

Jamal Abdolnaser and Arab Nationalism

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ABSTRACT

Nationalism is the national awareness and this awareness creates the interest of people to national constituents and sometimes respects them and believes that these national symbols are superior to other nations and as each nation has special land, loyalty to the land and sacrifice of it and national respect are the principles of nationalism. The present study analyzed Arab Nationalism, grounds and roots and the reasons of development of such thinking among Arabs from 18th century to 20th century and then the views and thoughts and leadership of Jamal Abdolnaser were reviewed.

KEYWORDS: Nationalism; Jamal Abdolnaser; Arabic countries

INTRODUCTION

One of the major political and thought changes of Middle East in the early 20th century is the emergence of Nationalism in the region. Three nationalistic movements affected the region changes mostly: Arab Nationalism, Turk Nationalism and Iranian Nationalism. One of the major differences of these three nationalistic movements was that Arab and Turk nationalism at first had ethnic nature, the thought tendency in the society (Ottoman) consisting of various tribes had different political, religious and cultural histories. Each of the above movements in the early stage established a new government based on Arab and Turk ethnic group. This Arab and Turk feeling namely in its political form was emerged from the mid 19th century and before that both groups were living based on Islamic identity in Islamic Caliphate system. Iranian nationalism despite these two thinking movements didn't have ethnic nature to establish a new government from a big emperor. Conversely, Iranian nationalism was a kind of national awareness awakening that was in different degrees mostly as cultural and then political form among various classes in Iranian society. Based on the studies in this ground and some definitions, Arab nationalism is defined as:

Arab nationalism is the belief in a Arab nation (الامة العربية) with a common past in cultural, historical and race had common destiny and based on historical, cultural common aspects and Arabic language are united with each other and all Arabic regions were free from the foreigner powers and an independent Arabic government is formed and each of the Arabic countries are considered one of the states of this unified government (Darvishpour, 1995:38).

Thus, language is one of the most important factors of Arabs unity. Before the apparent independence of Arabic countries of the dominance of foreigners, the independence and unity of Arabic countries were emphasized. After the gradual independence of Arab regions, the most emphasis was on Arab nationalists on Arabic unity (ibid).

Arab nationalism in its new form is combination of western society's thoughts and beliefs. The greatest important factor in Arab world in the beginning of this century was First World War and as thirty years war and Napoleon wars, the greatest changes are created in the mind and thought of Arabs. The results of this change are the increasing consideration of Arabs to Nationalism. Nationalism in Arab communities was developed due to coping up with the Imperialism and all classes of people attempted for the progress of nationalism as the greatest factor of unity against foreigner imperialists. The Christian Arabs were pioneer in nationalist movements of Arab. But these movements couldn't be developed in the Arab world without the leadership of Muslim Arabs and Christian Arabs couldn't be responsible despite the collaboration of Arabs and Muslims in Islam religion in the early past century and they didn't take the leadership of Arab nationalistic movements and such movements didn't have political importance and value. One of the factors leading to the great amount of theoretical works on Arab and Turk nationalism is the feature "pan" and in other words their "annexation" and pan Arabists and Pan Turkists even after establishment of Arabic and Turkish countries were not convinced regarding achieving the required goals. Thus, pan Arab and Pan Turks theorists after the first world war years explained their ideology and principles of their plans and goals to justify the annexation of other countries to Arabic or Turkish countries. The feature "pan" and "annexation" of Arab and Turk nationalism led to internal conflicts in Middle East after the collapse of Ottoman Emperor. Not only Arabs and Turks had conflicts on some of previous Ottoman emperor countries as Eskandarun

states, they fought on “annexation” of entire Middle East countries with other nations. The interesting point is that both annexation movement and romantic “pan Arabism” and “pan Turkism” attempted to grasp some parts of Iran and tried to annex it to Arab or Turkish world (ideal emperor of Turks). “Pan Arabism” in the years after 1920 considered major parts of Iran as Khuzestan, Persian Gulf and Iranian Islands and even Baluchestan and attempted to annex them to Arab world in terms of speech and behavior.

