

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MODERNISTIC EXEGESIS OF THE HOLY QUR'ĀN

2.1. PREAMBLE.

2.1.1. Conceptual Confinements:

Many researchers hold that the root of modernism dates back to the eighteenth century following Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. This juncture virtually represented the start of a direct confrontation between the East and West; between the Ottoman caliphate, which embraced the whole Muslim nations ('*Ummah*) – including the Arab world – and its foe, represented then by all of Europe¹.

This historical phase set off an alerting awareness for Muslims as being fraught with rampant underdevelopment and backwardness. Thus, in the wake of the socio-economic association with the West, the Western institutional education had pervaded the entire Muslim world, which had, in turn, spurred the appearance of worlds of cultural enterprises and political groupings².

In an endeavor to give a clear picture of this rooted relapse, a number of vexed questions that haunt the mind of the Muslim masses are being posed: what are the reasons lying behind the weakness of the East and the dominance and might of the West? What is, then, the appropriate cure for this long-lived plight? What is the most suitable ideology that has the merit to be followed; is it based on religion or

¹Al-Sharfi, 'Abd al-Majid'. *Al-'Islām wa al-Ḥadāthah*, 2nd edn. Tunis: publication of al-Dār al-Tūnisīyyah, p. 30. You may also refer to 'Isma'il, Fadī, (1991), *Al-Khitāb al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir*, 1st edn. USA: International Islamic Institute of Thought (IIIT), p. 27.

²Al-Dūrī, 'Abd al-'Azīz (1986), *al-Takwīn al-Tārīkhī li al-'Ummah al-'Arabīyyah: Dirāsah fī al-Hawīyyah wa al-Wa'y*, 3rd edn. Beirut: Center of Arabian Unity's Studies, pp. 142-50.

current probe, here, is not to examine the root of modernism in the Arab world since this seems to be an unfounded and irrelevant claim. Therefore, our main emphasis is rather to point out the different stages of modernism's hybridization process and the main turning points this process has passed through.

In order to narrow down the scope of the study, we come to divide this prefatory chapter into three central sections, which are intended to touch upon the main stages of the Modernist movement evolved in the Arab world. Each section will draw thoroughly on a particular period of Arabian Modernism.

1. The first section examines the period between post World War I and the Palestinian setback in 1948. The underlying reason for specifying the start of the period after and not before the First World War is due to the following two factors:

- a. This period had witnessed the break up of the Ottoman Caliphate and subsequently the outright split between the Arabs and Turks. As such, the Arabs had, themselves, to bear the brunt of a heavy civilizational conflict⁶.

- b. Since the current research seeks to describe and observe the phenomenon of Modernism as being a fact couched upon specific geographical frontiers, it is thereupon logical and yet meaningful to commence the observation period after the secession, emergence and the intrinsic political formation of the Arab world⁷.

2. The second section discusses the Modernist movement from after the Palestinian setback until the eighth decade of the twentieth century, that is

⁶Al-Naqib, Khaldūn Ḥasan (1991), *Al-Dawlah al-Taṣalluṭiyyah fī al-Mashriq al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir: Dirāsah Binā'iyyah Muqārīnah*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of Arabian Unity's Studies, p. 71.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 69-73.

after the resounding defeat of the Arabs by the American backed Zionists in 1967 and 1973 respectively.

3. The third section deliberates over the remaining decades of the last century.

2.1.2. Methodological Confinements:

Before we start detailing these stages, it is worthwhile to have a cursory roundup of some methodological foundations and to recall some assumptions and axioms, which are, to our knowledge, an essential prerequisite to apprehending the purpose and objective of this chapter.

1. The concept of modernism in Arabian thought is clearly elastic and unstable in that it has no single or well-defined form. It is, instead, a dynamic and all-inclusive concept. It comprehends all intellectual currents and philosophical doctrines that have crept into the Arab world⁸. The term modernism may, sometimes, symbolize liberalism as it may also mean nationalism, and on occasions it may stand for socialism and communism. It is even used sometimes to have other connotations like secularism, in its downright purport that is dissociating religion and *state* power. In this respect, an Egyptian thinker, Salāmah Mūsā, while answering a question “what is the appropriate amount we should acquire from Western civilization?” states that: “The Arab countries’ dilemma and yet its worse affliction lay in the fact that we believe in civilization other than European civilization, and by corollary we reject the principles of parliamentary democracy and socialism although these principles have not been recognized in Asia and autocratic dictatorship

⁸ Al-Jābirī, Muḥammad ‘Ābid (1991), *Al-Turāth wa al-Ḥadāthah: Dirāsāt wa Munāqashāt*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of Arabian Unity’s Studies, p.16.

systems⁹.” It is unequivocal from the preceding that all conflicts that have been experienced in the last few decades were exclusively couched within the elite society associated with its different ideological and epistemic ramifications. Thus, despite its styles and trends being so numerous; the conflict was actually running on the same cultural ground, which was based on modernism and the comprehensive headway for all intellectual schools¹⁰. Therefore, we shall come across a host of types and aspects of modernism, since everyone is seeking rejuvenation according to Western thought with its all-colorful collections. This would accordingly lend us a strong reason to contend that the conflict was, overall, between two cardinal poles, the fringe Western thought and the local Arabian (religious) thought, in addition to the internal rivalry among the wings of current modernism itself.

2. We tend to admit the innocent and genuine intention behind resorting to the modernist trend, and thus we rule out every opinion that claims the existence of a potential plot or a lurking malicious attitude. In other words, we believe that those who have cherished modernism are basically following their own personal persuasions to conceive modernism to be the perfect solution to the Arabian crisis. Hence, neither their mistakes nor their rightness are to be our focal concern in this chapter, and this is, generally, in consonance with the descriptive method adopted in this preliminary chapter.

3. In addition to the epistemic framework of the modernists, which is the main topic of this research, we shall further emphasize the legal stand and

⁹ Ismā‘īl (1991), *op. cit.*, p.64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.132.

nature of the relationship between modernism and religion. Indeed, this is the core of this chapter.

2.2. The First stage: Between the First World War and 1948.

This historical interlude is deemed as a perilous phase in the history of Arabian political, cultural and social thought, whereby the conflict between the Arab modernism (*Western views to the life and universe*) and Islam becomes more blatant¹¹. This conflict took several forms, among which, the most overriding controversial issues were:

2.2.1. The Relationship Between Islam and Power (Authority):

For instance, the best example that mirrors this acrid conflict is the blunt polemics aroused by the daring book: “*al-’Islām wa ’Uṣūl al-Ḥukm*” (*Islam and Foundation of State*), published in 1925. The book was written by ‘Aḥī ‘Abdu al-Razzāq, the man who wore the ‘*azharī*’ turban and who was well known for his liberal stand. The author through his book affirms and countenances the idea of the separation of religion from the state and he even observes that the leading cause of Muslims’ misfortunes was the preponderant practice of relating religion to the state as being a subset element of the former *religion*. A. ‘Abd al-Razzāq further adduces that:

“The perceptible fact that supports reason besides being accentuated by history in old as well as recent times, reveals that rituals and images of religion of almighty Allah (Islam) are neither restricted to that type of authority called by Muslim jurists “caliphate” nor to those conventionally named as caliphs. The fact also sustains that the welfare of Muslims in their worldly life is not contingent upon any of these

¹¹ Alan R. Taylor (1988), *The Islamic Question in Middle East Politics*. London: Boulder and, westview Press, pp. 38-39.

stipulations...Indeed, the caliphate regime was and still is a sheer disaster and a source of harm and corruption inflicted upon both Muslims and Islam”¹².

It is ostensibly clear from this audacious claim that A. ‘Abd al-Razzāq had not only admitted the theoretical divorce between Islam and the state, but he had even stepped forward to lay his own induction about the pertinent facts and practices which showed, according to his observations, a significant consistency between the proposed analogical premises and their final outcomes. The author had, thereupon concluded that relating the caliphate to religion is indeed a source of disaster that spells outright misfortune and corruption for the Muslims. Furthermore, he went on to clarify his above assertion and contended that the “caliphate has nothing to do with religious plans or judgeship’s affairs and also it is not supported to take part in any of the state’s functions or government’s constitutions. They are rather mere political plans and have nothing to do with religion”¹³. The ready question here is, will Muslims remain without a leadership, or what? Or else, from which ideological fountain are they going to imbibe? Here our scholar disclosed his keen admiration for the Western theory of authority. He ascertained that:

“There is nothing to prevent Muslims from rallying with other nations in all sciences of sociology and politics, so they should undermine that archaic system to which they humiliate and succumb themselves. In return, they should build up the foundations of their dominion and their government’s regime based on the latest contemporary inventions of the human mind and also the most sound experiences of the other nations that appeared to be the best available regime”¹⁴.

¹²Abdu al-Razzāq, ‘Alī (n.d.), *al-‘Islām wa ‘Usūl al-Ḥukm*. Miṣr: Al-Hay’ah al-Maṣriyyah al-‘Āmmah li al-Kitāb, pp.35-36.

¹³*Ibid.*, p.103.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p.103.

Thus, were there not any responses to such an irritating claim? In fact, this book sparked off a burning debate in the intellectual arena and was accordingly subject to severe prosecutions and blistering critiques led by many religious scholars and specialist academicians in Egypt and abroad. One of the most powerful, arguments aimed to debunk the many fallacies of this book was directed by ‘Abdu al-Razzaq al-Ṣanhūrī Bāshā, who was then working on his PhD dissertation in Paris. The theme of his dissertation was the jurisprudence of the caliphate and its historical evolution, which, thereupon, rendered his natural response more relevant and potent in refuting the suspicious ideas about the eminent principle of the caliphate along with the relationship between religion and power. Under the heading: “abnormal opinion”, al-Ṣanhūrī included all his arguments that defend and uphold the practice of the caliphate. However, al-Ṣanhūrī not only stoutly argued against the vicious attempt of secularism in the succinct writings of his dissertation in 1929, but also soldiered on to pursue this controversial matter as he elaborated a very important research paper, which was published in the Legal Defense Journal in 1929 under the title: “Religion and State in Islam”. This research emphasizes the following:

1. Islam is indispensably a religion and state and the former is undoubtedly a significant part of the message of the Prophet, may peace be upon him.
2. While Islam is construed as both religion and state, it also and simultaneously draws a clear distinction between both of them. That is religion is constant because it is a divine set whereas the state is progressive because it is subject to the human’s legal efforts (‘*ijtihād*’), which are bound by legal constants set by Islamic rulings (*sharī’ah*). This is truly an ingenious and

tactful idea that portrays the peculiarity of the relationship between religion and state in the Islamic model¹⁵.

The controversial book had ultimately brought his author, ‘Afi ‘Abdu al-Razzāq to the disciplinary board of the master scholars of *al-‘Azhar*, the world-renowned high learning institute of religious studies, to which he used to belong. This supreme board decided to strip him of his membership as his theory was found to contravene the Islamic theology (*al-‘Aqīdah*). The author had then to live a reclusive life for the rest of his days¹⁶.

2.2.2. Women’s Liberation:

Another aspect of modernism, in this particular period, is the issue of “women’s liberation”. The ensuing alteration in the Muslim’s lifestyle associated with changes in the administration and management systems along with economic enterprises newly inspired from the West, all ultimately led to a change in the existing cultural patterns.

This precipitated the question as to the significant role of women in these modern institutions and their potential contribution towards the building of the new society. In this context, and amidst a fierce conflict between the conservative intellectual currents and those advocates of Western values who adamantly call for imitating Western cultural patterns, a number of writings appeared allegedly claiming the liberation of women from the decaying traditions, in an attempt to enable them to pursue their societal activity in the same way as their Western counterparts.

¹⁵Amārah, Muḥammad (1992), *al-‘Islām wa al-Siyāsah – al-Radd ‘Alā Shubuhāt al-‘Ilmāniyyīn*. Center of Islamic Researches, pp. 94, 107-108.

