aflaq's denial of Western thought, many of his concepts were adopted from Western ideologies, especially from the Communists.

adopted Lenin's concept of the vanguard, but until then he opposed any cooperation with the Communists. However, upon his return to Iraq, he stated that workers and laborers¹⁹ were the Party "vanguard," thus applying a Marxist concept. Furthermore, he approved cooperation with other Marxists and with the Soviet Union, although this did not mean that he stopped advocating the necessity of Arab unity and nationalism.

Aflaq now lives in Beirut, which causes scholars such as Khadduri to believe that he may not approve of some Iraqi political attitudes and therefore prefers to stay in Lebanon. Aflaq's complex personality is described thus by Abou Jaber:

His mild manner and his austere visage and behavior are reflected in his political action. He dislikes extremes and is a middle-of-the-road man in the fullest sense of the word.

Aflaq is both the strongest and the weakest point in the Ba'th Party. His strength is drawn from the aura of romanticism surrounding him and the respect he commands from both his followers and advisers. In a society where political positions are sought after as a means of furthering one's financial ambitions and prestige, Aflaq's attitude is uncommon.²⁰

¹⁹Michael Aflaq, Nyktat Al-Biydayah-Ahadytti Baad Al-Khamas Min Hozeyran [The Starting Point: Conversation After the Fifth of June], 3rd ed. (Beirut: Moassasat Al-Arabiyyah lil Dyrasat wa Al-Nashr, 1973), pp. 77-81, 121-72.

²⁰Abou Jaber, pp. 36, 37.

Aflaq's mild personality and hesitance were one of the weakest points in the Party and thus contributed to the climate in which factions later emerged.

Because of the similarity of his personal experiences and resultant political views to Aflaq's--experiences and views which caused him to become one of the co-founders of the Ba'th Party--Salah Bitar's life will be discussed here briefly. Salah El-Din Al-Bitar was born in 1912 to a middle class family, Sunni Moslem of Damascus, Syria. Like Aflaq, he was involved in school from an early age in political activities against the French mandate. He pursued his high school education in Damascus, then left for France in 1928 to study physics at the Sorbonne. He returned in 1932 to teach in public school with Aflaq. During these years Bitar was impressed by Aflaq's thought. Together they waged a campaign against imperialism, political corruption, and poor social conditions. Their best audience was comprised of students and a few intellectuals. Bitar, with Aflaq, protested against governmental intervention in the freedom of educational institutions and in educational programs and methods. After their resignations, both men faced unemployment and financial trouble, but that did not prevent either of them from advocating their ideology.

In addition to his role as co-founder of the Ba'th Party, Bitar assumed many positions, including those of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (1956-1958) and Prime Minister (1963-1966). Bitar, unlike Aflaq, was active in political life and played a leading part in forming the United Arab Republic.²¹ He was less idealistic than Aflaq and "less inclined towards doctrinairism."²² Bitar's realism caused him to adopt the "guided democracy" of Sukarno as a method rather than a parliamentary system²³ because he believed that the Arabian countries were not yet ready for full democracy; this was clear in Ba'th's definition of freedom, which will be given later in this study. Bitar was a clever, calm politician, even though he lacked the romanticism of Aflaq.

Aflaq and Bitar, after resigning from their teaching positions to become enmeshed in politics in 1940, were thinking of establishing a party, but this idea became more insistent in response to three events which occurred in the Arabian countries. First, Rashid Ali Al-Kailani unsuccessfully staged a coup in 1941 in Iraq when he rebelled against the British and the British-controlled

²¹Glubb, p. 226.

²²Mohammed Sahfi Al-Agwani, "The Ba'th: A Study in Contemporary Arab Politics," in The Contemporary Middle East: Tradition and Innovation, p. 456.

²³Al-Agwani, p. 456.

Iraqi monarchy. The coup d'état ended with more suppression of the Iraqi nationalist power and the return of monarchy to the country. During this revolt Aflaq and Bitar formed a committee to aid Iraq. Although the rule of Al-Kailani was short-lived, it inspired the nationalist movement in the Arab world.²⁴ The second event was the annexation of Alexandretta to Turkey in the late 1930's when the French decided simply to give away this part of the Syrian land.²⁵ Third, in 1943 the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Riyadh Al-Sulh, declared his intention of revising the constitution to add amendments which would ensure the independence of the Lebanese people after the French promised that they would give them freedom. Al-Sulh presented these amendments, which were subsequently passed by the chamber of the Lebanese Cabinet. The French, however, reacted severely to the passing of these amendments, imprisoning the Lebanese president Bishara Al-Khuri, Prime Minister Al-Sulh, and all the elected cabinet. They cancelled the amendments and suspended the constitution. Finally, under British and American pressure, the French agreed to return the constitution and to hold a new

²⁴ Ahmed Tarabein, Al-Wahida Al-Arabiah Fi Tarekh Al-Mashraq Al-Mo'asser 1800-1958 [Arab Unity in the History of the Contemporary Arab East 1800-1958] (Salmia: Maktabat Dar Althaqafa Al-Arabia, [n.d.]), pp. 212-25.

²⁵ Suleiman, p. 121.

election, which, in both Syria and Lebanon, was won by the nationalists.²⁶

These events, in addition to the French mandatory oppression and other social and political problems, motivated both Aflaq and Bitar to meet with other young intellectuals²⁷ and to agree to organize openly a party to participate in Syrian resistance against the French after Syria gained formal independence.

The first task was to gain the complete independence of Syria from French colonization. The Party leaders called for the people to organize and fight the French in a nationwide struggle. During this period, the Party was forced to follow underground methods to avoid French tyranny and oppression of nationalistic elements, which included the repeated jailing of some Party members. Finally, Syria obtained its independence in 1946. In the same year the Party issued its newspaper, Al-Ba'th. In April of 1947 the Party held its first convention, at which the Party constitution was discussed and approved.

²⁶William Spencer, Political Evolution in the Middle East (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), pp. 176-81; and From the Aggression on Lebanese Independence, statement by Michael Aflaq and Salah Bitar (Damascus: In.p.J, 1943), p. 14.

²⁷This group included, among others, Dr. Madhat Bitar (the cousin of Salah Bitar), Dr. Ali Jabir, Dr. Abdullah Abdul-Daim, Dr. Wahib El-Ghanim, Dr. Jamal Al-Attasi, Dr. Munif Al-Razzaz, Dr. Musa Rizik, Badi' Al-Kasm, Sami Al-Droubi, and Abdul Birr 'Iyun Al-Sud. See Abou Jaber, p. 56.

The First Convention of the Ba'th Party

In 1947 the Ba'th Party was growing in Syria, especially among the elite.²⁸ Most of its members were under thirty years old, full of enthusiasm and hope that their party would offer new concepts to political life in the Arabian area. Although the Party won popularity in Syria and the countries bordering it--Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon--it did not have any branches in these countries or, in fact, any branches outside Syria. The exception was a small group formed by students of the American University of Beirut who attended the convention, and Jordanian, Iraqi, and Lebanese students who were studying in Syria at that time.

Until 1954 the Ba'th Party was still one unified organization in that it did not have Qiyada Al-Qawmia,²⁹ a National Command, separate from the Qiyada Al-Qutriá, Regional Command. Jordanian or Iraqi delegates, for instance, attended the meeting in the same capacity as they would have if they had been delegates from cities in

²⁸This "elite" consisted mainly of teachers, university students, and a few bureaucrats and traders.

²⁹Different translations for the word "Qawmia" are given, such as those supplied by Suleiman in his book (p. 124), "international command" and "national command," since the word refers to the Ba'th organization or activity in several or all Arab countries. To avoid confusing or misleading the reader, in this study the term "national command" will be used.

Syria. The first branch of the Party outside Syria was established in Jordan after the first convention in late 1947. In early 1948 the Jordanian branch was considered to be simply a branch of the Party, not constituting a Regional Command. The Party headquarters was in Syria.

The first convention in 1947 was attended by approximately two hundred members. Invitations were not extended to any branch or country, and the convention was open to anyone who could be present. The purpose of the first convention was to end the contention over some Ba'thist principles and concepts. In this period of the Party's life, new visions and directions began to appear. The Ba'thists started to take differing stands, dividing into moderates and extremists, activists and nonactivists, on issues such as religious groups and foreign policy, especially as these issues concerned Arab unity. Socialism created contradictory opinions among the members, but this dissension was not strong enough to split them apart. On one hand, some of the extremists in the Ba'th Party were impressed and influenced by the socialist and Communist thought and system. This influence affected their stand, for instance, on foreign policy. The Communist attitude, founded on suspicion, dominated their actions and reactions, especially toward the West. On the other hand, some of the Ba'th moderates either maintained a

conservative mentality or at least preferred not to adopt new attitudes and concepts. On the whole, the Party attitude toward foreign affairs (expressed in Article 22 of the Ba'th Constitution) stressed the humanitarian aspects of peace, freedom, and progress in Ba'th's pursuit of foreign policy.³⁰

The first convention and constitution sought to rid nationalism of imported concepts which accompanied the rise of Nazi power. Nazism had found fertile ground in the Arab world. The traditional nationalism of the Nazis, which was based on a glorification of ancestry and of the past, combined with the war against the Allies who were hated by the Arabs, influenced many Arab intellectuals to adopt elements of Nazi thought. These Arabs accepted Nazi racism along with the demand for national independence against imperialism.

The Ba'th starting point was different from that of movements or beliefs which were divorced from science and the rational approach. Ba'thists, criticizing other modernizers who adopted imported concepts, believed that Arab nationalism should not be defined according to other ideologies because the Arabs had a unique personality as

³⁰Nidal Al-Ba'th Fi Sabil Al-Wahda-Al-Huriyya Al-Ishtirakiyya [The Struggle of the Ba'th for Unity, Freedom and Socialism], Part 1, 1943-1949 (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliah, [n.d.]), pp. 176-77.

a nation which demanded concepts suited to their own particular needs. Specifically, some of the Arab intellectuals outside the Ba'th Party were impressed and influenced by Nazi tenets which offered, as they believed, an easy solution to the Arab problem. These intellectuals declared that Arab backwardness was a result of conspiracy among imperialists and newcomers, such as the Turks, who had become Arabs through the Arabization process. The Ba'th Party, however, took a clear stand against all ideas built on Nazi thinking. In the Constitution (the third principle, second article), ratified at the first convention, the value of humanistic civilization was stressed.

Ba'th conceived a link between humanism and nationalism in its thought; stating that true, developed nationalism was necessarily accompanied by humanism. Nationalism separated from humanity was untrue nationalism. According to Ba'th's concept of human good will, a certain environment was conducive to developing this good will in the service of humanity. On the other hand, pursuing chauvinism or internationalism was considered to be inhumane. The former was inhumane in stressing one nationality at the expense of all others; the latter in abolishing nationalism in order to create internationalism. Bitar and Aflaq did not seek to advance an international theory, but their concern for the rest of humanity was reflected

in the development of their thought from the part (nationalism) to reach to the whole (humanism).

In this first convention, some controversy took place over government intervention in the private sector. Some extremists advocated increased intervention while moderates favored limited governmental intervention. Socialism, however, was the only major point of contention at the convention. There were two points of view: some delegates were not serious about applying socialism at all; others wished to adopt and apply a brand of socialism which would be suited to the Arabs and would be "Arab socialism."

The proponents of this second viewpoint felt that socialism should not obstruct personal freedom and that freedom should be granted to everyone. For instance, if a factory owner did not exploit his workers, his freedom of enterprise should be guaranteed because persons who were fair exercised talent and inventiveness, contributing to the progress of the Watan, "country." Such persons could not be found in systems that did not guarantee freedom to the members of their societies. The Ba'th Party, then, did not accept the socialism advocated by the socialist and Communist camps but believed instead in national socialism.

The Ba'th Party Constitution ensured personal freedom and considered it to be the basic foundation in the

building of a new society. The Constitution did not call for a republican system as a means of rule but instead stated that the system should be a constitutional parliament. In this way, the Party could avoid the obstacles it would face in a monarchical system and could spread to countries ruled by monarchies.

