A Criticism of the Idea of Arab Nationalism

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Contradictions in the concept of Arab Nationalism, and an explanation of its major positions.

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The Arab nationalist propaganda has been increasingly voiced in recent months from many organs in several Arab countries, particularly Egypt. It was quite evident to observers of the Islamic movement that a re-vitalization of that idea was in order in view of the current hysterical building of defensive strategies in the Arab region against the famous danger of Islamic 'fundamentalism'.

It is only appropriate that an idea which originated at the hands of Christian Levantine writers to serve as a weapon of disintegration against the 'Uthmani State, should now be unearthed to be of service once more in the face of rising Islam.

In its latest form, Arab nationalism is put to a different use than its employment by Nasir or the Ba'thists as a means of masking personal or party ambitions. It is presented as a secular political creed that

draws upon certain Western concepts as its frame of reference. These concepts (viz. modernity, progress, socialism, besides other minor ones) represent both its slogans of appeal and its intellectual categories of viewing Arab reality.

The leading feature in the renewed nationalist propaganda is the repeated emphasis on the term 'Arab' as opposed to that of ' Islamic'. The indubitable aim of this calculated shift is to substitute the former for the latter term as an inclusive and prime category for analyzing and describing political and social facts. The limited 'Arab horizon' is designed to replace, and take precedence over, the Islamic horizon in the thinking and feelings of those toward whom the nationalist propaganda is directed.

The insistence on the category 'Arab' as an alternative for, or at least as a higher, more primary and inclusive mode than the category 'Islamic', gives the entire game away. It is clear that in the recent presentations of the idea of Arab nationalism, a confrontation with Islam is envisaged, not merely an 'innocent' revival of a century-old view.

Advocates of Arab nationalism do not hide the fact that it is Islam that they counter with their idea. They use that idea as a weapon of attack within a certain anti-Islamic climate that is now prevailing in many Arab countries notwithstanding the fact that its presentations are riddled with logical contradictions, which this paper proposes to expose. It seems that those who recalled the nationalist idea for use against Islam were hard pressed for a tool of intellectual confrontation.

The idea of Arab nationalism suffers from two main contradictions, which make its edifice of slogans shaky and which are reflected in its various presentations. The first is the exclusion of Islam as a defining and constitutive element of that nationalism; and the second, a related one, is the completely Westernized content of an avowedly 'Arab' movement that supposedly wants to revive 'Arab' values and culture.

The First Contradiction

The Arab nationalist message seems simple and consistent. The Arabs from the Gulf to the Atlantic are one people united by the ties of blood, history, language, and interests. They ought to be united in one political entity which is socially and culturally modern and progressive. This program can be achieved by the Arab nationalists in the face of various imperialist and “reactionary' forces of whom the Islamic movement is the most prominent.

Now, the appeal to ties of blood or the argument from ethnography and race has been rather eclipsed by scientific discussions and has largely fallen into disrepute after Hitler. Still it is not quite clear how one can speak of a pure Arab race after the long process of mingling between the original Arabs of the Peninsula and such peoples as the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Berbers, or Negroes.

The Arabic phrase 'ties of blood' comes in conveniently to cover the weakness of the nationalist views on

this matter by its double reference to both race and kinship. The latter is usually the meaning which is immediately suggested by normal usage and saves the nationalists from getting involved in a losing ethnographic debate. The invocation of geographic facts is not of much help in advancing the nationalist argument. The Gulf–Atlantic axis is a rather arbitrary projection which overlooks other areas to which the original Arabs ventured.

Moreover, it is the 'imperialist' view of the Arab–land which the nationalists now come to adopt, rather uncritically in the light of their high–flown anti–imperialist slogans. The crucial fact in this regard is that it was Islam that created this 'grand Arab homeland', as it is called, and which impelled the original Arabs to conquer that area and much more besides it to spread its teachings.

The Arab nationalists perform a sleight of hand in that they arbitrarily carve out of the grand Islamic homeland, which was made possible by the Arabs' spread of their own religion, a small area––the 'Arab homeland' –– which is then separated from the larger body and made to stand against or to take priority of allegiance' vis–à–vis it. If we adopt the same secularist stance, for the sake of argument, which the nationalists adhere to, we can say that Islam is an Arabic cultural and social phenomenon which has been propagated by the Arabs throughout a large part of the known world at the time. In this sense, the Muslims of the world can be said to have been 'Arabized' by the mere fact of embracing Islam.

The Arab nationalists play the trick of separating a section of the 'Arabized' (the Muslims) which happens to possess one added feature of 'Arabism', the language, and place it as an independent entity and identity against the rest of Muslims (the 'Arabized' in our sense). It is to be noted that they do not include in their nationalism some Arabic–speaking minorities while they ignore the vital role that Arabic –– with its script –– plays in the languages and culture of the other Muslims.

The nationalists are indicted of contradiction according to their own secular view of Islam as a social growth. For, if it is the 'religion of the Arabs', their prize acquisition as well as the main motive for issuing out of their limited homeland in Arabia, this religion should be the defining feature of Arab nationalism.

It is Islam, and not those cultural factors transformed by it beyond recognition, such as language or history, that should be set up as the emblem and sine qua non of Arab nationalism. Yet, the nationalists are out and out secularists who exclude Islam altogether or assign it a servile existence within their creed as a vaguely defined 'spiritual factor', a thing which negates Islam's own claims.

This same criticism applies to the nationalists' call about joint interests –– presumably economic –– as a unifying factor of the 'Arabs' so ambiguously defined. It is to be asked, why shouldn't common interests, of whatever sort, exist among the Muslims, as they have always done? Once again we meet with the same trick.

An arbitrary carving out of a certain section within the general Islamic context and its setting up as an independent entity. The keyword here is 'arbitrary', which strips nationalism from any rational claims and exposes its bare ideological bias, which it tries to mask under pretexts of modernity or by appeal to

similar specious terms.

The major contradiction in Arab nationalist thinking is seen in its most flagrant form in the adoption of certain cultural elements as language, common history and heritage, and tradition as defining features of that nationalism, while ignoring Islam out of a deep-seated secularist bias.

Before Islam, the Arabs were living in what may be called their pre-history. A warring collection of tribes with various dialects and with none or very little of cultural life, especially on the intellectual plane. Islam introduced such an unimaginable qualitative change into the life of the Arabs that it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that it ' created ' the Arab identity anew.