¹⁶Barakāt (1991), *op cit.*, p.419.

To the writer's knowledge, Shaiykh Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī in his book "*Qawfī fī al-Mar'ah*" (*My Opinion on Woman*) conveyed the best description of such a conflict, whereby he quoted a statement of one of the women's liberation's advocates: "The saying that association of both genders (*'ikhtilāf*) leads to anarchy is a hackneyed statement and it has no evidence"¹⁷. In the same vein, another liberal thinker observes:

"The systems of association between young boys and girls in their early age is nonexistent in Egypt, and it is all missed but to a lesser extent it is present within our aristocratic families, who have been living quite some time in Europe... and I am very impressed with the *'ikhtilāf* system in British family, whereby you can find a child boy accompanying a little girl of the neighborhood and playing together in either one's home garden, and they do so until they become juvenile. By then the young lad gradually approaches the girl while shifting from the playing stage to the schoolmate friendship stage, subsequently everyone would seek to invite the other for a cup of tea"¹⁸.

Shaiykh Muṣṭafā has extensively retorted to the above article, in that he asserts:

"Egyptian and non Egyptian fathers are obliged to test the level of smartness and judicious reasoning of their children before they send them over to study in the West, or else there will be no deterrent that one day these (miseducated) children, upon maturation, will write to the Egyptian newspapers urging their fathers and brothers, frankly and publicly, to follow the religion of Westerners, since they are intellectually fed by extremely distorted thinking, of which we have earlier illustrated a few examples. I would like to end my talk about the tertiary student's article by saying that Egyptians must rule their country independently, due to the fact that the West has colonized the hearts of their educated offspring. Indeed, colonialism has the most detrimental effects on nations"¹⁹.

¹⁷ Ṣabrī, Muṣṭafā (1993), *Qawfī fī al-Mar'ah wa Muqāranatuh bī 'Aqwālī Muqalidāh al-Gharb*. Hassan al-Shammākhī Swīdān (ed.), 1st edn. Beirut & Damascus: Dār al-Qādirī, p. 49.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

2.2.3. Nationalism:

The third aspect of modernism in this particular phase was to accord greater priority to nationalism than to religion. Although the roots of this ideological tendency date back to the drastic conflict between the federalist Turks and some Arab nationalist thinkers, with each party being very chauvinistic and ostentatiously sticking to its race and language which they were vehemently propagating at the expense of the religion itself, this specific phase had, nevertheless, lost the stimuli of its ongoing conflict. This is because the Ottoman caliphate had eventually collapsed and subsequently, there was no reason to warrant such a call to uplift the race at the expense of religion.

Modernism has a blatant effect on the Arabian thinking, thereby national parties were to be established on a racial basis, for instance "*Jamā'at al- 'Ahālī*" (group of Kinsfolk) in Iraq and the Syrian Nationalist Socialist Party (SNSP). The most outstanding proponents and theorists who championed this ideology, during that era, were 'Amīn al-Rayḥānī, 'Antūn Sa'ādah, Ṣāṭa' al-Ḥuṣārī, Quṣṭantīn Zurīq and others alike²⁰. Al-Rayḥānī says:

"Arabs were there before Islam and Christianity and they will remain as Arabs even after Islam and Christianity. Christians as well as Muslims should apprehend that Arabism is before everything and above everything. Every one of our factions is a self-existent homeland... they all prefer their own interests at the expense of the supreme national benefit...thereupon, I cherish the transition from sectarianist ideology to nationalist ideology...Arabism joins us together, Arabism reunifies us, Arabism shows the potential thrust within us and then revives us"²¹.

Yet Al-Rayḥānī conceives that the main hindrance to the application of nationalism is the religious partisanship, for which he boastfully advocates: "the

²⁰ Barakāt (1991), *op.cit.*, p. 424.

²¹ Al-Rayḥānī, 'Amin (1987), *al-Qawmiyyāt*. 7th edn. Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, pp. 374-375.

split between religion and politics”²². He enunciates that “the development is a natural (universal) law and, thus, dissociating religion and politics comes in the overall context of religious and political development”²³.

Among these nationalist currents, there was a local intellectual current, which was particularly advocating a peculiar local nationalism, as Ṭāhā Ḥusīn did when he called for a racial Egyptian nationalism. He considered that “pharaonism” is the watershed that distinguishes between Egypt and other neighboring countries. Ṭāhā Ḥusīn issued in a Lebanese magazine called “*al-Makshūf*” the following statement:

“If you mean that Egypt is ready for contributing towards Arabian unity, you are then wrong. The fact is that the Egyptian is first of all an Egyptian descendant. Thus, he would not relinquish his ‘Egyptianity’ whatever are the vicissitudes...we shall not believe some Egyptians who pretend to strive for Arabism. In fact, ‘pharaonism’ is rooted within themselves and it will remain so, and it must remain and get even empowered...the history of Egypt is squarely independent from the history of any other country. Egypt today is Egypt yesterday that is Egypt of the Paraohs. Thereupon, the Egyptian is a pharaonic before being an Arabian. You should neither request Egypt to change its ‘pharaonism’ nor to give what cannot be given”²⁴.

In contrast to his downright rejection of the concept of Arabian nationalism and his firm stand against relating the history and civilization of Egypt to any other country in the region, Ṭāhā Ḥusīn alternatively exerted his efforts, after being bewitched by modernism’s ideology, to relate Egypt culturally and intellectually to Western civilization. In this pursuit he claims:

“Egypt is always a part of Europe in respect to all that is comprehended by cultural and intellectual life with its different

²² *Ibid.*, p.152.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.153.

²⁴ Shukrī, Ghāfi (1983), *Salāmah Mūsā wa ‘Azmah al-Ḍamīr al-‘Arabī*, 4th edn. Beirut: Al-‘Afāq al-Jadīdah, p. 66.

sorts and ramifications”²⁵. The author went too far in expounding his ideas, which reveal his intense fascination with European thought and civilization, whereby he contends: “We should take the tracks of the Europeans and follow their way, so that we would be able to be their real peers and partners in civilization in its all underlying nature whether it be good or bad, sweet or sour, laudable or reprehensible”²⁶.

To the extent that the author insists upon hanging on European civilization and adopting it as a way of life, he equally exhibits great fears over the negligence and incompetence of the Egyptians to undertake such a heavy trust. “I fear that we may default towards ourselves and others, namely the Europeans in general and our British fellows in particular, as they are keen observers, who take record of every small and big act, and accordingly, they hold us accountable for every futile and serious matter”²⁷.

Besides Egypt, this intellectual trend appeared also in other Arabic countries, like Syria and Lebanon as it is stated by ‘Abd ‘Allāh Ḥannā: “Apart from the Arabian nationalist current, two local nationalist trends had sprung up to emphasize, particularly, Syrian-Lebanese nationalism. The Jesuit father “Lamanson” is the first activist to propagate such ideas in his book Syria”²⁸.

In the context of these social, intellectual and political changes, in addition to the contesting foreign influences on the Arabian homeland, the communist trend came to appear under a kit of slogans that were commensurate with the aspirations and hopes of the opposed Arab masses at that time. These communist watchwords that fit closely with the people’s preferences, fell sometimes, under the guise of democracy, and upon occasions came under the name of socialism and also, in

²⁵ Ḥusīn, Ṭahā, *Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfah fī Miṣr*. 2nd edn. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, p.28.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.39.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²⁸ Ḥannā, ‘Abd ‘Allāh (1987), *al-‘Ittijāhāt al-Fikriyyah fī Sūriya wa Lubnān fī al-Niṣf al-‘Awwal min al-Qarn al-‘Ishrīn*. Damascus : al-‘Ahālī, p.91.

considered the Egyptianization slogan chauvinistic. He felt there should be no distinction between Egyptians and non-Egyptians in an international movement...Curiel claimed that he and Israel differed on the question of religion. He maintained that Israel believed in the need to concentrate their attack on religion, whereas Curiel and his group rejected that approach because they were active among students of al-'Azhar. Thus *al-'Ittiḥād al-Dimucrāṭī* became the seedbed for a number of activist Marxist organization"³³.

The communist movement had spread over most Arab countries, like Syria, Lebanon, Algeria and Iraq. Ḥusīn al-Raḥāl was among the pioneer activists to propagate communist thought. He established a journal called "*al-Ṣaḥīfah*" in 1924. It was the first journal to publicly espouse Marxist ideology. The journal called for the liberation of woman and rebelling against traditions. Following in the footsteps of her brother, 'Amīnah al-Raḥḥāl was among the pioneering women to forsake their Islamic attire (*al-Ḥijāb*), and then she joined the membership of the central committee of the Iraqi communist party. This journal instigated a furious response from scholars and the preachers at Friday sermons. The impetus led to its temporary closure. After that, it came to appear anew in 1927.³⁴

At this juncture, the communists took a hostile stand against religion³⁵. For some tactical reasons, few communists and secularists, in general, have often attempted to use religion to woo religious public opinion. "Egyptian Socialists as a whole – not just the Marxists- took the opportunity to use the media to disclaim the charge that socialism conflicts with religion"³⁶. On top of that, many of them were trying to prejudicially employ some *Qur'ānic* verses and Prophetic statements (*Ḥadīth*)

³³Jabr, Dandal (1985), *Al-Shuyū'īyyah Mansha'an wa Maslakan*. 3rd edn. Jordan: Al-Manār library, p.153. Ḥannā (1983), *op. cit.*, pp. 168, 172. al-Kaddūrī (1985), *op. cit.* pp. 127-128.

³⁴Barakāt (1991), *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309.

³⁵Ḥannā (1983), *op. cit.*, p.182.

³⁶Ismā'il and al-Sayyid (1990), *op.cit.*, p.24.

and apply them in a way that sounded consistent with their ideas. Ra'if Khūrī, originally a Christian but with a communist philosophy, had adduced some verses of the holy *Qur'ān*, while presenting his drama (*baydabā*), in order to legitimate his communist beliefs. He said upon explaining the content of the holy verse:

Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief.

Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ : 4

“These lucid verses are a strong evidence against the oppression of investors involved in commerce. Simultaneously, they are a signal for redemption of injustice and oppression from the persecuted people, who ultimately will take over the grip of power”³⁷.

As an opposite trend to the modernist current with its all orientations, a number of religious groups came into vogue, among which the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, founded by “*Ḥasan al-Bannā*” in 1928³⁸, was the most prominent Islamic group. We shall later in this chapter, point out the importance of this Islamic activist group.

We have come to delineate the general traits of modernism in this period, which was known as a stage of foundation, exploration and attraction until the end of the Second World War³⁹.

2.3. The Second Stage: 1948-1967.

After the Second World War, Arabs had to face new challenges culminating in the Palestinian misfortune upon the promulgation of establishing the Jewish state on

³⁷Hannā (1987), *op. cit.*, p.129.

³⁸Khaddūrī (1985), *op. cit.*, p. 85. Alan (1988), *op. cit.*, pp.10,54.

³⁹Khaddūrī (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

the Palestinian homeland. This scurrilous invasion occurred shortly after the defeat of the Arabs by the Jews in 1948. The ensuing war had virtually unveiled the strength of the religious current, its high competitiveness and its unprecedented potential to absorb the popular masses. In return, this bleak misfortune had shown the blunt idealism of leftist thought, in general, and communist thought, in particular. This fact is actually seen as a landmark in the history of modern Arabian thought, the salient outcomes of which we shall find out in the end of this stage and in its successive stage.

So how did this occur and what are the main turning points which Arabian thought had come through? To attempt this question, we should first do a roundup on the positions of the effective intellectual currents, and then we will proceed to underline their interrelationships. The movements under focus, here, are the leftist current with both of its wings (nationalism and communism), and religious activism.

