

against the traditional political and social structures and their defenders.³⁷

It is obvious that the Arab Nationalists have adopted an idealist ideology that was peculiarly vulnerable and open to criticism on the score of self-contradiction and of failure to reckon with the objective facts of the Arab situation. In their enthusiasm to achieve the political goals, they failed to see what social forces must be organized and what opponents they would have to defeat. No wonder that Muhsin Ibrahim, a former leader, admits that the Arab Nationalists had no conception of the laws of social change at this time.³⁸

Furthermore, the evolution and development of the above ideology did not proceed according to a preconceived plan. It was conditioned by a number of exceptional historical circumstances beyond the control of the founding leaders. After the initial cadres had accustomed themselves to withstand the attacks of a constellation of political forces, including the Ba'th, the Arab Nationalists began to adjust themselves to the objective facts of the political struggle. As early as 1954, the Arab Nationalists have been at great pains to show that their two-phase program was misunderstood because of the mechanical separation envisioned between the political phase and the social phase. Instead

³⁷ See Munif al-Razzaz, Limatha al-Ishtirakiyah al-An? [Why Socialism Now?].

³⁸ Muhsin Ibrahim (ed.), Limatha Munathmat al-Ishtirakiyeen al-Lebnaniyeen?, [What for is the Organization of the Lebanese Socialists?], (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1970), pp. 17-18.