The Qurayshi dialect was turned into the richest language in the world and one of the most wide-spread. Islam won for that tongue adherents that came from non-Arab cultures and it was responsible for turning it into a tool of thought and expression in many fields of science and scholarship. It spread it far beyond its original home and speakers.

Similarly, the Arab society was totally transformed in its structures, customs, aims, and outlooks by Islam. This religion is a constitutive principle of Arab social and intellectual life for the past fourteen centuries, and the attempt to posit an 'Arab nationalism' without Islam or in confrontation with it is inconceivable if not utterly absurd. At the same time, an Arab nationalism that tries to take account of Islam will find itself in an impossible position; for the universal claims of Islam and its insistence on full allegiance to its tenets, as well as its priority over other attachments, ensure that it rejects nationalism as a modern form of ancient tribalism or hamiyyat al-jahiliyyah (the fanatical clinging to pre-Islamic loyalties).

The Arabic language and culture have been made by and contained within Islam and not the reverse. Islam has not been a passing and limited stage occurring to an otherwise independent and developed history or tradition of Arab culture and society that had their own line of growth. The same view applies to Arab history, which is Islamic history along with the history of the many peoples that accepted Islam.

In fact, Islam is the common denominator that ties the life and history of a great mass of humanity together. As a total religion, Islam has shaped all the aspects of the societies that embraced it and linked them together in a vast entity which often found a political expression in the caliphate system. A non-clerical creed, Islam does not have a separate, isolated history within a church, for instance.

The strategy adopted by the propagandists of Arab nationalism in view of the above state of affairs is as follows: They take certain cultural, social, and historical facts or elements and cite them both as factors of 'Arab nationalism' and as reasons or arguments supporting that idea. They, however, ignore the decisive role played by Islam not only in shaping these elements but in bringing them into existence as well, as with regard to culture and history.

Islam is forgotten and deliberately banished from the consideration of the Arab nationalists. It is excluded

according to the principle of secularism, which is, indeed, the real defining feature of that nationalism. Nevertheless, the cultural, social, and historical facts forged by Islam are wrested from it and made to stand as supports and features of an Arab nationalism.

Moreover, the same facts that can in all validity and legitimacy be adduced to substantiate the idea of Islamic 'nationalism', unity, or identity are arbitrarily 'stolen' from the Islamic framework and forced to become constituents of a secular idea that sets aside one group of Muslims----the so-called Arabs---and puts them in confrontation with or, at least, in contradiction with the rest of the Muslims who, still, share with this separated group the same cultural, social, and historical unifying elements.

This may well be described as an exercise in deception and it continues the same misleading attitude noticed earlier of artificially defining and extracting an 'Arab' identity from within the Islamic matrix. If a separate Arab identity existed, there would not be any problem. But to take the unification and identification features forged by Islam and designed for all Muslims and then to separate them from Islam, their forming principle, and confine their applicability to an ambiguously and arbitrarily defined group of Muslims -- this can rightly be called intellectual dishonesty.

In their much-vaunted slogans about the unity of culture, heritage, customs, feeling, outlooks, and hopes, the Arab nationalists use fruits from the tree of Islam while disowning the tree. This position, paradoxically enough, is their only logical move. For, to recognize the claims and priority of Islam is to negate their own existence, their own attempt at breaking Muslim ranks and at setting up a higher authority than religion.

The Arab nationalists have to deny Islam even at the cost of devastating logical inconsistencies. Accepting Islam demolishes their own raison d'être. Islam would not allow a higher, or even another, locus of allegiance, of authority, or of guidance. It would not tolerate a breach of unity among the believers or a limitation of its universal message and validity. Hence, it rejects nationalism and is in turn rejected by it.

The Second Contradiction

The term 'Arab nationalism' sets up a certain expectation which is violently contradicted by the content of the idea carrying that name. It should be reasonable to expect that such an idea will seek its content from peculiarly Arab intellectual and cultural premises and fundamentals, whatever those may be. Yet, the plain fact is that apart from some superficial slogans about the glory of the Arabs, etc., the entire content of this idea is of Western origin; i.e. from the same source that is referred to in nationalist rhetoric as the imperialist West.

It is not a question of borrowing certain ideas or terms. It is, rather, a matter of wholesale adoption, assimilation, or 'internalization' of attitudes, weltanschauungen, methods of analysis, frames of reference, etc. Arab nationalism is, indeed, a Western phenomenon not just in the familiar sense of being induced

by European sources but on the deeper level of being a mere extension of Western concerns and modes of thinking.

It should, however, be hastily added that presentations of Arab nationalism rarely, if ever, reach the degree of sophistication that may be suggested here. It remains a crude and immature rehearsal of certain set formulas designed primarily for mass consumption. What is attempted here is to sound the roots and backgrounds of these formulas.

The major Western “import” is the principle of secularism which Arab nationalists go out of their way to emphasize as their defining factor. Secularism is not an Islamic idea and it has not been invariably present in conjunction with nationalist thinking and its practice in Europe itself. One thinks, for instance, of the role played by Protestantism in west European nationalisms or that played by Eastern Orthodoxy in Serbian or Bulgarian ones.

The insistence of Arab nationalists on an indissoluble bond between secularism and nationalism highlights their premeditated intentions against Islam which were examined under our 'First Contradiction' and which betray that movement's nature as a weapon of attack against Islam. Secularism has been deliberately cultivated by Arab nationalists although it does not spring naturally from any ' Arab ' source, except, perhaps, that of the anti-Islamic Arabs of the Prophet's time.

This is not the place to discuss secularism, and it is only the first of a long chain of Western intellectual goods appropriated by the 'purist' Arab nationalists. The most outstanding of these is the idea of nationalism itself, not as the recognition of the existence of tribes or races or peoples, but as a call for the establishment of a secular political entity around a vaguely defined nation, which in the event turns out more often than not to be those people governed by a central authority that sets out to legitimize and mask its authority by fostering the 'national' myth of a historic, glorious past and a unique identity with a future-oriented mission.

Thus, a phenomenon which was deeply embedded in local European religious, cultural, and political conditions and which often came to reinforce certain power interests, is imported by the Arab nationalists, or rather, is purposely exported by the West to the Islamic world, after being abstracted from its distinctive and unique historical matrix and transformed into an abstract, prescriptive program according to which certain entities are to be created and certain existing power interests are to be encouraged to repeat European experiments and Europe's historical developments.