2.3.1. The Communist Current:

Despite the fact that the two constituent trends of leftism had come to terms with 'ruling out religion from politics' as the former is deemed a sheer hurdle in the course of liberation⁴⁰, and although they both concur with the adoption of modernism, with its all dimensions, as a sole way to regeneration and development, these two wings, however, have one core difference, namely nationalism. The latter had often caused a burning conflict and squabbles between the underlying intellectual streams of the leftist current. Sa'dūn Ḥammādi had this to say: "The intellectual strife between national Arabism and communism had

⁴⁰Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 189-191. Khadūrī (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 206-207.

flared up at the time when communists had yet to appear in the Arabian society⁴¹". As a former communist activist, Ṭāriq Hajjī says: "The issue of Arabian nationalism was the moot point between 'Abd al-Nāṣir (Egypt's former president) and the communists"⁴². While nationalism is the mainstay of Arabian nationalism with its all-different types⁴³, it is, however, considered within communist teaching, as a factor of underdevelopment, given that communism usually maintains the international proletarian thinking. "The Syrian communist party is keen to persistently emphasize, through its policy, its international proletarian image"⁴⁴. Now, let's find out the potential bearings of such a conflict on the cause of the Palestinian and other critical issues in the Arab world, like the issue of growth and freedom. The factual happenings are the most crucial criterion to test and assess any kind of thought, and simultaneously they are the key factors either to develop or marginalize such thoughts. The Palestinian misfortune might be one of the most substantial terminals to lend the Arabian people an optimum opportunity for reflection and reconsideration with regard to each available doctrine, according to each one's yield, efficiency and its ability to meet the people's needs and ambitions. This is a positive repercussion, although such reflection took long decades to materialize due to a number of reasons, like the deliberate exclusion (from featuring the genius of Arabian identity) imposed by foreign forces, in parallel with the biased media, being monopolized by intrusive Western powers, which were subjugating the masses by means of force and

⁴¹Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, p.145.

⁴²Hajjī, Ṭāriq (1983), *Tajribatī Ma'a al-Mārksiyyah*, 1st edn. Jeddah & Cairo: International Union of Islamic Banks, p.89.

⁴³Al-Tal, Suhayr Ṣaltū (1996), *Ḥarakat al-Qawmiyyin al-'Arab wa 'In'itāfātihā al-Fikriyyah*. Beirut: Center of Arabian Unity' Studies, p. 88.

⁴⁴Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, p. 116. Khaddūrī (1985), *op. cit.*, p.164.

oppression⁴⁵. The Arab communists' stand towards the Palestinian cause and other issues of Arabian liberation, was mostly subject to the (former) Soviet Union's stance⁴⁶. This had actually emanated from the tenacious belief in internationalism (socialism), centrally cherished by Moscow. It was for this reason that the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) used to instill in every individual who sought party membership, the following slogan: "Oh! Comrade let's be an international (socialist) and stand up for the principle of brotherhood among different people, and let your trust be boundless with the thrust of freedom, development and socialism over the world under the leadership of the Soviet Union"⁴⁷. Here are some particular stands of the Arab communist parties which often oscillated from one contradiction to another, according to what had been dictated by Moscow's politics rather than what was actually required by the conditions and circumstances of the Arabs. The joint communiqué of both the Syrian and Lebanon communist party, a few days before the consent of the Soviet Union to the project of division of Palestine, had stated that:

"Both the Syrian and Lebanon communist party have an unalienable belief that the cause of Palestine is a cause of freedom, departure (of intruders) and independence, and they are quite sure that they express the opinion of all Arabian nationalist democrats. They also emphasize that resolution of Palestine's cause, is the complete evacuation, independence, canceling the (colonial) mandate beside the absolute refusal of the division proposal"⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Al-Jundi' Anwar, Hazimah al-Shuyū'iyyah fī al-'Ālam al-'Islāmī. Dār al-'I'tisām, pp. 55-57.

⁴⁶ See for example Algerian Communist Party, which had dropped the issue of Algeria's independence from its plans and struggle, beside its outright countenance to the decree dated 7 March 1944, which was then designed to offer the French citizenship to more than 50 thousand Algerian elite. In return, the party had assaulted the patriotic leaders, who rejected this proposal. Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

⁴⁷ Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122. Ḥajjī (1983), *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁴⁸ Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30. Ḥajjī (1983), *op. cit.*, pp. 93-96.

The latter stand was neither original nor genuine since it was contingent upon supreme interests beyond the borders (i.e. Moscow). Therefore, it is quite clear that when the Soviet Union had, later, supported the division plan of Palestine, all the Arab communists had obediently rushed to shift their stand towards the Palestinian cause. For instance, in December 1947, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) organized a boisterous street demonstration, in which it voiced its total support for the idea of the division of Palestine and approved the institution of a Jewish state in Palestine. Moreover, the communists went further and addressed the fact, in that both Syrian and Lebanon communist party had directed a bid to their comrades in Iraq and Palestine in order to unite their slogans. They even issued a joint communiqué that endorsed the division plan and denounced the war against the Jews as being a “dirty war” and a plot concocted by colonialism against the proletariat. In this pursuit, the Egyptian Communist Organization (ECO) had labeled the entrance of Arab military troops in Palestine as an incursion, and they even contended that the ensuing war was mere military training and a real gear -up of bourgeois troops and also a military base meant for an imminent assault on the Soviet Union⁴⁹. Many ex-communists perceive that the negative stance of the communists towards the Palestinian misfortune, at that time, was a huge blow against the communist movement in the Arab world, which had resulted in marginalizing the movement and spurring the people’s disgust for

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 98-102. Jabr (1985), *op. cit.*, pp. 158-160. In this context, see the standpoint of the Tunisian Communist party, which had countenanced the division of Palestine and the establishment of the Jewish state and had considered this as a heavy blow for the British Imperialism and its coalitions from Arabs, who clustered under the umbrella of the Arab League. Al-Timūmī, al-Hādī (1986). *Taṭawwur al-Wa'y al-Qawmī fī al-Maghrib al-'Arabī*. Beirut: Center of Arabian Unity' Studies, p.312.

communism. This fact stimulated one Sudanese ex-communist to comment: “It was the final straw that breaks the camel’s back”⁵⁰.

2.3.2. The Religious Current:

The most important political and religious movement, associated with an ideological platform, which appeared as an adversary to modernism, was incontestably the Muslim Brothers’ Group (MBG). Thus, in this regard we attempt to limit our discussion to this movement, in this particular historical phase.

In contrast to the communists’ stand, which upheld the rise of the Jewish state, the Muslim Brothers’ Movement had stoutly denounced the Zionist colonialism and vehemently opposed the establishment of a Jewish state on Palestinian soil. With a high efficacy and desperate efforts, and despite being upset by Arab governments⁵¹, the Muslim Brothers had managed to mobilize their members all over the Arab World for the cause of Palestine. Many of them were martyred⁵², and their commando operations had, indeed, distracted the Jewish forces, which tried hard to obviate the direct confrontation with such undaunted *fidā’iyīn*. Mushy Dayane, a prominent Jewish leader had this to observe: “The *fidā’iyīn* fight with a faith (tenet) much stronger than ours...They prefer to be martyred, while we want to build up a nation, we have tried combating them but we have incurred glaring casualties... Thus we tried as much as possible to avoid clashing with them”⁵³.

⁵⁰Sulaymān, ‘Aḥmad (1987), *Wa Mashaynāhā Khutan, Ṣafahāt fī Dhikrayāt Shuyū’ī ‘Ihtadā*, vol. 1. 2nd edn. Kuwait : Dār al-Qalam, p.133.

⁵¹Ṣāliḥ, Muḥsin (1989), *Al-Tayyār al-‘Islāmī fī Falastīn wa ‘Atharuh fī Ḥarakat al-Jihād*. 1917-1948, 2nd edn. Kuwait: Al-Falāḥ library, p.471.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p.47.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p.475.

In contrast with the communists, who held vociferous demonstrations only to acknowledge the division plan for Palestine and to show their indignation towards the war against Israel, the Muslim Brothers, for instance in Iraq, had formed the Palestine Salvation Association (PSA), and mobilized nearly 15 thousand volunteers to fight in Palestine. Furthermore, the movement had made a great deal of headway in collecting donations, and indeed a colossal number of these volunteers had reached Palestine, where they bravely participated in the war against Israel⁵⁴.

The main achievement of the Muslim Brothers in the war of 1948 was the pivotal role they had played in lifting the siege of an Egyptian military battalion, which was beleaguered by the Jews in *‘In al-Fālūjā*⁵⁵. Nevertheless, it appears that the unprecedented effectiveness of this religious group through its bold participation in this war, had attracted the public opinion, and subsequently an overwhelming majority of people had sided with the Muslim Brothers’ Movement. This immense popularity had prompted the modernist forces, led by the Egyptian government to dissolve and besiege the movement in 1948 under the guise of a secret plan to combat insurgence against the state⁵⁶. In response, Ḥasan al-Bannā, the founder and leader of the Muslim Brothers’ Movement, had refuted this spurious allegation and ascribed such a nasty official move to two main reasons:

1. To divert public attention from the flagrant failure of the government and its inability to repel the Jewish invasion of Palestine.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p.478.

⁵⁵Richard P. Mitchell (1993), *The Society of Muslim Brothers*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.58.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p.58-65.

2. The government's determination and its countenance of the principle of negotiation with the British and Zionists⁵⁷. Shortly after, Ḥasān al-Bannā was killed on 12 February 1949, at the hands of the "political police"⁵⁸. Following this despicable assassination, many members of the Muslim Brothers' Group were arrested⁵⁹.

It is worth noting that the Defense Board assigned to plea for the Muslim Brothers' Group had categorically proved that the decision to dissolve this Group was an instruction from America, France and Britain. Furthermore, the Defense had asserted that military battalions of the group were exclusively aimed at supporting Egypt and fighting against infidelity and disbelief, and were by no means designed to stage a rebellion against the state, as prejudicially claimed by the latter⁶⁰.

Therefore, it is absolutely clear that the essence of the conflict was actually not between a government and an opposition faction, but rather it was between the modernist current, represented by the liberal government and the communists, and religious activism, which was politically and mainly reflected, during that particular era, by the Muslim Brothers' Group.

2.3.3. The Nationalist Current:

The nationalist movement differs from the two preceding movements with regard to its stance towards the Palestine misfortune. Although there existed a number of

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.70. Alan (1988), *op. cit.*, p.57.

⁵⁹ Richard (1993), *op. cit.* p. 72.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.76-77.

theorists for nationalism prior to this grim misfortune⁶¹, despite the movement's comprehensiveness and popularity, it was not every bit as large as the communist and religious current. For instance *Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-Sūrī* (Syrian Resuscitation / *Ba'th* Party), which was a nationalist-based party, had directed all its concerns and political struggle, first and foremost to the Syrian issues. The party's agenda had failed to comprehend the cause of Palestine until the outburst of the unfortunate Palestinian mishap. Only then did the *Ba'th* party realize that the Palestinian cause was a significant part of the unionism struggle. In contrast, overall, the Arab nationalist movement was actually a product of the Palestine misfortune, and thus it had no presence prior to the 1948 War⁶².

The nationalist trend made its effective start only after Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir took power in Egypt, following a military coup d'état with the help of a bunch of military officers in 1952. Consequently, the nationalist current had to be under the auspices of the new leadership⁶³. Under the patronage of Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, the Egyptian Military Revolution had brought a new lease of life to the modernist movement, especially the Socialist trend. The latter, after being just an excessive intellectual and theoretical practice of the elite, had turned out to be a more practical and even a pervasive popular current⁶⁴. Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir was the pioneer leader and prominent exponent of the military revolutionary trend, either in the intellectual field, through his book *Philosophy of Revolution*, which was

⁶¹ Al-Tal (1996), *op. cit.*, pp.54-55. 'Aḥmad, Rif'at Sayyid (1993), *Thawrah al-Jinirāl Jamāl Abd al-Nāṣir*, 1st edn. Dār al-Jil, Beirut & Cairo: Dār al-Hudā, p.590.

