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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS

#### A. The Agrarian Reform

The establishment of social justice was one of the six basic principles of the Egyptian Revolution.<sup>1</sup> The Military Junta of 1952 has felt that the first step towards the fulfilment of such a principle was agrarian reform. However, the Agrarian reform Law No. 178 of September 1952 was, for them, more than a purely social measure. Agrarian Reform was the foundation of the social co-operative state, where every individual enjoys justice, equality, and equal opportunities.<sup>2</sup> In The Philosophy of the Revolution, Nasser speaks of two revolutions, one political and one social, that a nation undergoes during its history.<sup>3</sup> In Egypt, agrarian reform was the elucidation of the social revolution.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The other five being: destruction of imperialism, ending of monopoly and the domination of capital over government, establishment of social justice, building of a powerful army, and the establishment of a social democratic system; The Charter. . . , Introduction.

<sup>2</sup>Nasser's speech, May 20, 1960, Speeches, April-June 1960. . . , p. 121.

<sup>3</sup>Gamal Abdel-Nasser, The Philosophy of the Revolution, (Arabic) Information Department (Cairo /written in 1953/), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Al-Lajnat at-Tahdiriyat. . . , p. 21.

The Agrarian Reform Law of 1952 was also intended to change the political structure of Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Nasser declared in 1954, that the sovereignty of the nation cannot be total unless it is freed from its "little kings"<sup>6</sup> -- nickname which Nasser used to designate the feudal lords. As land was the major arm with which the landlords bought the peasants' vote, it became necessary to deprive the landlord from this powerful tool.<sup>7</sup> Since a man who is worried about his bread cannot say "yes or no", said Nasser, such a man "can be collected in lorries to give his vote";<sup>8</sup> so the first condition of "true democracy" is the liberation of man from any form of exploitation.<sup>9</sup> Nasser advocates the eradication of feudalism because he considered it as "the worst form of exploitation" and the reason behind the class struggle, so the Agrarian Reform

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<sup>5</sup>Nasser's address to the Egyptian National Assembly, July 22, 1947, Speeches, 1952-1958. . ., p. 681.

<sup>6</sup>Speech, June 25, 1954, Speeches, 1952-1958. . ., p. 151.

<sup>7</sup>Nasser's Speeches, 1952-1958. . ., interview granted to Al-Ahram on June 17, 1953, p. 33; and speech of April 19, 1954, p. 121.

<sup>8</sup>Press Conference at Raj Bhaven (India), given on April 10, 1960, Speeches, April-June, 1960. . ., p. 31. Speech, Oct. 5, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 291. Interview granted to Columbia Broadcasting System of New York, April 7, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., pp. 387-88.

<sup>9</sup>Nasser's speech, Nov. 26, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 468.

appears to him as an urgent measure in order to abolish the influence of feudalism<sup>10</sup> and to establish social democracy.<sup>10</sup> This latter can be established only if peasants own the land they cultivate.<sup>11</sup> Social democracy is necessary for the establishment of political democracy, since both are "the two faces of liberty."<sup>12</sup> Nasser considers them as two inseparable conditions; and, in case political democracy is established without social democracy, it degenerates into "the rule of the minority for the exploitation of the majority."<sup>13</sup> Nasser went even further and equated freedom with social democracy.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, agrarian reform is a means to unite the nation, since unity cannot prevail where the nation is made up of masters and slaves, and where dissension -- the creature of feudalism -- prevails.<sup>15</sup> However adds Nasser, land reform does not entail the liquidation of any class,<sup>16</sup> since it is not a matter of grudge but a means to spread social justice.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Speech at the Opening of the Preparatory Committee of the National Congress for Popular Powers, Nov. 25, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . . . p. 81.

<sup>11</sup>Speech, Feb. 20, at Hama, 1960, Speeches, January-March, 1960. . . . p. 64.

<sup>12</sup>Speech, Feb. 21, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . . . p. 27. Unity Talks. . . . 3rd phase, 5th meeting, p. 210.

<sup>13</sup>Speech, Feb. 22, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . . . p. 42.

<sup>14</sup>Speech, July 22, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . . . p. 270.

<sup>15</sup>Speech, Feb. 23, 1960, Speeches, January-March, 1960. . . . p. 93.

Besides its social and political roles, land reform has also an economic function. It spreads "economic justice,"<sup>18</sup> abolishes the domination of capital over the government, and thus ensures to every individual the right to make his livelihood.<sup>19</sup> In his list of the elements of power, Nasser includes agriculture;<sup>20</sup> and it is but natural that the state gives more attention to this vital sector and makes the whole nation (and not only a certain class) benefit from it.

Agrarian reform is also necessary in order to balance the distribution of capital among the various sectors of national economy. Before the Egyptian Revolution, private capital had always turned to agriculture, while investment in industry was practically non-existent; but, with the limitation of land ownership, capital turned to industry.<sup>21</sup>

It was felt that, for all these reasons, agrarian reform

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<sup>16</sup>Interview granted to Dr. Hans Fleig of Hamburg T.V., August 13, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 195.

<sup>17</sup>Speeches, 1961. . ., Speech, March 3, 1961, p. 79; and speech at the Opening of the Preparatory Committee of the National Congress for Popular Powers, Nov. 25, 1961, p. 393.

<sup>18</sup>Speech, Feb. 22, 1962, Speeches, 1962. . ., p. 27.

<sup>19</sup>Speech, July 22, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 270.

<sup>20</sup>Speech, July 22, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., p. 243. Speech, Feb. 24, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., pp. 54-55.

<sup>21</sup>Speech, July 27, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., p. 249.

was needed, and the "revolutionary solution" to the agrarian problem in Egypt was the increase of the number of landowners.<sup>22</sup> It is important to notice that Nasser does not speak of nationalization of land but simply of its re-distribution. Fourteen million Egyptian peasants were to benefit from the Agrarian Reform of 1952.<sup>23</sup> The Law No. 178 of 1952 limited land ownership to 200 feddans (80 hectares); in July 1961 land ownership was reduced to 100 feddans.<sup>24</sup> Compensation was paid to the landlords in the form of governmental bonds redeemable over forty years, while the peasants were to pay for the lot they received, the same price paid by the government plus an annual interest, the whole to be paid over a certain number of years. (In July 1961 the price of the land and the interest

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<sup>22</sup>The Charter. . ., Chap. viii.

<sup>23</sup>See Sayed Marei, Al-Islah al-Zira'i wa-Mashkalat as-Sukan fi al-Qitr al-Misri (Cairo: Ad-Dar al-Qawmiyat lit-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr /1964/). Anwar Abdel-Malek, Egypte, Société Militaire (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962), pp. 59-91. Charles Issawi, Egypt in Revolution (London; Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 121-168.

<sup>24</sup>Decree-Law No. 127 of July 25, 1961, U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 166 (July 25, 1961), p. 1076.

were reduced by half for peasants in both Regions.<sup>25</sup>) In that way expropriation and distribution was to be "a self-supporting operation."<sup>26</sup> The Law regulated also the relations between peasants and landlords; it fixed a minimum wage for labourer and provided for the formation of co-operatives.<sup>27</sup> The two remaining land problems in Egypt were (and still are) technical backwardness and shortage of arable land.<sup>28</sup> Except for this latter problem, Syria's agrarian problems did not differ from those of Egypt. So the motives behind the Agrarian Reform Law for the Syrian Region were similar -- in the eyes of Nasser -- to the ones which dictated the Law of 1952. Before examining the Agrarian Reform in the Syrian Region, it is relevant to discuss briefly the agrarian situation in Syria prior to its union with Egypt.

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<sup>25</sup>Decree-Law No. 128 of July 25, 1961, U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 166 (July 25, 1961), p. 1077.

<sup>26</sup>Issawi, Egypt. . ., p. 161.

<sup>27</sup>A.M. Goïchon, "Le plan de rénovation sociale de la campagne égyptienne," Orient (Paris), No. 18 (2e trimestre, 1961), a description of co-operatives and combined units in the Egyptian village, pp. 71-116.

<sup>28</sup>Marei, Al-Islah al-Zira'i. . ., p. 306.

Agriculture is an important sector of the economy of Syria, since 70 per cent of the Syrians depended on land for their living.

Between 1950 and 1957, progress in agriculture<sup>29</sup> led to an increase of 47 per cent to the irrigated land; thus the agricultural income increased and constituted 50 per cent of the national income.<sup>30</sup> But this progress did not profit the agricultural labourer, who remained undernourished and indebted either to landlords or to moneylenders. This was due to land tenure conditions and to lack of planned agricultural policy.

The land tenure conditions.-- They were characterized by great inequalities in distribution of ownership, and by lack of protection of tenants. The unequal repartition of ownership has been attributed to the following reasons:<sup>31</sup> First, the system of land registration, introduced by the Ottomans, which obliged landowners to register their land in the Cadastral Survey Office. Syrian peasants, fearing that

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<sup>29</sup>The reasons of this development were threefold: the advent of the Second World War with its import restrictions and Allied expenditures; the Korean war; and the cotton boom of the early fities. These were the reasons given by Samir Makdisi, "Some aspects of Syrian Economic Growth, 1945-1957," Middle East Economic Papers, 1961 (Economic Research Institute, American University of Beirut, 1961), pp. 46-47.

<sup>30</sup>Report of the Minister of Agriculture to the Regional Congress of the National Union, Barnamej al-Mu'tamar. . ., pp.1-2.