The Ba'th Party's Ideology

Because of the changes which evolved in the practice of Ba'th's ideology and the different versions of it which were espoused by developing factions among the Ba'thists, it is not easy to study this aspect of the Party. The Constitution endorsed at the first convention, a skeleton of the Party's ideology, illustrated the Party philosophy without explaining or tackling the system and rules to be followed by the Party; "the Party ideologues were made to look like theorists without a system."³¹ The Constitution intentionally left many issues ambiguous, to be translated later on with different meanings. The Ba'thists explained that issues such as socialism were not defined in detail purposely to enable the Party to respond flexibly to all situations and systems and to prevent the Party from becoming static, to make politics spring from the place and nature of the country in which they would be

³¹Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," p. 462.

applied. Since the mid-sixties, however, many prominent Ba'thists³² have realized that they had been mistaken about this concept of flexibility or at least had not handled it correctly and firmly. The absence of clear thinking and specific programs created conflicts and allowed factions and different versions of the Party's ideology to flourish.

Aflaq, as spokesman for Ba'th, stated many times that the Party's ideology did not seek geographical expansion like Communism; being peculiarly Arabian, it depended on the Arabian personality. The Arabs needed an ideology which reflected the Arabian environment, nature, and soul. The Arabs, as Aflaq stated, "are not like any other nation of secondary importance. Thus they cannot accept an alien doctrine. They cannot imitate; they must create."³³ Arabs did not proclaim that their nation was better than others but simply that it was different.³⁴ The Arabs as a nation presented to the world one of the greatest religions to contribute to humanity, Islam. The Arabs were a nation which had had a great civilization in the past, and their land was the home of Judaism and of Christianity as well

³²Sami Al-Jundi, Sa'aun Hamadi, Michael Aflaq.

³³Aflaq, Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th, p. 195.

³⁴See Leonard Binder, "Radical Reform Nationalism in Syria and Egypt," The Muslim World, 9, No. 2 (April 1959), 102.

as of Islam--the world's three great religions--a fact which was a great source of national pride to them. The Arabs constituted a great nation because they possessed all the characteristics of one nation, "a common feeling, mentality, origin, race, language, spirit, history, and education."³⁵ The Arab awakening was built on a sound, strong foundation, spiritually rich and respected, and guaranteed man's freedom and independence.

Thus Aflaq severely criticized modernizers who depended upon or borrowed their ideologies from the West.³⁶ He attacked these ideologies, saying that neither capitalism nor Communism was good for the Arabs. These ideologies and approaches had been adopted by the West as a result of the evolution of Western societies and therefore suited them. Such concepts, on the other hand, were alien to Arabian societies and did not suit them for the same reason that they did suit Western societies. Nor was the application of these Western ideologies clear enough to be absorbed by the Arabs; the attempts of both the European imperialists and the Arab modernizers who came into power afterwards to apply capitalist and Communist systems failed because they did not take

³⁵Aflaq, Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th, p. 77.

³⁶For Aflaq, the "West" also included the Soviet Union.

the different structure of the Arab countries into consideration.

In Ba'th's opinion, both capitalist and Communist patterns were equally undesirable for the Arab nation. Arab imitation of the capitalist system had failed internally to secure social and economic advancement. In addition, some local capitalists had allied with imperialist powers in exploiting the Arabs and their land. Ba'th also rejected Communism because, as Aflaq explained, "Communism treats disease with disease."³⁷ Communism, too, was a threat to the Arab, his thought, and his spirit. Although this system might have met the Soviet Union's basic needs, it was bound to destroy the future of Arab thought if it was adopted in the Arab society because the Arab nation would then depend on the Soviets rather than upon itself for solutions when it was confronted with problems. The Ba'thists' consistent opposition to Communism reflected their belief that this system was alien to everything Arab in ignoring nationalism and that the U.S.S.R. would always pursue its interests at the expense of the Arabs.

Ba'th believed that imperialist-capitalist powers cooperated with Communism to crush the nationalist aspiration in the Arab world. There were, however,

³⁷Aflaq, Ma'rakat Al-Masir Al-Wahid, p. 10.

similarities between Arab socialism and Western socialism. Both movements, for instance, advanced similar programs to achieve social justice and eliminate the impoverishment of the working class. The differences between the two movements lay largely in the kinds of problems they faced in domestic and foreign affairs. Western socialism, according to Aflaq, opposed nationalism and religion, an opposition obviously radically different from the Ba'thist position. The Islamic religion was, in fact, an integral part of Arab life. In the Arab world, Islam was a "real picture and a perfect immortal symbol of the nature of the Arab spirit, its rich, vital, and honorable guidance."³⁸

Islam led and unified the Arabs under its banner when they were no more than tribes, creating a great nation with a glorified civilization. Under imperialism, this great nation went through centuries of backwardness, weakness, and division and subsequently felt the need to depend on more than religion to unify the Arabian countries and to enable them to be independent. Arab nationalism now replaced Islam as the unifying factor. Arab nationalism did not mean, however, to ignore or abolish religion. Ba'thists believed that there were two conditions necessary for a revolution to succeed, one spiritual and the other material. The first had to

³⁸Aflaq, Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th, p. 49.

do with the spiritual belief in the heart of the revolutionaries; the second was concerned with the external and internal circumstances of the countries, such as growth and sound economic conditions. If Ba'th ignored the first condition and emphasized the condition, there would be no true revolution as long as there were no true supporters who believed in it. The Party felt that religion was the true expression of man's humanity, and, as such, "it could be developed, changed, altered, but could never vanish."³⁹ This was Ba'th's solution to the problem of excluding or including Islam as an element in Arabian nationalism. According to Ba'th,

There is no fear that Arab nationalism will conflict with religion because, like religion, it springs from the heart and comes from the will of God. Both walk hand-in-hand--especially if religion (Islam) represents the genius of (Arab) nationalism and harmonizes with its nature.⁴⁰

Arab Nationalism

The chief goal of most of the parties and movements in the Arabian countries, especially that of Ba'th, was Arab nationalism. Ba'th explained that Arab unity was not Arab nationalism, as was commonly thought, but was rather a component of nationalism in this period. Ba'th nationalist theory for the Arabian nation in this stage of its history was built on achieving the three

³⁹Ibid., p. 212.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 210-12.

revolutionary goals--freedom, unity, and socialism. Ba'th believed that a different nationalist theory would emerge according to specific needs in any stage of history to provide what was lacking in Arabian societies; the necessary aims were now freedom, unity, and socialism. Arab nationalism was profound and wide enough to contain all the nationalist theories and their aims. As Aflaq stated, "Nationalism is not a theory but the source of theories; it is not an invention of the mind but its nursemaid. There is not any contention between nationalism and freedom since it is freedom if it is freed from obstacles."⁴¹

That is why, when the controversy over Arabian socialism became the prominent issue occupying Arab intellectuals and politicians, Ba'th emphasized nationalist goals over socialism. In his writings Aflaq asserted that "unity takes precedence (in our principles) over socialism."⁴² In another passage he added, "Our socialism thus is a means to resurrect our nationalism and our people and is the door through which our Arab nation enters history anew."⁴³

The Ba'thists looked forward to one Arab nation that would include all Arab countries from the Atlantic

⁴¹Ibid., p. 119.

⁴²Aflaq, Ma'rakat Al-Masir Al-Wahid, p. 61.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 30-33.

Ocean to the Arabian Gulf. Overall nationalism was to be the sole tie in the unified Arab state. The slogan of the Party, as prefaced in the Constitution, was as follows:

One Arab nation with an immortal mission.
The Arab Ba'th Party,⁴⁴ a popular, national revolutionary movement striving for Arab unity, freedom, and socialism.⁴⁵

The Ba'th Party's duty was to unify and change the entire Arab world. It saw its function as that of Al-Taliyah, the "vanguard," of Al-Sha'b, the "masses." The link between Arab socialism and Arab nationalism as advanced by the Ba'th Party was the theory of "battle on two fronts," the external struggle against imperialism, Marxism, reactionary governments, and capitalism, and for unity, and the struggle against such internal maladies as poverty, illiteracy, and social injustice.

Ba'th's concept of nationalism was not merely the result of certain economic, social, and political elements or of economic evolution as the Communist concept explained socialism, nor was it like the French concept of a contract

⁴⁴The name of the Ba'th Party was changed to the Arabian Ba'th Socialist Party after merging with the Socialist Party in 1953.

⁴⁵Nidal Al-Ba'th, Part 1, 1943-1949, "Ba'th Constitution," p. 172. This slogan appeared first in early Ba'thist publications even before the Party was officially organized and on Party stationery and is now the slogan of the present Syrian government.

among a group of people to live together and establish a society. Arab nationalism differed also from the law concept of citizenship followed in the United States. In Ba'th's opinion, citizenship came about as a result of nationalism, not vice versa. Nationalism was not subject to common rules like those observed in the Western systems mentioned above. Ba'th explained nationalism as a feeling developed through centuries and generations. This feeling of love and good will could not be measured; it was born with the Arabian man. It was his fate because it was his identity by birth and thus not a matter of choice.⁴⁶ It was, as the essence of humanity, profoundly felt in Arabs' souls. On this point Aflaq's romantic nationalism is shown at its best:

Nationalism, like every kind of love, fills the heart with joy and spreads hope in the soul; he who feels it would wish to share it with all people. He who feels its sanctity is led at the same time to venerate it in all people; it is, then, the best way to a true humanity.⁴⁷

To achieve the goals of Arab nationalism, Ba'th believed that the Arabs had to acquire the three pillars of their nationalist theory, Arab unity, freedom, and

⁴⁶Statement by Michael Aflaq, "Al-Qawmiyya Khadar M'ohhabab" ["Nationalism Is Our Destiny"], in Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th, pp. 47-50.

⁴⁷Statement by Michael Aflaq, "Al-Qawmiyya Hobb Gabl Kul Shay" ["Nationalism Is Love Before Anything"], in Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th, p. 111.

socialism. Arab unity had been the dream and unrealized goal of the Arabs since their division in 1918, but, before Ba'th made Arab unity achievable, the Arabs did not know how to crystallize this idea. Unity, for the Ba'thists, differed from the traditional concept of merely gathering the Arabian parts into one political entity. The Ba'th revolutionary concept was one of struggle against division and the differences that this division created with regard to mentality, interests, and political, economic, and social conditions. Ba'th linked unity with the other revolutionary goals, for the first time placing unity in the heart of the struggle for the Arabs' freedom and political, economic, and social rights. Arab unity was economic, military, social, and public as well as political, joining the Arabs by the same feeling, interests, outlook, and future.

Freedom, according to Ba'th, meant liberating the Arabian man's true will. It was an inner freedom which would liberate his soul from psychological, social, political, and economic chains, helping him to reach the state of full consciousness and thus enabling him to discover himself and his society. The "will" and "consciousness" would relieve the country of external danger, imperialism and corruption, reactionaries, illiteracy, and backwardness. This concept of freedom was different from that of

the Western Europeans, who did not believe in restrictions on freedom. Ba'th granted freedom of speech, assembly, belief, and art in Article 17 of the Constitution but at the same time restricted it, for it was not to be a freedom without responsibility which would lead to anarchy.

Although the Ba'th Constitution preached and granted freedom to Arabian men, this freedom was in reality limited. The state controlled education and directed every aspect of life (Article 44), which Ba'th justified by citing lack of national fulfillment and unity and by saying that the Arabs were living in a critical time in their history. Arabian societies, Ba'th asserted, were passing through a transitional period during which the elite would lead them until they achieved union and stability; then, when the Arabian homeland was ready, full freedom would be granted to everyone. The Arab countries would respect this freedom and would at that time be strong enough to preserve their unity.