⁶² Ibrāhīm 'Ibrāsh (1987), *al-Bu'd al-Qawmī lil-Qaḍīyyah al-Filasṭīniyyah: Filasṭīn baina al-Qawmiyyah al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Waṭaniyyah al-Filasṭīniyyah*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, p.93-94. Alan R. Taylor (1988), *op. cit.*, p.7.

⁶³ Al-Tal (1996), *op. cit.*, pp.34-35.

⁶⁴ Hammād, Majdī (1987), *al-'Askariyyun al-'Arab wa Qaḍīyah al-Wiḥdah*. First edition. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, p.162. Alan R. Taylor (1988), *op. cit.*, p.42.

written in 1953,⁶⁵ or in the practical field, whereby he was likely to back up any military overthrow in the Arab World. This is evidenced by his clear support of a number of military coups d'état in Iraq (1958), Yemen (1962) and Libya (1969)⁶⁶. These military regimes along with their political and intellectual sympathizers used to uphold the slogan of fighting against both direct and indirect colonialism. The former stood for outside aggression like that of Israel, whereas the latter focused upon the reactionary Arabian regimes, which sided with the imperial West. Indirect colonialism also includes the issue of underdevelopment with its economic, social and intellectual types⁶⁷.

Thus, how would these missions come into effect, and what are their repercussions on the peculiar relationship between modernism and religion?

2.3.3.1. Combating Colonialism.

Colonialism, which is topped by Israel, appears to be the most crucial pretence used by leftist militants to silence the mouths of the masses and to prosecute those who do not countenance their policies. Such official atrocities are revealed through the following aspects:

1. The prohibition of political pluralism. Socialist militants are accustomed to suppressing public freedoms and keep banning the multi-party system while using the pretext of fighting colonialism, particularly, the Zionists. In this vein, Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāsir wrote in 1959: "We should avoid establishing the political pluralism system, this is because political parties would bring Egypt into the Cold War arena through the colonial sponsors and foreign communists

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p.168.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p.163.

⁶⁷Sālim, Muḥammad al-Sayyid (1987), *al-Taḥfīl al-Siyāsī al-Nāṣirī: Dirasah fī al-'Aqā'id wa al-Siyāsah al-Khārijīyah*, 2nd edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, pp. 208-210.

related to these parties”⁶⁸. Nevertheless, the nationalists’ anti-communist feelings did not last long. That is, despite the acrid contention between the Arab nationalists and communists on the issue of nationalism, as mentioned earlier, certain political changes besides military and political alliances between nationalist governments and Soviet Union – the patron of international communism – had ultimately narrowed down the gap of dissension between these two clashing movements⁶⁹. Later on, most Arab nationalists cherished Marxist dictums, especially after the resounding defeat of the Arabs by the Jews in 1967. Nationalists had thereby failed to achieve what they had pledged to do with such bright slogans as the unity and liberation of Palestine. George Habash underlines nationalism’s regression by saying: “The movement was experiencing a leftward shift in its evolutionary course...The movement had started out by holding up the slogan of unity - liberation – vengeance, and ever since, it had increasingly evolved to the extent of even consenting to the act of July 1967”. Another intellectual observes:

“Congresses came successively in a frantic motion in order to discuss the causes and effects of the Arabs’ debacle, and thereupon determining the appropriate stand (towards such obsessing defeat). The movement had witnessed... and maybe for the first time in its history the spread of Marxist methodology through the specific mode of analysis, and also by requiring the alteration of the movement’s political guidelines, after being labeled as a pro-bourgeoisie party. This move had eventually edged towards the Leninist-Marxist doctrine”⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.222.

⁶⁹ Khaddūrī (1985), *op.cit.*, p.163.

⁷⁰ Al-Samarrā’i, ‘Abd Allāh Salūm (1986), *Taṭawwur al-Fikr al-‘Arabī al-Qawmī*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity’s Studies, p.187.

The most serious challenge that threatened the Arab nationalist government was religious activism, especially its most effective faction, which was then the Muslim Brother's Group. As a response, the military nationalist governments initiated a fierce campaign to wipe out this activist group⁷¹. As a result, the execution toll mounted to several leaders of the Muslim Brothers' Movement, such as 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Isma'īl and Sayyid Quṭb⁷².

2. The exportation of revolution and fighting of dissenting regimes. Militant leaders perceived that the liberation of Palestine required, in the first instance, the elimination of internal rival fronts, which lay in the religious activist groups, and second the Arab reactionary regimes. Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāsir had affirmed such a perception in one of his speeches, in 1961: "I am waiting first to get rid of the reactionists and the fifth reactionary column. I am waiting for the Arab masses to free and bring themselves out of the fifth column...After that, the (decisive) battle for liberating Palestine will then be imminent"⁷³. Indeed, Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāsir had substantiated his revolutionary persuasion, as he contributed significantly to overturning the government in Iraq, in 1958, followed shortly after by the Sudanese regime. Likewise, the Yemeni government was, in turn, overthrown in 1962. Moreover, Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāsir had attempted to topple the Saudi and Jordanian regimes, but with to avail⁷⁴. He had even projected his revolution to embrace some Arabic countries, which were situated beyond the neighborhood of Egypt. For example, al-

⁷¹Ṭāriq al-Bishrī (1987), *al-Dīmuqrāṭiyyah wa Niẓām 23 Yūliyū 1952-1979*. Beirut: Mu'assasah al-'Abḥāth al-'Arabiyyah, p.171 . Alan R. Taylor (1988), *op. cit.*, p.73.

⁷²Ṭāriq, Maḥdawī (1986), *al-Ikhwān 'alā Madhbaḥ al-Munāwarah*, 1st edn. Dār 'Azād, p.124.

⁷³Sālim (1987), *op. cit.*, p.210.

⁷⁴Ḥammād (1987), *op. cit.* pp.164-165.

Ḥabīb Būrḳībah, the president of Tunisia at that time, had accused Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāsir of intriguing against him⁷⁵.

With the same collusive mentality, Colonel *Qadhāfī* (Libya’s president), carried on the revolutionary path. He viewed that it is legitimate to interfere in the internal affairs of Arabic countries, and it is even, sometimes, recommendable to topple such regimes, should their collapse lead to Arab Unity⁷⁶.

Such obstinacy, while resorting to force and influence to expand one’s ideology, had eventually led to the unveiling of the truth of Arabian modernism and precipitating the rise of religious activism.

2.3.3.2. Combating Underdevelopment.

Underdevelopment is still viewed as the most critical problem inflicting the Islamic world, in general, and the Arab world, in particular. Although this part of the world possesses a tremendous amount of human and natural resources, it still, however, fails to fulfil its too promising slogans hoisted here and there. Indeed, the status quo of the Arab world is marked by utter decadence. The conflicting intellectual currents had addressed the issue of underdevelopment, but each faction was trying to emphasize its own subjective resolution. In this regard, and in consonance with its ideological underpinning, the modernist current, represented by the revolutionary militants, had presented a set of projects theoretically designed to uproot the underdevelopment dilemma. These projects drew on several aspects, among which are:

⁷⁵Lawrence Ziring (1981), *The Middle East Political Dictionary*, 5th edn. California: ABC-Clio Information Services, p.111.

⁷⁶Ḥammād (1987), *op. cit.*, p.165.

1. The cultural and educational aspect. Proponents of modernism opine that the most perilous impediment that obstructs the process of advancement and development is, undoubtedly, the metaphysical religious culture prevailing in the Arabic societies. They conceive that the way to uproot this virulent disease is, essentially, contingent upon two measures:

a. Cutting off the sources of this culture, or to a lesser extent, relegating and diminishing their role, so that the Arabian mind would be freed from its shackles and restrictions, and thereupon, it would be able to comprehend the “fact”, change it and then sustain it. The intellectual sources referred to by the modernists were rather the Jāmi’ al-Zaytūnah (al-Zaytūnah mosque) in Tunis, which was closed by al-Ḥabīb Būrḡibah, the pro-liberal president⁷⁷, and Jāmi’ al-‘Azhar⁷⁸ which was subject to several malicious attempts directed by the military authorities in Egypt in order to play down and marginalize its viable role⁷⁹. The most sinister and despicable operations inflicted upon the mosque, including its scholars, were those targeted by the communist regime in Yemen. The latter maintained that mosques are dangerous dens that propagate backwardness and reactionary thought. Therefore, the Yemeni communists banned any mosque sermon or speech intended to preach about *Tawḥīd* and Islamic legislation (*al-Tashrī‘*), or anything that may clash with communism, which was seen as the only ideology or doctrine to uplift and bring prosperity to the Yemenis. Communist brutality had even gone to the

⁷⁷ Al-Najjār, ‘Abd al-Majīd (1988), *Ṣirā’ al-Hawiyyah fī Tūnis*. Paris : Dār al-‘Amān, p.57.

⁷⁸ Al-Azhar: High religious learning institute.

⁷⁹ Hammād, Majdī (1993), *Thawrah 23 yūliyu 1952*. 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity’s Studies, p.190.

extent of shifting some mosques and places of worship to schools teaching Marxism and places for cinematic shows. Thereafter, those who had adamantly opposed such disarray were relentlessly killed. 'Iwaḍ al-'Arshānī pronounces on the matter:

"The gangsterism system had disallowed Imams of mosques to touch upon the spiritual aspects and miracles of the Almighty Creator over his universe and creatures...Thus, those scholars and preachers who dare to encroach upon these interdictions...were to be jailed in the people's sight...from the central mosque until the whole streets and quarters of the city. The most outstanding example of such an atrocity was the dreadful incident in '*Ḥaḍramawt*', *al-'Awāliq*' and '*al-Wāḥidī*' in the fourth and fifth districts. In these towns, the government had tied nearly 150 scholars and preachers to the backs of a number of cars, and then hauled them to their deaths. Yet this errant (communists) gang described these scholars as clergies, and even converted many mosques to teaching centres for Marxism and places for cinematic shows⁸⁰."

b. Spreading a new culture that was commensurate, in their opinion, with the spirit of the living age, by means of establishing government schools, universities, and cultural centres on a modernist basis. Indeed, these institutions have been very instrumental in the rise of a new educated generation, which enshrines many constituents of modernist teaching⁸¹. Nevertheless, the increase in the number of these modernist educated groups has not prompted the due scientific leap that is intended to revive, energize, and invigorate the Islamic Ummah (nation). By contrast, this sort of education has significantly contributed, under the effect of intellectual bigotry, poor planning, and lusting after individualism and prestige, to the destruction and relegation of the Arab man by rendering him a dependent

⁸⁰ Al-'Arshānī, 'Iwaḍ (1979), *al-'Irḥāb al-Shuyū'ī fī al-Yaman al-Janūbī*, 2nd edn. Cairo: Maṭba'at Al-Ṣabāḥ, pp.105-106, 203-206.

⁸¹ Ḥammād, Majdī (1993), *op. cit.*, p.187.

person with no specific identity, and even an antagonist to his own heritage and civilization, in that he lives as a parasite on the West in all his thinking, nutrition, and dressing⁸².

According to 'Imhammad Ṣabūr, this type of education has proven its failure in Arab society despite thriving in the West, and this is due to the fact that the Arabs, when they transferred this type of teaching to their countries, failed to bring along with it the overall educational context, and its auxiliary policies that serve science and scientists positively.

While in the West, more emphasis is accorded to a modern university vested with respect and reverence, which is objectively revealed by the university's autonomy and teacher's freedom, the Arab's motive for instituting modern universities was instead to politicize and monitor knowledge by setting up "Academic Police" organizations whose sole role is to oversee students and academicians and deter them from expressing their genuine ideas and opinions on the critical issues of the Ummah. Thus, this innocent elite was despicably restricted from employing its cumulative inputs for the sake of the Ummah's renaissance, and they thereby failed to extricate it from the pit of ignorance and backwardness⁸³.