With regard to this last point one thinks of the attribution, after the fact, of nationalist tendencies to some rulers in the Muslim world in the nineteenth century who sought independence from the 'Uthmani State, for example. Mere power-seeking was responsible for such 'famous' nationalist examples as the Muhammad 'Ali rule in Egypt.

The Arab nationalists usually forget that European nationalism which they so readily imitate dealt with individual entities or 'peoples' within the larger European entity. Applied to Arab conditions, this justifies

the division of the so-called 'Arab world' into such constituent nationalisms as the Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, Sudanese, etc. This logical 'nationalist' move is, however, bitterly rejected by Arab nationalists, who choose, for no apparent reason, to halt their process of dividing the Muslim world at the 'Arab' frontier rather than carry the nationalist principle to the legitimate level of 'sub-nationalities'. For sure, a true believer in nationalism would wish to see that principle carried to its logical conclusion, and the local peoples of the Middle East region have more unity and common identity factors than can be adduced for the nebulous 'Arab' variety of nationalism -- if we exclude Islam, of course.

The secret behind the arbitrary halting at the Arab level is that the real concern behind this call is not the application of the nationalist principle as such but rather its employment as a tool to hit at the unity of the larger Islamic entity. It is a good tactic to hide the disintegrative aims of that tool by pretending that it is still a unity-seeking idea -- among the 'Arab peoples', that is. Besides, an idea directed originally against the 'Uthmani State will have a better chance of success if it brought the combined weight, real or imaginary, of the 'Arabs' to bear, rather than an attempt to invoke heterogeneous local nationalisms.

It is clear that the Arab nationalists, both old and new, have not even been faithful to the principle of nationalism which they borrowed from Europe to plant in an Islamic environment, which owes allegiance to a more inclusive political expression than that of race or 'nation' defined in vague tribal terms.

Secularism and nationalism represent the outer frame which includes and determines the various other borrowings from the West by the Arab nationalists. Having rejected Islam and having posed themselves as the carriers of a certain cause, they found themselves obliged to fill the vacuum and boost their claims by a program of action or a `project,' as it is now fashionably called in their circles.

Upon inspection this 'project' turns out in its various presentations and developments to be no more than a weaker version of the dominant Western ideologies also removed from their social matrix and imposed as abstract rules of action on the totally different Arab environment.

The strangely protean content of Arab nationalism has passed the entire gamut of Western ideologies from liberal to fascist to socialist to Quasi-Marxist to social-democrat. It has a tendency to be coloured by the ideology of the particular Western power that happens to be dominant in the Middle East at a certain time or that patronizes the Arab nationalist factions. In the light of this view, incidentally, the emergence nowadays of a right-wing, capitalist-oriented, anti-Islamic brand of Arab nationalism based in certain “moderate” regimes can be explained in terms of American influence in the region.

The Western ideologies which came into being in response to certain social, political, and cultural conditions and challenges in Europe were successively adopted by Arab nationalist propagandists and uncritically presented as a 'project' for the renaissance of the 'Arab nation', which, according to their own claims, was passing through a different path of development and has not yet attained to a stage equaling that of the European Renaissance because of the retarding effects of Islam and the 'Uthmani State.

Aside from superficial or cosmetic modifications in phrasing and emphasis to suit political conditions and

guard against charges of Westernization, the Arab nationalists kept the main body of the ideologies they imported intact. Frequently, two or more incompatible Western doctrines are to be found side by side in ignorant or uneasy contiguity in the thought of Arab nationalists. The socialist and liberal mix that is echoed in the present revival of the idea is a case in view.

Not only were the Western ideologies appropriated in the manner sketched above but their peculiar terms, frames of reference, and methods of examining facts were also whole-heartedly adopted. This attitude is seen most clearly in that Arab nationalists see Islam, for instance, with European eyes. They ignore the immense scholarship on Islam that exists in their own cultural environment and look at their own religion, in name at least, through Western spectacles.

In fact, Islam as well as all the other aspects of Arab reality are defined, examined, reinterpreted, and judged in terms of one Western ideology or another by the Arab nationalists. Favourite ideologies in this regard have been the secular-liberal, a diluted form of Marxism referred to as Arab socialism, and a collection of socio-political ideas of American origin.

Thus, Islam is usually seen by Arab nationalist writers as a socio-economic projection from a certain `base', or a flowering of the enlightened emancipatory spirit of the Arab nation, or as a `human revolution' against, the reactionary and exploiting forces of the Quraysh.

The purpose here is not to study what Arab nationalism has adopted from the West. It is rather to expose one of its major contradictions. With its present content, terms, principles, and method of analysis it is neither Arab nor nationalist for that matter. It is, rather, Western and internationalist. Looked at from its intellectual angle it is simply a tool for propagating and universalizing Western ideologies.

The terms 'Arab' and 'nationalist' are convenient masks facilitating the acceptance of the surreptitiously smuggled Western contents among the suspicious Muslims.

Arab nationalism is not condemned here for failing to completely adopt the ideas, directions and the general social and cultural heritage of the Arabs (the Muslims). It would have been unreasonable to tax the nationalists for not using the old traditions of the Arabs as their guiding programs of action just to make themselves deserving of the epithet 'Arab'.

Nevertheless, a continuation, revival, and renewal of Arab heritage in all fields of life is certainly the natural attitude to expect from those who base their idea on Arabism and build a huge emotional aura around that term, putting it at the centre of their propaganda.

Instead, they have abandoned the Arab heritage altogether and opted for a Westernized content for their idea.

The Arab (Islamic) heritage certainly offers a viable wealth of major values, premises, concepts, ideas, etc. for anyone who wishes to undertake a revival project for the 'Arab nation' even if he has reservations

on what, may be called the purely “religious” part of that corpus. Islamic jurisprudence, social and moral values, concepts or principles of government, and practical experience in running a flourishing civilization for many centuries are valid and fruitful bases that can be developed, modified, and enriched even by a secularly-bound Arab nationalism to yield a genuinely Arab project for renaissance and progress.

Yet, that Arab (Islamic) heritage is completely neglected by Arab nationalists, except for being mentioned in propaganda contexts, in favour of the Western doctrines. The only reason that can be advanced for this attitude is the inherent anti-Islamic nature of the idea of Arab nationalism and its being essentially foreign to the Islamic heritage and beliefs of the Arabs.

This idea cannot envisage an Arab renaissance from within the Arabs' creed simply because that creed happens to be Islam and because the adherents of nationalism have set themselves from the outset against that religion and aligned themselves with the West.

