

## CHAPTER ONE

### DEFINING ARAB NATIONALISM

The men and women of the nationalist generation who had sought the political unity of the Arab people must have cast weary eyes at one another when they heard their acknowledged leader call a truce with those they considered to be anti-unionists; they must have dropped their heads and thrown their hands in the air when he announced the onset of a new era where “solidarity” among Arab states would replace the quest for a comprehensive political unity. Had Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir, the President of Egypt and the hero of Arab nationalism, reneged on the principles of the Arab nationalist creed when in 1963 he declared that it was Arab solidarity “which constituted the firm basis upon which Arab nationalism could be built,”<sup>1</sup> and that Arab solidarity would make “the Arab states stronger through their cooperation in the economic, military and cultural fields, and in the sphere of foreign policy”?<sup>2</sup> The nationalist generation must have hoped and prayed that Nasir would reconsider, come to his senses, and retread the

<sup>1</sup> Al-Jumhuriya al-‘Arabiya al-Muttahida, *Majmou‘at Khutab wa Tasrihat wa Bayant al-Rai’s ‘Gamal Abd al-Nasir* (The collection of the speeches, statements and communiques of President Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir), vol. 4 (Cairo: Maslahat al-Isti‘lamat, n.d.). (Hereafter cited as *Khutab*), p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Khutab*, p. 455.

path of revolutionary Arab nationalism with its unequivocal commitment to organic Arab unity.

But their hero's intent was different, more complex, and more subtle. Nasir, after all, was both an ideologue and a politician. To him the path to Arab unity was fraught with both opportunities and constraints, and an organic unity of all the Arabs in one unified state would be the ultimate aim of a long and dialectical process consisting of "several stages."<sup>3</sup> Arab solidarity constituted one of these stages; it was "a step toward unity."<sup>4</sup> Solidarity was a pragmatic course of action when political constraints made impractical the aggressive pursuit of comprehensive Arab unity. But even when bending to political realities, the Egyptian president would reiterate the belief, shared by all Arab nationalists, that without the goal (or at a minimum, the aspiration) of Arab political unity, Arab nationalism would be a creed without a purpose, indeed without a meaning.<sup>5</sup>

To this, Sati' al-Husri, who, as we shall see later, was the foremost theoretician of Arab nationalism, would say, "Amen." Throughout his numerous writings on Arab nationalism, Husri never lost sight of the ultimate goal of the ideology he so vigorously propagated, namely the political unity of the Arabic-speaking people. "People who spoke a unitary language," Husri maintained, "have one heart and a common soul. As such, they constitute one nation, and so they have to have a unified state."<sup>6</sup> In another instance, he wrote that the happiest of nations were the ones in which political and national boundaries were fused into one another.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> E.S. Farag, *Nasser Speaks: Basic Documents* (London: Morssett Press, 1972), p. 142. This notion that political unity is achieved in stages can also be found in the writings of Michel Aflaq, the philosopher of the Ba'th Party. See for example his *Fi Sabil al-Ba'th* (For the sake of resurrection) (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1963), p. 230.

<sup>4</sup> *Egyptian Gazette* (Cairo), January 29, 1958.

<sup>5</sup> United Arab Republic, *The Charter* (Cairo: Information Department, 1962), p. 79; *Al-Abram* (Cairo), October 19, 1962; *al-Muharrir* (Beirut), April 2, 1963; *Khubtab*, p. 447.

<sup>6</sup> Abu Khaldun Sati' al-Husri, *Ma Hiya al-Qawmiya?: Abhath wa Dirasat 'ala Dhaw'i al-Abdath wa al-Nadhariyat* (What is nationalism?: enquiries and studies in light of events and theories) (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li al-Malayeen, 1963), p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Abu Khaldun Sati' al-Husri, *Ara' wa Ahadith fi al-Qawmiya al-'Arabiya* (Views and discussions on Arab nationalism) (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li al-Malayeen, 1964), p. 23. Husri

Husri considered the Arab states to be artificial creations of the imperialist powers. Driven by their imperial interests, these powers proceeded to carve up what essentially was a natural cultural entity with an inalienable right to political sovereignty. An intended consequence of this perfidious parceling of the “Arab nation” was to keep the Arabs politically ineffectual and militarily feeble. In one of his writings, Husri says that he is constantly asked how was it that the Arabs lost the 1948–1949 war over Palestine when they were seven states and Israel was only one? His answer is unequivocal: The Arabs lost the war *precisely because* they were seven states.<sup>8</sup> The conclusion is unambiguous: To avoid losing future wars, the Arabs had to unite into one Arab state.