The clear deterioration of education or rather the regression of the modern teaching administration has led to the drying out the teaching process from its essence, and put it in the opposite direction to the will of the Ummah.

⁸²Ṭāhā Jābir al-'Alwānī . in his preface to the book written by 'Ismā'īl, Fādī (1991), *op. cit.*, p.6.

⁸³Ṣabūr, 'Imhammad (1992), *al-Ma'rifah wa al-Sultah fi al-Mujtama' al-'Arabī: al-'Akādimiūn al-'Arab wa al-Ṣulṭa*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, p.174.

In this regard, 'Imḥammad Ṣabūr enunciates: "Knowledge has lost its credibility because it becomes a prisoner of nonscientific pursuits"⁸⁴.

Under the pressure of a coercive modernist trend, the Arab intellectual has nothing to do but to adopt either of the following options:

- Forsaking his scientific message in return for his reconciliation with the state authority. This can be done firstly by his direct participation in its segments and affiliates, and then propagating and sticking up for its philosophy, plans and policies; by doing so, he will be able to hold high official posts in the academic institutions. He, therefore, becomes a man of prestige, whereby he wields his juridical influence over assigning vacant posts and deciding upon financial support⁸⁵ (scholarships, grants, etc). Alternatively, under the fear of losing his job, he persuades himself that his opposition to the government is to no avail. Pronouncing on the matter, 'Imḥammad Ṣabūr states: "Whatever it is, it is preferable for him (Arab intellectual) to be a government employee rather than anything else, because of the prevailing unemployment among tertiary and academic staff"⁸⁶.

There is no doubt that such dependence on the political authority would inevitably harm the teacher's dignity, and restrict his innovations and aspirations, and make him a (psychologically) defeated person, who is unable to handle his own problems apart from his 'Ummah's problems.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.177.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.111.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.122.

“...and this oppressive dependence would offend the teacher’s dignity and pride”⁸⁷.

- Apprehending his message that has been entrusted to him as an Arab intellectual who is aware of his responsibilities and dues towards his Ummah, for which he must honestly uphold its concerns. As contended by Qustanḥin Zurayq, the function entrusted to the Arab intellectual takes two principal dimensions:

“The first function is safeguarding or participating in the protection of the university against (political) authorities’ offences besides other affecting elements, that is to say, an intellectual must be a militant and not just a mere thinker. Inevitably, such a struggle may lead the intellectual to prison, or expulsion, or displacement, etc. The second function is to preserve the university and national freedom, thereupon, it is worthy of the intellectual to be the first distinguished with the sense of responsibility, since there is no proper freedom without (due) responsibility”⁸⁸.

The existence of such struggling academicians has played a crucial role in the emergence of an opposition voice that rejects the government’s hegemony, the stimuli that spurred, in many instances, heated clashes between government and the resentful elite. For instance, in Sudan (1964), the government broke into the premises of Khurṭūm University and killed a number of students and detained others, the impetus that precipitated the resignation of several lecturers, in protest against the government’s atrocities, and also in defending the university’s autonomy⁸⁹.

- In an attempt to run away from the stagnant local environment, the Arab intellectual feels reluctant to move away and migrate to the West,

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p.87.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p.77.

⁸⁹Ḥāj Ḥamad, Muḥammad ‘Abū al-Qāsim (1996), *al-Sūdān wa al-Ma’zaq al-Tārīkhī wa ‘Alfāq al-Mustaqbal*, vol. 2, 2nd edn. Beirut: Dār ‘ibn Ḥazm, p.268.

wherein he realizes the respect, appreciation, recognition and value accorded to his works. "One of the major causes of the Arab brain drain to the West was the lower esteem which the Arab intellectual faces in his own homeland"⁹⁰.

As a result, the university became an arena for blunt political strife amidst dissenting intellectual forces, particularly, between the modernist movement with its all factions and religious currents represented, mainly, and the Muslims Brothers Group.

"In contrast to this situation, the revolutionary Arab activity, within the secular modernist framework, has encountered a fierce challenge from the "Brothers" religious movement... the nationalist thinking dilemma, here, is not couched upon nationalism, but rather it is based on its (legacy-free) and (history-free) inclination, through which it is exposed to the Arabian environment, in Sudan, and in other countries, ...it is this negative stance that enables the Muslims Brothers Movement to tighten their grip on the revolutionary thinking currents in the academic surroundings"⁹¹.

2. The social aspect. Modernists conceive that to stimulate an Arabian renaissance, and fight the political and economic backwardness requires a new culture that frees the Arab man from the complex of past legacy, thus rendering him a modern man. Therefore, without this cultural mutation, modernism remains a superficial process. Modernists lay emphasis on several issues among which was the issue of "*women's liberation*" from the chains of the decaying traditions, which have been long imposed by the *Sharī'ah* injunctions. Therefore, they strive to draw up a set of conventional laws that retrieve, to their minds, the self-esteem of women, and ensure their rights, so

⁹⁰Šabūr (1992), *op. cit.*, p.103.

⁹¹Ḥāj Ḥamad (1996), *al-Sūdān, op. cit.*, pp. 330-332.

that they are on par with their fellow men. One of modernism's advocates asserts: "It is necessary to set an integrated Arabian civil law for all personal statuses. This civil law must be secular, because it is the only possibility to efficiently mutate the relationship between man and women (socially and personally) in the direction of effective equality"⁹².

Religious activists do not face the secular proposal by justifying the reality of the Arab woman, who is indeed subject to social injustice, but rather they call for the recursion to the pristine injunctions of Islam, which truly assure the rights of woman, and shield her dignity.

"The judicious methodology for curing (woman's predicaments) has neither to be derived from the traditions and customary heritage in Islamic society, which incur (an outrageous) oppression on woman, nor from the intrusive Western system, which is utterly alien to the make-up and principles of the Islamic society, but rather it must be done through radical resolutions provided by the doctrine of Islam that liberate and dignify woman"⁹³.

Among the conventional laws that have been championed by the modernists, and even applied in some Arab countries as an alternative to Islamic laws are as follows:

- a. Bequest equality. Modernists allegedly claim that the Islamic inheritance system is a clear abuse of the woman's rights, in that it is not in consonance with the spirit of the modern age that calls for bridging the inequality gap between the genders in terms of both rights and

⁹²Al-Makki, 'Abbās' et al (1993), *Munāqashāt of Shqīr, Ḥafīzah's paper Dirāsah Muqāranah li al-Qawānīn al-Khaṣṣah bi al-Mar'ah wa al-'Usrah fi al-Maghrib al-'Arabi: Tūnis wa al-Maghrib wa al-Jazā'ir in al-Mar'ah wa Dawruhā fi Ḥarakah al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah Buḥūth wa Munāqashāt al-Nadwah al-Fikriyyah al-latī Nazzamahā Markaz dirāsāt al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah*, 3rd edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity's Studies, pp.110, 115-116.

⁹³Al-Najjār (1988), *op. cit.*, p. 92.

responsibilities. Thus, in their view, the decaying Islamic system must be replaced with a new system that ensures the woman's dignity, and cares for her humanity. Although many Arab countries have clearly cherished certain Western legislation, especially in respect to family affairs, like Tunisia, Somalia, and Democratic Yemen⁹⁴, the modernists still, however, were not enchanted with such secular achievements, and yet they demanded more liberation and equality, including the issue of the "bequest". In this pursuit, one modernist commented on the *Tunisian Personal Status Journal*, which is considered as model of modernism⁹⁵: "It is confirmed nowadays to be necessarily reviewed within the trend of absolute legislative equality between man and woman, especially with regard to bequests..."⁹⁶.

b. Proscription of polygamy. Modernists argue that polygamy is one aspect of backwardness, and enslavement of the woman; they view it as a glaring oppression against women. By corollary, all of modernism's factions were set to put a legal end to the practice of polygamy, and eventually, they managed to issue a set of laws that strictly forbid such practices. For instance, the Tunisian personal status journal includes the following clause:

"Polygamy is prohibited. Whoever marries (another wife) while he is still under (first) marriage life, and without breaking the bound of the former marriage, he will be sentenced to one year jail and fined 240 thousands (Tunisian Dinar), or either of the

⁹⁴ Al-Najjār, Bāqir Salmān (1999), *al-Mar'ah al-'Arabiyyah bayna thiḡal al-Waḡi' wa Taḡalu'āt al-Taḡarrur*, 1st edn., Center of the Arab Unity's Studies, pp.146-147.

⁹⁵ Shqīr, Ḥafīẓah (1993), *Dirāsah Muqāranah lial-qawānīn al-khāṣṣah bi al-Mar'ah wa al-'Usrah fī al-Maghrib al-'Arabi: Tūnis wa al-Maghrib wa al-Jazā'ir*, in *Al-Mar'ah wa Dawruhā fī Ḥarakah al-Wiḡdah al-'Arabiyyah Buḡūth wa Munāqashāt al-Nadwah al-Fikriyyah al-latī Nazzamahā Markaz dirāsāt al-Wiḡdah al-'Arabiyyah*, 3rd edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity's Studies, pp.91-92.

⁹⁶ Al-Najjār (1988), *op. cit.*, p.91.

two former sentences, though the new marriage is not conducted according to the rules of law...⁹⁷.

However, to the religious current, the secular opinion on polygamy is really a sort of twisting of realities. They, instead, enunciate there is no humiliation or contempt for woman in polygamy, which is virtually in a juridical account surrounded by stringent stipulations, and thereby is only sought in the exceptional instances wherein polygamy becomes the best way for that particular case⁹⁸.

3. Thought. Although all modernists unanimously agree on the fact of modernizing the Arab Society while standing in one trench against the religious current, which mirrors, in their opinion, reactionary backwardness, darkness, and ages of decadence⁹⁹, they (modernists), nevertheless, show a strong intellectual dissention among themselves on the primary source of their thought, and from which Western school it has to imbibe its ingredients. Naturally, this results in the divergence of stands, particularly, in some up to date issues over the Arabian atmosphere, such as the Palestinian cause. Thereupon, every miniature group seeks to absorb the other whenever it is possible.

In this section, we point out the evolution of nationalist thinking that dominates this period, which ultimately turned to espouse Marxist theories. This type of thinking passed through three stages.

- a. The first stage is well summarized in the book of Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir, which was written in 1954 under the title: “*Philosophy of*

⁹⁷ Hafiḍah Shqīr (1993), *op. cit.*, p.99.

⁹⁸ Al-Najjār (1988), *op. cit.*, p.93.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.57. Barakāt (1991), *op. cit.*, p.358.

Revolution". The author, in his book, attests that the Egyptian people are experiencing two revolutions, a political revolution, whereby they are able to retrieve their right to rule themselves by themselves, and a social revolution among disparate classes of society until the realization of social justice¹⁰⁰. To achieve the former objectives, the book underlines the meaning of popular revolution under the leadership of the sole hero¹⁰¹.

b. The second stage began around 1962 with the advent of a national constitution that justified the emphasis on the principles of both revolution, and socialism. Revolution is a principal condition for the realization of Arab unity, which in turn needs the core state as a centre for transferring unity to the rest of the Arab countries. At this stage unity requires another stipulation, namely the elite who stands for the "revolutionary pioneer". As for socialism, it means for them the control of all means of production of the Arab masses. Socialism is viewed as a historical determinism enjoined by the fact, and it is deemed as the only path to economic and social advancement. In this sense, the modernists edged closer to Marxist doctrine while they got further away from religion, which, in their opinion, contravenes the spirit of nationalism. Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir asserts this clearly, and practically brought secularist teaching into effect by amending the national constitution while holding nationalism as the backbone of Arab brotherhood, and the focal principle

¹⁰⁰ Al-Tal (1996), *op. cit.*, p.116.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.117-124.

upon which all rules and legislations are hinged¹⁰². At this juncture of history, there was a heated dispute between the modernist current under the patronage of the nationalists (semi-Marxists) and the religious current led by the Muslim Brothers Movement. This conflict showed signs of a brewing intellectual contraction of the nationalist trend, which had suffered at the hands of the "Brothers" drift, especially, outside Egypt. One Sudanese Arab-nationalist elucidates on the tactically foolish mistake made by the modernists, in general, over their direct assault on religion, and also, over their premature move towards the implementation of instant modernist ideas in Arab society without preparing the right atmosphere for that; the impulse that made them easy prey for the Muslims Brothers' responses.

