

the same time. He dreams of acquiring the material power of the West. But at the same time, he is against most of the Western philosophies. In his system of thought there is no correspondence between the national power acquired by a country and its political, economic and social structure. To him, a good government makes a powerful country. What counts, in the final analysis, is power not principles or ideas.

By the same token, all social ills and economic disparities are blamed on the government. This attitude towards governments in general has a deep-rooted origin in the Arab mentality. Islamic history was taught as a history of dynasties and great rulers. Abdu's early cry that the East is in a desperate need of a "benevolent despot" is a manifestation of this mentality.

The people were yearning to the glory of their past, the glory of powerful heroes. It is no accident, therefore, that Aflaq introduced the Ba'th as a "new era of heroism".<sup>5</sup> His later rhetoric always touched on this focal point. A good one is his famous saying: "Mohammed was all the Arabs, so let now all the Arabs be Mohammed."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Fi Sabil al-Bath [Toward the Ba'th], (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1963), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 54.