Ba'th socialism was still the most controversial issue in the Party ideology. At the first convention, as stated earlier, the Ba'thists did not agree on the extent and degree of state intervention which should be allowed in the private sector, and the convention ended without clearly defining a theory of Arab socialism which would be complex enough to suit the proponents of

the differing viewpoints on the matter. Ba'th philosopher Aflaq, although moderate in his stand, was undecided about socialism, which increased the intensity of this debate.

Due to Aflaq's uncertainty about socialism, a slight change in his opinion appeared in 1957 in an introduction which he wrote to an article by Munif Al-Razzaz, a prominent Ba'thist, about socialism as a way of life rather than merely as an economic element. It was not until 1960, however, that Aflaq explained that the Ba'th Party had to study socialism more extensively because it "had not discerned socialism sufficiently or conclusively."⁴⁸

The Ba'th concept of socialism sprang from the perceived Arab need for it in this state of history. Until this time the Ba'th concept of socialism was limited to an economic system and was not viewed as an all-encompassing ideology and a way of life. Ba'thists had declared that socialism was not a system which would regulate every aspect of human existence. Ba'th socialism was humanistic even in its function as an economic concept, according to which the economic system was to be organized to prevent exploitation and to achieve justice

⁴⁸Suleiman, p. 145. See also Michael Aflaq, Al-Ba'th wa Al-Ishtirakiyyah [Ba'th and Socialism] (Beirut: Moassasat Al-Arabiyyah lil Dyrasat wa Al-Nashr, 1973), pp. 147-48.

and the welfare of the state. Arabian socialism was "concern[ed] with redistribution of wealth in the Arab homeland."^{4 9}

Arabian socialism differed from Communism on many essential points. First, Arabian socialism was not the product of class struggle and proletariat revolution but a way to redistribute the wealth of the country. The Communist philosophy, established on materialism, explained the evolution of history according to economic factors, whereas Ba'th believed that spiritual and humanitarian factors also had a great effect on humanity. Second, Ba'th's brand of socialism was realistically developed for practice in the Arab homeland, whereas Communism sought international expansion. Arabian socialism further differed from Communism in that it did not oppress man's freedom but instead protected it. In addition, Communists looked to Moscow for leadership, while Arab nationalists stressed socialism and justice with the maintenance of first place for Arab nationalism.

In spite of these differences between Arab socialism and Communism, however, Party division and the instability of its rule in both Iraq and in Syria encouraged the "radical" Ba'thists to request an acceleration of modernization and economic progress by following the

^{4 9}Suleiman, p. 145.

Soviet model and by adopting more radical policies in applying socialism.

In analyzing the Arab environment in hopes of finding the reason for Arab backwardness, the problem which vexed the Ba'thist scholar was large-scale corruption. Weakness in the Arabian society was not merely the result of imperialism, to be found in the institutions, government, laws, and tradition; it was also present in the Arabian individual. Corruption penetrated his soul and influenced his thought, education, and stands on issues in society. To solve the problem of the Arabians and pave the way to achieve Ba'th's goal, Arabs needed Inqilab, "revolution."⁵⁰

Inqilab was to be a far-reaching change in the political, social, economic, educational, and institutional values in Arab society. Most importantly, this Inqilab was to occur in the Arabian man to change his views of life, values, and beliefs. The power which would agitate the Inqilab was the truth, the good will of the people.

Many Arab nationalists proclaimed that unity, freedom, and socialism were the necessary means for

⁵⁰Although many scholars translate Inqilab as "coup," this does not seem to be the meaning which Ba'th had in mind because the meaning of Inqilab was to change entire values and beliefs of the society, as explained here.

Arab nationalism, but Inqilab as a means of change distinguished the Ba'th Party from all others. Ba'thists did not believe in slow evolutionary methods. They agreed with Hanna Arendt's argument that "revolution [was] a sweeping, fundamental change not only in political organization but also in the social structure, economic property control, and the predominant myth of the social order."⁵¹ They advocated revolutionary change throughout Arab society, for, without this revolution, the resurrection of the Arab nation from stagnation would be meaningless. The Ba'thists did not, however, intend to discard the past completely. Arabian nationalism had emerged from the experiences of the past, and Arabs were not to forget or revolt against the past but instead against their own backwardness and weakness. The past, in fact, was to be the stimulus for renewal of the great Arab civilization through the Arabs' ability to progress and modernize. Men were needed to achieve this Inqilab, and for the Ba'thists these men were Al-Taliyah, the "elite," or "vanguard," who would lead the Arabians to modernity and progress.

Only the few elite were aware of the national ills, and only those who had the will and faith to accept

⁵¹Carl Leiden and Karl M. Schmitt, The Politics of Violence: Revolution in the Modern World (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), pp. 4-5.

change could struggle to correct them. Thus, during the period of Inqilab, of complete change, they must lead the nation.⁵² Justification of the elitist idea of the Party rested on the widespread illiteracy, poverty, and lack of political consciousness in most Arabian social classes. This elite, the vanguard, Al-Taliyah, was to rally the Arabs towards a new, modernized society.

Party Organization and Structure

Although the Ba'th Party had formulated its idea of Inqilab and the theoretical means of achieving it, the first Party convention mentioned little about structure or organization. It provided that the Party should establish branches in Arab cities but did not mention the specific function of these branches, thus giving them the freedom to act alone, as shall be seen later. The Constitution also stated in General Principles (Article 2), "The headquarters of the Party is for the time being located in Damascus. It can be transferred to any other Arab city if the national interest should require it."⁵³ The Constitution did not, however, specify exactly what the national interest was and who would define it.

⁵²Aflaq, Fi Sabil Al-Ba'th, pp. 185-86.

⁵³Abou Jaber, "Appendix B--Constitution of the Ba'th Party," in The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: History, Ideology and Organization, p. 167.

The need for organization was not the only problem in this period of the Party's history. The Ba'thists who were communicating with the people at large were staging demonstrations and direct contact with the masses, and thus it may be that they did not discuss the matter of organization in their first convention or in their Constitution because they felt that they were dealing with other, more vital problems. After the Ba'th Party merged with the Socialist Party of Akram Al-Hourani, however, a more formal and definite organization became necessary.

Ba'thists organized their Party according to their concept of Arab nationalism. The entire Arab homeland, Al-Watan Al-Arabia, was represented by the Qiyada Al-Qawmia, National Command, the highest legislative and direct organ in the Party; Al-Watan Al-Arabia was divided into regions, or Al-Qatar. Qatar was the country, and these countries (Aqatar) were represented by the Qiyada Al-Qutria, Regional Command. Each Regional Command was divided into Shu'ba, district branches, and each branch or Shu'ba was divided into Firaqa, or groups of cells; every Firaqa consisted of a number of Khaleqa, single cells, which comprised the lowest layer of the structure. This pyramid structure, designed to link and tighten all the layers as one unit, reflected Aflaq's admiration

of the Communist Party's organization. Ba'thists considered it to be the best structure for their activities, which were carried on secretly in most of the Arab countries to avoid persecution from different regimes. Because of this secrecy, it is hard to estimate the number of Ba'thists in the Arabian area.

At that time the Party membership consisted exclusively of schoolteachers and students; although Aflaq's concept of the vanguard elite had changed, it was still the Party of the elite. As Laqueur states, "It [the Ba'th] is very popular among schoolteachers, students, and Palestinian refugees, and in certain rural areas; it has not succeeded as much as one would have expected among workers."⁵⁴

After Aflaq's changing concept of the elite vanguard,⁵⁵ many new members joined the Party. This change in the ranks later became a source of trouble to the Ba'thists, for often either the new members were not well indoctrinated or they used the Party for their own benefit. In these cases, the Party lost more than it gained from its new members.

⁵⁴Walter Z. Laqueur, The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1958), p. 124.

⁵⁵In 1950, discussions were carried on among Party leaders to make Aflaq change his concept of the vanguard to the activist mass political party. Bitar presented and supported this change. See Suleiman, p. 133.

CHAPTER III

SYRIA'S UNION WITH EGYPT AND THE SUBSEQUENT FRAGMENTATION OF THE BA'TH PARTY

Now that Ba'th's ideology and its organization in Syria have been briefly reviewed, this portion of the discussion will concern the internal conditions which prompted Syria's union with Egypt, the subsequent breakup of the two countries, and how this breakup fragmented the Ba'th Party.

The Arabs' defeat in Palestine put the Party's ideology in the limelight. Ba'th had warned the Arabs in 1947 about the Israelis and asked for a unified Arabian action, ignoring Western promises and false hopes inspired by nations which would later let the Arabs down. The Palestinian defeat fulfilled this warning and added supporters to the Party.

The Party's conflict with the military dictatorship in Syria in the years 1949-1954 marked a turning point in its history, as did the union with Egypt in 1958. Ba'th's popularity reached its peak in 1958 but fell apart in 1961 after the breakup of the union.

The Ba'th Party leadership stood firm to achieve its goals through action based on its ideology. For that

reason, Ba'th took a different stand from those of other Arab movements or parties. Ba'th had waged a severe campaign against the Arab League since its establishment in 1945, pointing to it as a means of intensifying the division of the Arabs, and the League's Charter in fact proved this accusation by recognizing the Arabian countries' separate independence.¹ The Charter furthered this division by emphasizing sovereignty of state and not of people. In addition, Ba'th criticized the League's weakness on three counts. First, the emergence of the Arab League was itself clouded. The British Foreign Minister declared the need for the League to unify and represent the Arabs, but, at the same time, many of the Arabian countries in the Arab League were obligated under agreements with Britain, which prevented them from making decisions without British approval. The Ba'th Party believed that Arab League countries had to have their full independence and sovereignty to act alone according to the Arabian interest if they wished truly to unite. Second, the countries which comprised the League deprived it of the authority and the power to act. The League could not take any action without the agreement of all the members, a fact which, of course, rendered it ineffective. Third, the Ba'thists objected to the fact that the Arab

¹Nidal Al-Ba'th, Part 1, 1943-1949, p. 80.

League consisted of officials and governments on the grounds that the people did not have a chance to express their hopes and goals.²

Ba'th insisted that the "Arab League" should be second to an "Arabian peoples league," to be formed for the purpose of protecting the rights of Arab interests against the regionalists, reactionaries, and corruption of governments and officials.

Another phenomenon which Ba'th worked against was any pacts which linked the Arabs with foreign nations. Ba'th saw these Western pacts as no more than a new kind of imperialism; it was a new way for Western powers to control the Arab countries and to interfere in Arab external and even internal affairs. Pacts would tie the Arabs into international conflicts and their outcomes and might drag them into wars which they did not know about or in which they had no interest. Ba'th believed that such pacts originated to protect and serve Western ambitions and interests and that Arab or other weaker countries did not benefit from them. If the Communist camp collapsed, Ba'th felt, the imperialist-capitalist camp would win, and the Western powers would exploit the Arab national resources and sovereignty once again. On the other hand, if the capitalist camp were defeated, the

²Ibid., p. 81.

Communist ideology would spread in the world and consequently destroy nationalism and freedom. Therefore, Ba'th felt that the Arabs should pursue non-pacts and non-alignments policies.

In addition, according to their ideology, which advocated peace and cooperation for development between nations, Ba'thists saw alignment and pact policies as conflicting with Arab humanity. Ba'th was preaching about and working for a future in which the Arab countries would unify themselves in a single state and then work together to modernize their country. They hoped for the same future for the rest of the world and thus stood firmly against all Western pacts, such as the Baghdad Pact.³

In Syria the Ba'th Party's struggle did not end with independence for that country alone. Ba'th condemned traditional regimes which used their power to reward themselves for their striving for independence. Such criticism from the Ba'th, the nationalistic, and the social nationalistic parties found a response among the

³The Baghdad Pact was a defense pact with the British consisting of Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran, signed in 1955. Turkey was also a member of NATO: thus, this linked the Baghdad Pact to NATO. Furthermore, Pakistan's membership linked the Baghdad Pact with SEATO. Most of the Arab countries' governments rejected this pact, except Nuri Al-Said, the Iraqi Prime Minister, who suspended his Parliament when it opposed Iraq's signing of the Pact.

complaining masses who were hoping for a better way of life and a developed society after independence. However, the deadly stroke to traditional regimes came after the Arab defeat in the Palestinian war in 1948. The outcome of this war shocked all the Arabs, including the Syrians, and created a desperate need for change to occupy the political vacuum which existed after the defeat. Most of the Arab intellectuals were then ready to accept the new Ba'th ideology, thinking that it would help them to cope with their problems. At this time, none of the existing parties in Syria was capable of meeting this need except the Ba'th Party, which subsequently became popular and rose in prominence.