<sup>31</sup>Salah Dabbagh, "Agrarian Reform in Syria," Middle East Economic Papers, 1962 (Economic Research Institute, American University of Beirut, 1962), p. 2.

this was a measure to enforce military service and to increase taxation, preferred to register their property in the name of their landlords. Second, land being a source of wealth, landlords sought to invest their savings in purchasing more and more lands. Finally, the relationship between the landlord and the tenant was generally that of creditor and debtor. The tenant was practically always indebted to his landlord, usually as result of a crop failure, so that he was often reduced to give up part or all of his land in payment of his debt. In this way ownership in Syria came to be concentrated in a few hands (particularly in Aleppo, Jezira, Euphrates, Hama, and Damascus) as the following tables show:<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Doreen Warriner, Land Reform and Development in the Middle East. A Study of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs; Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 83.



TABLE 1

LAND OWNERSHIP BY SIZE OF HOLDINGS IN SYRIA

(Hectares)

Muhafazats*	Private Property			State Domain	Total Area
	Small (under 10)	Medium (10-100)	Large (over 100)		
Damascus	178,000	413,345	347,700	24,500	963,545
Aleppo	264,800	732,500	831,848	462,800	2,291,948
Homs	37,500	284,708	157,000	720,000	1,199,208
Hama	8,350	195,200	259,435	269,200	732,185
Latakia	175,000	164,161	207,000	8,000	554,161
Euphrates	74,041	236,300	196,300	2,000	508,641
Jezira	55,600	463,300	277,500	95,600	892,000
Hauran	194,100	188,000	27,000	10,900	420,000
Jebel Druze	110,100	214,900	45,000	. .	370,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,097,491</b>	<b>2,892,414</b>	<b>2,348,783</b>	<b>1,593,000</b>	<b>7,931,688</b>

\*The order of the muhafazats is the same as it appeared in the original. The same applies to the other Tables.

These figures must be treated as approximations, even in 1958, it was difficult to know the exact number of owners who were affected by the Agrarian Reform and the exact number of hectares for expropriation. This was due to the systems of registration, delimitation and verification of ownership which were defective points in Syria.

More recent figures are given by Dr. Chafic Akhras, who, basing himself on the figures given by the Minister of Agrarian Reform after the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law, concluded that one per cent of Syrian landowners were affected by the reform, but that this small number possessed more than 38 per cent of arable land and more than 50 per cent of cultivated areas, of which half was irrigated land. He drew his conclusions from the following tables :<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Chafic Akhras, "La limitation et la redistribution de la propriété agricole en Syrie et leurs incidences," Etude Mensuelle. . ., No. 9 (October, 1958), pp. 16-17.

TABLE 2

LAND OWNERSHIP OF RAIN-FED LANDS BY MUHAFAZAT

IN 1958

(Hectares)

Muhafazats	Number of Owners in each Holding				
	1 -50	50-100	100-500	500-1,000	over 1,000
Damascus	2,924	350	100	. .	. .
Homs	13,500	1,200	225	60	15
Soueida	12,000	900	100	4	. .
Aleppo	119,000	9,300	3,120	1,000	193
Latakia	32,540	112	18	1	1
Hama	7,108	695	468	99	1
Hauran	12,267	472	149	6	6
Euphrates	11,741	1,120	629	203	53
Hasaka	14,445	1,040	488	208	24
Total	225,424	15,364	5,297	1,581	333

TABLE 3  
 LAND OWNERSHIP OF IRRIGATED LANDS BY  
MUHAFAZAT IN 1958  
 (Hectares)

Muhafazats	Number of Owners in each Holding				
	1-50	50-100	100-500	500-1,000	over 1,000
Damascus	3,060	87	8	..	..
Homs	1,960	40	..	..	..
Soueida	10	..	..	..	..
Aleppo	3,520	240	150	94	59
Latakia	1,700	12	4	..	..
Hama	7,789	147	57	16	1
Hauran	687	19	8	4	..
Euphrates	21,800	174	288	70	22
Hasaka	2,226	61	37	25	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,752</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>95</b>

Besides this inequality in ownership, the lack of protection of tenants was another characteristic of land tenure in Syria. The Syrian tenant depended on the landlord for his living: tenure of land was verbal and terminable at the will of the landlord; the tenant was at the mercy of his landlord. Moreover, the area allotted to the tenant hardly sufficed for his needs and those of his family, so he was often, if not always, in debt.

There was no hope for drastic reform before the Union since most of the members of the Syrian Parliament were big landowners. An attempt was made after the Union to protect the interests of the tenants. To that effect, Law No. 134 of September 1958 was promulgated to stabilize the leases and to fix the maximum limits of rents.<sup>34</sup> The new Law prescribed that leases should be drawn in writing and that they were to be automatically renewed even if land was transferred to another owner. However, termination of leases was possible when the tenant caused damages to the land. Next, in order to reduce the high rents paid by the tenants, Law No. 134 of 1958 set limits on the share that the landlord could exact from his tenants. A fine, varying from L.S. 50 to L.S. 2,000 would be exacted from those who did not abide by these

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<sup>34</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1958, No. 26 (Sept 4, 1958), pp. 18-38. Dabbagh, Middle East Economic Papers, 1962, p. 9.

provisions. Another measure intended to protect the peasants was taken on April 11, 1959, when Social Security was extended to labourers in both Regions.<sup>35</sup> So, up to the time when these measures were taken, the Syrian peasant was living in a very precarious situation.

Lack of planned agricultural policy.-- As we said earlier, this was the second reason why the agricultural boom of 1950-1957 did not lead to a real and stable prosperity. Since expansion of new zones of cultivation<sup>36</sup> was the achievement of private enterprise, it was only natural that profit should be the primary objective of such expansion. Practically no attention was given to the improvement of soil fertility, to soil conservation (which requires reforestation), or to agricultural development at large.<sup>37</sup> Such a state of affairs could not continue without State intervention, specially in a country where 50 per cent of the national income was derived from agriculture. The State had to step in, not only in order to put an end to social injustices but also in order to improve agricultural methods (such as the establishment of an adequate system of irrigation and the creation of storage

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<sup>35</sup>Yearbook 1959, p. 455.

<sup>36</sup>These areas extended from the neighbourhood of Aleppo up to the frontiers of Iraq, across the areas of Euphrates and Jezira.

<sup>37</sup>Barnamej al-Mu'tamar. . ., report of the Miniters of Agriculture, pp. 2-3.

facilities so as to avoid price fluctuation after<sup>a</sup> crop failure). The State had also to provide loan facilities to farmers specially during the years of drought.

The successive Syrian governments were aware of the need for reform, but socio-political obstacles could not be overcome. Nevertheless, some efforts were made: such as the establishment of Cereals and Cotton Bureaus and of the Agricultural Bank. The State had also endeavoured to launch some irrigation schemes and had reclaimed part of the Ghaz Valley. As to land reform,<sup>38</sup> Article 22 of the 1950 Constitution provided that a series of laws would be passed to ensure that maximum limits of ownership were defined when title to property was registered. These maxima would not be retroactive. The Constitution provided also (in the same Article) that small and medium holdings were to be encouraged and that state rural domain was to be distributed among tenants.

The National Charter of 1956 stipulated that State land would be distributed among non-landed peasants, graduates of agricultural schools, unemployed citizens, and tribesmen. It also provided for the establishment of co-operatives and of a council (the Council of Agricultural Production), both of which were to provide equipments, seeds, loans, and chemicals for

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<sup>38</sup> Dabbagh, Middle East Economic Papers, 1962, p. 4. He mentions that the first attempt in that respect was made on May 5, 1926 when an order of the High Commissioner was issued for the distribution of rural state domain. Another attempt was made by the government of Latakia in 1929 for the expropriation of big landowners in favour of small farmers but this attempt failed.

peasants. But no important reforms were carried out before the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law No. 161 of September 27, 1958.<sup>39</sup>

The aim of Agrarian Reform, as stated by the Minister of Agrarian Reform before the General Congress of the National Union in the Syrian Region in June 1960, was threefold: economic development, by rendering agriculture more productive and more stable; social security for labourers, by creating a class of small holder which would form an agrarian class with vested interests; and, finally, political stability, by putting an end to exploitation and providing social security to peasants.<sup>40</sup> The general policy to be followed by Agrarian Reform was to expropriate land and re-distribute it to peasants, to establish agricultural co-operatives, to orient agricultural policy, to set up and execute social projects for labourers, as well as other development and economic projects pertaining to agriculture (such as reclamation of new land and development of agricultural industry).

Agrarian Reform was brought about by means of the following laws and decrees:<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>U.A.R., D.G., 1958, No. 29, bis (Sep. 27, 1958), pp. 1-7. The executive regulation of Law No. 161 of 1958 was Decree No. 1417 of Nov. 8, 1958, U.A.R., O.G., 1958, No. 35 (Nov. 9, 1958), pp. 2-4.

<sup>40</sup>Barnamej al-Mu'tamar. . ., report of the Minister of Agrarian Reform, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup>Etude Mensuelle. . ., No. 43 (July, 1961), pp. 51-52. This table was translated by the writer of this thesis. The order of "Date" is maintained as in the original text.



TABLE 4

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM  
LEGISLATION TILL JULY 1961

<u>Text No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>O.G.</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
D.-L.* No. 161	9.27.58	29 bis ( 9.27.58)	The Agrarian Reform
P.D. No. 1181	9.30.58	30 bis (10. 2.58)	The Agrarian Reform Organism.
P.D. No. 1310	10.11.58	32 (10.16.58)	Authorizing the Agrarian Refrom organism to make a loan of 10 million Syrian pounds.
D.-L. No. 193	11. 8.58	35 bis (11. 9.58)	Amending articles 9, 18, and 19 of Law No. 161.
P.D. No. 1417	11. 8.58	35 bis (11. 9.58)	Executive regulation of Law No. 161
P.D. No. 1418	11. 8.58	35 bis (11. 9.58)	Internal regulation of the Agrarian Reform Organism.
D.-L. No. 41	2. 4.59	23 ( 2. 9.59)	Adding article 19 bis to Law No. 161.
D.-L. No. 42	2. 4.59	23 ( 2. 9.59)	The guarantee of labourers (who benefited from the Reform at the credit houses)
Inst. No. 616	2.19.59	. .	Formalities of D.-L. No. 42 of 1959.