"They envisioned a personal perception for an alien Arabism, which differs from the one in Sudan, since Arabism in Sudan is bound by its peculiar dialectic characteristics and restricted to the Sudanese fact. Thus, when the (modernists' concept on) Arabism comes from without its legacy and history in Sudan itself, and then set aside an entire phase through a void concept, the modernist organizations were laid bare against the Brothers' assaults"¹⁰³.

The Muslims Brothers "were able to besiege the Arab nationalist thought through legacy-free fallacy constituents of this secular thought...and also the Sudanese Communist Party"¹⁰⁴. Within such drastic strife and along with the modernists' failure to substantiate their bubbly watchwords, and, also the convulsion of intellectual foundations, upon which the modernists

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.126-130.

¹⁰³ Hāj Hamad (1996) *al-Sudān, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 335.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, v.2, p.332.

built their thought, all collectively hastened the resounding defeat of the Arab nationalists by the Jews in 1967.

b. The third stage. After this landmark defeat, modernist thought ushered in a new phase marked by rampant fragmentalization and its total submission to Communist thought. The Arab nationalist movement saw rapid changes and heated debates about the underlying reasons for the stigma of the 1967 defeat. Such a critical probe even questioned the macro-foundations of the nationalist theory itself. It might be for the first time that the nationalist movement witnessed a large circulation of the Marxist system in its analysis, and also in calling upon the alteration of its political inclination after being labeled as “pro-bourgeoisie”. Ultimately, modernism turned into a Marxist-Leninist party¹⁰⁵. Therefore, the 1967 defeat came to unveil a stage that was no longer promising, and thus the slogans of unity, socialism, and fighting backwardness and reactionary forces remained meaningless signboards. By then, all dreams had been dashed, and the masses awoke in a state much worse than before, in that they entered a new phase of frustration and apathy. “But the 1967 defeat had foiled the dream, and Arabs, thereby, turned into a state of ‘frustration’ whose niggling outreach is still standing up to day”¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Samarra'i (1986), *op. cit.*, p.187.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Jābirī, Muḥammad 'Ābid (1990), '*Ishkāliyyāt al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Mu'āṣir*. 2nd edn. Beirut:, p.180. Alan R. Taylor (1988), *op. cit.*, pp.42-43.

2.4. The Third Stage: 1970 – until today.

As indicated earlier, the second phase ended with the Arab setback of 1967, followed by vehement intellectual conflict within the nationalist trend, which led this phase until its effective termination in 1970. Therefore, nationalism came into a subsequent new phase.

In this phase, we attempt to underscore the most effective and clashing currents, the causes of their emergence, and the ensured consequences.

2.4.1. The Causes:

To discuss the effective causes of this stage, we naturally refer to the consequences arising from the setback of 1967, and its implications that were the prelude to the subsequent stage associated with its all-underlying aspects. After the collapse of 1967, Arab society, under the control of the modernists, plunged dramatically into a very critical stage, at the political, economic, and social levels¹⁰⁷.

1. The Political Level. At the political level, Arabs and particularly their leaders were defeated by Israel, who ultimately and forcibly brought the former to the principle of reconciliation, and pacific coexistence between the two rivals. This was initiated, for the first time, through the “Camp David” agreement signed by Anwar al-Sādāt in 1979,¹⁰⁸ which conceded the outright recognition of Israel, and the consent to the normalization of relations (with

¹⁰⁷ Al-Tal, Suhayr Luṭfī (1993), *Waḍa' al-Mar'ah fī al-'Usrah al-'Arabiyyah wa 'Alāqatuhu bi 'Azmah al-Ḥurriyyah wa al-Dimūqrāṭiyyah, in Al-Mar'ah wa Dawruhā fī Ḥarakah al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah Buḥūth wa Munāqashāt al-Nadwah al-Fikriyyah al-latī Nazẓamahā Markaz dirāsāt al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah*, 3rd edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity Studies, p.123.

¹⁰⁸ Khidr, Bishārah (1993), *'Urupā wa al-Waṭan al-'Arabī al-Qarābah wa al-Jiwār*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity Studies, pp.87-88. Alan (1988), *op. cit.*, p.8.

the Jews). This agreement was coercively to be enjoined upon the Arab masses. In turn, the Arab unity claim has dwindled whereas the narrow sectarian feud has a mushrooming circulation among Arab countries, whereby every country showed an extreme vanity and chauvinism to its particular sectarian and cultural perceptions. In this respect, the ex-president of Tunisia, al-Ḥabīb Būrḳībah, stated in one of his speeches in 1974: "since the old ages, Tunisia has always, and inalienably stuck to its identity, even in those ages that enjoin upon it new language and urge it to embrace the religion of intruders"¹⁰⁹. Likewise, the Lebanese, Maghribi, Egyptian, and others, have all boastfully discussed the peculiarity of their nationalities, which are different and self-distinct, and hence cannot be integrated or unified under one umbrella. In this pursuit, they view that every effort directed for such a purpose (unity) will be useless, and to no avail¹¹⁰. Based on the foregoing, one can easily apprehend the essence of the border conflicts among Arab countries, which on occasion interfere in each others' internal affairs, especially from countries with a strong nationalist and socialist orientation. For example, clashes erupted between Tunisia and Libya due to the latter's support of the *Qafṣah* events of 1981, whereby it had dispatched a professional armed group to Tunisia in order to topple Būrḳībah's regime. The underlying purpose for concocting such conflicts is essentially to preoccupy and divert the attention of the masses from their real concerns, and conceal the gross failure of ensuring development, prosperity, and social justice, which

¹⁰⁹Barakāt (1991), *op. cit.*, p.41.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp.40-41, 44.

Arab modernistic Governments have long bragged about.¹¹¹ The last tragedy that occurred in this phase was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces in 1990. This dreadful event wrought real havoc to the Middle East as well as showing a disgraceful split of Arab political allegiance, which prompted the foreign intervention in the Gulf, thereby laying hands on the region's tremendous resources while subjugating its citizens¹¹².

2. The Economic Level. The economic level is one of the most affected fields, which the Arab modernistic regime failed to develop. The drama of the Arab economy is revealed by different aspects. However, here, we just underline two major aspects, namely human wealth, and mineral wealth.

a. For the former, the Arab world lost yearly a significant number of its experts due to distorted planning besides the lowering of the self-esteem of specialists and scholars. From 1972 through 1973, nearly 18,623 experts migrated from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq making their way to the USA. Among this fleeing elite, there were about 3,130 experts majoring in technical and quantitative science. In addition, the official report of the Arab Education Ministers' Conference held in the Emirates, in 1979, indicated that the proportion of Arab doctor emigrants amounted to 25%, whereas, for engineers the rate was 20%. This occurs while most Arab countries are experiencing a glaring lack in the number of doctors. For instance, Syria, which lost about 3,000 doctors to the West, has an average of only one doctor for every 2,310 citizens, whereas, in Sudan the position is more shocking, whereby it is found to be as high as one doctor

¹¹¹ Ibrāhīm, Ḥasanīn Tawfīq (1992), *Ḍahīrah al-'Unf al-Siyāsī fī al-Nuẓum al-'Arabīyyah*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity Studies, pp.341-350.

¹¹² Khidr (1993), *op. cit.*, p.92.

for every 8,800 citizens¹¹³. Another report states that the number of Arab workers migrating to Europe seeking jobs totalled one and half million in the year 1972. Moreover, the report attests that the number of immigrant workers is expected to reach 15 million by the year 2000. Among this massive outflow of intellectuals, the rate of emigrant doctors, engineers, and those holding high tertiary qualifications is expected to be much higher in the forthcoming years¹¹⁴.

b. With regard to mineral wealth, it is badly embezzled and misused as well as not being properly exploited despite its huge quantities, which induce both local and foreign greed. The returns on these resources are often distributed among the ruling class associated with all its courtiers, and the dominating Western countries through their giant firms and banks¹¹⁵. Emphasizing this reality, some of the Kuwaiti official statistics reveal that the total deposits of some petroleum countries in the USA amounted to USD 141 billion in 1977; this shows that the real beneficiaries of the oil revenues are, indeed, the Western countries. The report further illustrates that the oil revenues for OPEC countries throughout the period between 1974-1978 were estimated to be approximately USD 550 billions, of which USD 400 billions were spent for the purchase of consumption goods, while experts ascertain that their real cost fetches less than USD 250 billions. This means that the West sold

¹¹³Nazmī, Wamīd Jamāl 'Omar (1985), *Qaḍiyyah al-Takhalluf wa al-Taḡaddum ma'a al-Tarkīz 'Alā al-Tajribah al-'Arabiyyah*, 1st edn. Beirut: Arab enterprise for studies and publication, p.67.

¹¹⁴Al-Himṣī, Muḥammad (1986), *Khuṭaṭ al-Tanmiyah al-'Arabiyyah wa 'Ittijāhāt al-Takāmuliyyah wa al-Tanāfuriyyah Dirāsah li al-'Ittijāhāt al-'Inmā'iyyah fī Khuṭaṭ al-Tanmiyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'āsirah 'Izā'a al-Takāmul al-'Iqtisādī al-'Arabī 1960-1980*, 4th edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity Studies, p.239.

¹¹⁵Barakāt (1991), *op. cit.*, p.19.

its merchandise at as much as twofold its original price, given the fact that Western countries buy the oil at a low price, while they sell their manufactured products at exorbitant prices. Thus, they are the first and the last beneficiary¹¹⁶. By contrast, ordinary Arab citizens are facing poverty and destitution and struggling for their daily sustenance while they are perpetually afraid of tomorrow's vicissitudes¹¹⁷.

3. The Social Level. Now, we come to shed light on the social level, which is no different from the two former levels. Pronouncing on the matter, Ṭāhā Jābir al-'Alwānī argues that modernism in Arab countries does not help to generate the original and responsible thinker; but in contrast, it contributes to "conveying ignorance to the Arab citizen, breaking his will and dignity, destroying his humanity, overlooking his legacy, smearing his identity, and making him wallow in economic, technological, intellectual, education and food dependency, in a way that renders him unable to dispense with his Western conquerors"¹¹⁸.

Thereby, under the name of modernism, advancement, and development, the Arabian personality was destroyed, and he ultimately became a perplexed and impotent being, a helpless person engrossed in the hassle of providing his instant needs, and overwhelmed by individualist values and parsimony¹¹⁹. For further illustration, we put forward two examples, one about women, and the other which touches on freedoms.

¹¹⁶Nazmī (1985), *op. cit.*, p.27, 48.

¹¹⁷Barakāt (1991), *op. cit.*, pp.18-19. Al-Tal (1993), *op. cit.*, p.125.

¹¹⁸Ismā'īl (1991), *op. cit.*, p.6.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp.14, 160. Barakāt (1991), *op. cit.*, p.19.

a. As previously noted, the modernists attempted to alter and liberate women from the grip of the inherited religious traditions. Nonetheless, this call was a flash in the pan, and happened to be invalid for the woman's welfare. Yet, the following is asserted by one leftist woman, who soldiers on for women's rights within the modernistic prospect, in that she says:

"Presenting pornographic movie shows, naked dancing teens, woman's spicy bodies, and the moaning of guys and lady singers during the day and night, in both TV and radio besides exposing the nude tantalizing thighs and breasts on top of magazines, have all let the (innocent) Egyptian girl in a puzzled position to unravel the intricacy of this equation. She has to follow all these movies, pictures, and vociferous sounds to satisfy her lust and desire, while at the same time she has not to be affected by it"¹²⁰.