The founders of the Ba’th Party, the prominent Arab nationalist organization, felt the same about the connection between nationalism and organic political unity. The opening article of the party constitution promulgated in 1947 unequivocally declares: “The Arabs form one nation. This nation has the natural right to live in a single state. [As such] the Arab Fatherland constitutes an indivisible political and economic unity. No Arab country can live apart from the others.”<sup>9</sup> The party’s founder and philosopher, Michel Aflaq, in his most important canonical document, posited the party’s Arab nationalist creed as a mission to resurrect the Arab people, to revive their intrinsic humanity and creativity, which lay dormant because of the political divisions in the Arab world. And how was this to be accomplished? Aflaq’s remedy was clear: by uniting these “artificial and counterfeit countries and statelets” into one Arab nation-state. Only then could the Arabs return to their true selves “their upstanding spirit, clear ideas and upright morality,”

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once told Iraqi historian, Majid Khadduri, that “public attention should focus on the problem of unity: it is the national duty of every Arab to support the leader who is capable of achieving Arab unity.” Majid Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World: The Role of Ideas and Ideals in Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 201.

<sup>8</sup> Abu Khaldun Sati’ al-Husri, *al-‘Uruba Awalan* (Arabism first) (Beirut: Dar al-‘Ilm li al-Malayeen, 1965), p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> An English translation of the Ba’th Party Constitution can be found in Sylvia Haim, ed., *Arab Nationalism: An Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), pp. 233–241. This particular quote is on p. 233.

and only then would “their minds be able to create.”<sup>10</sup> To Aflaq, therefore, Arab unity is not only an intrinsic element of Arab nationalism; it is also a necessary precondition for the revival of the Arab spirit and Arab intellect.

As the membership of the party grew in the years to follow, and as its ideas spread throughout the Arab world, members would squabble over the meaning and role of such fundamental Ba‘thist principles as freedom, socialism, and religion. Yet not until the eclipse of the Arab nationalist idea itself was there ever any questioning of “unity” as an absolutely essential component of the party’s Arab nationalist doctrine.<sup>11</sup> Thus, whether Arab nationalism was expressed through Nasirist or Ba‘thist discourse,<sup>12</sup> or through the writings of Sati‘ al-Husri, it was inexorably linked to Arab political unity. In short, to the thinkers and activists who made up the nationalist generation, Arab nationalism would be a hollow and meaningless concept if it did not strive to gather its children under one roof in one unified and sovereign Arab state. And it is this definition of Arab nationalism, with its necessary goal of Arab political unity, that will be used in this study.

But why this detailed and deliberate emphasis on the seemingly abiding link between Arab nationalism and Arab political unity? Can this link be anything other than self-evident? Well, not necessarily. In fact, an ongoing debate among specialists on Arab and Middle Eastern politics over the nature of nationalism has centered on whether achieving or desiring statehood was by necessity a core element of nationalism. Hence, the argument has predicated on whether the concept of nationalism is one of culture or one of poli-

<sup>10</sup> Aflaq, *Fi Sabil al-Ba‘th*, p. 181; see also Haim, *Arab Nationalism*, p. 248.

<sup>11</sup> See John F. Devlin’s excellent discussion of Ba‘thist ideology in his *The Ba‘th Party: A History from its Origins to 1966* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), pp. 23–45.

