

tyranny and hypocrisy.²⁹ It is the conviction of this author that had the Ahali group and other independent socialist trends responded favorably to nationalism they would have carried the Arab national movement to new horizons by inculcating it with their progressive ideas. However, by opting to favor regional nationalism against Arab nationalism these socialist trends have to share part of the responsibility with the Communists and other separatist groups in the disintegration of the unitary Arab national movement in the interwar period. Indeed, apart from other factors, the programs and activities of these groups accentuated the drift into iqlimiyah [regionalism].

The Arab national movement had to undergo a process of complete transformation structurally as well as ideologically, in order to adjust itself to the new circumstances. Before the war a more or less unified movement was struggling to assert the rights of Arab provinces to secession and independent national development. Their struggle was essentially against the religiously legitimized political institutions of the Ottoman Empire. After the war the national movement broke down into a number of political organizations each preoccupied in its struggle towards the independence of that particular state in which the organization was established. Moreover, the

²⁹ Ibid.