The modernist woman then went on to suggest the optimum solution for that by saying:

"Women's liberation cannot be attained in a capitalist society, and the equality between man and woman cannot be achieved in a society that discriminates between one individual and another, and between one class and another. Therefore, what women should learn is that their liberation is an integral part of the entire liberation of society from the capitalist system"¹²¹.

Undoubtedly, the above assertion indicates the degenerated status of woman and society under the modernistic regimes.

b. With respect to freedoms, all that we find is just hollow slogans of democracy and socialism, which are often misaligned with the facts. The tightening of freedoms, the prevalence of dictatorships, running after intellectuals are all salient features of the modern Arab regimes that cherish and plead for modernism. 'Imḥammad Ṣabūr spells out the

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.187.

¹²¹ *Ibid*

outrageous persecution faced by the ordinary Arab man, in general, and the Arab intellectual, in particular, in that he says:

“In the West they respect their scholars, whereas here they persecute them, over there (in the West) they open for them academic and scientific institutions, but here they, instead, open for them the prisons, over there, they dignify scientists with fond appreciation and lavish awards, but here they send the police to monitor their activities even within university the compound...”¹²².

So that the whole of society and the youth, in particular, edged towards a feeling of strangeness and lost confidence in the ruling elite after being overwhelmed by the feeling of the wide gulf between hope and fact¹²³. In the same context, Fādi maintains:

“Secularism has failed, and so too has rationalism, and this is a subset of the failure of modernism, as a whole, in the Arab development experience, whereby political decomposition, cultural alienation, confessional feuds, sectarian and regional conflicts, economic dependency, and the political and cultural upsurge of the religious current, have all been damning evidence of this failure”¹²⁴.

2.4.2. The Major Clashing Intellectual Currents:

The 1967 misfortune was, instead, a decisive turning point in the history of modern Arabian thought. It was the starting point for reviewing the long struggling journey led by the forces of modernism in order to be free from the two bitter enemies, namely, colonialism and underdevelopment. Indeed, modernist forces neither succeeded in completely drumming out colonialism, since it acts as its substitute in persecuting its own people, nor did they succeed in driving away the backwardness obsession that has haunted the Arab masses for such a long

¹²² Sabūr (1992), *op. cit.*, p.185.

¹²³ Ibrāhīm (1992), *op. cit.*, p.145.

¹²⁴ Ismā'il (1991), *op. cit.*, p.157.

time. But, in contrast, they do consolidate and protect its roots. In this vein, Laylah 'Abd al-Wahhāb, who is a female leftist, describes the position of the Arabs after the 1967 setback, whereby she observes:

"The political debacle dominating Arab countries at the present time, and whose severity increasingly escalated since the defeat of June 1967, is substantiated by the Arab's subjugation to the global capitalist system with regard to the reproduction of backwardness inflicted over social and economic structures, and the increase of oppression, and political persecution of the masses and liberation movements"¹²⁵.

Under this critical situation, especially, after the practical failure of the nationalists to effectuate what they had so much vaunted with such slogans as unity and liberation,¹²⁶ the religious current sprung up at a gale force, eligible to lead the Arab people, who are actually racked with psychological frustrations.

Thereupon, the conflict between modernism and Islam turn off onto a different track, but with a clear alteration in the balance of power, which this time, was in favor of the religious current and the Marxist activists. Ḥamīd Sa'īd comments on the fact and says:

"I view that those who stick to Marxism and the ancestor-based religious current all meet in the angle of intellectual negativism as they lack the innovative potential by resorting to instant (ready) solutions. Thereby, their stances appear as a type of negative reaction, and this is adduced by the fact that these two trends have (only) been activated after the June-setback"¹²⁷.

¹²⁵ 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Laylā *et al.* (1999), *al-Mar'ah al-'Arabiyyah bayna Thiḡali al-Wāḡi' wa Taṭallu'āt al-Taḡarrur. Ta'thīr al-Tayyarāt al-Dīniyyah fī al-Wa'yi al-'Ijtima'ī li al-Mar'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of Arabian Unity's Studies, p.175.

¹²⁶ Ibrāhīm (1992), *op. cit.*, pp.28, 141. Alan (1988), *op. cit.*, p.74.

¹²⁷ Sa'īd, Ḥamīd (1986), *Ta'qīb on Sa'dūn Ḥammādī in his paper al-Qawmiyyah al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Taḡaddiyāt al-Muā'ṣrah in Tatawur al-Fikr al-Qawmī al-'Arabī Buḡūth wa Munāqashāt al-Nadwah al-Fikriyyah al-latī Nazḡamahā Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wiḡdah al-'Arabiyyah* 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity, p.365.

1. The religious current. Suffering the effects of nationalism's debacle along with the rampant frustration of the masses, the religious current gushed forth as a force that carried the long-awaited hopes of the persecuted masses. Therefore, Islam was the only solution that had neither been experienced by the contemporary masses or had incurred any negative stand. With the adoption of Islam, the religious current was, indeed, the one which fought against the Jews in 1948, wherein it showed exemplary bravery. It was also the one being oppressed for nearly two decades, in that Muslim activists were badly displaced at the hands of the modernistic Arab elite, who eventually went bust in the 1967 setback. Expressing this bare fact, 'Imḥammad Ṣabūr affirms: "Islam has surprised intellectuals, politicians, militants, and foreign observers with its (abrupt) appearance as a leading political force, while it might be said that Arab leftists were the most afflicted group overwhelmed by this shock"¹²⁸. The religious current has steadily grown despite being incessantly exposed to the atrocities and oppression of Arab rulers and leftists. Consequently, the religious movement outplayed the whole intellectual modernistic trends; it is indeed a social and cultural phenomenon with political and civilizational dimensions, and it is simultaneously apt to revamp Arabian thought along with its leading exponents, holding that it is a resolute reaction to modernism, and an abstinent stand against all forms of cultural incursion¹²⁹. As mentioned by some leftist researchers, the prevalence of the religious current, and the contraction of the modernist movement are mainly due to the following reasons:

¹²⁸Ṣabūr (1992), *op. cit.*, p.165.

¹²⁹Bashūsh', Muḥammad (1986), *Tatawur al-Wa'y al-Qawmī fī al-Maghrib al-'Arabī*, 1st edn Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, pp.279-280.

- a. The 1967 defeat came as a severe blow to the slogans, institutions, and leaders of Arab nationalist regimes, especially in Egypt and Syria.
- b. The incompatibility of the Arabian atmosphere to host modernistic thinking was a leading cause for the regression of the modernists and widespread development of Muslim activists¹³⁰.
- c. The extremism of the tyrannical ruling elite and leaders, who are deeply steeped in Westernization under, of course, the patronage of Western regimes was indeed the major thrust that drove the people to sympathize with Islamic currents, which insist upon boycotting the West, and returning to the lost self-identity¹³¹.
- d. The high organizational potential of the religious current and its staunch sacrifice for the sake of its principles, and its ability to renovate Arabian thought besides providing a theoretical alternative to the problems inflicted upon the Arabian man¹³².
- e. The plainness and simplicity of the Islamic discourse, which often provides easy answers to the existing problems facing society¹³³.

To the modernists' knowledge, these are the main factors that led to the growth of the religious current and decline of the modernistic movement, which was seen under the lens of popularity, and horizontal deployment over society. But, does that mean the decisive demise of the modernistic current? Certainly not! The fact is that it is still vested with power and clout, and is there to manipulate the fate of the Arab masses.

¹³⁰Ibrāhīm (1992), *op. cit.*, p.139-141.

¹³¹Šabūr (1992), *op. cit.*, p.166. 'Ibrāhīm (1992), *op. cit.*, p.141.

¹³²Bashūsh (1986), *op. cit.* p.280. Al-'Aẓmah, 'Aziz (1992), *al-'Ilmāniyyah min Manẓūr Mukhtalif*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, p.303.

¹³³Ibrāhīm (1992), *op. cit.*, p.141.

2. The modernistic current. Under the leadership of the Marxists, following the 1967 defeat, the nationalist and leftist mass together experienced a new awareness that eventually led to a heated inbound debate on the underlying causes of this defeat. The outcome of this was to question even the intellectual footing of the above current, and this led to the dramatic shift of the nationalist movement to the Marxism-Leninism based doctrine. In doing so, they categorically agreed on the inherent debilitation of the core foundation of nationalist thinking over the previous two decades¹³⁴. Such a switch to the fellow-contentious communism might be a very unfamiliar stand in the world of ideologies.

“The sudden pounce on Marxism is, relatively, a new incidence, and accordingly, it is difficult to know, at present, its outright ramifications...Although this move allowed for discharging the ancient doctrine, and encouraging the free probe, and this, in itself, is a laudable attainment; it is implausible to omit the potential threat of substituting one doctrine with another...It may apparently seem that the substantial shift from nationalism to Marxism, in a short period, is very bizarre to the observer from without the system”¹³⁵.

As such, nationalism paved the way to Marxism to lead the modernistic current in its contentious stand against the religious current under the gloss of popular revolution and national liberation movements. Nevertheless, the succeeding doctrine failed to accomplish the predetermined objectives at the broad popular level, but in contrast, it had a significant impact on the elite and semi-elite segments in society. The latter was entranced by the theoretical phraseology, and instant solutions that fall beyond the real concerns of the Arab masses, and hence fail to comprehend the essence of their problems,

¹³⁴Al-Tal (1996), *op.cit.*, pp.189-196.

¹³⁵Al-Sāmurrāʾī (1986), *op. cit.*, p.182.

while at the same time, it was unable to coexist with the people's values and traditions. Ultimately, Marxism has badly and popularly regressed in the face of the sweeping religious current¹³⁶. The immediate question here is what are the effects of the Marxist debacle? The answer will be shortly attempted in the following section.

2.4.3. Effect of the conflict between Marxism and Religious Activism:

As set forth above, the drastic strife and bickering over front line positions, and jostling over who woos the ordinary Arab masses along with other related factors, have all been instrumental in the rise and horizontal dominance of the religious current, in the last three decades, in contrast to the meager presence of the modernistic current. In this respect Muḥammad Bashūsh maintains: The Islamic religious movements are, truly, considered as a social and cultural phenomenon with political and civilizational dimensions that are discerned from Marxist and nationalist doctrines in the centre of modern Arab society¹³⁷. In view of the disruption in the convictions of the modernist activists about the credibility and viability of their means and ideologies, the modernist current split up into two groups:

1. The first group encompasses those who relinquish modernism and jump on the fundamentalist bandwagon. Most of them, actually, espoused Islam as a political benchmark, and later on, they became prominent proponents of the religious trend, and they even appeared to be a new distinguished prop in combating the modernist current as they used to be their most stalwart

¹³⁶ Ibrāhīm (1992), *op.cit.*, p.141.

¹³⁷ Bashūsh (1986), *op. cit.*, p.279.

advocates. Among those modernists newly converted to religious activism are 'Ādil Ḥusīn, Ṭāriq al-Bishrī, and Muḥammad 'Amārah.

“Although there are some writers who classify Muḥammad 'Amārah in the column of leftists, who professed Islamist ideology, in the last decade, like 'Ādil Ḥusīn, and Ṭāriq al-Bishrī from Egypt; however, the man (M. 'Amārah), radically, differs from the two former ex-modernists due to his scientific specialization in Islamic studies since he was a communist militant. Therefore, M. 'Amārah already possessed a firm cultural background when he recanted communism, in the late sixties”¹³⁸.