The party system in Syria at that time was fairly complex, although it could be basically divided into conservative and radical elements. The National Party and the People's Party comprised the conservative element. The National Bloc had merged with the Constitutional Bloc to form the National Party, consisting mostly of wealthy, upper-class businessmen and traders concentrating around their headquarters in Damascus. This party had fought for Syrian independence, and its members, believing that their past struggle gave them the right to rule, started to reward themselves and use their power and consequently lost their popularity. The National Party advocated Arab

unity in general, especially with Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, and rejected the notion of union with Iraq or Jordan, which would have created a Fertile Crescent unity under the Hashemite Kingdom and dissolved the Syrian entity. This rejection of Iraq and Jordan was based on the fact that the Saudi Arabian and Egyptian kings who supported the National Party stood to prevent the Hashemite Kingdom from spreading its rule, advocating the opinion that unity should start from Saudi Arabia or Egypt and not from Iraq or Jordan.⁴

The People's Party, consisting of landlords, had its area of influence in Aleppo and North Syria and headquartered in Aleppo. This party advocated unity with Iraq, which meant to its supporters an open market in Iraq without tariff or taxes. But People's Party members made the same mistake as the National Party members in wielding their power, which cost them their popularity.

The radical element was composed of the Syrian Social National Party (SSNP), the Communist Party, the Arab Socialist Party (ASP), and the Ba'th Party. The SSNP was headed by Autun Sa'ada, who had socialist ideas and was considered to be a regionalist because of his outlook on Crescent unity. Sa'ada adopted the idea of

⁴Tarabein, pp. 546-49.

a centralized socialist state and sought cooperation with the West.⁵ The Communist Party, led by Khalid Baqdash, advocated the Communist ideology and was very tightly organized and disciplined, which gave it far greater importance than it would have merited otherwise.⁶ The ASP, led by Akram Al-Hourani, which advocated land reforms and the well-being of the farmers, had established a strong connection with army officers. In 1953, the ASP merged with the Ba'th Party to form the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. As discussed earlier, the Ba'th Party advocated Arab nationalism and unity and adopted socialism as a means of achieving its economic goals. Struggling against imperialism and reactionary regimes to gather the Arab world into one nation, Ba'th carried on anti-colonial and anti-Zionist policies.

These various conservative and radical parties in Syria struggled with each other for supremacy. After the Palestinian war, however, in reviewing these existing parties, the people rejected the traditional parties because of their diminished role and inability to cope with and solve problems. The people also turned away from regionalist parties such as the SSNP, which emphasized

⁵Ibid., p. 549.

⁶Richard F. Nyrop et al., Area Handbook for Syria (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 47-48.

the regionalist feeling to such an extent that they ignored the rest of the Arab world. Its readiness to cooperate with the West made the people turn to Ba'th, which gained prominence by advocating Arabian nationalism and unity, emphasizing the necessity of liberating Palestine, and demonstrating concern with Arabian problems. Although the Ba'th Party was achieving popularity, supremacy in this struggle would be won by the party which could dominate the army because the army was the key to controlling the political situation in this period of Arabian history.

As the source of stability of any regime in the area, the army played a significant role in Arabian destiny. After the Arabian army was defeated in 1948, the officers suffered from the agony of failure mixed with anger resulting from their feeling that their governments had deceived them. In addition to the corruption which weakened it, the army lacked organization, sufficient weapons, and training to face the enemy. The army's defeat at the hands of the Israelis awakened the military officers to the extent of the corruption, weakness, and backwardness of their country. Believing that the military regime was hopeless, they were determined to correct these conditions and become involved in the civilian regimes. The outcome of this determination of the "free

officers" who fought in Palestine was the Egyptian Revolution of 1952.

In Syria Ba'th and the SSNP understood the importance of the army in overthrowing the current regime and continuing the revolution. The Ba'thists believed that the army should be a revolutionary organization working to protect the revolution internally and externally and assisting in pushing it forward to achieve its goals. The army would be directed in these functions by the Party; thus, SSNP and Ba'th Party members infiltrated the officer corps to create a circle of influence.

In the atmosphere of anger and shock which followed the Palestinian defeat, the traditional regime of Shukri Al-Quwatli cast the blame for the defeat on the army. The army, reacting angrily to this accusation, sent a protest letter to President Quwatli, who ignored it,⁷ thereby exploding the situation. On March 30, 1949, Brigadier General Hussnie Zaim, a member of the Kurdish ethnic group in Syria, took over. Zaim's regime was a "whirlwind rule, . . . crowded with both constructive action and oppressive measures."⁸ Zaim did not encounter public resistance to his military government because the

⁷Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military 1945-1958, pp. 121-22.

⁸Nyrop, p. 48.

people's discontent with the previous regime made them ready to accept the change. Although the political parties applauded him, he suspected them all and forbade their activities. The suppression of Zaim's regime was ended by a counter-coup led by Brigadier General Sami Al-Hinnawi. Although Hinnawi brought the civilian politicians back into the picture, the influential army officers maintained control behind the scenes. Hinnawi treated Ba'th, along with other parties, well. In fact, during Hinnawi's reign, Aflaq became the Minister of Education in Syria. The increasing influence of civilians who opposed the army officers' influence, however, led to still another coup.

On December 19, 1949, Colonel Adib Al-Shishakli carried out the third coup following the independence and arrested Hinnawi, accusing him of conspiracy with a foreign power, Iraq.⁹ Shishakli established a military dictatorship in Syria and dissolved all political parties, even though the Arab Socialist Party and the Ba'th Party had supported him before the coup.¹⁰ In late 1952, Shishakli arrested Aflaq, Bitar, and Hourani for their

⁹Hinnawi was planning to unite with Iraq, according to a section of the Baghdad Pact.

¹⁰These parties supported Shishakli because they were opposed to union with Iraq and to the Baghdad Pact. See Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," and Tarabein, pp. 546-48.

activities, but in January of 1953 all three escaped to Lebanon.

While Shishakli's regime persecuted the Ba'th Party in Syria, the Party ideology was spreading outside the Syrian border, founding branches in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. Ba'th ideology prevailed in the early fifties among the students in the American University of Beirut¹¹ and among intellectuals in these countries.

Aflaq, Bitar, and Hourani returned to Syria in 1953 after Shishakli granted them general amnesty. At that time, they and the Ba'th Party formally merged with the Arab Socialist Party to become Hizb Al-Ba'th Al-Arabi Al-Ishtiraki, the Arab Ba'th "Resurrection" Socialist Party.

Both parties needed each other. Ba'th needed the popularity that Hourani¹² enjoyed with his party's wide

¹¹The intellectual role began in the university clubs in the Arab world, especially in the American University of Beirut, which was considered to be a center and club for discussion of Arabian politics and conditions. Harakat Al-Qawmiyyia Al-Arab, the Arab Nationalist Movement, one of the strongest of the national movements, started among the students of the American University of Beirut.

¹²The third personality who became a leader in the Ba'th Party was Akram Al-Hourani. Born in 1914 to a well-known family in Hamah, he studied law and was trained in both Damascus and Beirut Universities. In 1950 he originated the Arab Socialist Party, advocating social and economic change and emphasizing land reforms, equality, and justice to the farmers. His party was largely followed by farmers, especially in the north around Hamah, Homs, and Aleppo. He was a very active and ambitious politician. Laqueur describes him as "an opportunist who has been distinguished by a most determined effort to gain power, whatever the

base of followers. At the same time Hourani needed Ba'th's doctrinal framework and the support of the elite and intellectuals who were in the Ba'th Party. Thus the merger "produced a well organized party advocating a broad program of social reforms that quickly became a serious challenge to all existing political parties."¹³ After this merger, Aflaq remained the philosopher and intellectual, Bitar became the administrator, and Hourani became an activist politician.

Rural and lower class urban individuals from the north and northwest began to join the Party, particularly from among the disaffected sectarian and ethnic minorities. Most of them served in the Syrian army and became the "most active elements in political conspiracies."¹⁴

In 1954 Shishakli's regime was overthrown, to be replaced by a civilian regime led by Hashim Al-Atasi. In

means, and by a willingness to ally himself with all and any individuals" (Laqueur, p. 327). Hourani was a member of the Syrian Parliament from 1943 until 1958. He assumed offices many times: in 1949, Minister of Agriculture; in 1950, Minister of Defense; in 1957, Speaker of the Syrian Parliament; and a Vice-President of the United Arab Republic from 1958 to 1959.

¹³ Nyrop, p. 151.

¹⁴ Paul Y. Hammond and Sidney S. Alexander, Political Dynamics in the Middle East (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), p. 230. Even the least prestigious and most economically deprived groups in Syria, such as the Alawis, gained long experience in the Syrian armed forces. See Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, pp. 308-09.

that year Ba'th rose as a strong political factor because of its increasing support from army officers, intellectual circles, students, and followers of the Socialist Party. Ba'th worked to organize itself, became more active than any other party, and won seventeen seats in Parliament in 1954. At that time, Ba'th's main issues were social reforms and an anti-Westernist attitude.

Before this period the loyalties of the army officers had been divided, but in 1954 a new "pro-Ba'th" officer group emerged in the army, led by the strong young Colonel Adnan Al-Malki, who rapidly dominated the scene with his personality and the increasing number of his followers in the military. Colonel Malki's power swung the balance of the army from the SSNP to a more moderate and Ba'thist direction.

Considered to be one of the strongest officers in the army, Malki believed that the military had a mission to rescue Syria from conflict in order to achieve the Arabian goal of unity and to work for modernization. He viewed the catastrophe in Palestine and the corruption of civilian government as symbols of the corruption of society as a whole by the professional politician. Colonel Malki stood against all pacts and conditional Western aid and worked hard to prevent Syria from joining the Baghdad Pact. He contributed to the signing of the defense agreement

with Egypt in 1955, but his assassination followed shortly afterward in the same year. In the aftermath Malki's followers in the army and the police, along with the Ba'th Party, crushed and persecuted the SSNP.¹⁵ Malki's assassination opened Syrian eyes to the profound conflict in their country. With his death, the army lost a popular leader who was the hope of army unity, and splintered into different factions and parties.¹⁶

In the years 1955-1956 Ba'th led a coalition composed of Communists, left-wing nationalists, individual populists, and independent, pro-Egyptian, pro-Saudi, and pro-Soviet deputies. This "radical power" worked against the traditional and pro-Western forces in the government. However, in 1957 the coalition broke up, and Ba'th openly parted with the Communists after refusing to rely more extensively on the left. The Communists nevertheless became a strong power (Afif El-Bizri, a Communist, was appointed army chief of staff and Khalid El-Azim Minister of Defense in 1957) with increasing public support as "the popularity of the East and dislike of the West grew."¹⁷

¹⁵Torrey in "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," however, expresses the opinion that Malki's assassination may not have been perpetrated by the SSNP. See Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, pp. 308-09. See also Spencer, p. 97; and Tarabein, pp. 597-99.

¹⁶Tarabein, pp. 597-98.

¹⁷Nyrop, p. 49.

The popularity of the Soviet Union and the Eastern camp developed for several reasons. The Russian economic aid agreement with Syria--\$180 million repayable in twelve years at 2.5 per cent interest--gave the Soviets a chance to forge close relations with the Syrians. The Arab anti-Western feeling toward imperialism grew as a result of the Suez canal crisis in 1956, and, during this same period, the West (the United States, France, and Britain) refused to sell weapons to Syria and Egypt. In addition, the Communists did not have a record of bitter experiences or confrontations with the Arabs. Finally, the Twentieth Communist Congress of February of 1956 approved and encouraged the national liberation movements in the third world in general and was sympathetic to the Arabs.