In the final years of 19th century and the final days of Ottoman emperor, Arab Christians were the main components and driving force of nationalism in Arab world. Indeed, they were activated unpredictably in the ideological policies and formations of Arab community. Arab Christians were leaders in national movements of Arab as Syrianism, Ba'athism, Palestine liberal movement and other movements. The main and fundamental duty of them to the commitments in national awakening had major effect on all Arab nations and religions. Regarding the importance and continual Islamism policies in the region, the reaction of Arab Christians was a test of their capability for changing. As it was said, most of the Arab Christians for economic opportunities and increasing security or life in a free society migrated to west.

Kreg (western author) justified the reason of the considerable role of Arab Christians in initial Arab movements during the final days of Ottoman emperor with the claim that they had many things to achieve in the past social and political organizations of Ottomans and believed that this trend is finished with the identification of the existing condition of Ottoman emperor and an independent country gave the direct interference to Arab Christians, to those who were in the margin under the Ottoman caliphate as the government executor of traditional Islam teachings.

Most of the Arab Christians took national identity of Arabs and as they considered themselves as Arabs consciously, the next considerations as government agency as minority group and it is possible that supporting their social status in Islamic society and implementation of secular ideals of the west show their political beliefs but Arab Christians were associated with both Christian and Arab identities.

Although political changes in Arab world caused that Arab world is divided into various countries and keeping the benefits and integrity and independence of each of them are considered by Politicians and the related people. In the Arab world, the greatest political force was Arab Nationalism and supporting it. Important discussions are regarding the reasons of Arab Nationalism growth, the important point is that this type of nationalism is with many ups and downs. Arab nationalism at first was an ethnic movement in the framework of Ottoman caliphate asked for the return of political authority to Arabs and establishment of a unified Arabic government.

Nationalism of Arab believed in a unified Arab world and a nation an “Arab nation” and attempted to fulfill the political, social ideals, life and value of this society. After taking the ethnical stage of Arabic nationalism (1860-1918), a type of convergence or integrated nationalism was emerged to combine the dispersed Arabic countries arising from Ottoman collapse.

Some thinkers as Abdolrahman Bazar, Sate Al-Hasri and before them Najib Azuvari raised the necessity of the unit of dispersed countries (Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and other Arabic countries). Nationalism period of Liberal convergence (1920-1952) was finished with the coup of Naser in Zuikh 1952 and since then after nationalization of Suez Canal in 1956, a kind of new Arabic nationalism called pan Arabism that was emerged in Bas ideology before Naser and attempted that by non-liberal methods and in case of coupe and revolution, control Arabic countries and unite all of them in the framework of a country.

When crisis 1956 of Suez is considered, all the events of Arabic movement associated with Arab nationalism are depicted as inspiring event in the minds. In all the events, Jamal Abdolnaser was not alone the main reason of all the events. The unprecedented support of Jamal Abdolnaser ideals among Arab people masses shocked most people in Suez crisis in 1956. The western powers during contemporary history and in facing with the social and cultural conditions of Arab tribes and to influence them, it was dependent upon the elite’ class and all the changes of these societies were observed from the view of elites and they didn’t consider the mass. The conditions leading to crisis 1956 of Suez created an opportunity of Jamal Abdolnaser that besides recognizing their inherent talents to achieve his political goals is raised as the symbol of nationalism in the minds of Arab masses.

Suez turned Naser to a leader in Arab world and made an Arabism attraction and his leadership was on no constitution or institution and it was based on the satisfaction of Arab masses.

The ethnical reactions of Arab people to Naser attacks against Baghdad convinced him to promote the relationship between Egypt and Arabs. The constitution of Egypt in January 1956 of Egypt was introduced as an Arabic country.

Naser by his success in Suez to develop the dimension of Arab role by using the weakness and instability of other Arab countries was encouraged by an Arabic active policy. His main purpose was stabilization of Arab position in international political field and avoiding of any effort to guide the region to the influence realm of great powers. It can be said that Egypt didn’t impose any of the conditions to national groups of Arab or the movements

going to them to be supported. Egypt neither imposed its supervision nor obliged them to act in special areas (limiting their acts). Naser believed that local movements were aware of their background and could select what is better for their country. As he said the French journalist (1958), he never tried to form an emperor. His decisions were not based on the services presented by Arabs or they could present in dramatic conditions of Suez crisis. His determination was supported by the risks taking for Arabs.

The emergence of Naser as the famous without challenge leader of Arab nationalism was mostly based on the acts not the words.

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