

were in fact a community of true believers more than anything else. As such, one can hardly compare them with the leadership of other political parties who are mainly interested in seeking or maintaining public office. The leaders of the Movement were young men in their twenties, who were either university students or recent graduates. Although they were almost exclusively of middle class origin, they had no or little class consciousness. They were idealists with little political experience and less political thought.<sup>36</sup>

The above leaders viewed their organization as the spearhead of the Arab masses in their struggle for national unity and independence. With such an elitist concept they started to set the rules for one of the most disciplined and strictly organized political movements in the area. They laid special emphasis on the leading organs of the ANM which had to conform to the following organizational principles:<sup>37</sup>

1. Collective Leadership: This principle was deemed very important for the following reasons:

A. As a safeguard against deviation, opportunism, personal influence, and motivations;

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<sup>36</sup> Statement by Dr. George Habash, personal interview, July 16, 1967.

<sup>37</sup> ANM, Mafahim tanzimiyah, [Organizational Concepts], pp. 4-7.