TABLE 4 -- Continued

<u>Text No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>O.G.</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
P.D. No. 945	6.24.59	115 ( 6. 3.59)	Attaching the financial services to the Agrarian Reform.
D.-L. No. 209	9. 6.59	193 bis (9.9.59)	Concerning persons possessing land in both Regions
D.-L. No. 266	12.19.59	284 (12.26.59)	Amending article 11 of D.-L. No 161, modifying the whole system of State subrogation to affected owners.
Inst. No. 266	1.30.60	. .	Application of D.-L. No. 266 of 1959.
P.D. No. 41	12.15.59	285 (12.27.59)	Formation of Commission in charge of application of D.-L. No. 161.
D.-L. No. 208	7.13.60	159 ( 7.17.60)	Relative to motor pumps on expropriated land.
D.-L. No. 209	7.13.60	159 ( 7.17.60)	Delimitation of Romj area.
D.-L. No. 210	7.13.60	159 ( 7.17.60)	Embellishment and parcelling.
D.-L. No. 211	7.13.60	159 ( 7.17.60)	Remuneration of experts.
D.-L. No. 275	10.20.60	245 (10.27.60)	Regulation of loans and credits for the Agrarian Reform
V.-P.D. No.33	2. 9.61	44 ( 2.20.61)	Interpreting article 1,5, and 33 of D.-L. No. 161

TABLE 4 -- Continued

<u>Text. No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>O.G.</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
V.-P.D. No. 45	2.9.61	50 (2.28.61)	Amending article 21 and 22 of P.D. 1417 of 1958
D.-L. No. 9	3.8.61	62 (3.14.61)	Adding a paragraph to Article 1 of D.-L. No. 161

\* D.-L. stands for Decree-Law; P.D. for Presidential Decree; V.-P.D. for Vice-Presidential Decree; and Inst., for Instruction.

(To this table, we can add Decree-Law No. 128 of July 25, 1961, which reduced by half the price and the interest of land distributed to peasants.)<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>United Arab Republic, Arab Political Encyclopedia. Documents and Notes, Information Department (Cairo: Documentation and Research Centre, July 1961), pp. 59-60. Cited hereafter as Arab Encyclopaedia. . . Marei, Al-Islah al Zira'i. . . , p. 369.

TABLE 5

ORDERS OF EXPROPRIATION ISSUED BY THE  
EXECUTIVE MINISTER OF THE SYRIAN REGION

No.	Date	O.G., Annex	Page
1	11.20.58	37 (11.27.58)	4561
2	11.29.58	41 (12.24.58)	5274
3	10. 1.58	4 ( 1.22.59)	363
4	10. 1.58	4 ( 1.22.59)	364
5	2. 1.59	9 ( 2.19.59)	1125
6	2.14.59	10.( 2.26.59)	1206
7	3.23.59	16 ( 4. 2.59)	2125
8	4.14.59	20 ( 4.30.59)	2583
9	4.20.59	20 ( 4.30.59)	2583
10	5.27.59	26 ( 6.11.59)	3391
11	7.1.59	31 ( 7.16.59)	4298

To this legislation must be added Decree-Law No. 134 of September 4, 1958 which regulated the relationship between landlords, tenants, and labourers (as already discussed), and Decree No. 267 Of July 19, 1960 (concerning the General Co-operative Institutes) Also related to the subject are the

three decrees reorganizing the Agricultural Bank, namely, Presidential Decree No. 130 of August 23, 1958 and the two decrees by Vice-President 'Amer, No. 220 of July 1961 and No. 369 of September 14, 1961.<sup>43</sup>

The present essay will concentrate on the main provisions of the Agrarian Reform Law No. 161 of 1958 -- namely, the limitation of ownership (articles 1, 2, 8), the expropriation of land exceeding the maximum limit and its distribution (article 12) and the grouping of new owners in agrarian co-operatives (article 28) -- because of their political impact on the Syrian scene.

Limitation of ownership.-- Under this Law, maximum individual land holdings were limited to 80 hectares of irrigated land and 30<sup>0</sup> hectares of rain-fed land. The owner was permitted, however, to transfer to his wife and to each child an area of land not in excess of 10 hectares of irrigated land and 40 hectares of non-irrigated (bour) land, provided that the total area of land thus transferred did not exceed 40 hectares of irrigated land and 160 of non-irrigated land.

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<sup>43</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1958, No. 25 (August 28, 1958), pp. 6-17.  
U.A.R. O.G., 1961, No. 155 (July 12, 1961), pp. 908-10.  
U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 223 (Sep. 14, 1961), p. 1437.

Special regulations were to rule land holdings of agricultural societies. These latter were divided into three categories:<sup>44</sup> societies which possessed land to improve it and sell it, those which possessed land to exploit it, and societies of agricultural industry. Societies falling in the first category were allowed to keep the land they possessed, provided that the holdings of the new owners did not exceed the fixed limit and that 25 per cent of the improved land of these societies was distributed to labourers under the supervision of the Agrarian Reform Organism. Societies of the second category (that is the societies that exploited the land) fell under the maximum limit. Societies comprising the last category were exempted from expropriation in order to encourage agricultural industry.

The limitation of land ownership in the Northern Region has been criticized for having been inspired by the Egyptian reforms of 1952 without paying due regard to the agrarian structure of Syria.<sup>45</sup> It has been said that the fact that

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<sup>44</sup>Yearbook 1959, p. 918.

<sup>45</sup>Decree-Law No. 178 of 1952 limited land ownership to 200 feddans (80 hectares) of irrigated land and to 750 feddans (300 hectares) of non-irrigated land. For a comparative study between Decree-Law No. 178 and Decree-Law 161 of 1958 see Dr. Negib Haddad, "Etude comparative analytique de la

Syria was composed of different types of land makes a uniform limitation of the size of land holding impracticable. For example, in the Ghouta of Damascus, or on the Oronte at Homs, or in Hama -- where land is intensively cultivated and irrigated -- 80 hectares and 300 hectares can be considered a large holding; while, in the extensively cultivated Jezira, 1,000 hectares is a small farm.

Some critics have gone even further, and have questioned the very idea of limiting land ownership.<sup>46</sup> They have suggested that the new law should have confined itself, at the initial stage at least, to State land (which is a large holding, amounting to 1.5 million hectares of arable lands approximatively).<sup>47</sup> Proponents of such a view have claimed that the limitation of ownership is necessary where there is a shortage of arable land (as is the case in Egypt); but not in Syria, where the area of arable land is 7,100,000 hectares.

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réforme agraire dans les deux provinces d'Egypte et de Syrie," Etude Mensuelle. . . . No. 13 (January, 1959), pp. 35-40. Comments on the same subject were made by Morroe Berger, The Arab World Today (Garden City, New-York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1962,) p. 225. Unity Talks. . . . 3rd phase, 5th meeting, statement of 'Abdel-Karim Zouhour, pp. 200-201.

<sup>46</sup> Akhras, Etude Mensuelle. . . . No. 9 (October, 1958), p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> To this must be added the area of land newly reclaimed by the State. Yet the exact areas were not known as far as 1960. Barnamej al-Mu'tamar. . . . p. 9.

Apart from these considerations, the limitation of land ownership was generally unexpected. Speaking of the problems of Syrian agriculture, Hassan Gebara, Minister of Planning, declared on March 2, 1958 -- that is before the promulgation of land reform law -- that Syria's agricultural problems were as follows: lack of an adequate system of communication and transportation, absence of a large-scale irrigation system, shortage of labour, and absence of a market for agricultural products. He expressed his hope that the Union would solve all these problems and especially the last two for, he said, the Egyptian Region would serve as a market for the products of the Syrian Region and would provide the Syrian Region with labour.<sup>48</sup> Nothing in what the Minister said a few months before the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1958, anticipated or intimated the provisions of that Law.

If the limitation of property was a measure to establish social justice, it was much more a means to curb the political influence of the feudal lords. This measure, together with the

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<sup>48</sup>Hassan Gebara, "Le programme de développement économique de la Syrie et ses perspectives d'avenir après l'union avec l'Egypte," Etude Mensuelle. . . , No. 2 (March, 1958), pp. 4-9.



dissolution of political parties, was a means to neutralize the powerful groups of Syria.

Expropriation and distribution of land.-- The next step after the limitation of land ownership, was the expropriation of land in excess of the maximum limit. The areas to be expropriated amounted to 1,543,636 hectares (of which 1,449,526 were rain-fed land and 94,109 irrigated land) belonging to 3,240 owners. It must be remembered that not only expropriated land was to be distributed, but also the new land which was to be reclaimed. Table 6 shows the number of owners and of properties affected by expropriation. While tables 7 and 8 show the areas of land which were expropriated or due to be expropriated.<sup>49</sup>

The operations of expropriation started soon after the promulgation of the Agrarian Reform Law No. 161 of 1958. By January 1961, 596,735 hectares had been expropriated out of a total area of 1,376,000 hectares as Tables 7 and 8 show.

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<sup>49</sup>"Trois ans de réforme agraire en Province Syrienne," Etude Mensuelle. . . , No. 43 (July, 1961), pp. 45-46.