<sup>12</sup> There were, of course, other Arab nationalist groups and organizations, most notably, *Harakat al-Qaumiyyeen al-‘Arab* (the Arab nationalists movement), but none was as consequential or as resilient as ‘Nasirism’ or ‘Ba‘thism’, and in any case, all shared in the belief that Arab unity could not be intellectually separated from Arab nationalism. See, for example, ‘Abdallah Saloom al-Samarai’, “Harakat al-Qawmiyyeen al-‘Arab wa Dawruha fi al-Wa‘i al-Qawmi” (The Arab Nationalists Movement and its role in the national consciousness), *al-Mustaqbal al-‘Arabi* (Beirut), no. 84 (February 1986): 75–99.

tics. A spirited and instructive dialogue on the subject occurred on the pages of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. In their book, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930–1945*,<sup>13</sup> Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski argue that the Egyptians' sentiments of affiliation and loyalty which had centered on Egypt alone were gradually shifted in the 1930s and 1940s to Arab and Islamic referents,<sup>14</sup> a claim that was vigorously contested by Charles D. Smith.<sup>15</sup> The relevant debate for our purposes was a difference in the interpretation of one of the central theses of Benedict Anderson's influential book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of nationalism*.<sup>16</sup> Anderson defines the nation as an imagined community:

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community. . . . [It] is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.<sup>17</sup>

Using this definition and relying on another assertion by Anderson that “nationness” and nationalism are “cultural artifacts of a particular kind,”<sup>18</sup> Gershoni and Jankowski conceive of the nation as a cultural construct, existing without the necessary addendum of the state. Indeed, to them, “Anderson’s great insight and chief contribution to the study of nationalism is precisely his emphasis on its cultural-semiotic nature, its ‘imagined’ character.”<sup>19</sup> Smith, on

<sup>13</sup> (London: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, “Print Culture, Social Change and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt; Response to the Review by Charles D. Smith of *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1 (February 1999): 82.

<sup>15</sup> Charles D. Smith, “Imagined Identities, Imagined Nationalisms: Print Culture and Egyptian Nationalism in Light of Recent Scholarship,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4 (November 1997): 607–622.

<sup>16</sup> (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Gershoni and Jankowski, “Print Culture, Social Change and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt,” p. 89.

the other hand, insists that Anderson posited his “imagined communities” as linked to political boundaries. After all, he argues, Anderson does specify that the imagined community (the nation) “inhabits territorial and social space,” and that it “is inherently limited and sovereign.” It is limited, Anderson explains, because it “has finite if elastic boundaries beyond which lie other nations,” and it is sovereign because “the gage and emblem of [a free nation] is the sovereign state.”<sup>20</sup> Smith concludes that Anderson cannot be more adamant in postulating a statal referent to nationalism.

Gershoni and Jankowski are undoubtedly right in arguing that historically the absence of a state has not been a barrier to nationalist imaginings. They point to the many groups, Palestinians, Basques, Kurds, etc., that have existed and continue to exist that claim to be a nation even though they lack a state, and they further argue that to insist on positing the state as the essential criterion for nationalism would deny these groups their claims for nationhood.<sup>21</sup> The crucial point here, however, is that while lacking a state, all these groups are in fact adamantly and vociferously *desirous* of a state.<sup>22</sup> And it is perhaps in this context, in the need for a sovereign state whether it exists or not, that Anderson’s imagined community could best be understood.

These criteria are evident in the way Bernard Lewis, the notable historian of the Middle East, defines the nation. To Lewis, a nation denotes “a group of people held together by a common language, belief in a common descent and in a shared history and destiny. They usually but do not necessarily inhabit a contiguous territory; they often enjoy, and if they do not enjoy they commonly seek,

<sup>20</sup> Charles D. Smith, “‘Cultural Constructs’ and other Fantasies: Imagined Narratives in *Imagined Communities*; Surrejoinder to Gershoni and Jankowski’s ‘Print Culture, Social Change, and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt,’ ” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 31, no.1 (February 1999): 97.

<sup>21</sup> Gershoni and Jankowski, “Print Culture, Social Change, and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt,” p. 89.