Consequent Contradictions

The two major contradictions in the idea of Arab nationalism treated in the previous sections render this doctrine vacuous and, in fact, negate its claims both to Arabism and to nationalism, revealing its nature as an ideological tool for the spread of Western influence and for antagonizing Islam. These two contradictions have been reflected in many of the positions and arguments of Arab nationalism graphically illustrating its inadequacy.

I propose now to deal with several of these consequent inconsistencies beginning with an examination of three positions adopted by Arab nationalists and following that with a refutation of three of their most frequently repeated arguments.

Three Arab Nationalist Positions

1. The Attitude Towards Independence

The Arab nationalist writings place a high value on their `independence' slogan. This has been their battle cry against the `Uthmani State and it has been raised against the occupying foreign powers in the Arab countries. It is the main element in their political outlook and a constant part of their propaganda. They even raise it against Islamic trends whom they accuse of hankering after the days of the 'Ottoman Yoke' and of scheming to dissolve the cherished Arab `independence' in a universal Islamic State.

Arab nationalist definitions of independence are negative in that they consider it as freedom from external domination and influences. Independence does not have a positive content in that doctrine and this is understandable in the light of its use as an instrument of attack upon the Islamic caliphate. It is independence from something but for no alternative. It has no justification other than the mere love, it seems, for a sort of vague liberty. It is not impelled by a desire to institute Islam for instance, in place of

the departing foreign influence.

Moreover, independence has always been defined in a superficial way by the Arab nationalist'. It was first defined in mere political terms as the evacuation of foreign armies and native rule. Later on, further elements were added such as non-alignment and the highest ceiling that these definitions have reached of late---and only in response to Western debates on the matter---was to make some noises about economic independence. Independence with regard to world-view values, attitudes, ideologies, and frame of reference is hardly, if ever, broached in Arab nationalist circles.

These circles that have been created by Western thought even in their way of seeing things cannot be expected to push their cherished slogan to its logical conclusion and to its only meaningful usage. The cause of this muddle is in the "First Contradiction" discussed above. As doctrinaire secularists, the Arab nationalists have rejected Islam as the only possible content of and justification for the call for independence.

They had, or preferred, to fill their ideological vacuum with a Western content, while, at the same time, they had also to maintain the `independence' slogan both as raison d'être and as an element of appeal. This left them in a position in which they were forced to use only the negative, superficial meaning of the term `independence', and to shun its deeper implications, which raise the spectre of Islam as the only independence-content for the Arabs.

The Arab nationalist position on this issue is reflected in the practice of those who ruled under the banner of this idea, such as Nasir or the Ba'thists. Their fervently advocated slogans did not prevent them from losing their independence to certain Western powers---including the Soviet Union---for which, some would say, they were no more than clients.

On another level, the `nationalist' intellectuals, who call themselves 'Arab', are slavishly dependent on the cultural goods of the West -- including the view and prescriptions of the Westerners about the Arab and Muslim conditions. Arab nationalism failed miserably both in theory and practice to live up to an idea which constituted its essence. The rejection of Islam and the adoption of secularism have been responsible for this.

2. The Position on Palestine

The Arab nationalists have recently coined a phrase which found currency in the Arab media to the effect that Palestine is `the central cause of the Arab people'. Their propaganda pictures them as the only defenders of the Palestinian cause. I do not wish to dwell here on the sad and disastrous record of that 'championship' of their chosen cause. Their intellectual failure implied in this slogan is perhaps more interesting.

The establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine is unanimously explained by Arab nationalists as an imperialist plot against the Arab nation, designed to retard Arab unity and to fritter away Arab resources

in the struggle with the `Zionist enemy'. This explanation fails to account for so many aspects of the question that it can only be deemed of mere propaganda value.

The Arab nationalists cannot explain why the attempts at setting up Israel started when Palestine was still a part of the 'Uthmani State. Instead, it is Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid's rebuff of these attempts that can explain the encouragement given to the idea of Arab nationalism by anti-caliphate, foreign powers at the time (the French in Lebanon, for instance).

There was no 'Arab nation' at that time to justify the fiendish imperialist plot but there was rather an 'Islamic nation' to be torn to pieces by the colonial and Zionist schemes in which Arab nationalism itself featured prominently. But this view is, of course, uncomfortable to the nationalists.

More importantly, they cannot explain, let alone come to grips with, the religious nature of the Jewish nationalism which has been planted by their secular Western mentors in Palestine. They have been taught by the West that nationalism is built on material and cultural ties that do not include religion. In fact, nationalism replaces religion as a locus of allegiance and has priority over it in the life of an individual or a nation.

This principle was shattered to pieces before the uncomprehending eyes of the Arab nationalists as they confronted the Israeli case. For here material considerations such as unity of race or original homeland did not exist and the Jewish religion is the constitutive element of the Israeli-'nationalism'. Religious observances and symbols play such a vital part in the state's affairs that it is impossible to deny the essential religious character of Israel.

The only response that the Arab nationalists could bring to this situation was to invent a famous dichotomy distinguishing the `Jewish' from the `Zionist'. Judaism, it was maintained, is an innocent religion which the secularist-nationalists respect just like any other creed.

Zionism, however, was an imperialist movement within Judaism which should be fought in Palestine as the enemy of the Arab people, The massive support of the Jews all over the world for Israel gave the lie to this Arab nationalist argument and in spite of the waning of the Zionist trend inside Israel as time wore on, the state itself grew stronger. The Zionists were not the only party to share in the setting up and building of Israel.

Socialist, communist, and religious parties have enthusiastically joined in this process. The charge of imperialism directed against Israel and its backers rang hollow with the Arabs who saw the Soviet Union and the world communists as well as European leftists, who are the forces of good according to the nationalist propaganda, supporting the new state wholeheartedly, only turning to the Arab side to exploit its defeat in the 1967 war.

The Arab nationalists cannot explain why the imperialists chose to perpetuate their influence in the region through a Jewish state in the religiously significant Palestine rather than through military bases

and client rulers or elites. They cannot also explain why Israel was being set up at a time when imperialist powers were already entrenched in the Arab areas that really mattered to them: the Gulf and the Maghrib.

Finally, they fail to account for the fact that Israel was, and is, willing to live with all forms of secularist, nationalist regimes in the area but not with an Islamic regime or even a movement.