TABLE 6  
NUMBER OF OWNERS AND OF AREAS AFFECTED BY  
THE AGRARIAN REFORM.

Muhafazats	No. of Owners	Irrigated Land	Rain-fed Land	Total Area
Damascus	146	5,996	68,929	74,925
Der'a	27	1,606	40,227	41,833
Scueida	11	. .	1,790	1,790
Homs	201	2,334	120,999	123,333
Hama	250	6,663	85,515	92,178
Aleppo	612	12,908	249,657	262,565
Latakia	51	1,174	5,554	6,728
Deir Ezzor	879	43,966	316,428	360,394
Hasaka	1,063	19,462	560,427	579,889
Total	3,240	94,109	1,449,526	1,543,635

TABLE 7  
EXPROPRIATED AREAS TILL JANUARY 14, 1961  
(Hectares)

Muhafazats	Irrigated Land	Rain-fed Land	Unexploited Land
Damascus	364	8,167	27,976
Der'a	150	5,334	6,420
Homs	1,202	82,371	8
Hama	1,006	40,013	132
Latakia	823	862	. .
Aleppo	1,980	81,183	1,213
Deir Ezzor	3,232	5,838	109
Hasaka	5,495	320,213	2,624
Total	14,272	543,981	38,482

TABLE 8  
AREAS SCHEDULED FOR EXPROPRIATION BETWEEN  
1961 AND 1965

Year	Land of Agrarian Reform	State Domain	No. of Families to Benefit
1960-1961	476,000	315,000	25,000
1961-1962	300,000	311,000	25,700
1962-1963	300,000	314,000	25,000
1963-1964	300,000	300,000	20,000
1964-1965	. .	300,000	15,000
Total	1,376,000	1,540,000	110,700

Owners who lost their land were to receive a compensation equivalent to ten times the average rental value of the land for an agricultural cycle not exceeding three years. Compensation to affected owners was to be in the form of governmental bonds bearing 1.5 per cent interest redeemable in a period of forty years (articles 9 and 10 of Law No. 161 of 1958).

The expropriated land was to be distributed to peasants in plots of 8 hectares in irrigated areas and 30 hectares in non-irrigated areas (articles 13 and 15). The price paid for

the land by the new owners equalled the price paid by the government to the former owner, plus 10 per cent to cover administrative expenses and an annual interest of 1.5 per cent over forty years, the period during which the new owner was to pay the total price of his land (article 14). This latter article was amended on July 25, 1961 by Decree-Law No. 128 which reduced by half the price and the interest due by the new owners to the State.

The movement of land distribution was rather slow, as the following figures show:<sup>50</sup>

TABLE 9  
MOVEMENT OF LAND DISTRIBUTION UP TO SEPTEMBER 1960

Muhafazats	No. of Villages	Distributed Areas	No. of Families	No. of Members of these Families
Damascus	8	34,138	597	3,830
Homs	8	12,957	833	4,640
Hama	12	9,786	547	3,646
Latakia	6	1,361	268	1,583
Aleppo	37	33,930	1,805	9,499
Deir Ezzor	5	2,544	451	2,573
Hasaka	27	17,947	1,075	5,108
Total	103	112,663	5,576	30,879

<sup>50</sup> "Un an de réforme agraire en Syrie," Etude Mensuelle. . . .  
No. 21 (September, 1959), pp. 89-90.

By January 14, 1961, the figures had been 157 villages; 154,932 hectares; 7,732 families made up of 42,256 members. By July 23, 1961, 26,780 hectares had been distributed among 2,993 families in 90 villages.

Along with the re-distribution of land, Nasser encouraged the spread of co-operative societies throughout the villages because, he said, they would lead to collective farming. Nasser has made it clear that he did not advocate collective farms, since land was not nationalized, but only collective farming which is a guarantee of the establishment of the socialist co-operative society.<sup>51</sup>

Co-operative societies<sup>52</sup>— The creation of co-operatives was made necessary by the parcelling of land, because the distribution of land among small farmers deprived agriculture of the benefits of large-scale enterprise. This fact was acknowledged

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<sup>51</sup>Unity Talks. . . , 3rd phase, 5th meeting, p. 211. F. Sayegh, "The Theoretical Structure. . . ," p. 70.

<sup>52</sup>République Arabe Unie, Annuaire 1962, Administration de l'Information (Cairo: La Maison Nationale d'Édition et de Presse, 1962), p. 293. Muhammed 'Abdel-Majid Marei, Mashrou' al-Mithaq wa al-Islah al-Zira'i fi 'Ashr Sanawat, 1952-1962 (Cairo: Ad-Dar al-Qawmiyat lit-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr #1962/ ), p. 19. United Arab Republic, Al-Islah al-Zira'i, Information Department (Cairo, July 23, 1963), pp. 15-19. République Arabe Unie, Dix Ans de Grandes Réalisations, 1952-1962, Administration de l'Information (Cairo: Al-Sha'b Printing House, 1962), pp. 212-224.

by the legislator who provided for the formation of farmer co-operatives and agricultural co-operatives, both of which were to play the role of big enterprise. It is interesting to note that the Syrian Constitution of 1950, advocated the encouragement of co-operative societies in Article 22 (2). Under the 1958 legislation, the Agrarian Reform Organism was to organize the work in these co-operatives while the supervision of work in each co-operative was carried by an officer appointed by the Agrarian Reform Organism.

Two types of farmer co-operatives were established:<sup>53</sup> the first, the compulsory co-operative, confined to the beneficiaries of Agrarian Reform. These were to form one and sometimes two farmer co-operatives in each village (articles 28-32 of Decree-Law No. 161 of 1958). The farmer co-operative is not a collective farm, but it has a system of collective farming where facilities are provided to farmers under State control. The second type, the service co-operative, is voluntary and open to all farmers. Members of service co-operatives were also entitled to profit from State facilities, such as loans and other services.

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<sup>53</sup>Nasser's press conference at Raj Bhaven (India), April 10, 1960, Speeches, April-June, 1960 . . ., p. 33.

Apart from farmers' co-operatives, agricultural co-operatives were also formed in the Northern Region. The total number of co-operative societies was to reach 2,000 in the Northern Region.<sup>54</sup> A special credit was reserved to these co-operatives.

The co-operatives were expected to develop the village and increase its national income.<sup>55</sup> They were to free the farmer from the usurers, and to secure for him credits, seeds, fertilizers, live stock, storage of crops, a market, and other agricultural services.<sup>56</sup>

All co-operatives were to join and elect co-operative unions and a General Co-operative Society (article 31 of Decree-Law No. 161 of 1958). This latter was to dissolve with time in the Agrarian Reform Organism, and become one with this Organism.<sup>57</sup> But before this stage was reached, the co-operatives were to surmount various difficulties: As the co-operatives were a new experiment in the Northern Region, so the traditional structure of the Syrian village took time to adapt itself to that revolutionary change. Another difficulty stemmed from the fact that

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<sup>54</sup>Nasser's speech, August 8, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . . , p.404.

<sup>55</sup>Nasser's speech, July 28, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . . , p. 326.

<sup>56</sup>Nasser's speech, March 3, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . . , p. 83/ Yearbook 1960, pp. 537-538.

<sup>57</sup>Barnamej al-Mu'tamar. . . , report of the Minister of Land Reform, p. 39.



co-operative societies which started to operate in a capitalist system, could hardly expect to find capital in the private sector. The State tried to overcome this problem by creating special co-operative banks which were to provide credits to needy farmers. But the State was slow at meeting the financial needs of all co-operatives. Another difficulty was to halt the decrease in the output of certain crops as cotton, wheat, and others needed for export. This decrease has resulted from the tendency of the farmer to cultivate his newly acquired land in such a manner so as to satisfy his immediate needs. The State was aware of that development and attempted to remedy the situation by entrusting the co-operatives with the task of organizing the cultivation of land. But there again, State success was meagre since the co-operatives have not extended to all Syrian villages.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, affected landowners whose land was scheduled for expropriation over a number of years, tended to cultivate a crop which might render a more immediate profit even if at the detriment of export. In that respect, the State was powerless and could only encourage the landowners to join the co-operative societies.

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<sup>58</sup>Up to July 1960, only 113 co-operatives were formed, "Trois ans de réforme agraire. . .," Etude Mensuelle. . ., No. 43 (July, 1961), p. 47.

The United Arab Republic authorities attempted to meet the problems of the co-operatives by placing them, as already stated, under the supervision of the Agrarian Reform Organism. For that same purpose, public co-operative institutes attached to the Presidency of the Republic, were formed during July 1960.<sup>59</sup> These were to decide on the general policy of the co-operative sectors of the economy, to develop the co-operative sector, and to supervise the co-operative societies. But these efforts and others (such as the formation of a Control Committee for the Agrarian Reform headed by 'Amer) could not overcome the great difficulties encountered during the execution of the Agrarian Reform in the Syrian Region, difficulties of an administrative, technical, and political nature.

One has to remember that Syria's years of union were years of drought. The consequences were disastrous, since Syria's national income had fallen from L.S. 1,062 to L.S. 555 millions, a fall of 47.7 per cent;<sup>60</sup> and capital, which could have served for development projects in the villages (such as housing,

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<sup>59</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1960, No. 161 (July 19, 1960), pp. 1415-1417. This was done through Decree- No. 267 of July 19, 1960.