All these elements facilitated the Communist Party's spread and its gain of influence, especially at the end of 1957,¹⁸ which saw a major battle for supremacy in the radical camp. Because of the Communists' rapid growth in power, Ba'th feared a loss of power and a possible Communist takeover, which, if successful, would convert Syria to a Communist state, and, if a failure, would give justification for the political right to act against

¹⁸Arnold Hottinger, The Arabs: Their History, Culture and Place in the Modern World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 276.

the radicals.¹⁹ Ba'th then turned to Cairo to seek help from Nasser; the Party needed Nasser's leadership to confront the conservative right and the Communist left. So the Party went to Nasser, in effect, to "kill two birds with one stone." Ba'thists knew that Nasser would restrict Communist activities,²⁰ and, even if Nasser abolished all political parties, they assumed that their Party would be given a special role in the new state because of its continued support of him. In addition, through union with Egypt, Ba'th thought it could achieve the dream of Arab unity for the first time.

Ba'th advanced the idea of unity with Egypt,²¹ first calling for it in 1956,²² for many reasons. They would achieve the Arab goal of unity. Their strong pro-Nasserist stand, especially after the Suez Canal crisis of 1956,

¹⁹"U.S. Defers View on Arab Merger," New York Times, 2 Feb. 1958, p. 12, cols. 3-4; Sa'dun Hamadi, Nahnu wa Al-Shuyu'iyah Fi Al-Azamah Al-Hadiriya [We and the Communists in the Present Crisis] (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliah, [n.d.]), pp. 48-49.

²⁰Nashat Al-Taghlibi, "Ghasat Thawart Al-Thaluth wa Al-Ashroun Min Yuoly Al-Masryyah" ["The Story of the Egyptian Revolution of 23 of July"], Al-Hawadess (Beirut), No. 925 (August 2, 1974), p. 26. Nasser crushed the Communists in Egypt after the 1952 revolution.

²¹Union with Egypt and not with Iraq was advocated because of Nuri Al-Said, who was pro-West and was advocating the necessity of pacts with the West to protect Iraq and the other Arab countries.

²²Al-Ba'th, 20 April 1956, p. 1.

came at the apogee of Nasser's prestige in the Arabian world. He was a strong personality able to control the destiny of his country vis-à-vis the great powers. Ba'th knew that any plan of union ignoring Cairo would be incomplete, since the status of Egypt in the Arabian world,²³ especially after Nasser's rise as a hero of the Arabs, gave Egypt special importance. "Nasser would provide the material force that the Party lacked,"²⁴ since Ba'th needed a charismatic leader and personality to propagate its ideology throughout the union, and, at the same time, as Peter Mansfield states, "Ba'th would provide Nasser with the philosophy that they thought he lacked."²⁵ Extensive modernization had taken place in Egypt under Nasser, which further impressed the Ba'thists with his ability. Ba'th imagined that it could gain supremacy in Syria after the union since it had called for unity to begin with. Finally, Ba'th found that Nasser's stand resembled its own stand on the basic issues. Both of them were against colonization, believed in non-alignment, worked to protect their national independence, and closely paralleled each other in their

²³Aflaq, Ma'rakat Al-Masir Al-Wahid, p. 206.

²⁴Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," p. 457.

²⁵Peter Mansfield, The Middle East: A Political and Economic Survey, 4th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 85.

economic and pan-Arabian ideology. Perhaps most importantly, Ba'th's unity with Nasser would feed an Arabian nationalistic feeling in Egypt which had not yet grown there.²⁶

On December 9, 1957, Aflaq presented a draft to the Parliament for federation union with Egypt. Bitar was sent in January of 1958 as the head of the delegation for union and talked with Nasser, "who was reluctant to burden himself with a troubled Syria and agreed to the union only after the Syrian delegation convinced him of the seriousness of the Communist threat."²⁷

At this time Nasser was not very well informed about Syria; he himself admitted that until 1957 he had known only seven persons in Syria.²⁸ He could not accept union without studying it and planning for it; otherwise it might only be temporary. At the insistence of the Syrians, however, Nasser requested that union begin with federation as a first step toward unification of their foreign defense affairs and consideration of the economic and political differences which might work against unity. Syrian pressure was brought to bear against federation on the grounds that it was insufficient to create a strong central state which could withstand political games and external or

²⁶Seale, p. 311.

²⁷Nyrop, p. 51.

²⁸Ibid.

internal pressures. The Syrian delegation also declared that it was hoped that unity with Egypt would save Syria from falling into the hands of the Communists or even into those of the reactionary power which would ally with Nuri Al-Said, Iraq, and the West.²⁹

As far as the Communists were concerned, they had no reason to oppose the union of Syria with Egypt, since they hoped it would create a weak federation which would prevent the establishment of a strong, unified state and would create no problem for their activity. At the end of 1957, they realized the seriousness of the situation and insisted on unity rather than federation on the grounds that Nasser would refuse it, assuming that he would be too busy in Egypt to accept union with Syria since Syria was not ready for it. But Ba'th discerned the Communist strategy and therefore insisted on unity.³⁰

Nasser was under Syrian pressure on one hand, and, on the other hand, Arabs in other countries were watching to see which of two options he would take. He could either accept the union and establish his image as an Arab nationalist leader and hero or refuse it and accept the consequences of this refusal and the reaction to it

²⁹Tarabein, pp. 617-20.

³⁰Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military, 1945-1958, pp. 347-74.

from the Arab masses in the other Arabian countries who looked to Nasser as their leader for unity.³¹

Nasser posed several conditions for the proposed union, hoping that the Syrian delegation would reconsider its stand on unity. First, all Syrian political parties would be dissolved and replaced by a national union. Furthermore, the Syrian army officers would have to separate themselves from Syrian political life, and any officer who chose to work in politics would have to resign from the army. Nasser also stipulated that the Syrian and Egyptian economies would merge and that the land reform and economic development program already in existence in Egypt would be applied in Syria.

The Syrian delegation went back to Syria with Nasser's conditions, and after a few days Syria announced its approval. The Syrian and Egyptian leaders met on February 1, 1958, in Cairo to finalize the union.³²

On January 23, 1958, the union was announced,³³ and President Nasser was chosen unanimously to be its president. There were to be four vice-presidents, two Syrians

³¹ Sami Jawher, Al-Samuton Ya Takalamon [The Silent Dissent Talk], 4th ed. (Cairo: Al-Maktab Al-Masri Al-Hadyth, 1975), p. 57.

³² See the Egyptian-Syrian union in Mothea Karat Majalis Al-Nuob Al-Souri [Syrian Parliament Sessions], (Session 11, 1957), pp. 382-83.

³³ See Mansfield, p. 471.

and two Egyptians. Hourani was appointed as one of the Syrian vice-presidents. Nasser appointed Bitar as Minister of State and later as Minister of Culture and National Guidance. The central cabinet, however, was located in Cairo, which paralyzed their political activities.

At first, Ba'th seemed satisfied with the early results of the union and with its role as the party which had achieved the first unity in the Arabian land with the most popular Arab leader heading the state. Ba'th had optimistically persuaded Syria to accept Nasser's conditions without deliberation. The Party members hoped that they would play a large part in this new nation or at least have significant influence. As Aflaq stated later on,

. . . we hoped that the Ba'th Party would have a basic and responsible share in the governing of the new nation, which we helped to create. We hoped our role would be both practical and theoretical since it was we who began preaching socialist ideas at least fifteen years before Nasser assumed power.³⁴

The union did not develop, however, as Ba'th planned or imagined it would. Nasser ruled Syria in an authoritarian way, as he ruled Egypt.³⁵ The socialist reform which had been applied in Egypt was also applied in Syria.

³⁴Michael Aflaq, quoted by Abou Jaber, p. 168.

³⁵Seale, p. 325.

Protests arose from the landlords, but the strongest opposition came from three elements: businessmen, Syrian intellectuals and professionals, and the Syrian army. Businessmen who were accustomed to free dealings became annoyed with Nasser's restrictions applied in the socialist program. Syrian intellectuals and professional men felt disabled and deprived after the disappearance of political activity and limitation of freedom. Khalid Baqdash, the Communist Party leader in Syria, who had fought the idea of union, went to Czechoslovakia, then to Damascus, then to Peking when the union was announced.³⁶ There was an increase of the power of police and intelligence services, especially with the policies of Lieutenant Colonel Abd'al-Hamid Al-Sarraj, the chief of the army's Deuxième Bureau, who sought to prevent and prosecuted any kind of political activity, thus fueling the rapid growth of dissension among intellectuals. The Syrian army, which was fragmented by different religions, races, and groups of mixtures of Kurdish, Turkish, and Circassian, refused to be under the Egyptian officers' command, especially when most of the Syrian officers had been sent to serve in Egypt and had been replaced by Egyptian officers.

Dissenting voices increased with the ensuing economic decline, during which Syria suffered years of drought.

³⁶Abou Jaber, p. 107.

Syria was disappointed with Nasser's tightened grip on the country. Furthermore, Nasser's dissatisfaction with the slow application of his social program made him send his right-hand man, Field Marshal Abd Al-Hakim Amer, to Syria with full power to accelerate this program and to alleviate the growing opposition to the union there. Amer had authority over the Syrian cabinet and administration, and he was responsible to Nasser only. The resignations of four Ba'thist ministers resulted from disputes with Amer over his power and his decisions.³⁷ The union further suffered from the pressure of regional interests, personal jealousies, and ideological differences,³⁸ and the wide intelligence activities turned Syria into a police state.

The Ba'th Party was seriously affected by the union and the problems it created. Aflaq's idealistic beliefs and work clashed with the reality of Nasser's rule. Years of struggle and experience to unify his Party were shaken by the Egyptian-Syrian union. For the first time in its history, Ba'th knew factions; it was no longer a cohesive, one-unit party. Discussion and controversy took the form of division instead of conferences and meetings.

³⁷Harry B. Ellis, "Cairo Acts to Calm Syria," Christian Science Monitor, 22 Oct. 1959, p. 7, col. 8. Also see Mansfield, p. 472.

³⁸Ellis, p. 7, cols. 7-8.

The first major split occurred with Abdullah Al-Rimawi³⁹ in Jordan before the formal breakup in 1959.

A new pro-Nasser faction appeared, led by Rimawi, the Secretary General of the Ba'th Party in Jordan. Members of this group believed that as long as the Ba'th and Nasser ideologies had the same goals there was no need for the Ba'th Party as a separate entity and that the Party should dissolve itself and Ba'thists devote themselves to preaching Nasserism and the United Arab Republic.

This approach was condemned by the rest of the Ba'thists, for, at that time, Ba'thists were devoting themselves to Nasser, who was working against them. The National Command asked Rimawi to come to Beirut to clear up the situation, but Rimawi refused on the basis that the request was illegal.⁴⁰ The Party consequently expelled him in September of 1959. Nasser responded to Rimawi's expulsion by dismissing Riad Al-Malki, the prominent Ba'thist who was the Minister of National Guidance of the northern region.

³⁹Rimawi was a very popular Ba'th leader in Jordan. Al-Agwani calls him "l'enfant terrible" of Ba'th. He was the opposition leader to the successive governments of Jordan in 1950-1956. He was a Foreign Minister of Jordan in the Al-Nibulsi government.

⁴⁰The National Command transferred to Beirut after 1961.

In a short time, Rimawi set up a new "Ba'th," holding its first convention in Damascus in May of 1960 and claiming that he was its representative. Obviously pro-Nasser, "Rimawi made no secret of his appreciation of President Nasser's policies and shared with the latter an intense dislike for the Ba'th."⁴¹ The "Rimawi affair,"⁴² the first major split in the Party's history, was only the beginning of serious division.