The establishment of Israel can only be fully understood in the light of designs of the West against the Muslims of the Middle East.

The seizure of a land holy to Muslims (Jerusalem, al-Khalil) is an affront to Islam and the setting up of a Jewish entity described as `nationalist' was calculated to serve as a Westernization agent and an encouraging example for the cluster of secular nationalisms that were being fostered around Palestine since the beginnings of the present century. Israel is a phase in the long battle between Islam and Judaism, and if it serves any imperialist purposes it is in the context of the West's attack on Islam and not on an Arab nationalism that did not exist when Israel was first conceived and which itself shares the anti-Islamic nature of the Jewish state.

It is no wonder that the Arab nationalists, who themselves were part of the strategy of confronting Islam, should fail to explain the nature of Israel although it is their chief alleged cause. Both Israel and Arab nationalism have been tools used in the attempt to disintegrate Islam. But the two tools are so different that the theoretical bases of the first demolish those of the second and the second stands in bewilderment before the first. Ironically enough, it is Islam which is the cause of this paradox. Religion is allowed to be a basis of Jewish nationalism -- indeed its only basis -- but it is unnaturally excluded from Arab nationalism.

The nationalists' confusion in this connection was reflected in the scandalous failures with which they met in their management of the conflict with Israel, although they have been in complete control of the largest and strongest Arab countries. Having excluded the Islamic dimension of this conflict, they found themselves thrown back on appealing to the 'nationalist' sentiments of the Arab masses.

But the only sentiments that came out into the open were the 'local' nationalist tendencies, which were not enthusiastic about leaving their own homelands to defend that of the Palestinians. The real sentiments of solidarity that impelled the Arab masses to support the struggle for Palestine were Islamic. The Muslim Brothers, for instance, were the only group in Egypt to fight in Palestine against the Jews, and Islamic motives led the Egyptian people to sympathize with their jihad.

The Arab nationalists refused to draw upon the huge material and moral resources of the Muslim world in their conflict with Israel. This would have led to abandoning their secular principles and would have caused the very disaster their Western backers fear: an Islamic unity and a new caliphate.

They also deliberately isolated themselves from the other causes of the Muslim world. Despite their

avowed nationalistic and independent tendencies, however, they found it quite acceptable to attach themselves to certain internationalist movements–––the communist, for instance –– to seek help in their predicament, rather than go to the Muslim world. The results are all too clear before our eyes at present as the nationalists are dragged in the mud by American diplomacy from which they expect only a humiliating solution for the crisis they brought about.

3. The Position Towards Islam.

Various hints have already been made about the attitude of Arab nationalist writings towards Islam. That religion's claims to full allegiance to it from the Muslims are rejected. All aspects of Islam that contradict the secularist outlook, such as the Shari'ah, the concepts of jihad or the Islamic State, are interpreted away as mere historical growths that were attached to the body of Islam in 'ages of backwardness.'

Call for Islamic unity or revival are condemned as dangerous deviations from the nationalist path. Islam itself is subjected to various “interpretations” (i.e., revisions and distortions) to prove that it really approves of and even encourages nationalism. In the process, Islam is turned into what the nationalists call turath (heritage).This turath is viewed by them as a cumbersome corpus of writings, beliefs, attitudes, etc., which has no place in the 'modern world' or in the project of Arab nationalism unless it is 'sifted,' 'purified' and 'reinterpreted' to be ready for use. From what point of view will the turath be sifted, by whom, for what purpose, under what conditions, and what will be left of it, are questions that the nationalists prefer to ignore.

The attitude of Arab nationalism to Islam can be summed up by saying that an intellectual violence is exercised against all aspects of that religion to make it amenable to their secular views of it and to justify its exclusion from the place of prominence in the Arabs' lives in favour of nationalism. Here once more the nationalists fall into contradiction.

The natural course would have been for them first to find Islam inadequate or empty of content and then to set about building a social and political creed to replace it, or, at least, to compensate its deficiencies. On the contrary, the strategy of Arab nationalism was to attack the fullness and validity of Islam and to deny or throw doubt on its programs so that it can justify its own project or doctrine. This is more like putting the cart before the horse; but it seems that sound logic must give way if hitting at Islam is in question.

This nationalist attitude towards Islam has revealed itself in yet another contradiction relating to political practice this time. The Arab nationalists show intense jealousy in guarding the 'Arab entity' they carved out of the body of Islam from re–uniting with or reverting once more back to that body. All political movements that call even for lukewarm and formal cooperation between Muslim Nation–States are scoffed at by the Arab nationalists as reactionary steps which would only hinder the crystallization of the desired Arab entity. Even empty organizations run by some Arab regimes in the field of Islamic action are not acceptable to the Arab nationalists.

However, the nationalists do not show any reservations in linking or even incorporating that precious Arab entity into other international entities or movements not only in the political but in the cultural and economic spheres as well. The majority speak, in the current revival of their thought, about a unified front of all the progressive, freedom-loving forces of the world, which primarily include the Soviet Union and its satellites, in addition to the left in Europe and the other continents.

Other Arab nationalists speak of close ties between the 'Arab entity' and western Europe as a cultural and political body that balances the two super-powers. Some of these speak more specifically about a 'Mediterranean' entity which fuses the Arabs and the southern Europeans in a primarily cultural-economic system.

This last variety is now adopted by wide sections of the Arab nationalists and it is flagrantly anti-Arab in its implications of merging the Arab identity into an essentially Western culture. The Egyptian writer Taha Husayn, who first suggested this idea in radical terms in the late thirties, was bitterly criticized by Muslim thinkers for proposing that servile form of Westernization.

On the political front, the Arab nationalists envisage merging their cherished entity into such world movements as that of the non-aligned, the Third World, and the 'South'. These movements are really Western-defined and inspired despite their high-sounding rhetoric about imperialism, a just economic order, etc.

The argument that I am trying to put across here is that while the Arab nationalists do not find any problem in cooperating with or even merging into internationalist movements of every kind, they completely stand against any form of Islamic action even if it were mere window-dressing that does not bear upon the existing nationalist entities. The reason cannot be that Islamic action relates to a religion while the other world movements are of political or economic nature.

The communist or the 'Mediterranean' ideals are redolent of 'belief' and cultural implications; and Islamic action includes 'worldly' fields in its purview. Once again, Arab nationalism faces us with a contradiction that can only be explained by its anti-Islamic stance.