<sup>22</sup> Transplanted on to the Arab situation, Ghassan Salame contends that the desire for Arab unity denotes a kind of legitimacy which compels Arab officials to refer to it constantly. See Salame’s *al-Siyasa al-Sa’udia al-Kharjia Mundhu ‘Am 1930* (Saudi foreign policy since 1940) (Beirut: Ma’had al-Inma’i al-‘Arabi, 1980), p. 214.

sovereign independence in their own name.”<sup>23</sup> Lewis acknowledges the importance of the cultural elements, but goes beyond cultural proximity by incorporating the notion of “sovereign independence” into the definition.

It is in this sense, in the explicit distinction between the cultural and the political that an ethnic group could most profitably be distinguished from a nation. Adrian Hastings identifies the crucial elements that transform a culturally bonded ethnic group into a nation as *its claim “to political identity and autonomy, together with the control of specific territory”*<sup>24</sup> [italics added]. In this definition Hastings echoes the emphasis on a nation’s desire for political separateness voiced a century earlier by John Stuart Mill: “Where the sentiment of a nationality exists in any force, there is a *prima facie* case for uniting all members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart.”<sup>25</sup> He then tellingly adds that the “the strongest of all identity is that of political antecedents.”<sup>26</sup> Max Weber concurs: “If one believes that it is at all expedient to distinguish national sentiment as something homogeneous and specifically set apart, one can do so only by referring to a tendency toward an autonomous state. [Hence] a nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, what distinguishes a nation from an ethnic group or any other collectivity has to be the nation’s self-derived desire to achieve political sovereignty within a recog-

<sup>23</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East* (New York: Schocken Books, 1998), p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism*. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Ryan, *J. S. Mill* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 214; see also Lynn Williams, “National Identity and the Nation State: Construction, Reconstruction and Contradiction,” in *National Identity*, ed. Keith Cameron. (Exeter, England: Intellect, 1999), p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> John Stuart Mill, “Considerations on Representative Government,” in *The Nationalism Reader*. eds. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay. (Atlantic Heights, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995), p. 98. Quoted also in Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948), p. 179.

nized territory. Lacking such a desire, a group can be a number of things but not a nation. That is precisely why Canada is, and the old Yugoslavia was, a multinational society, since significant ethnic groups within these two countries agitated for political independence, hence constituting nations. The United States, on the other hand, with its profusion of culturally based ethnicities, is not a multinational society, but rather a multiethnic society, since none of its ethnic groups desires political separation and sovereignty.

It is the recognition of the political element, centered on the ultimate goal of Arab political unity and the desire for a unitary Arab state, that anchors the definition of Arab nationalism to be used in this study. This would also help us avoid the conceptual overlap, at times harboring on confusion, in the use of the term Arab nationalism. As a concept, "Arab nationalism" has tended to be used in the literature of Middle Eastern politics and history interchangeably with other terms such as Arabism, Pan-Arabism, and even sometimes Arab radicalism, thus blending the sentiment of cultural proximity with the desire for political action. To say one is an Arab should denote a different connotation from saying one is an Arab nationalist. The former concedes one's cultural heritage, expressed best in the term "Arabism," whereas the latter, as we have seen, imbues this cultural oneness with the added ingredient of political recognition.

If this seems a reasonable distinction, it certainly has not been reflected in the literature. The present author himself, in a book published in 1976, follows the practice of other analysts of the Middle East by ascribing to "Arabism" properties best affixed to "Arab nationalism" then declaring the two terms interchangeable.<sup>28</sup> Shibley Telhami concludes an excellent study, subtitled "The New Arabism", by trying to differentiate this new phenomenon from Nasir's "Arabism of the 1950s and 1960s."<sup>29</sup> Telhami tells us

<sup>28</sup> A. I. Dawisha, *Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> Shibley Telhami, "Power, Legitimacy, and Peace-Making in Arab Countries: The New Arabism," in *Ethnic Conflicts and International Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Leonard Binder. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), p. 56.