The year 1960 was considered to be the decision year in the Ba'th Party because of the splits within it. Fuad Al-Rikabi, who had been the Secretary-General of the Ba'th Party in Iraq, followed Rimawi in carrying on the pro-Nasser orientation in Iraq. In order to understand the development of the Rikabi faction, it is important to look at Ba'th's rise in Iraq.

The Ba'th Party started in Iraq among the Palestinian refugees and Iraqi students who studied in Syria and Lebanon in 1949. These individuals began secretly preaching Ba'th's ideology, not coming into the open until 1952, when they led a demonstration against the government and became known as a major street power in Iraq. The Iraqi monarchy severely persecuted the Ba'thists.⁴³ Ba'th was

⁴¹Al-Agwani, p. 460. ⁴²So called by Abou Jaber.

⁴³The Party in Iraq was recognized as a regional branch in 1954 and started to issue statements on its own. See Abou Jaber, p. 119.

a major opposition power to the monarchy, especially to Prime Minister Nuri Al-Said, in its internal and international policies, which were corrupt and pro-West. As stated earlier in this study, Ba'th opposed all pacts, including the Baghdad Pact and unity between Jordan and Iraq, as Western actions against the unity of the Arabs. The Ba'th Party in Iraq was a major element in helping the July 4, 1958 revolution to overthrow the monarchy and establish Abd Al-Karim Qassem as President, who severely suppressed the Ba'thists after the revolution with the help and support of the Communists.⁴⁴ The extreme suppression of the Party during Qassem's regime, however, did not prevent it from spreading and growing stronger among the dissenters to the regime. The Party in Iraq enjoyed a strong secret organization and had an effective propaganda machine. Thus Ba'th spread beyond its usual membership of students and was able to dominate a number of trade unions and army officers who later overthrew Qassem's regime on February 8, 1963.

At first, Fuad Al-Rikabi participated in the Qassem regime government because he believed that Qassem would join the U.A.R. Rikabi, like Rimawi, advocated the notion of dissolving the Ba'th Party in favor of Nasserism and

⁴⁴This was one of the reasons which caused Ba'th to persecute the Communists later.

becoming a wing of the Nasserist movement; they believed that, as long as the Ba'thist and Nasserist ideologies were so close, there was no need for a separate Ba'th. In August of 1961 Rikabi was preparing himself for the separation of his faction from the Ba'th Party as Nasserists. Furthermore, he condemned the Ba'th Party and accused it of being imperialistic and of cooperating with the Communists.⁴⁵ Ba'th's National Command asked him to stop his attack and his accusations, but finally the Party expelled him from its ranks, which was the second significant split in the Party.

In September of 1961 a coup d'état led by Ma'moun Al-Kuzbari took place, and the breakup with Egypt was announced. Nasser did not take any action to resist the secession by force but only denounced the regime of "reactionary separatists."⁴⁶ The separation between the two countries was expected for many reasons, including the lack of serious study and planning prior to the union. Possibly Nasser was overloaded by the Syrian economic and social problems and wanted to concentrate more on Egyptian concerns.

In the first place, the Syrians, a more individualistic people, were different from the Egyptians, who were more accustomed to centralized authority and regulation.

⁴⁵Abou Jaber, pp. 121-26. ⁴⁶Kerr, pp. 27-28.

Another problem was the Syrians' feeling that they were not getting a fair share in rule because Egypt and Nasser were taking over in Syria, and especially the Syrians' belief that Nasser was moving slowly to "Egyptianization" of Syria.⁴⁷ Ba'th itself contributed to the unsuccessful union because, although advocating Arab unity since its emergence, Ba'th had not had a clear vision of what shape the union should take.⁴⁸ The Ba'th Party had wanted Syria to unite with Egypt without any real idea of what Nasser was proposing. Ba'th leaders had rationalized that as long as both regimes were "progressive," unity could be achieved and that the shape of the union was not important.⁴⁹

The coup of 1961 presented the Ba'th Party with a dilemma which led to its third significant internal split. Although Ba'th condemned the Nasser regime, it condemned even more the separatists who had supported the coup. Ba'th's dilemma translated itself into a division within the Party leadership and membership. Hourani, the important popular leader, welcomed the coup, and on September 28, 1961, along with Bitar, he signed the "declaration of

⁴⁷Abou Jaber, p. 96.

⁴⁸Al-Ba'th, 27 April 1956, p. 1.

⁴⁹Al-Ba'th, 20 May 1956, p. 5.

separation."⁵⁰ On June 18 Hourani announced that he was forming a new party of his own. The next day Aflaq announced that Hourani was being expelled from the Ba'th Party. Thus the alliance between the Arab Socialist Party of Hourani and the Ba'th Party of Aflaq and Bitar ended, and Ba'th lost a sizeable wing led by Hourani.

The National Command of the Ba'th Party met in Beirut in 1962 to deal with the new situation. The Regional Command in Syria refused to consider reunion with Egypt, while the Regional Commands in Iraq and Jordan condemned the breakup and asked for an immediate return to the union on a "new basis" of understanding and freedom.⁵¹ Meanwhile, Ba'th suffered in Syria from instability and still other intra-Party factions.⁵²

The Party's insistence on unity with Egypt caused the fourth major split in the Party ranks, this time in Lebanon in 1962. The Regional Command in Lebanon issued

⁵⁰Abd-Al-Rahim, p. 33. Salah Bitar regretted this and withdrew his signature later on. See Mansfield, p. 473.

⁵¹The reason for the Iraqi and Jordanian Ba'thist support of union was that both Ba'thist parties struggled under suppression in both systems, and they received support, assistance, and sympathy from Nasserist elements. See Abou Jaber, p. 143.

⁵²Ibid. There were also minor factions emerging, led by Riad Maliki, Sami Soujan, and Adid Nabowi; and at the same time Sami Al-Jundi organized the Socialist Unionist Movement. See Suleiman, p. 125.

a statement to the National Command declaring its refusal to reunite with Egypt and accused the National Command of "ideological deviation"⁵³ on the basis that the Party had agreed to reunite with Egypt even though freedom and democracy, the key Ba'th principles, were suppressed under Nasser's control.

The National Command of the Party (Old Ba'th), on the other hand, issued its own statement calling for a reuniting of the two countries. Aflaq attacked the separatists, explaining that, if there were mistakes, these should not be treated with another mistake, that of separation. He demanded that the problem be solved within the union and not by separation. Aflaq stated that "what failed was not the unity but the way in which it was applied."⁵⁴ Once again, Ba'th called for unity with Egypt on a new basis of collective leadership and freedom of active political parties to assure democracy.⁵⁵ The Regional Command in Lebanon refused the call for union and split from the Old Ba'th. As Sati Al-Husri states,

The period from September 28, 1961, to March 8, 1963, was a difficult one for the Ba'th Party. It experienced two major splits in Syria and

⁵³Abou Jaber, p. 144.

⁵⁴Aflaq, Ma'rakat Al-Masir Al-Wahid, p. 207.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 214.

Lebanon and was under attack from the dissident wings that left its ranks. It was also under bitter attack from the Nasser sympathizers all over the Arab world.⁵⁶

Shortly after 1963, Ba'thists in Iraq split into two factions, radical and moderate. The radical faction was headed by the Iraqi Premier Ali Saleh Al-Saadi, a leftist who advocated the necessity of hastening the socialist revolution in Iraq and of spurring development through socialist reforms. The moderate faction was headed by former ministers Talib Shabib and Huzem Jawad, who wanted to move according to the political, economic, and social conditions and wait until the situation was suitable for the application of decisive reforms; meanwhile they pursued more gradual programs. On November 18, 1964, Abdul Salem Aref, president of the new regime, ousted the Ba'thists to welcome the Nasserists.

The Party was further fragmented in 1964 when the Lebanese Ba'thists split into three factions after their dispute over the Marxist resolution which was adopted by the Sixth Conference of the National Command, which sounded more leftist than Ba'thist. The first faction followed Aflaq and supported the old or orthodox Lebanese Regional Command. The second followed the Iraqi leftist Saadi. The third group considered Salah Bitar to be the best

⁵⁶Sati Al-Husri, quoted by Abou Jaber, p. 149.

hope to save the Party from factions and differences. Through these splits and factions, the Ba'th Party in Lebanon became ineffective in the country's political life.⁵⁷

In addition to these different factions which took place on the regional level in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon after the breakup with Egypt, there were further divisions within the Ba'th Party itself. More intra-Party conflict occurred on different levels due to the ideological cleavage which appeared among the Ba'thists after the breakup, even within the unionist regime in Syria,⁵⁸ which assumed power in 1963 after the overthrow of the separatist regime, when a new regional trend developed, advocating more emphasis on the Arab countries individually than on overall Arab unity. This cleavage was especially evident in the military sector, which was mainly Alawit. But Aflaq, Bitar, and Munif Ruziz,⁵⁹ taking note of past mistakes, ignored this trend and emphasized the necessity of reunion with Egypt and also with Iraq on a new basis. The "unity talks" among the three countries (Iraq, Syria, and Egypt) broke down, and neither did the talks between

⁵⁷Suleiman, p. 126.

⁵⁸This regime was the Old Ba'th, led by Aflaq, which condemned the breakup with Egypt and worked for reunion.

⁵⁹Munif Ruziz, a prominent Jordanian Ba'th leader, later became the Secretary General of the Party.

the two Ba'thist regimes in Syria and Iraq⁶⁰ in 1963 after the failure of the "unity talks" give the regionalists a stronger position against the unionists.

In November of 1963, Amin Al-Hafiz assigned Major General Salah Jadid, an Alawi Ba'thist, to the key post of army chief of staff. The regionalists believed that Jadid was beginning to exploit his position as chief of staff in the army and the post of Secretary General of the Regional Command later in 1965 to increase the contention between the military and civilians and between Hafiz, Old Ba'th, and the neo-regionalist Ba'th.

In the summer of 1963, Hafiz had tried to curb the influence of Alawit and Druz, but in 1966 Jadid, Nur El-Din Al-Atasi, and Yusif Zuayyin⁶¹ overthrew Hafiz and the Old Ba'th regime. Hafiz was wounded, arrested, and imprisoned, and the old National Command was denounced and expelled.

On February 18, 1966, Aflaq denounced the Jadid faction for "degenerating into regional separatism and for the military usurpation of Party and government power from the civilian leadership."⁶² As a result,

⁶⁰In 1963 Iraq was ruled by pro-Ba'thist Abdul Salem Aref after he overthrew the Qassem regime.

⁶¹Al-Atasi became the President and Zuayyin the Prime Minister.

⁶²Nyrop, p. 157.

Aflaq and Bitar were read out of the Party. Later released, both of them went to Lebanon.⁶³

In 1966 Syria was ruled by Zuayyin, the Prime Minister; Atasi, the President; and, behind the scenes, by Salah Jadid, the mastermind of the coup d'état and the Secretary of the Syrian Regional Command of the Ba'th Party. Khalid Baqdash, the Communist Party leader, served as the Minister of Communications.⁶⁴ The Marxist and Communist ideology influenced the extreme left wing in this era, which the Old Ba'th condemned. In Syria, Bitar attacked the "Marxist wing," as he called it, through many articles in the Ba'th newspapers in Damascus and Beirut, specifically condemning their concept of scientific socialism and Arab unity and reiterating that "Marxism had no place in the Arab world."⁶⁵

In March of 1969 a new government was formed from all the regionalist elements. Jadid was not officially part of the new government, but he still controlled the country through his position in the Party as Secretary General of the Regional Command.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Baqdash had been allowed to return to Syria for the first time since 1958.

⁶⁵Kerr, p. 158.