Three Arguments of Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism is not a well-argued or defined doctrine, as has already become clear in the previous sections of the present paper. Its advocates usually have a limited repertoire of arguments that derive their only strength from being tirelessly repeated by their propaganda and uncritically circulated as self-evident truths.

These arguments are weak and they reveal the stress of the contradictions we have examined. I now propose to round off this criticism of the idea of Arab nationalism by discussing three of such arguments that are frequently advanced.

1. The Argument of 'National Unity'

The most powerful argument proudly displayed in the arsenal of Arab nationalists is that their doctrine will solve the problems of the non-Muslim minorities in the Arab countries by abolishing the principle of religious rule by the Muslim majority and substituting it with nationalist rule in which the higher authority will be secular and under which the minorities will regain their 'rights.'

There are no religious minorities in the 'Arab world' except the Copts in Egypt, who have been assimilated into the Muslim majority in all walks of life and who live in harmony with it unless provoked from the outside, and the Christians and some deviant sects in the Levant. The latter have been hostile to Islam for centuries and have cultivated close ties with the imperialist powers and world Christendom in modern times.

It is among them that the idea of Arab nationalism emerged to serve as an instrument of attack upon the Caliphate and Islam and to separate the Arab countries from the rule of Islam to be an easy prey for the European imperialists and their clients -- the Westernized elite. It was these early `pioneers', who could not write Arabic proficiently, that called for `Arab' nationalism with their entire inspiration coming from the West and their sentiments drawn to it.

In the light of the confinement of disaffected minorities to a narrow corner of the Arab world, the primacy given to this issue by Arab nationalism raises doubts about this movement. It has very wide claims over all aspects of life and it declares its intention to replace Islam as the guiding `project' of the Arabs. When the major justification given to these bold claims turns out to be the solution of a limited minority's problems that only exist in the minds of some members of those minorities themselves, suspicion is naturally aroused.

Religious minorities in the Arab world did not suffer from persecution under Islam or the 'Uthmani State. Barring the usual tensions that may occur, they have attained a secure and advanced status that made them ambitious for more, particularly with the penetration of European influence into the Ottoman-ruled Arab provinces. The Maronites in Lebanon used their links with France to agitate against the 'Uthmani State calling for an independent Christian-dominated enclave in Lebanon which was actually realized almost a century later under Western auspices.

This agitation and similar rebelliousness by other Levantine minorities against a tolerant Islamic rule were primarily motivated by religious sentiments and were coupled with enthusiastic entry into alliances with such colonial powers as the French and the British in the nineteenth century. There was no talk initially about an Arab dimension or 'nationalism' when this minority first began its plotting against the 'Uthmani State.

Into this context the 'Arab' dimension was suddenly introduced to serve both as a cover for these moves towards minority secession with Western backing and as a skilful tool to engage the Arab Muslims in a

struggle against Islam and its rule. For, 'Arab' is a critical and sensitive term to use. It has been indissolubly tied to Islam as almost to become synonymous with it.

At the same time, it does not clearly indicate Islam and may be filled with non-Islamic, if not anti-Islamic, content, such as the reference to the pre-Islamic age. In this way, it can be used for deception and propaganda purposes with the first meaning displayed and the second implied or intended.

This is how it came to serve the conspiring minorities of the Levant and disguise their far from 'nationalist' ties to the West. It dragged with it the idea of nationalism with its secular essence as a further aid in disguise and in luring the unsuspecting Arab away from his Islamic allegiances.

This basically religious agitation against Islam and its rule is exposed fully in the insistence by Arab nationalism on the argument of 'national unity.' It explains to us why a movement that is supposedly secular and engrossed in a wide-ranging 'project' for the renaissance of the Arabs should pay such exaggerated attention to an imaginary problem that does not arise in Islam either theoretically or in practice, and that, if it arose, can easily find a solution within the tolerant and humane precepts of Islam.

This argument only reveals that the main concern of the Arab nationalists is to continue that plan of the Levant minorities---independence from Islam and ties with the West---and to place before the other quiescent minorities the prospect of a similar project.

It is ironic that the Arab nationalists, who come to the Muslim majority and ask them to shed their allegiance to Islamic teachings on unity and to Islam's priority and authority over their lives, come also with a call for more commitment by the non-Muslims towards their own creeds. They completely ignore that their alleged championship of the very small minorities comes at the expense of the overwhelming majority of Muslims whom they address.

This is because their definition of minority rights has been of the negative type. These rights will be secured only against Islam, when Islamic rule has been abolished, and when the Muslims have been secularized and Westernized. In fact, the last words point to the paradox involved in this Arab nationalist view.

The rights of the minorities will be guaranteed and their problems solved only when the majority of Muslim Arabs have become like the Christians of Europe; that is, like the Christian minorities in the Arab world. This can only be described as a form of sectarian blackmail.

The nationalists, who are so enthusiastic for minority rights, do not attempt to search for them in Islam or to work for them, supposing that they have been violated under its rule. They do not even care to define these rights and problems except in the negative sense mentioned above: the rights of the non-Muslims will be guaranteed and their problems solved when Islam itself is liquidated.

Thus, Arab nationalism poses itself primarily as the solution of certain undefined problems occurring to

some small minorities at the expense of the Muslim majority. Their proposed 'nationalist entity,' which has so far failed to solve the minority problems, as witnessed by the renewed sectarian tensions in some Arab countries, will also create other problems. It will clash with the strongly entrenched local nationalisms in many Arab countries, it will come into conflict with racial and linguistic minorities in these countries, and it will collide with the universally-oriented movements like the Islamic and, to some extent, the communist.

The grand scheme of Arab nationalism boils down to a suspicious obsession with a so-called minority problem for the solution of which a host of other problems will be created, foremost amongst which is the obliteration of the identity of the Muslim majority of Arabs. In practice, these problems have actually been created and Arab nationalism has, in that sphere, proved itself a mere tool for achieving the hegemony of religious and political minorities.

In Syria it was the Christians and then the Alawites who used Arab nationalism as a cover ideology to disguise their power-seeking that ended in tragedy for the Muslim majority. In Iraq it is the secularist-Christian minority that rules under the banner of Arab nationalism and leads the Muslim people of their country to attack the Muslims of Iran.

In Lebanon the Christians raised the same nationalist slogans only to drop them in recent times and uncover their real designs and alliances with the enemies of Arabs and Muslims alike.