that this “new Arabism,” which emerged toward the latter part of the twentieth century, was centered on intellectual elites and driven by a small sector of the media that was relatively free of governmental control. It facilitated expressions of political concern that were “Arabist,” in the sense that they transcended state boundaries, and were independent of state governments. This was especially true in the effort to maintain a political focus on the issue of Palestine and Arab relations with Israel.<sup>30</sup> Illuminating as Telhami’s analysis undoubtedly is, nevertheless, to affix the same term, that of “Arabism,” to the Nasir-led movement of the 1950s and 1960s is to so stretch the term as to attenuate its definitional clarity. Nasir, after all, led an army of vocal and activist Arab nationalists throughout the length and breadth of the Arab world who believed fervently that the overriding purpose of their political struggle was to return the Arab people to their “natural” condition, united into one sovereign Arab state. One wonders how many of the “new Arabists” would take seriously even the remote possibility of such an outcome?

R. Stephen Humphreys, in an erudite and meticulous study of Middle Eastern history,<sup>31</sup> treads a similar path of conceptual trespassing. In a chapter entitled “The Strange Career of Pan-Arabism,” he traces, in an admirably concise analysis, the growth and the decline of the Arab nationalist movement. Here again though, Humphreys sees little need for a conceptual distinction among the terms “Arab nationalism,” “Arabism,” and “Pan-Arabism,” and as such uses the three terms interchangeably.<sup>32</sup> In one section, he concludes an analysis of the withering fortunes of the Arab nationalist movement in the last three decades of the twentieth century by asking the question: “Where is Pan-Arabism or Arab Nationalism in any form?”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in a study of the changes that occurred in the Arab world during the 1970s, the dean of Egyptian

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 56–57.

<sup>31</sup> R. Stephen Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 60–65.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 63–64.

political science, Ali Hillal Dessouki, employed “pan-Arabism” and “Arabism” essentially to describe sentiments of political allegiance that transcended the Arab state “to a larger human and social body.”<sup>34</sup> Dessouki did not endeavor to conceptually separate one term from the other, because, one presumes, they meant more or less the same thing to him.

In all this definitional overlap, there indeed was unanimity over the meaning of “pan-Arabism,” which was generally understood to be the drive, or at a minimum the desire, for Arab political unity. Here is how the distinguished scholar, Walid Khalidi, expounded on the doctrine of pan-Arabism in the late 1970s:

The Arab states’ system is first and foremost a “Pan” system. It postulates the existence of a single Arab Nation behind the facade of a multiplicity of sovereign states. . . . From this perspective, the individual Arab states are deviant and transient entities: their frontiers illusory and permeable; their rulers interim caretakers, or obstacles to be removed. . . . Before such super-legitimacy, the legitimacy of the individual state shrinks into irrelevance.<sup>35</sup>

Of interest, in a later issue of the same journal, another distinguished scholar and commentator, Fouad Ajami, took issue with Khalidi’s depiction of the potency of pan-Arabism. Ajami argued that pan-Arabism “which had dominated the political consciousness of modern Arabs [was by the end of the 1970s] nearing its end, if it [was] not already a thing of the past.” Ajami agreed that in an earlier era Arab states that “resisted the claims of pan-Arabism were at a disadvantage—their populations a fair target for pan-Arabist appeals, their leaders to be overthrown and replaced by others more committed to the transcendent goal.” In contrast to Khalidi, however, Ajami argued that by the end of the 1970s *raison d’etat* was gaining ground, and “a normal state system [in the Arab

<sup>34</sup> Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, “The New Arab Political Order: Implications for the 1980s,” in *Rich and Poor States in the Middle East: Egypt and the New Arab Order*, eds. Malcolm H. Kerr and El-Sayed Yassin (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 326–327.