<sup>60</sup>This fall was registered till Nov. 1959 but 1960 was also a year of drought and a new fall did occur. Chafic Akhras, "Le programme économique du Mouchir Amer pour la Province Syrienne," Etude Mensuelle . . . , No. 23 (Novembre, 1959), pp. 1-4.

resettlement, health, schools, and the improvement of agricultural production at large) was used instead to balance the deficit. Numerous were those who affected by the drought, tended to hold the land reform responsible for the agricultural disaster. To these, add the grievances of those who had not yet received their land and of those who, having received the land, had still lacked the facilities for its cultivation due to the absence of co-operatives or any State assistance. Naturally, one has also to remember the whole situation in the Syrian Region. Nevertheless, the Agrarian Reform of 1958 had the credit of launching agrarian reform in Syria.

After the Coup of September 1961, the Agrarian Reform Law was modified in favour of big landowners; but was restored, with minor modifications, following the counter-coup of March 28, 1962.<sup>61</sup> (not the Ba'thists' coup of March 8, 1963).

The successive Secessionist governments declared on several occasions that they were applying land reform on an

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<sup>61</sup> "Réforme de la réforme agraire," Etude Mensuelle. . . . No. 53 (May, 1962), pp. 11-12. Though the Secessionists declared in their Economic Statement of September 1961 that the new Government would maintain the principles of Land Reform, yet they modified the Agrarian Reform Law of 1958, Syria, Wahdatuna al-Kubra. . . . pp. 58-60.

equitable basis, and the major criticism they directed against the Agrarian Reform of the Union was its "slowness."<sup>62</sup> While a declaration of the Revolutionary Command of the Coup of March 8, 1963, stated that one of the reasons of their Coup was the Secessionists' violation of the Agrarian Reform.<sup>63</sup>

It can be concluded from this that, despite the failure of Nasser in Syria, his revolutionary policy continued to be applied after his departure. Even the Secessionists and anti-socialists enemies of his revolutionary programmes could not but pay lip-service to the principles underlying these programmes.

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<sup>62</sup>Amin an-Nafouri, Minister of Land Reform after the Coup declared that only 88 villages benefited from the Agrarian Reform Law, An-Nasr, Sep. 27, 1962. Haidar al-Kuzbari, an Army officer who took part in the Coup of 1961, declared that the fertile land which was expropriated was not distributed to Syrian fellahs because Nasser reserved them to the 300,000 Egyptian fellahs whom he planned to bring into Syria (some reported that this number was to reach 3 millions), An-Nasr, August 20, 1962. President Qudsi and Prime Minister Khaled al-'Azam declared on several occasions their attachment to the application of Land Reform, An-Nasr, August 10, 1962; Sep. 14, 1962. And Al-Ayyam, Nov. 9, 1962; Dec. 10, 1962.

<sup>63</sup>Thawratuna, wajhuna al-'Arabi al-Asil wa-Muntalaquna al-Wahdawi al-'Azim, The Directorate of Public Affairs and Moral Guidance of the Army and the Armed Forces (Damascus, 8 March 1963), p. 31.

B. The Socialist Laws of July 1961

Having deprived feudalism of its "weapon," land, Nasser issued the Socialist Laws of July, 1961 in order -- he said -- to deprive "the exploiting capital" of its weapon, namely the means of production, with which it exploits the people.<sup>64</sup>

The July Laws introduced the last phase of the "Social Revolution,"<sup>65</sup> a phase which was intended to be a "bloodless" Arab social revolution.<sup>66</sup> These laws were to determine the bases of the socialist, democratic and co-operative society.<sup>67</sup> They were proclaimed "to exterminate exploitation and tyranny and to establish social Justice."<sup>68</sup> They were the herald of socialism in the United Arab Republic. This socialism, Nasser advocates, in order to liberate man from exploitation in all its forms and to establish social and political democracy.<sup>69</sup> But Nasser insists that socialism does not abolish social barriers; it rather means that no class will be allowed to exploit

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<sup>64</sup>Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 142.

<sup>65</sup>Al-Lajnat at-Tahdiriyat. . ., p. 51.

<sup>66</sup>Nasser's speech, July 26, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 171.

<sup>67</sup>The Explanatory Note attached to the July Laws, Arab Encyclopaedia. . ., pp. 36-42.

<sup>68</sup>Nasser's speech, Sep. 28, 1961 (at 9 a.m.) Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 247.

<sup>69</sup>Speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 147; and speech, March 3, 1961, pp. 94-95.

another.<sup>70</sup> His aim is not to have the proletariat exploit the bourgeoisie or tyrannize over it, but to create a society where equal opportunities would be available for all.<sup>71</sup>

As the Agrarian Reform Law has benefited the farmers by limiting land ownership, the July Laws<sup>72</sup> were to benefit the workers,<sup>73</sup> by transferring most of the means of production from capitalist ownership to that of the people.<sup>74</sup>

Decree-Law No. 112 of July 19, 1961 stipulated that workmen in every company or establishment should have the right to obtain 25 per cent of its profit.<sup>75</sup> Of this, 10 per cent is to be distributed to them directly, 5 per cent to be allocated to social services and housing, and the remaining 10 per cent to be allotted to central social services for workers.

Decree-Law No. 114, of the same date, limited to seven the members of the board of directors of any company or organization;

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<sup>70</sup>Speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 150.

<sup>71</sup>Speech, August 25, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 218.

<sup>72</sup>For the text of these Laws see Arab Encyclopaedia. . ., pp. 33-36, 42-64. The United Arab Republic, Al-Qawanin al-Ishtirakiyat, Information Department (Cairo // 1963/ ), pp. 5-50. Orient (Paris), No. 19 (3e trimestre, 1961), pp. 218-230.

<sup>73</sup>Nasser's speech, Sep. 28, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 248.

<sup>74</sup>Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 143.

<sup>75</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 161 (July 19, 1961), p. 1042.

two of these members were to represent labour and staff, one for each respectively.<sup>76</sup> This legislation was promulgated, emphasized Nasser, because the worker had exerted great efforts while the profits went to the capitalist, the factory owner, or the monopolist;<sup>77</sup> it was only "humanitarian" said Nasser, to give the worker the right to participate in management and profit.<sup>78</sup>

Another Decree-Law No. 133 of July 27, 1961 reduced the hours of work, for workers of industrial establishments, to forty two hours per week. The same law prohibited the said workers from working in more than one establishment except by special permission from the Central Minister.<sup>79</sup>

Nasser justified on the basis of Justice and Divine Law,<sup>80</sup> Decree-Law No. 113 of July 19, 1961 which set the maximum limit (L.E. 5,000 per annum) to the remuneration received by any member of the board of directors or that of any person employed by an organization or public establishment.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 1043.

<sup>77</sup> Speech, Sep. 29, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 270.

<sup>78</sup> Speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 145.

<sup>79</sup> Al-Qawanin al-Ishtirakiyat. . ., p. 49.

<sup>80</sup> Speech, Oct. 16, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 308.

<sup>81</sup> U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 161 (July 19, 1961), p. 1042.

Decree-Law No. 130, promulgated on July 25, 1961, imposed a tax on general income, to be assessed on the net total income of persons enjoying the citizenship of the United Arab Republic regardless of the place of their residence and of foreigners residing in the Syrian Region even if their income is attributable to sources outside the Region.<sup>82</sup> Foreigners not residing in the Syrian Region were not subject to this tax, except on that part of income which resulted from the Syrian Region.

These measures were necessary, explained Dr. 'Abdel-Qader Hatem, then Minister of State, in order to ensure liberty -- which means, according to Hatem's definition, equal opportunities for all citizens, the end of exploitation, and the removal of the wide gulf between classes.<sup>83</sup> Liberty, continued the Minister, cannot be safeguarded unless two foundations are provided, namely sufficiency and justice. Sufficiency requires that all potentialities of the nation be directed to all aspects of production; and justice requires that the gains of production return to all citizens. The best guarantee for the attainment of justice and sufficiency is the presence of the public sector in

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U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 166 (July 25, 1961), pp. 1078-1079.

<sup>83</sup> Dr. 'Abdel-Qader Hatem's Explanatory Statement after the promulgation of the Laws of July 19, 1961, Arab Encyclopaedia..., pp. 36-39.



the economy, declared Mr. 'Ali Sabri, then Minister for Presidential Affairs.<sup>84</sup>

The public sector has acquired a central importance in the United Arab Republic. The interest of United Arab Republic authorities in the public sector antedated the July Laws. In 1955, Nasser declared that the main thing in politics is production and services.<sup>85</sup> Since 1956, the public sector has been steadily expanding in Egypt through the following means: government participation in the establishment of several industries;<sup>86</sup> the Egyptianization of foreign establishments; the sequestration and subsequent nationalization first of foreign property and later on of Egyptian property.<sup>87</sup>

The public sector was not as large in Syria as in Egypt. It included water services, electric companies, railways, ports, and such other State institutions as the Central Bank, the Agricultural Bank and the Cotton and Cereals Bureaus.

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<sup>84</sup>Press conference held by 'Ali Sabri on July 20, 1961, Arab Encyclopaedia. . ., pp. 39-40.

<sup>85</sup>Speech, March 28, 1955, Speeches, 1952-1958. . ., p. 286.

<sup>86</sup>Nasser's speech, July 27, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., pp. 245-52. Speech, Nov. 26, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 466.

<sup>87</sup>The Arab World, May 25, 1960, p. 7. Both Issawi, in Egypt in Revolution, pp. 55-57, and Abdel-Malek, Egypt, Société. . ., pp. 287, 347-53, held the view that Nasser's nationalization was a reaction to western policy. This is true in the case of Suez and of Belgian property confiscated in Dec. 1960 (in reaction to Lumumba's assassination) but not of his subsequent nationalization measures (the Press, Bank Misr and Bank al-Ahli, Feb. 1960, and the Cairo bus, May 1960).