As a result, the relation between this category of thinkers, and the rest of the modernists became frayed, whereby, the latter consider this (radical) move as a submission to reaction and darkness and an assassination of reason with its all inherent characteristics¹³⁹. Lamenting on the position of his ex-colleagues, 'Azīz al-'Azmah says: “A number of crises drove many intellectuals away from progressivist positions to other positions close to the Islamic ones or (at least) to those running in its primary track”¹⁴⁰.

2. The second group stands for those modernists who tenaciously stick to their intellectual persuasions so as to recognize modernism as a unique civilizational project. This project is, allegedly, relevant for the uplifting of the Arabs from their deep backwardness to the heightening of the contemporary global civilization. Nonetheless, due to the difference in the methods of activism, and the issue of facing the challenges of the religious current, this group of modernists was, thereupon, divided into two sub-categories:

¹³⁸ Shukrī, Ghālī, 'Aqni'atu al-'Irḥāb, al-Baḥṭh 'ani 'Ilmāniyah Jadīdah. Egypt: Maṭābi' al-Ḥay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, p.457.

¹³⁹ Al-Najjār (1988), *op. cit.*, p.57. 'Ismā'il (1991), *op. cit.*, p.13.

¹⁴⁰ Al-'Azmah (1992), *op. cit.*, p.334.

a. The first faction professed the necessity of pursuing the assimilation of European civilization without any limitations or restrictions because it is a global civilization, which one can neither stand against nor ensure success beyond its realm¹⁴¹. In their opinion, it should not be an exaggerated sensitivity upon observing the continuous growth of the religious current, which is due to a casual social setup that will ultimately fade away with the coming of new social changes¹⁴².

b. The second faction is more vigilant in dealing with the fact that affirms the mushrooming increase in the trend of Islamic activism. "Many thinkers, in this country, being influenced by modernist theories, and modernist dialectics, emphasized in their writings, in the late of seventies, that Islam as a social force had already vanished. But, history has proved the contrary to this claim"¹⁴³. Based on the foregoing, this faction views that if the modernists are willing to face the traditionalists (religious current) in a drastic and efficient way, and at the same time, serve and localize modernism in the Arab world, they must first change their methods of work and struggle. This would not be attained except by shifting the battle and confrontation to the opponent's field. In parallel, they have to share the same mechanisms used by the traditionalists while attempting to disentangle them, and then recompose them in a form that caters for modernism, and then become a suitable ground for them. One of this group's advocates elucidates on the matter by saying:

¹⁴¹ Al-Jābirī, Muḥammad 'Abid (1994), *al-Mas'alah al-Thaqāfiyyah*, 1st edn. Beirut: Center of the Arabian Unity's Studies, p.225.

¹⁴² Ṣabūr (1992), *op. cit.*, p.166.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

"I perceive that religion is a double edged weapon; it is both important and very dangerous. It is true that the backwardness of the Arabian; be it a man or woman, has several roots, but the original root is certainly religion from which, customs, habits, and traditions come forth. The tradition's bound controls the Arabian man while securing him with powerful chains that lay him far behind...the religious tenets are the most important factors in the building of the Arabian identity, whether it is for man or woman; it is the core foundation which lies in the depth of the Arabian personality. Thus, should we fail to find a new, and modern exegesis for religion, we would not then succeed in changing the social structures"¹⁴⁴.

The ultimate objective sought from the elaboration of a modern exegesis is a purifying backward process meant not for the sake of religion, but rather it is destined to dismiss and uproot religion from the heart of the Arabian personality in order to facilitate the modernistic building process. Al-Jābirī enunciates this meaning, and unveils the lurking intent of those calling for the adoption of "legacy", in that he says:

"The reality is that my solicitous interest about legacy was not (before), and it is still (now) not for the sake of legacy itself; but rather for a highly sought after modernism; a modernism that stems from the core of our life, and reflects the real constituents of our personality. There is two ways of heading to modernism; the first way searches for modernism wherever it is regardless of whether the Arabian ground is compatible or not (for such intellectual implantation), and then omits the efforts to readapt such a ground. The other way is to view modernism as a historical product, and view contemporary modernism as a one stage of European history, and this is actually my sustained way. Thus, I opine that any attempt to cultivate modernism in another space must be founded on two complementary operations. Apprehending modernism in its contemporary history, I mean its European history, and then examining the history and legacy of the destination to which modernism is transferred in order to elaborate the appropriate ground that fit closely the peculiarity of this destination"¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Durrah, 'Amīrah, (1993), *al-Munāqashāt* of Ḥalīm Barakāt in his paper *al-Niẓām al-'Ijtīmā'ī wa 'Alāqatuh bimushkilah al-Mar'ah al-'Arabiyyah* in *Al-Mar'ah wa Dawruhā fī Ḥarakatī al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah Buḥūth wa Munāqashāt al-Nadwah al-Fikriyyah al-latī Nazzamahā Markaz dirāsāt al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah*, 3rd edn. Beirut: Center of the Arab Unity Studies, p.82.

¹⁴⁵ al-Jābirī (1994), *op. cit.*, p.250.

Therefore, we are confronted with two new conceptual stands on modernism. One stand emphasizes the adherence to the European reference, which is marked with Western modernism, and sustains the break with the legacy and culture of the past, and the devotion to the living age as a present instant that is self-sufficient. This stand does not favor the submission to the occasional circumstance nor does it sympathize with the religious current, or humor its ideas, since modernism imposes itself as a universal global reference that dominates both the present and future of the entire world¹⁴⁶. Modernism from this perspective is not a social and historical project like a renaissance, but rather a policy and daily practice; it is a comprehensive change in all aspects and of all structures of the Arabian being and thinking; it is a subscription, without illusion, into modernism and the global civilization¹⁴⁷.

The other stand envisages the necessity of benefiting from the past while taking care not to be entangled in the fundamentalist trap¹⁴⁸. It is incumbent upon modernists if they are willing to stem the tide of religious current and empower modernism, to enshrine religious theories, and then shift the conflict inside the former field so as to show the inconsistency and incoherence of the legacy, eventually paving the way to modernism to mould modern Arabian thought¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.218.

¹⁴⁷ Ismā'īl (1991), *op. cit.*, p.141.

¹⁴⁸ Ḥāj Ḥamad (1996), *al-Sudān, op. cit.*, vol. 2, p.332.

¹⁴⁹ Ismā'īl (1991), *op. cit.*, p.147. Al-'Azmah (1992), *op. cit.*, pp.296-305. Al-Jābirī (1994), *op. cit.*, p.227.

The tactical dissension between the two groups has led to a mutual aversion, whereby every party seeks to flout or crossbreed the method of its dissentious fellow.

- While showing his tacit disenchantment with those who negate the usefulness of legacy for the benefit of modernism, M. A. al-Jābirī observes:

“Why should we restrict our modernism from some innovative attempts that seek to renew our perspective towards the legacy, while relying on concepts and views that are a product of contemporary human thinking? ...The “bastard” intellectuals are not able to share with the Ummah its grievous concerns, and thereby they must be put out of concern and solicitude”¹⁵⁰.

Al-Jābirī goes on to humiliate this group of modernists by ascribing to them ignorance and treason: “We do not delve, here, into detailing the motives that make some Arab intellectuals civilizational agents serving the interest of the West. According to the description of ‘Anwar ‘Abd al-Mālik, their case is known, whereby most of them make of ignorance a culture, and of alienation a modernism”¹⁵¹. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ describes the stand of this modernist group as being marred with mirages and illusions:

“Because of their excessive progressivism and modernism, these people believe in the possibility of disdaining and bypassing the legacy (*Turāth*) and the past without confronting it from within or getting with it into the battle of reality. Thus, all their attempts revealed mirage and illusionary pretensions, while (in fact) the rock is still rooted in its place”¹⁵².

The author views that this immature and non-historical stand has inflicted a great damage on all modernists: “Because of their excessive modernism

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.228-229.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.210.

¹⁵² Ṣāliḥ, Hāshim (1991), in his introduction to Muhammad ‘Arkūn’s book *Mina al-‘Ijtihād ‘Ilā Naqd al-‘Aql al-‘Islāmī*. Hāshim Ṣāliḥ (trans.), 1st edn. Beirut and London: Dār al-Sāqī, p.20.

and Marxism, they jump over the real problems of their societies instead of facing them gradually and from within. We have paid a very high cost because of such an immature and non-historical stand.”¹⁵³

- Likewise, the other group has its counterarguments that relegate and discredit the claims of the compromising modernistic group. The response was mainly based on two factors:

1. The fact shows that modernization of the reconciliatory view is contingent upon the intentions of its advocates, and remains with no feasible effect on the structure of the reconciliatory liberal-nationalist discourse.

2. The liberal and nationalist discourse was pledged to the Islamic discourse...such a pullout is not only a signal for sharing some structural foundations of the social and historical thought, but also an earmark for subjugating many currents of Arab nationalist thought due to the conquest of religious ideology even before it comes into real practice...this tribal view, which implies the continuity of today into yesterday in an uninterrupted flow that humors the nature of vicissitudes in history, has a lot of consequences, among which is the ensuing effect on the rationalism of history¹⁵⁴.

The mushrooming development of the religious current and its predominance over large segments of people and, particularly, educated youth,¹⁵⁵ besides its powerful political presence revealed by a number of aspects in the Arab and Islamic world,

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁵⁴ Al-‘Azmaḥ (1992), *op. cit.*, pp.311-312, 317.

¹⁵⁵ Ibrāhīm (1992), *op. cit.*, p.139. Al-Jābirī (1994), *op.cit.*, pp. 225-226. Šabūr (1992), *op. cit.*, p.167.

in general, for instance, the victory of Iranian revolution¹⁵⁶, and the eruption of the Afghani sacred war (*Jihād*) against the Russian invasion – the leading camp of international communism – have all been highly conducive to the awareness and optimism of youth, who were to pin their hopes on Islam's solution. This stimulus later spurred the Palestinian uprising under a religious leadership; also there were a number of incumbent religious candidates that reigned over a handful of ministerial positions, like in Jordan and Egypt, and the resounding victory of the religious current in Algeria's dismal election, in 1991. All these factors and other related elements have proved the efflorescence of the religious current and the decline of the modernistic current. Thereupon, modernists have to reckon with the religious tenets, and find a new contemporary modernistic exegesis¹⁵⁷ if they are willing to change the social structures, and pull out the carpet from under the feet of the Muslim activists. That is to say, according to al-Jābirī, the conflict should be turned to inside the field of the religious current in order to show the inconsistency and incoherence of the legacy (traditions), and hence allow modernism to formulate Arabian thought anew¹⁵⁸, because to the modernists' mind, the religious current fails to apprehend both the spirit of Islam and the meaning of human development¹⁵⁹. Therefore, the modernistic current had, accordingly, to present a sound understanding of religion¹⁶⁰.

In the modernists' view, what is required today is "the re-elaboration of '*ijtihād*' in the *Sharī'ah* on the basis of new methods of interpretation. Thus, what we

¹⁵⁶ Hammādī, Sa'dūn (1986), *al-Qawmiyyah al-'Arabiyyah wa al-Taḥaddiyāt al-Mu'āṣirah fī Taṭawwur al-Fikr al-Qawmī al-'Arabī*, op. cit., p.348.

¹⁵⁷ Al-Durrah (1993), op. cit., p.82.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Jābirī (1994), op. cit., pp.227-229. 'Ismā'īl (1991), op. cit., p.147.

¹⁵⁹ Sa'id (1986), op. cit., p.367.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.366.

currently need is not the study of God, but rather a new legislative fundamental thinking”¹⁶¹.

However, before reaching this new fundamental thinking, one must know how the modernists breached the ancient (pristine) exegesis principles, while showing their inconsistency and irrelevance to the present era.

¹⁶¹George Tarābīshī (1993), *Madhbaḥat al-Turāth fī al-Thaqāfah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Mu‘āṣirah*, 1st edn. Beirut : Dār al-Sāqī, pp.14-15.