<sup>35</sup> Walid Khalidi, “Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 4 (July 1978): 695.

world was] becoming a fact of life.”<sup>36</sup> Writing twenty years later, Bernard Lewis agreed with Ajami’s conclusions:

Pan-Arabism . . . for long was a sacrosanct ideological principle in all the Arab countries, some of which even incorporated it in their constitution. But as the various Arab states established themselves more firmly and defined and pursued their various national interests with growing clarity, their commitment to pan-Arabism became more and more perfunctory. At the present time, after a series of bitter inter-Arab conflicts, even the customary lip service is often lacking.<sup>37</sup>

Notice, however, that while Ajami and Lewis disagree with Khalidi on the relative potency of pan-Arabism, they accept the basic definition of pan-Arabism as a movement and a doctrine of Arab political unity. So do a score of other historians, political scientists, and commentators of the Middle East.

What is rather baffling about all this is the glaring paucity in the use of the term pan-Arabism in Arabic texts. There are authentic Arabic equivalents for a number of terms that are of significance for our subject: al-qawmiya al-‘Arabiya (Arab nationalism), al-‘Uruba (Arabism), al-Wuhda al-‘Arabiya (Arab unity), al-Ittihad al-‘Arabi (Arab union), al-Iqlimiya (regionalism), and al-Wataniya (state patriotism). These terms appear constantly in Arabic texts as speeches of leaders, radio and newspaper editorials, and political books and pamphlets. But one is hard put to find the literal Arabic translation of pan-Arabism (presumably, al-‘Uruba al-Shamila) in any of these texts.

The reason is self-evident: the desire for, as well as the pursuit of, political unity for the Arabs, which is how Western literature has defined and portrayed pan-Arabism, is incorporated, in the minds and discourse of the Arab nationalists themselves, in the very definition of Arab nationalism itself. To those who thought of themselves as Arab nationalists—the men and women who were

<sup>36</sup> Fouad Ajami, “The End of Pan-Arabism,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 57, no.2 (Winter 1978/1979): 355.

<sup>37</sup> Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*, p. 140.

consumed by the idea, who were prepared to endure hardships on its behalf, who drew courage from its promise, who celebrated its triumphs and mourned its setbacks—to all those people, Arab nationalism was meaningless *without* its ultimate goal of Arab unity. After all, what would be so distinctive about an Arab world that was nothing more than a region with a multiplicity of states, the vast majority of whose population were Muslim and happened to speak Arabic and share in Arabic culture? How would that be any different from, for example, Catholic and (Brazil-less) Spanish-speaking Latin America? At some point, the cultural bond that presumably tied citizens of the various Arab countries together under the banner of Arabism would have to acquire geographic and political rationalization. We have already seen that in contrast to an ethnic group, a nation desires and seeks a sovereign political identity, and those who identified themselves as Arab nationalists fervently believed that the Arab nation could not continue to allow its children to be scattered among different Arab states.

In his introduction to an edited volume on the origins of Arab nationalism, the noted historian Rashid Khalidi, in setting out the arguments of the various chapters, contends that “there was a clear difference before 1914 between the majority of Arabists, whose emphasis on Arab identity was linked to continued loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, and the tiny minority of extreme Arab nationalists who called for secession from the empire.”<sup>38</sup> In this account, those who Khalidi calls “Arabists” are aware of their cultural separateness from the Ottoman Turks, but have no aspirations for political sovereignty, yet Khalidi’s “Arab nationalists” go beyond the cultural domain to demand political separation. And this trait need not be reserved only to the extreme elements, but, as has been argued here, it should constitute the characteristic of *all* true nationalists.

The desire for political separateness, therefore, will be a constituent element in the definition of nation and nationalism used in

<sup>38</sup> Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeve S. Simon, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. ix.

this book. The nation thus defined is: *a human solidarity, whose members believe that they form a coherent cultural whole, and who manifest a strong desire for political separateness and sovereignty.*

Applied to the Arab world, this definition goes beyond the linguistic, religious, historical, and emotional bonds that tie the Arabic-speaking people to each other. For the purpose of conceptual precision, this cultural uniformity would be termed *Arabism*. But Arabism with the added element of a strong desire (and preferably articulated demands) for political unity in a specified demarcated territory—that is what will be termed *Arab nationalism*.