With the advent of the Union, it was felt that there was a need for an "active force" in the economic field, opening all spheres and moving in the widest possible areas so as to mobilize the national savings for economic development and expansion.<sup>88</sup> The public sector was to become that dynamic force. At the same time, the public sector was to serve also as a "balance of justice." It was expected to do so through its participation in the ownership of the means of production and through its share in the returns of production. Only when the nation possesses such a sector, said Minister Ali Sabri, that it can protect itself from exploitation and provide opportunities for all.<sup>89</sup> In other words, only when socialism is established can liberty, with its two foundations, sufficiency and justice, be attained, since socialism is defined by Nasser as both a means and an end, namely sufficiency and justice.<sup>90</sup> Sufficiency includes industrialization and increase of production while justice includes, among other things, nationalization. It was in the achievement of these principles, announced the official communiqué attached to the July Laws, that Nasser promulgated the following laws:

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<sup>88</sup> Ali Sabri press conference of July 20, 1961, Arab Encyclopaedia. . . , p. 40.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Speech, Oct. 16, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . . , Unity Talks. . . , 3rd phase, 4th meeting, p. 183. The Charter, chaps. ii, vi.

Decree-Law No. 117 of July 20, 1961 ordering the nationalization of all banks and insurance companies, of which twenty banks were in the Northern Region.<sup>91</sup> Nasser considered the banks as the most important sector in the State, the foundation of the economy.<sup>92</sup> During the Unity Talks, Nasser declared that the banking sector is the economy, since whoever controls the banks, can control the economy; that is why, said Nasser, capitalism controlled the people because capitalism possessed the banking machinery.<sup>93</sup> At that same meeting, Nasser analysed the situation of the banks and the insurance companies in Syria, describing it as even worse than that of Egypt. He said that the banks used to provide facilities for a certain class of the people only; as to the insurance companies, their capital was not in Syria. For these various reasons, concluded Nasser, the banks and the insurance companies of the United Arab Republic were transferred to the people so as to put capital at the service of the fatherland.<sup>94</sup> In that way, money ceases to be the "master" of the people and becomes its "servant."<sup>95</sup>

In the Northern Region, the nationalization of banks and

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<sup>91</sup>U.A.R., O.G. 1961, No. 162 (July 20, 1961), pp. 1046-1047.

<sup>92</sup>Speech, March 21, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., pp. 83, 88-89.

<sup>93</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 4th meeting, p. 104.

<sup>94</sup>Speech, Oct. 5, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 291.

<sup>95</sup>Speech, Oct. 16, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 309.

insurance companies was not only a measure to restore to the people its property, but was also a condition of political stability.<sup>96</sup> Nasser became convinced that no socialist regime can succeed unless it nationalizes the banks and the insurance companies.<sup>97</sup> However, for Nasser, these were not the only instruments of exploitation. He declared more than once, especially after the Secession of Syria, that the firms were another means through which capitalism exploited the people.<sup>98</sup> As Nasser was determined to eradicate "exploitation" in all its forms, he decided for that purpose to nationalize all heavy industries and part of the medium industries (Decree-Law No. 117 of 1961). The shares of the companies and the capital of establishments affected by this Law were to be converted into nominal State bonds for fifteen years at an annual interest of 4 per cent. These bonds were negotiable on the Stock Exchange.

Decree-Law No. 118 of July 20, 1961 established State partnership in 91 companies and enterprises, of which, 11 were

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<sup>96</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 4th meeting, p. 104.

<sup>97</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 3rd meeting, p. 89

<sup>98</sup>Speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p. 145.

in the Northern Region.<sup>99</sup> These were to assume the form of Arab Joint-stock companies. One of the public establishments, to be specified by order of the President of the Republic, was to participate in their capital to an extent of not less than 50 per cent. The government was to pay the share of the public organization in the capital of the said companies and establishments by nominal State bonds at 4 per cent interest annually for a period of fifteen years.

Decree-Law No. 119 of July 20, 1961 limited the total allowable shares of individuals in 159 companies.<sup>100</sup> Of these 11 belonged to the Northern Region. This Law stipulated that no individual or "moral" person may own shares in these companies to a market value of more than L.S. 100,000 (L.E. 10,000). The ownership of the excess shares shall be transferred to the State. The value of shares taken over by the State was to be fixed by a committee appointed by the Minister of Economy. The government was to settle the value of the shares which thus became its property by means of nominal bonds drawn on the State for a period of fifteen years at 4 per cent annual interest.

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<sup>99</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 162 (July 20, 1961), p. 1048.

<sup>100</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 162 (July 20, 1961), p. 1050.

The above mentioned three Laws provided for an administrative authority which was empowered to reorganize the boards of directors of the establishments affected by these Laws.

Presidential Decree No. 1203 of July 20, 1961 restricted contracting for the public sector to public companies.<sup>101</sup> In accordance with this Decree, establishments in which the State participates to the extent of 25 per cent of the capital or more may not, except by a presidential decree, assign general contracts and public works to companies other than those in which the government or the public authorities participated to the extent of no less than 50 per cent of the capital. This ban did not apply to operations the value of which did not exceed L.E. 300,000.

The total of all the establishments affected by the July Laws amounted to 400.<sup>102</sup> Other decrees were issued -- Decree-Laws Nos: 120, 121, 122, 123 -- but they were to apply first in the Southern Region.<sup>103</sup> These included a decree, No. 125 of July 21, 1961, establishing State participation in cotton enterprises, a decree imposing a progressive tax on income derived

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<sup>101</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 162 (July 20, 1961), p. 1066.

<sup>102</sup>Nasser's speech, July 26, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p.168.

<sup>103</sup>U.A.R., O.G., No. 162 (July 20, 1961), pp. 1053-1057.

from residential property, and a decree which forbade any citizen of the Southern Region to assume more than one job.<sup>104</sup>

The July Legislation marked the formal conversion of the United Arab Republic to socialism. As to the process of socialist transformation, it had started in 1956 with the nationalization of Suez.<sup>105</sup> In fact, few months before Suez, Nasser had declared that his society was a capitalist society limited by the State for the benefit of all.<sup>106</sup> In 1957, he started speaking of the co-operative society, and it was not till 1958 that he spoke of the socialist, co-operative, and democratic society.<sup>107</sup> The reasons for this change, as given by Nasser, were the experiences of the Country and its needs, which prompted the government to adopt a system of "guided capitalism."<sup>108</sup> Evaluated in the light of this statement (and also of the statement that "we do not possess other projects that deserve nationalization,"<sup>109</sup> which

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<sup>104</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1961, No. 163 (July 21, 1961), p. 1067.

<sup>105</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 4th meeting, p. 103.  
Muhammed Majzoub, Al-Jumhuriyat al-'Arabiyat al-Muttahidat  
(Beirut: Dar an-Nashr lil-Jami'iyin, 1958), pp. 151-152.

<sup>106</sup>Nasser's interview granted to Al-Gomhouriyat (Egyptian)  
May 30, 1956, Speeches, 1952-1958. . ., p. 481.

<sup>107</sup>Nasser's interview granted to American Editors and  
Commentators, Jan. 27, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., p. 362.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Nasser's interview granted to Karanjia, March 10, 1957,  
Speeches, 1952-1958. . .

was made after the nationalization of Suez), the July Laws were in fact a "revolutionary act."<sup>110</sup> This is not to say that Nasser had suddenly adopted new aims, foreign to his thinking.<sup>111</sup> The July Laws were said to have been taken in order to introduce social and economic justice and to eliminate social and economic exploitation.<sup>112</sup> Such aims were already embodied in his "six principles" and his concept of the two revolutions. What was revolutionary was the method of implementation and the subsequent development which it entailed and which went far beyond the "six principles", namely the new system of life which was being introduced.

The July laws were promulgated, said Nasser, in order to protect the political structure of the State, which was to guarantee the objectives of the Revolution.<sup>113</sup> He had felt, especially since 1960, that something had to be done; it was in 1960 that he "started to fear" the growing influence of capital which was trying to find its way to high officials.<sup>114</sup> However

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<sup>110</sup> See n. 102.

<sup>111</sup> For further study on Nasser's adoption of socialism see F. Saygh, The Theoretical Structure. . ., chap. ii.

<sup>112</sup> Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches 1961. . ., pp. 128-161.

<sup>113</sup> Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., pp. 142-145.

<sup>114</sup> al-Lajnat at-Tahdiriyat. . ., p. 28.



if this was true for the Egyptian Region, the fear might have been of different order in the Syrian Region. There, and despite Nasser's assurances that he was not against private capital, but only against exploiting capital,<sup>115</sup> the private sector was constantly shrinking as it was becoming more and more evident that Nasser was determined to eliminate what he called "the state of anarchy" or free economy.<sup>116</sup> The passive or rather expectative attitude of the private sector had paralysed the economy of the Syrian Region; to this must be added the consequences of three years of drought. As the situation in the Northern Region was deteriorating, economically and politically, State intervention was becoming imperative and imminent -- hence the July Laws. With this legislation, the State had ceased to be a partial planner and supervisor, a role which it had until then held.<sup>117</sup> Instead, the State stepped in to participate effectively in the economic life of the country. The official reason for that was the liberation of the economy from capitalists and exploiters.<sup>118</sup> But this was unacceptable to those Syrians for whom the Union was becoming unbearable.

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<sup>115</sup>Speech, July 30, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . . , p. 357.

<sup>116</sup>Nasser's speech, March 3, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . . , p. 86.

