

undermined the authority of the party leadership. Hence the party failed to set an example of superior performance in work and in the fulfillment of political tasks.

Finally, the Arab Nationalists were suspicious of the personality cult practiced by the Ba'thists. They believed, not incorrectly, that the glorification of any leader would inevitably push the people and the party into the background. The Arab Nationalists were also suspicious of Aflaq's attempt to raise the Ba'th to the dignity of an end in itself.³³ They insisted that the party or any organization for that matter should remain in the domain of ways and means.

Having observed the above drawbacks in the Ba'th, the Arab Nationalists finally decided to form their own independent organization. George Habash took the initiative early in 1951 to propose to the members of the Executive Committee of al-Urwah that a new nationalist organization be set in secret and, that the Executive Committee of al-Urwah be its nucleus. Everyone in the group responded favorably to the proposal.³⁴ They had all felt the need to establish a clandestine revolutionary organization to carry on the fight outside and against the established order for the achievement of the national objectives.

³³ See Michel Aflaq, Fi Sabil al-Ba'th [Toward Resurrection], (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1959), p. 299.

³⁴ Hani al-Hindi who was then serving a prison term for his activities in the Kata'ib joined the group upon his release from prison in May 1951.