The Arab nationalist argument concerning the minorities, often disguised by the positive-sounding phrase of 'national unity,' betrays much about the backgrounds, intentions, and inconsistencies of this idea.

2. The Argument of 'Modernity:'

There is a constellation of words that are always present in the Arab nationalist propaganda and which are produced as arguments in favour of this idea. These words include 'modernity,' 'progress,' 'the age,' 'reason,' 'enlightenment,' and similar phrases that supposedly support the Arab nationalist doctrine against its Islamic opponents, who are usually described by a counter-group of words like 'reactionary,' 'backward,' etc.

It is obvious that the mere repetition of a handful of favourable terms does not in-itself constitute an argument, but may be of some propaganda value. However, when these words are used in Arab nationalist writings they usually carry a Westernized content of a leftist character. This is another evidence to the essentially dependent nature of a doctrine that brags about being 'Arab' and 'independent'.

'Modernity,' in nationalist usage, means to establish a society similar to that of the West, and 'progress' is measured with reference to that model. 'Enlightenment' and 'reason' mean thinking and behaving in the secularist, materialist modes of Europe.

Islamic thought has come in recent years to analyze and criticize the arsenal of favourable terms circulated by the Arab nationalists and, indeed, by all sections of the secularist spectrum. It is usually pointed out that these terms are relative and abstract and must be placed in a certain frame of reference when used. The critics often indicate the confused use by the nationalists of these terms.

However, it can easily be demonstrated that even in the Western context the content of the Arab nationalists' terms cannot be described as modern, progressive, rational, or enlightened. Nationalism of the kind that prevailed in Europe has been superseded by 'the modern age.'

An 'enlightened' and 'progressive' socialism or Marxism, from which the Arab nationalists borrow much of their ideas, thinks in global terms and defines man in universal material terms that are basically socio-economic and not racial or even cultural. A new 'nationalism' has been created in the Soviet Union (I am only speaking here about the ideal claims) that cuts across old nationalist lines and unites and merges them on the basis of an internationalist creed.

The 'enlightened' and 'rational' secular ideas or attitudes that the Arab nationalists display are more often than not hackneyed remnants of nineteenth century positivist-materialist thought which are now dead museum pieces. It is certainly not rational or enlightened to present vague emotional formulations mixed with outmoded racist thought as the basis for Arab nationalism. It is equally far from reason to steal the cultural unification factors created by Islam to join all those who believe in it and make them constitutive of an Arab nationalism that ignores Islam or sets itself against it.

The Arab nationalists usually argue that they are working in the spirit of the age to create a larger entity out of local nationalisms in the Middle East area just as is now being attempted in Europe through various 'unions.' This, however, does not hide the fact that their call is essentially disintegrative and not unifying.

To unite some local nationalisms, a task in which Arab nationalists have failed miserably, is surely a paltry game compared to the serious cleavage which Arab nationalism has caused in the Muslim world along with non-Arab chauvinism. It should also be mentioned that the claimed unity will be in a secularist, Westernized framework which is a loss to Islam. In fact, Arab nationalism has a chronic tendency to degenerate into local nationalism which in its turn keeps the old Arab slogans to legitimize the local tyrants' claims to leadership outside their own countries.

The Arab nationalists ignore the fact that religion -- Judaism and Christianity -- is now a strong unifying force in the West. The rational, enlightened, and modernist Westerners to whom the nationalists owe so much are now flocking back in increasing numbers to their religion which is employed to establish a world-wide identity and entity through the activities of the big churches. The other Westerners are engaged in a similar universal quest through the other Western creeds: liberalism, socialism, and Marxism.

This argument of Arab nationalism turns out to be a mere empty rhetoric that only reveals the depth to

which that doctrine is attached to Europe in contradiction to its declared principles, at least from the theoretical point of view.

3. The Argument of 'Practicality'

With the weakness of their ideas being felt more and more, the Arab nationalists have developed this argument in the face of criticisms from Islamic quarters. Islam, which they view in a secular perspective, is seen by them as an unfit alternative for nationalism. Its civilization has failed many centuries ago and its political expression, the caliphate, has gone for ever after displaying its inherent defects.

Moreover, according to views propagated by some orientalists, Islam does not really have anything to offer beyond some general moral tenets. The social and political spheres are thus open before an Arab nationalism that offers a practical alternative.

It is tempting to quash this argument by citing the practical record of Arab nationalist forces that have ruled most Arab countries for different periods throughout the last thirty years or more. They have ruled in dictatorial fashion liquidating all other political tendencies and singling out the Islamic for particular harshness to prevent the evolving of a credible Islamic removement and, hence, a viable alternative to their rule.

However, their failures in the social, economic, and political fields have been resounding. All of the famous 'socialist experiments' introduced by the Arab nationalist regimes and elites have ended in ruin and their political and military efforts have been unable either to unify the Arabs or face Israel except in one war–––that of Ramadan –– which was won in its initial stages only by Islamic fervour and slogans.

Arab nationalist regimes led by military, intellectual, and sectarian elites of a secularist and Westernized bent have practised dictatorship at its worst, strangling all sorts of liberties and human rights. They enforced Western ideas and values on Islamic societies, causing chaos and deterioration in them, Their much–vaunted development schemes were mostly ill–conceived and badly planned as well as incompetently and corruptly managed.

In contrast, one can point to many practical successes of Islamic rule throughout its history though the comparison would be unjust to it because the Arab nationalists have such power in their hands that not even the most despotic Muslim ruler could have dreamt of. It may be more to the point to refer to the contemporary success of Islamic movements on many social and intellectual levels even when they have been subjected to severe persecution and distortion of their ideas and goals. The case of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt as well as that of the Islamic Societies in recent years may be considered in this connection.

Arab nationalism is in a worse condition, in the estimation of viability, than what it thinks Islam is in. If we grant that both movements currently exhibit signs of failure or weakness, Islam has at its credit the fact that it has been forcefully excluded from the sphere of action in its own countries for more than a century

now by repeated colonialist and, then, nationalist attacks. Islam is viable as a living creed which shapes the believers' values and view of life and it is not, as Arab nationalism, a travesty of certain nineteenth century European ideas which have outlived their interest there.

If both Islam and Arab nationalism are seen, for the sake of argument, to be in an equal state of failure from the political point of view, the decision to opt for one or the other reflects a value judgement. The Muslim can have many arguments to justify his choice of Islam, some of them appealing to Arab heritage. The Arab nationalist, on the other hand, can only argue by reference to Western or non-Arab terms and views to defend his doctrine.

