

of Salih Jabr and the abolition of the Portsmouth Treaty.²⁶ Moreover, their interest in change was stirred by the smashing success of the Communists in China. Hence they saw in the Communists a revolutionary force that should not be ruled out of the national struggle. On this premise the Arab Nationalists entered into discussions with the Communists with the objective of working out a formula for cooperation. However, the discussions broke out very soon because the Communist group would not waver on the Palestinian problem. Following the official line of the Communist parties the Communist students were all in favor of the United Nations Partition Plan. The Arab Nationalists who were adamant on this issue could hardly find any common ground to share with the Communists.²⁷

The Syrian Social Nationalists were the second most important group on campus. The Arab Nationalists ruled out the possibility of working with this group off-hand. They regarded the doctrine of Syrian nationalism as utterly incongruent with their national ideology. In fact they viewed Syrian nationalism as the most "sinister" manifestation of racial and cultural anti-Arab thought [Shu'ubiyah] which threatens the drive of the Arabs toward total unity.²⁸

²⁶ See Walter Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1956), p. 193.

²⁷ Statement by Dr. George Habash, personal interview, June 24, 1970.

²⁸ See Labib Zuwiyya Yamak, The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 3.