

This was the background against which the Arab mind was examining the different Western political ideas after the first World War. It is understandable that liberalism was most attractive to the well-to-do Arab intellectuals who completed their higher education in Western institutions, and whose main intellectual need was the search for an identity. Thus, nationalism was introduced by the above intellectuals as an outcome of European liberalism. In fact, it was looked upon as a national identity within which modern ideas about society and technology could be assimilated. Early nationalist writers advocated Arab nationalism as an identity against the identity of being merely "natives". Later they advocated an overall Arab identity against such regional identities as Syrian, Egyptian or Lebanese.⁷ They did not elaborate on the question of ideology because they were true to the liberal tradition. They hoped that the Arab people, after freeing themselves from foreign dominance and influence, will develop their political ideology by the fairplay of the democratic system, and within the framework of a unified Arab nation. They did not present a concrete political theory, nor did they advance a political program

⁷See Sati' al-Husry, Ara' wa-ahadith fi al-wataniyah wa algawmiyah [Views and Speeches on Patriotism and Nationalism], (Cairo: Matba'at al-risalah, 1944), Muhadarat fi nushu' al-fikrah al-gawmiyah [Lectures on the Origin of the Nationalist Idea], (Beirut: Dar al-'ilm lil malayin, 1956); and Constantine Zurayk, Al-Wa'i al-Qawmi [National Consciousness], (Beirut, 1936).