The new Ba'thist regime was isolated from the other Arabian regimes because of its extremist trend in denouncing the other Arabian regimes as "reactionary."⁶⁶ The Iraqi civilian Ba'th regime denounced the Syrian extremists several times, and the propaganda war continued to be waged between the two Ba'thist regimes, causing the Ba'th Party to lose much of its popularity in other Arab countries,⁶⁷

The new regime was not ready to live peacefully with the "reactionary regime" and tried instead to spread revolution throughout the Arabian countries. The new regime as described by Malcolm Kerr was

. . . more eager than their predecessors to see an end to peaceful co-existence with the "reactionaries" and did not hesitate to try to push Egypt into an alliance against the latter. One tactic was to take up the course of Ahmad Shuqain and the plot against King Husayn; another was to snipe away at the moderate policies of the hard-pressed Iraqi regime, knowing full well that this was embarrassing to Cairo. Their strategy was not to plead for Nasir's favour but to force him to the left, into an alliance on their own terms, by taking the initiative themselves.⁶⁸

Denouncing and contending with the other Arabian regimes, Syria isolated itself, especially when it held a closer relationship with the Soviet Union, which welcomed this new trend. Kautsky explains the attitude of

⁶⁶The extremists also cooperated with the Communists and had a close relationship with the Soviet Union.

⁶⁷Kerr, p. 158.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 161.

post-revolutionary modernizers and summarizes not only the post-revolutionary conflict in the third world but also the dilemma of the Ba'th Party itself:

The post-revolutionary conflict among modernizers, then, takes the form of those out of power attacking and attempting to overthrow those in power by means of a coup d'état and those in power trying to save themselves by striking at their enemies first (if they cannot or will not coopt them or buy them off) and by imprisoning, exiling, or killing them. These processes are likely to be virtually continuous in the post-revolutionary period. By and large, given their control over the armed forces and the police, those in power have a certain advantage over those out of power, and there are thus usually more unsuccessful conspiracies and coups than successful ones. Still, control of the armed forces and the police are by no means secure and may, indeed, themselves be stakes of the conflict, and thus successful coups, too, are by no means rare.⁶⁹

As more time passed, Iraq and her sister Ba'th nation Syria came to be at odds. In 1975, during numerous meetings arranged to resolve the mushrooming Euphrates waterways dispute, both Iraqis and Syrians were stubborn and intransigent. Most of these meetings, arranged by the Saudis, resolved little. The Iraqis claimed that Syrians were hoarding precious irrigation water behind the centrally located Euphrates river dam.⁷⁰ The Syrian delegation stormed out, denying that Syria was causing hardship to 3,000,000 Iraqi farmers by withholding needed

⁶⁹Kautsky, pp. 148-49.

⁷⁰"Syria Walks Out of Talks With Iraq on River Issue," New York Times, 2 May 1975, p. 2, col. 4.

water from them. For a time, the situation between the two countries gradually worsened.

At the height of the crisis, Ahmed Al-Azzawi, a high-ranking member of the Iraqi Ba'th Party who was recognized as a pro-Syrian Iraqi, was wounded when his car was sabotaged while he was visiting Damascus. The assassination attempt was pinned to radical Iraqi elements trying to trigger hostilities between the two Arab states.⁷¹ During the political mudslinging, the Iraqi Ba'th Party tried to minimize the feud. However, prominent Arabs described the situation as "very serious."⁷² The flow of the Euphrates became a burning issue in both Syria and Iraq. Both countries refused to compromise. Syria deployed an entire armored division from the strategic Golan Heights to eastern Syria in case of an outbreak of hostilities with Iraq. Heavy anti-aircraft equipment was planted around the huge Tabqa Dam that spans the Euphrates.

Reportedly the Iraqis took the crisis in a much more relaxed fashion. Tark Aziz, the Iraqi Minister of Information, declared that no responsible political leader in Iraq would think of launching an attack on Syria and

⁷¹"Iraqi Is Wounded in Damascus," New York Times, 29 June 1975, p. 7, col. 1.

⁷²Juan de Onis, "Iraqis Discount Crisis With Syrians," New York Times, 3 Aug. 1975, p. 15, col. 1.

that the idea of a Syrian attack on his country seemed equally ridiculous. The Iraqis were more concerned with the Arab struggle against Israel than with the current heated disagreement with Syria. They continued to remind the Syrians that they had sent several divisions to the defense of Damascus and that Iraq had sustained several thousand casualties in the Yom Kippur war, but, even so, negotiations between the two Ba'thist countries were stalemated for over four months.

Before the two sides came to an accord, Syria and Iraq withdrew their respective military attachés, closed down their national airlines, and prohibited commercial travel between the two countries. Iraq further complained that Syrian warplanes were violating Iraqi air rights. Iraqi Minister of Irrigation Mukram Talabani evaluated the cost of the dispute to Iraq as over 160,000 tons of rice. After much deliberation, Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia convinced the two countries to reach an agreement.⁷³ The agreement was based on each state sharing water derived from the Euphrates. A formula was established based on the flow of the river into Syria from Turkey.

⁷³James M. Markham, "Saudis Achieve Syrian-Iraqi Agreement," New York Times, 15 Aug. 1975, p. 3, col. 1.

All these factions which occurred in response to the breakup with Egypt and to Nasser's efforts in 1958 to eliminate the Ba'th Party produced its dissolution, and its later reincarnation did not resemble what Ba'th had been before.

CONCLUSION

The secession of Syria from the union with Egypt placed Ba'th in a dilemma, since the Party subsequently lost many of its members and much of its popularity, as discussed in Chapter III. The National Command of Ba'th was divided by the factions led by prominent Ba'thists which emerged. These new factions did not reject Ba'th as an ideology. On the contrary, they still considered themselves as the "real" Ba'thists, complicating the situation to the point that it was almost impossible to comprehend who truly represented the Party. The "real" Ba'th could be considered to be the Iraqi Ba'th or the Syrian Ba'th, and, if it were the Iraqi Ba'th, for example, the question of whether the civilian or the military sector was its true representative would still remain. Furthermore, if it were the civilian faction, within this unit the choice was still to be made between the Ali Saadi¹ or Talib Shibib² groups.

This fragmentation complicated the picture because, as each group separated from the rest of the Party, it

¹Radical Iraqi Ba'thists.

²Moderate Iraqi Ba'thists; both groups considered themselves to be the "Old Ba'th."

offered new versions and a different understanding of the Ba'ath ideology, at the same time condemning other Ba'ath factions. The regionalists divided into moderate and extremist Ba'athist factions after the army officers came to dominate the Party. The Old Ba'athists, led by Aflaq and Bitar, believed in the necessity of reuniting with Egypt and aligned themselves with some army officers to overthrow the separatist regime of 1961. In return, the civilian leadership allowed army officers a free hand in purging the military and turning it into an "ideological army," protecting the revolution from external and internal dangers.

During this time, Aflaq agreed on this coordination between the civilians and the military because it was to be temporary and restricted to the top level. This coalition between civilian and military succeeded in overthrowing the separatist regime in 1963, but the new influential group which arose within the Party as a result was the army officers. Later they created the Military Committee, consisting of officers who were formerly in a secondary position but now occupied the executive role. Their influence now rapidly increased in the Party, especially in the case of Salah Jadid, and inexorably a civilian-military struggle over power developed. The civilian regime felt threatened by the increasing influence

of the Military Committee in the Party; therefore, the civilian regime in the Regional Command in Syria tried to curb the army officers' activity by making them return to their garrison. The army officers overthrew the civilian regime of Amin Al-Hafiz in 1966, using another civilian regime as a front to give their military role popularity and legitimacy by ruling as Ba'thists and to be accepted by the other Ba'thist civilian regime in Iraq.

These army officers used the rules of the Ba'th Party's organization to protect and develop themselves. The Military Committee used secrecy to infiltrate the army officers into the Party. It also kept its organization and members secret from the civilian command, claiming that the army organization and personnel should be confidential, even though the civilian organization and personnel knew who the Military Command leaders were. The division between the civilians in the Regional Command gave the military officers the chance to prevail, especially when army officers were supported by the rest of their group.³ That also gave the heads of the Military Command the chance to reach the Regional Command and hold the two positions, using them to strengthen the army's grip.

³For instance, in Syria, Salah Jadid and Hafiz Al-Assad were both supported by the Alawit; in Iraq, Ahmed Hassem Al-Baker and Saddam Houssim were supported by the Takrit, a region in Iraq.

Differences developed between the civilian leadership and the army officers with regard to using power to suppress any opposition;⁴ the civilians objected to the means used by the Military Committee. The civilians in the Regional and National Commands opposed using the Party as a means for the Military Committee to achieve its interests and condemned violence on the part of army officers as a means of solving problems or suppressing opposition, at the same time emphasizing the necessity of public participation in rule. The Ba'th Party's ideology, which advocated unity, respected individuality and freedom and guaranteed democracy. Although factions occurred among members of the military--the extremists (e.g., Salah Jadid) and the moderates (e.g., Hafiz Al-Assad)--the army officers of Ba'th still dominated the Party and the political scene, relying on Ba'th's ideology to legitimize their dominance.

The Ba'th Party in its extraordinary session in late 1964,⁵ held to solve the civilian-military conflict, approved in its second resolution the separation of the army from political activity; nevertheless, the army

⁴Many of these officers repeated on several occasions that, when they met with opposition, one tank could stop the biggest demonstration.

⁵Shibli Al-Assaymi, Fi Al-Thawart Al-Arabiyyah [In Arabian Revolution], 5th ed. (Beirut: Moassasat Al-Arabiyyah lil dyrasat wa Al-Nashr, 1975), p. 107.

condemned this resolution and the conference as a whole and forced the National Command not to approve it. The thinking of Ba'th, as Aflaq explained, did not separate army and civilian life in creating an "ideological army" and demanded that the officers participate in the political life of the Party to protect the revolution from external and internal dangers. However, although Aflaq wanted the army to participate in political life, he felt that, as far as the leading posts were concerned, army officers should choose between a career in the army and a career in the Party.⁶ This state of affairs did not exist in reality, however, because, once army officers became involved in politics, they realized the importance of their status in the army and the importance of the army in maintaining their regime.

In the military regime of 1966, army officers in Syria adopted severe socialist reforms and leftist tendencies, maintaining close relations with the Soviet Union and emphasizing the regional trend. All these concepts differed from the Old Ba'th's ideas, but they were advocated by the military regime, which used the Old Ba'th's concepts only selectively. The military regime explained the concepts of Ba'th in such a way as to

⁶Aflaq, Nyktat Al-Biydayah-Ahadytti Baad Al-Khamas Min Hozeyran, pp. 247-51.

serve its own needs. The lack of clarity that characterized Ba'th's ideology gave the military the chance to be ambiguous in justifying its activities.

In addition, the role which might have been played by the intellectuals had not been fully carried out, leaving the professional politicians, such as Hourani, and the members of the military sector, such as Jadid, to prevail in the political arena.⁷ When they felt that they were losing control over the Party, the Ba'th intellectuals, such as Aflaq, left the country in objection to the Ba'thist army officers' activities. At the same time, unfortunately, Aflaq relinquished the political arena in both Iraq and Syria to the very groups he opposed. In 1963, Aflaq warned that political ambitions and personal interest among the Ba'thist members, whether military officers or politicians, brought about the adoption and development of new concepts and even modifications of Ba'th's concepts⁸ only to serve personal ambitions at the expense of the Party and of Arab nationalism.

One of the problems of the Ba'th Party was that most of its intellectuals did not constitute an aggregate,

⁷Michael Aflaq, Nidal Dhud Thashoyh Al-Haraka Al-Thawra Al-Arabiyyah [Struggle Against Deformity in the Arabian Revolutionary Movement] (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliah, 1975), p. 48.

⁸Such as the concept of class struggle, which was advocated in spite of Aflaq's objections to it.

bound by a feeling of oneness, nor even by a clear view of the fundamental problems facing them. Arab intellectuals, who are described by Richard H. Nolte as a "cultural hybrid" because they were influenced by their Western education, whether at home or abroad,⁹ tried to apply what they admired or taught of economic, social, and political ideas in the Arabian countries with little consideration of the reality that their countries were different from those countries whose successful development and modernization came about as a result of the unique evolution of their own societies. The same formulas were not successful in Arab countries, having been imported from very different cultures, and could only have been workable if they had been modified and adapted to be suitable to Arab culture and societies. Although Aflaq warned his colleagues about these feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis the West and about adopting imported ideas and ideologies, some Arab intellectuals, including left wing Ba'thist intellectuals, adopted leftist and extremist ideas as an easy solution to their problems.¹⁰

⁹Richard H. Nolte, The Modern Middle East (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), p. 144.