<sup>117</sup>David Rousset, "L'Egypte de Nasser condamnée à la révolution permanente," Le Figaro Littéraire, 16 Avril, 1964, p. 15.

<sup>118</sup>Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961 . . . , pp. 145-147.

According to the Secessionists, Nasser's economic measures were "great strokes" administered to Syria's economy; that is why, said they, they re-established free economy, which saved the economy of Syria from collapse.<sup>119</sup> In advocating free economy, the Secessionists asserted that they did not condemn socialism as such, but only Nasser's socialism -- which he had applied in the Northern Region without taking into consideration that Region's structure and circumstances. In the declaration made on October 10, 1961, the Secessionist government stated that the adoption of "true socialism" has become a "reality" in the world, and in the Arab World in particular.<sup>120</sup> But socialism, continued the same declaration, cannot be imposed by force, it has to stem from the needs of society; for this reason, the new government pledged itself to adopt the system of "controlled economic freedom," to provide for an equitable distribution of national income among those who participate in production and to encourage private property. These principles were adopted by the successive Secessionist governments which reasserted their intention to encourage individual efforts and reiterated their promises to

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<sup>119</sup>An-Nasr, Sep. 28, 1962.

<sup>120</sup>Wahdatuna al-Kubra. . ., pp. 44-55.

private capital, inviting it to invest in the industrial sector without fear of nationalization.<sup>121</sup>

The July laws were rejected as "improvised economic measures."<sup>122</sup> They were improvised, said Nuhad al-Ghadri, a secessionist spokesman, because nationalization is not socialist unless it increases the rate of economic development and widens the basis of popular services.<sup>123</sup> Judged by that standard, continued Ghadri, the July Laws could accomplish none of these goals since the total profits of nationalized companies amounted to L.S. 16,481,000, and if the profits of workers together with the interest on shares in these companies was subtracted from that sum, only L.S. 5 million would remain. So what could the State do with this small sum when the Euphrates project alone required L.S. 1,500 million. As to services, said Ghadri,

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<sup>121</sup>Khaled al-'Azm in an inaugural speech of the Week of Economic Development, Al-Ayyam, Nov. 9, 1962. (Khaled al-'Azm is cited among Secessionists and not exclusively with the Communists, because he formed a government after Secession). Dr. 'Izzat at-Tarabulsi, then Minister of Economy, An-Nasr, Nov. 20, 1962.

<sup>122</sup>Nuhad al-Ghadri, Al-Kitab al-Aswad fi Haqiqat 'Abdel-Nasser wa Mawqafih min al-Wahdat wal-Ishtirakiyat wa-qadiyat Falastin (Damascus: Mataba' al-Jumhuriyat /1962/), p. 160.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., pp. 160-165.

nothing proved that the Government was moving in that direction -- except for the Ministry of Interior and the Intelligence Bureau, whose budget amounted to L.S. 65 million (while the budget of the Ministry of Health did not exceed L.S. 18 million).

Criticisms were levelled at the Socialist Laws by various sides in Syria. Some claimed that these Laws were motivated by political considerations.<sup>124</sup> Dr. Muhammed al-Za'im, president of the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, declared, during that Congress, that the July Laws aimed at dominating the Syrian economy.<sup>125</sup> Other critics maintained that investments were slowed down, since citizens did not dare invest from fear of nationalization.<sup>126</sup> In this respect, Dr. 'Izzat Tarabulsi declared that the nationalization of banks and insurance companies resulted in the freezing of economic efficiencies.<sup>127</sup> It was also held that the July Laws destroyed the economy of Syria.<sup>128</sup> The July legislation was also criticized as having been another attempt in the process of transforming

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<sup>124</sup>Al-Ayyam, Nov. 5, 1962.

<sup>125</sup>This Congress started on Nov. 8, 1962, and lasted one week. Al-Ayyam, Nov. 14, 1962.

<sup>126</sup>Conference by Dr. 'Abdel-Rahman Hammour during the aforesaid mentioned congress. Al-Akhbar, Aug. 27, 1961, p. 8. (Lebanese Communist paper) reported that rumours of a possible nationalization of buildings have made work to cease in construction of new buildings. Al-Akhbar, Aug. 20, 1961, p. 1, reported that a fall in prices of buildings had occurred in the Northern Region.

<sup>127</sup>His declaration of Oct. 13, 1961, Munajjed, Suriyat wa Masr, p. 188.

<sup>128</sup>Khalil Khallas, (former Minister under the Union), at Shtaura, An-Nasr, Aug. 30, 1962.

Syria's economy into State capitalism.<sup>129</sup> This latter criticism was also held by the Communists with the only difference, that these latter requested more radical reforms. The essential features of socialism, wrote the Communist weekly, Al-Akhbar are: "collective ownership" of the principal means of production, the eradication of exploitation of man by man, and the leadership of workers and peasants.<sup>130</sup> Obviously, wrote the said weekly, the July Laws were not socialist; they retained all the bases of capitalism, such as private ownership, the right of any one to keep shares of a value of L.S. 100,000 in addition to land and buildings. High compensations were paid to owners of nationalized enterprises. Such measures, continued the weekly, are characteristic of state capitalism. As to the motives behind these Laws, Al-Akhbar listed seven of them: (1) Nasser's expansionist design in Africa and his politically-inspired need to provide African States with loans; (2) Nasser's need for an outlet to relieve him from his debts vis-à-vis the imperialist countries; (3) the centralization of capitals and industries so as to strengthen state monopoly; (4) the liquidation of Syria's economy; (5) the

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<sup>129</sup>"La Syrie à la recherche d'un régime économique et social," Etude Mensuelle. . . , No. 46 (December, 1961), pp. 1-3.

<sup>130</sup>Al-Akhbar, July 30, 1961, pp. 1-2.

pressure of the masses which compelled Nasser to perform a deed which might make him appear as the one who fulfills their demands; (6) the isolation of Nasser's regime which made him search for a new deed in order to win prestige; and (7) the pressure of foreign events, such as the revolution in Cuba and progress in Ghana and Indonesia whose progressive moves impelled Nasser to modify his policy.<sup>131</sup> The July Laws were, according to Al-Akhbar, in the interest of the bourgeoisie; but nevertheless, the fact that they were carried out under the banner of socialism proved the appeal of socialism. These Laws concluded Al-Akhbar were successful only in spreading "anxiety" in the economic circles of the Northern Region, because some of them were taken prematurely since the economic progress had not yet exhausted all its abilities.

The Ba'th criticized the socialist measures for not having been accompanied by the "exclusion" of the reactionary forces.<sup>132</sup>

In the view of many Syrians, their economic grievances were provoked not only by the promulgation of the July Laws but also by previous economic measures, as well as political measures.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 3rd meeting, A.-K.Zouhour, p. 159.

<sup>133</sup>An-Nasr, Nov. 19, 1962.

Khaled Bakdash declared (March 1959) that the economic situation in Syria was in constant deterioration.<sup>134</sup> Bakdash said also that the effect of the Union was detrimental to Syria's economy, he mentioned in that respect the freezing of at least the slowing down of industry, the suspension of construction work, the rise in prices, and the spread of unemployment.<sup>135</sup> Al-Akhbar wrote that, though Syria was not a paradise before the Union, its economy was nevertheless prosperous.<sup>136</sup> The Communists maintained also that Syria had not known since the Second World War the economic crises it was experiencing under the Union.<sup>137</sup> Al-Akhbar wrote that Syria's agriculture was threatened, while the government remained deliberately inactive in order to weaken Syria's economy and hence master it.<sup>138</sup>

The Secessionists directed their attacks at the whole economic policy of the Union. They maintained that the economy of the Northern Region had been distorted by the diametrically opposed actions of a public sector (with its expansionist phase

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<sup>134</sup> Bakdash's speech, at the Congress of Workers in Poland, Al-Akhbar, March 22, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> Bakdash's interview to the French Magazine "l'Humanité," reproduced in Al-Akhbar, April 19, 1959, pp. 1,4.

<sup>136</sup> Al-Akhbar, Jan. 18, 1959, p. 5.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Akhbar, Feb. 8, 1959, p. 5; and August 9, 1959, p.1.

<sup>138</sup> Al-Akhbar, Nov. 8, 1959, pp. 1,8; and Sep. 6, 1959; p.1.

mainly administrative and not so much productive) and of a private sector (with its restricted agriculture, its strangled industry, and its baffled economy).<sup>139</sup> The Secessionists criticized several aspects of Syria's economy under the Union. Some of their grievances will be discussed below.

The balance of trade of the Northern Region had a deficit of L.S. 453 million in 1960.<sup>140</sup> After Secession, it was reported that the Syrian economy recovered L.S. 350 million in 1962 over the previous years.<sup>141</sup> The reason, as given by Secessionist spokesmen, was due to the fact that Syria was deprived during the Union of its natural markets (except for the Egyptian market which they accused of having monopolized the import and export of the Northern Region and imposed its prices on ground of balanced economy between both Regions).<sup>142</sup> In 1957, imports of the Northern Region from the Southern Region amounted to L.S. 14,261,582, while exports from the former to the latter

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<sup>139</sup>Restoration de l'indépendance des autorités monétaires," Etude Mensuelle. . . , No. 46 (October, 1964), pp. 4-6. Al-Ayyam, Dec. 10, 1962.

<sup>140</sup>Writing in January, 1961, Dr. Youssef Helbaoui said that the deficit of Syria's balance of trade was L.S. 68 million in 1957 while it reached in the first three months of 1960 L.S. 344 million, "La situation de l'économie syrienne vue à travers son commerce extérieur," Etude Mensuelle. . . , No. 37, (January, 1961), pp. 29-37. According to Dr. 'Izzat at-Tarabulsi the deficit reached LS,453 million in 1960, Cahiers de l'Orient. . . , Vol. XLVII, chronique et documents (December, 1961) pp. 411, 445.

