

those who advocated the principle of nationalism? Because, we are told, those were not true nationalists. Moreover, it is the historic mission of the Arab people and other Afro-Asians to give the world a pure and true nationalism.¹⁰ So nationalism, according to this theory was not an identity but a doctrine. The following observations are in order:

1. It is obvious that the concept had moved away from the fascism-liberalism dichotomy by ignoring it. The emphasis on true and untrue nationalism abstracted the issue from the real internal forces that lead nations along the path of aggression.

2. The concept is a dogma that focusses all attention on the nation and says nothing about the forces within the nation. What political system is to be chosen and what form of democracy is to be advocated? Such important questions remain unanswered.

3. The defensive character of the doctrine and its stand vis-a-vis other doctrines exploited the masses' distrust of foreign political ideas. Thus, the weakness of the concept itself regarding its attitude towards classes or democracy was projected as a rejection of western political concepts.

Nevertheless, the optimism generated by Bandung, The Suez War, and the unity of Egypt and Syria gave great

¹⁰ It is only fair to mention that the idea of the Arab mission was first advanced by the Ba'th, see Aflaq, op. cit., pp. 139-152.