¹⁰Aflaq did not object to studying and knowing about every foreign ideology, but he did not favor adopting these for the Arab countries.

Intellectuals such as Shibli Al-Assaymi argued in favor of support for the professional politicians and army officers. Many Arab thinkers, feeling hopeless and despairing because of the political, economic, and social conditions in their countries, stopped fighting for their ideas. Still others were suppressed by the political regimes in their countries and forced to cease fighting. Many of the Arab intellectuals planned to solve problems but did not base their plans on reality, which made their solutions meaningless or unworkable when applied. In being too idealistic, they were becoming ineffective in the political arena, allowing the politicians and the military to change the Ba'th ideology as they pleased and to apply whatever solutions they wished to existing problems.

The lack of a clear ideology and definite programs provided different factions with the opportunity of giving different versions to Ba'th and what it stood for. As Avraham Ben-Tzur states, the Ba'th Party after the break-up with Egypt lost even its old ideology and was ready to adopt new trends to face the challenges; these new trends gave Ba'th new concepts completely different from the Old Ba'th:

Neither the old party leadership nor the military group, neither the regionalists nor the careerists in the party were able to offer a relevant and

comprehensive ideology that would reasonably meet the many-sided challenges within the party itself, and those coming from the Arab world and the Communist countries. It was thus possible for a small group of Marxists, most of whom had belonged to the old party and some of whom had a Communist past,¹¹ to play a prominent role in the birth of a neo-Ba'th ideology. They supplied the framework, the "scientific-socialist" ingredients, and the militancy of the ideology, intended to present Ba'th doctrine as a kind of revolutionary ne plus ultra, in contrast to its ideological adversaries, Communists and Nasserists alike.¹²

Yet, even members of this group, with its Communist background, differed in defining the issues; some of them, such as Yassim Al-Hafiz and Elias Murkos, adopted Communist thought, advocating Soviet experiences, whereas Jamal Al-Attasi¹³ looked to Yugoslavia as an example to be followed. In Iraq the failure of the right application was attributed by the Minister for Unity to differing understandings of socialism on the part of the various political factions:

To some groups socialism might mean social justice, while to others it meant Marxist socialism involving all the forces of production and trade. Under such a brand of socialism the state must take over all the wealth of the country. Another group of nationalists was prepared to settle for much less than this . . . what the masses believe in is their

¹¹Yassim Al-Hafiz was a prominent Ba'th ideologist with a Communist past.

¹²Avraham Ben-Tzur, "The Neo-Ba'th Party of Syria," Journal of Contemporary History, 3, No. 3 (July 1968), 170.

¹³Another prominent Ba'thist.

religion which, certainly, has nothing in common with pure Marxist ideologies.¹⁴

This disagreement resulted in more views on the essential concept of socialism. The Ba'th Constitution of 1947 had dealt with Arabian socialism, in which social justice through redistribution of wealth was granted and at the same time individuality was respected. But now socialism was no longer merely an economic factor, and Neo-Ba'th adopted socialism as a way of life. The Ba'thist extremists went too far in applying it in their society without previous study of their social, economic, ethical, and political factors, which caused its application not to succeed as had been hoped. Neo-Ba'thists separated on issues such as whether they should carry on a more rigid application of socialism to all industry and to what extent this application should be made. They further disagreed as to whether they should apply it in one country or wait until unity was achieved.¹⁵ Neo-Ba'thists believed in the possibility of applying socialism in Syria or Iraq alone. The military regime of 1966 adopted extremist socialist reforms to prove itself to be progressive.

¹⁴Kerr, p. 164.

¹⁵Applying the Soviet experience.

With these differences in the new leftist trend, the Sixth National Conference met in 1963 to adopt new theoretical propositions and to consider the new creed of the New Ba'th. Sami Al-Jundi confesses that, after hearing these theoretical propositions for the first time, "It was clear that we were in front of a new Marxist Party which did not have any connection with the ideal Old Ba'th which struggled all its history against this 'new spirit'"¹⁶ of the left. An essential difference was illustrated by the fact that the New Ba'th wanted to have close relations with the Soviet Union, whereas the Old Ba'th considered extensive relations with the Soviets to be nothing more than a new form of imperialism. Furthermore, the Sixth National Conference of Ba'th adopted, in spite of the opposition of the Old Ba'thists, the ideas of class struggle, scientific socialism, popular struggle, and popular democracy;¹⁷ all these

¹⁶Sami Al-Jundi, p. 140.

¹⁷See the Sixth National Conference in Ba'th Al-Montalkat Al-Nazariyah li Hizb Al-Ba'th Al-Arabia Al-Ishtirakiyyah: Akaraha Al-Motamar Al-Qawmi Al-Sades [Some Theoretical Aspects of the Arabian Ba'th Socialist Party, Agreed Upon in the Sixth National Conference, 1963] (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliah, 1974). See the English translation in Arab Political Documents (1963), eds. Walid Khaladi and Yusuf Ibish (Beirut: Political Studies and Public Administration Department of the American University of Beirut, [n.d.]), pp. 438-40. For comments on this resolution, see Lenczowski, The Political Awakening in the Middle East, pp. 134-36.

leftist concepts added a new content to the Ba'th ideology.

In the past, the Regional Command had been an executive branch of the National Command which planned, directed, and made decisions, but after 1963 the Regional Commands in both Syria and Iraq resisted the National Command's directive role, which became weak after the breakup of 1961. The conflict between the two commands reached its peak in the Eighth National Command Conference in 1965, when the Conference tried to solve the Party's problems without success. The Regional Command disregarded the National Command's resolution and the necessity of reporting to the National Command.

The Sixth Conference gave the National Command the right to interfere in the Regional Command's sphere, if necessary, so that the Regional Command could not act alone on the grounds that it was dealing with internal affairs, as it had in the past. Even so, the National Command did not have the power to enforce its proposals or recommendations.

Unity, the pillar of Ba'th, was given a new dimension; Old Ba'th emphasized all-Arab unity before any modernization program was to be put into action, but

the meaning of unity for the Neo-Ba'th in Syria (Alawit) and in Iraq (Takritti)¹⁸ was

. . . to work in a more independent and strictly Syrian framework, and that its leaders should no longer be subject to the authority of an all-Arab body whose composition and policy depended on factors which the Syrian party could not control.¹⁹

With this different view of unity, the Arab hope of eliminating the divisions among their countries through the Ba'th Party and its ideology declined.

The Old Ba'th had been opposed to political assassination, refusing to assassinate General Abd Al-Karim Qassem in Iraq even when he persecuted its members. Now, although political assassination was condemned in the Fourth National Conference, it became a pattern in Ba'thist behavior, as Kautsky explains: "Those in power trying to save themselves by striking at their enemies first (if they cannot or will not coopt them or buy them off) and by imprisoning, exiling, or killing them."²⁰ Salim Hatum, a Druz, was killed after his return to Syria in 1967 to fight against Israel; the Regional Command arrested him, and he was shot.²¹ This attitude was in direct opposition

¹⁸Takritti refers to a region in Iraq which is the home of most of the leading Ba'thists now in Iraq, such as Ahmed Hassem Al-Baker, the President, and Sadani Hassen, the Vice-President, the strongest men in Iraq.

¹⁹Ben-Tzur, p. 166.

²⁰Kautsky, p. 148.

²¹Salim Hatum led an unsuccessful coup d'état on September 8, 1966. See Nyrop, p. 158.

to the struggle for freedom which was advocated by the Old Ba'th.

Although the Syrian Ba'th Party dissolved itself during the union with Egypt in 1962,²² it regained its power, and, in less than a year, in 1963, it reassumed control of Syria by a military coup. In its reincarnation, however, it no longer resembled the old Party which antedated the union with Egypt. Ba'th's ideology and structure were now not the same as those of former times. The military differed because of the prevailing faction shifting the power to any direction. The composition of the military differed also; newcomers joined the Military Committee in the Ba'th Party, the prominent ones being Alawit and Druz. The newcomers increased after the factions and splits of the Old Ba'thists into separatists, Nasserists, or even Communists. These newcomers came forward to control the Ba'th Party. Briefly, the weak points of the Party which assisted in creating the splits and new versions were the absence of an effective structure or official Party stands on crucial issues and the lack of communication between leadership and rank and file.

²²The Syrian Ba'th Party dissolved itself in spite of the will of the rank and file, who opposed this, and of the other Regional Commands. The Lebanese Ba'th Party, however, refused to dissolve itself.

When Ba'th in Syria tried to revive, its structure was different. The Old Ba'thists were scattered among the different factions and groups mentioned above; therefore, in reorganizing their Party, the Old Ba'th, headed by Bitar and Aflaq, depended on new members, mainly consisting of followers of Alawit and Druz, most of whom were serving as army officers.

It should be stressed that the Ba'th Party, as Sami Al-Jundi describes it, was an "oral party"; gossip and talk played a significant role in it, especially in the absence of official Party stands or comments at times when it had to take a position.²³

Lack of communication between the leadership and the rank and file basis of the Party created a gap between

²³The Ba'th Party did not comment on Nasser's attack on it after the separation or on the failure of the union talks among Egypt, Syria, and Iraq in 1963.

Ba'th's stand on separation from Egypt was not unified. In Baghdad the Regional Command was against the secession and condemned it. In Beirut the Regional Command announced two statements, recognizing the second statement only. However, this statement could have been explained differently according to the individual reader or hearer, since it was ambiguous and unclear. It appeared to be against the secession but at the same time not against the union. In Damascus the Ba'thists were puzzled. The National Command was occupied in analyzing the situation at a time when firmness was required. In this situation, the least the Party needed to do was to clear up the situation instead of fostering ambiguity which spread anarchy among the Ba'thists.

them²⁴ and made it easier for credibility to be given to idle gossip. The lack of education and right direction in understanding Ba'th's positions among the rank and file contributed a great deal to the Party's decline. Ba'th's ambiguity and the ensuing lack of communication together created the perfect atmosphere for rumors, misunderstandings, and negative reactions from the Party members.

The contradictions between what was claimed by left or right and between different factions which emerged after the breakup were no more than a rationalization to control the country by power in the name of the Ba'th Party. Aflaq, in his attack on factions and their modification of the Ba'th ideology, contended that the ruling wing, whether in Syria or Iraq, used the Regional Command of the Party to justify and give an ideological framework to its power.²⁵

These new factions and new trends which added to the Ba'th ideology differed from Ba'thist thought in former times and sometimes even contradicted the Old

²⁴ Aflaq, Nyktat Al-Biydayah-Ahadytti Baad Al-Khamas Min Hozeyran, p. 211.

²⁵ Nidal Hizb Al-Ba'th Al-Arabi Al-Ishtirakiyy ebr Motamaratihi Al-Qawmiyyah [The Struggle of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party Through Its National Conferences] (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliyah, p. 1972), p. 54. Both Syria and Iraq had many military coups d'état but not true revolutions in the sense advocated by Ba'th.

Ba'th ideology and application of that ideology. The different versions from different groups fragmented the Party and sent it in various directions, although Aflaq and Bitar as Old Ba'thists were doing their best to return to the concepts of the Old Ba'th. Although the circumstances which accompanied the emergence of Ba'th are not present now, the enthusiasm and unity of Old Ba'th is the same.²⁶ The Ba'th Party emerged with great ideas from idealistic and romantic individuals, whose dream dissolved with the demise of the Old Ba'th Party in 1958, but whose ideas and ideals are still alive.

²⁶Sami Al-Jundi, p. 9.

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