The argument from practicality is reduced, in fact, to the contention by Arab nationalists that since their elites are in possession of power and influence, their idea is more practicable than Islam which has been excluded by them from the spheres of action. It is the old 'status quo' argument that the nationalists must have imported from bourgeois Europe of the last century.

In this attitude, they do not only attribute revolutionary (and, hence, 'progressive') tendencies to Islam but also deny their own claims to such tendencies. They consider the wider and deeper Islamic ideas which go beyond race and view man in his entirety as impracticable. They reject the comprehensive Islamic 'project,' whose features they consistently distort by their secularist approaches, and prefer a limited, racially-based, vaguely-defined, and practically disproved idea as a viable alternative to it for no other reason than that they happen to be in power and that they resent an Islamic change.

Perhaps the most telling 'practical ' criticism that can be brought at present to bear on Arab nationalism is that its elites have become reliable tools of conservative Arab regimes who shudder at the prospect of an Islamic revolution. At the same time they have become respectable and rich tools of blase, 'radical' regimes similarly apprehensive of an Islamic upheaval.

Conclusion

The present paper has set itself the rather narrow task of criticizing what it described as logical inconsistencies bedevilling the current, and old, presentations of the idea of Arab nationalism. It suggests that these contradictions which affect the positions and arguments of that idea can be explained by the fact that Arab nationalism has been envisaged from the beginning not as an intellectual creed or a philosophy but rather as a political instrument to achieve certain ends; i.e. the arousal of some eastern Arab provinces against the 'Uthmani State.

These ends have later developed to include the secularization and covert Westernization of the Middle Eastern Muslim Arabs, the lifting of non-Muslim or anti-Islamic elites to positions of influence and power, the legitimization of leadership ambitions either by certain dictators or by Arab nationalist parties, and the establishing of an 'Arab entity' separate from the Islamic entity and made to stand against it while using some of the elements it created.

Arab nationalism was primarily conceived for an emotional, demagogic mode of propaganda and dissemination. Hence, the contradictions. The crowds of Arabs, it seems, could sufficiently be aroused by a jumble of slogans. Arab nationalism, that is, started life with a derogatory view of Arab mentality. There is nothing strange in that, keeping in mind its Western inspiration.

When Arab nationalism began to feel the need for intellectual development it could only magnify the contradictions inherent in it in the way that this paper has traced. With its overwhelming Western content Arab nationalism has, in fact, lost its independence and become a mere branch of some ideologies of the West but without the intellectual sophistications and equipment.

As I have earlier emphasized, it has practically ceased to be 'Arab' or 'nationalist' in the strict or usual meaning of these terms and turned, intellectually as well as politically, into a Trojan horse for internationalist forces encroaching upon the Muslim world. It combines with other secularized and Westernized nationalisms fostered in various areas across the Muslim world to yield a pattern of attack upon the unity of that world and its identity.

The various brands of nationalism use the unifying elements created by Islam to forward their own claims of independent and separate entities vis-à-vis Islam. They disintegrate the universal Islamic identity but they do not end up in several entities as might be expected.

Rather, they are re-unified again into another global system, that of Western civilization in its widest sense. The nationalisms are claimed as smaller but more valid entities than the larger identity of Islam, but the valid and sure nationalist identities soon reveal their essentially dependent, Westernized nature and merge into the universal Western system in any or all of its political, economic, or cultural manifestations.

The crucial point in this development is the two contradictions that I isolated and attempted to explain. The nationalisms forced upon the Islamic identity represent intermediate stages in the confrontation between Islam and the West. They are secessions from Islam which claim an identity independent of Islam and, apparently, of the West, but their essential and characteristic content is basically and inescapably Western (secularist) in addition to their political orientations.

This content and the practice of the ruling nationalist elites leads inevitably to identification with, involvement in, and gradual incorporation into the universal Western 'project' in any of its major branches.

The nationalist elites cannot revert to Islam even if they wanted to because they have destroyed its universal system and have interpreted away its fullness and programs.

Thus, nationalism of any type can be seen, from the strategic point of view, as a mediate phase between the disintegration of a total Islamic polity and identity and the incorporation or assimilation of the resulting nationalistic identities into the global Western polity. This is the logic that is inherent in the content of the

idea of nationalism itself as it was, and still is, presented across the Muslim world: a secularist, Westernized content.

Nationalism can only lead to Western internationalism and it is in essence a temporary, unstable phase of political development that has been forced on the Muslim countries aimed at throwing them into the lap of the West. No amount of chauvinism or calls for a return to 'original culture' or 'the roots' can save the nationalisms from that fate, assuming that the nationalist elites so desire to be saved.

The mere idea, terms, mode of seeing things, and outlook of the nationalisms have been Western-oriented and inspired from the start. When they abandoned universal Islamic claims to priority, allegiance, unity, and political and social expression, they had no alternative but to join the other global system that confronts Islam, the West. Nationalist illusions of independence and identity were only preparatory stages in this development.

They are good arousal factors against Islam while they hide the Western content of the nationalist doctrine. When the nationalisms have performed the destructive part of their idea, the separation from the Islamic identity, and attempt to embark on some form of building their own 'identity,' they find themselves drawn into the Western vortex. All the secularized nationalisms of the Muslim world, from that of Ataturk to the Arab variety can be explained by and studied according to this formula.

All attempts to solve the desperate problems of the nationalisms --- under such concepts as 'the South' or 'the Third World' ---can only increase the malaise, because they are of Western origin and conception and because they are confined to partial views in the economic field which only help to remove tensions in the global polity dominated by the West.

This paper must stop at these limits but it is important to point out that the current artificial revival of Arab nationalist thought is directed primarily against Islam, either in Iran or inside the Arab countries themselves, and not against imperialism or Zionism.

The analysis of this paper should, I hope, shed light on this attitude. Another significant thing is that the framework defined here can also serve to criticize the similarly artificial revival in some Arab countries recently of the doctrinaire secularist tendency, which has been moribund in Egypt, for example, for many years.

Secularism uses the same arguments of Arab nationalism and suffers from the same contradictions and even more. It insists that Islam be evacuated from the sphere of social, economic, political, and cultural action and guidance only to replace it with Western views and values, some of them of Judaeo-Christian origins while the rest are atheistic. There is nothing to wonder at in that both the secularists and the Arab nationalists have united against Islam and its active movements.

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