<sup>141</sup>Declaration of Dr. 'Izzat at-Tarabulsi, Minister of Economy, An-Nasr, Jan. 19, 1963.

<sup>142</sup>An-Nasr, Sep. 28, 1962; and, Oct. 22, 1962.



amounted to L.S. 31,785,180.<sup>143</sup> In 1960 import from the Southern Region reached L.S. 68 million while this latter imported from the Northern Region for L.S. 48 million.<sup>144</sup> As to the general import of the Northern Region, it attained L.S. 217 million and this despite all shackles imposed on import; while its general export decreased heavily due to the existing economic crisis in the Northern Region.<sup>145</sup> During the Unity Talks, Nasser rejected such allegations and said that the Egyptian Region used to import from the Syrian Region while this latter did not import from the Egyptian Region.<sup>146</sup> However, Nasser admitted, at that same meeting, that trade agreements for the Syrian Region suffered from routine work in the Central Government. That is why he accepted the concept of regionalism for trade in the federal system proposed in 1963, for many years before Union is finally achieved.<sup>147</sup> After Secession free trade was re-established in Syria.<sup>148</sup>

Other criticisms were directed against the financial

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid., Sep. 28, 1962.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid.

<sup>145</sup>Munajjed, Suriyat wa Masr. . ., p. 187.

<sup>146</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 5th meeting, p. 219.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>148</sup>Announced by Prime Minister Khaled al-Azm on Sep. 13, 1962, An-Nasr, Sep. 14, 1962.

policy of the Union. Khalil al-Kallas, then Minister of Finance, said that the "erroneous financial policy" led to a general deficit in the economy and the finance of the Northern Region.<sup>149</sup> This, said the Minister, was due to two factors: first, great sums were spent on an aggrandized administration, on the Ministry of the Interior, and on the Intelligence Bureau, while very little was earmarked for development projects. This led to the increase of expenditures and to the decrease of income. The second factor was a deficient tax collection system which, due to a lack of statistical experts, led to a loss of great sums which ought to have returned to the State.

Currency was another target for Secessionists' criticisms. Currency control, and the subsequent rumours about currency unification, were widely blamed for having caused great harm to Syrian finance. Some of the harmful effects were: the escape of capital from the Syrian Region (the total sum of which was estimated after secession at approximately L.S. 850 million<sup>150</sup>); the devaluation of Syrian currency in outside markets (a decrease

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<sup>149</sup> Al-Ayyam, Nov. 27, 1962.

<sup>150</sup> L'Orient (Beirut), July 21, 1964; and March 2, 1965. Others evaluated this sum to L.S. 7 million, Cahiers de l'Orient... Vol. XLVII, Chronique et documents (December, 1961), p. 417.

which reached 43 per cent of the value of the Lebanese pound); the decrease by half of the amount of foreign currencies on the Syrian market; the 100 per cent increase of the general debt of the Syrian Region; the 60 per cent increase of that Region's commitment to the outside world; the inflationary policy of the State, which resulted in the exhaustion of Syria's reserves on markets; and the exhaustion of the Treasury to an extent that, despite the imposition of new taxes, there was a constant increase in the deficit of the balance of payment.<sup>151</sup> Nasser recognized the existence of a deficit in the Northern Region, but he said that he helped that Region on several occasions to meet its deficit<sup>152</sup> (a deficit which existed in Syria, added Nasser, before its Union with Egypt, while the Secessionists held Nasser's economic policy responsible of that deficit). Nasser also admitted that the State has met many difficulties while regulating currency in the Northern Region,<sup>153</sup> but he accused capitalists and reactionaries of having caused these difficulties, for which his opponents blamed him and his administration.

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<sup>151</sup>Munajjed, Suriyat wa Masr. . ., p. 189. This view was also shared by the Communists, Al-Akhbar, May 15, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup>Nasser's speech, Oct. 5, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., p.294.

<sup>153</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 5th meeting, p. 217.

Another criticism was directed against the industrial sector, which (the Secessionists and others said) had come to a virtual stand-still,<sup>154</sup> while progress on such projects as the Euphrates Dam and oil exploitation was deliberately stopped.<sup>155</sup> For these various reasons, different economic circles urged a return to Syria's traditional economy -- without however condemning socialism. Among these were the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, which submitted certain recommendations, including the following: the liberation of currency; investment of Syrian capital; protection of private capital; the liberation of imports; the adoption of free economy so as to spread confidence and secure stability which encourages the return of Syrian capital; the encouragement of Arab investment in Syria; the abolition of the institutes and establishments which were created "to dominate the Syrian economy"; the liberation of the banks and insurance companies; the finding of an equitable solution for other nationalized enterprises in a way which would liberate the State from that burden; and finally, the issuance of the Agrarian Reform bonds and payment of the value of those bonds already due to former landowners.<sup>156</sup> Such requests were intended, said they, to save Syria's economy.

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<sup>154</sup>An-Nasr, Oct. 22, 1962. Al-Akhbar, May 22, 1960, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup>Ahmed 'Abdel-Karim, Adwa'. . . , p. 214.

<sup>156</sup>An evaluation of these recommendations by Muwaffaq al-'Attar, al-Ayyam, Nov. 19, 1962.

Besides these economic grievances, we have to remember that following the July Laws, the Executive Councils were abolished and were replaced by a Central Cabinet. At the same time the National Union was tightened by the abolition of its two Regional Executive Committees and its two Regional Congresses. These developments were viewed as new attempts in the process of "Egyptianizing Syria."<sup>157</sup> If we add to all this, Nasser's declaration, namely that his socialism is "a road with no end",<sup>158</sup> we can understand the panic which the July Laws provoked in the Northern Region so far used to a liberal system. Several moves were undertaken, after Secession, in order to liberate the Syrian economy.

The July Laws have undoubtedly left an impact on Syria and were decisive for the United Arab Republic. As Secession was viewed by Nasser as a reaction to socialism, or more specifically the July Laws,<sup>159</sup> he subsequently became determined to deal more firmly with reactionism by more socialism and by introducing special devices<sup>160</sup> -- such as the Arab socialist Union; "exclusion", and "isolation" of reactionary elements; and

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<sup>157</sup>Conference by Dr. 'Awad Barakat during the Economic Development Week, Al-Ayyam, Nov. 11, 1962.

<sup>158</sup>Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches 1961. . ., p.148.

<sup>159</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 3rd meeting, p. 82.

<sup>160</sup>For further study on Nasser's socialism since the Coup of 1961 up to 1964 see F. Sayegh, The Theoretical Structure. . . pp. 71-129.

the gathering of the "working powers" -- in order to protect "the revolutionary growth and the revolutionary interaction" of which he spoke when he issued the July Laws.<sup>161</sup>

In Syria, the government hesitated long before submitting to Parliament a law (which Parliament finally passed) denationalizing industrial and commercial enterprises, with certain governmental limitations and controls. The government was torn between its allegiance to the class it represented and its alleged commitment to bring about "true socialism." So it had to protect the interest of the bourgeois class and, at the same time, to avoid a clash with the progressive forces among the masses favouring socialism. When the balance tilted in favour of the former, the latter grew restless; the bourgeois government was overthrown and a socialist regime took over. This does not mean that socialism was inevitable in Syria or that it was the best remedy for Syria's economic difficulties, but when a revolutionary process is set in motion -- and the July Laws have launched such a process, namely socialism -- it then becomes much more difficult to reverse the process.

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<sup>161</sup>Nasser's speech, July 22, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . .  
p. 168.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ATTITUDE OF SPECIFIC GROUPS TOWARDS THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

Nasser was criticized by both the Right and the Left. They rejected the Union on the ground that it had committed deliberate mistakes against the Syrians. In contrast to this attitude, Nasser considered that the failure of Union was due to the social and political structure of Syria.<sup>1</sup> Nasser could not help the situation because, he said, the Union took place so rapidly that no time was allowed him to acquaint himself with the situation in the Northern Region.<sup>2</sup> This was reflected, whether implicitly or explicitly, in the mistakes which Nasser recognized as having been committed during the Union. One of these, according to Nasser himself, was his self-confidence and confidence in others.<sup>3</sup> This led him (as he has explained) to think that he could remove class differences peacefully, and

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<sup>1</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 2d meeting, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup>He said, 15 days only. Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 2d meeting, p. 148; 2d phase, 1st meeting, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Speeches, 1961. . ., speech, Oct. 16, 1961; and speech, Oct. 2, 1961, pp. 311-12, 285.

to imagine that the reactionary elements would not harm the Union. This, concluded Nasser, was an illusion: because imperialism was shielding itself behind reaction in such a way that, in Syria, "capitalism, feudalism, and opportunism joined forces with imperialism to wipe out the gains of the masses and to strike at the socialist revolution."<sup>4</sup> Another mistake -- which seems a natural outcome of the first -- was the allowing of reactionary forces to enter the National Union, declared Nasser.<sup>5</sup> Still another mistake was what he called his failure to develop the government machinery up to the revolutionary level; he did not put the right men in the right places.<sup>6</sup> However, the greatest mistake (said Nasser) was the exploitation of regionalism. In this category, Nasser has placed his experience with the Ba'th.<sup>7</sup>

It cannot be denied that the social and political structure of Syria has helped to bring about secession. The reaction of the feudalists to the Agrarian Reform was natural. Capitalists were dissatisfied with Nasser's planned economy. The Ba'th

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<sup>4</sup>Speeches, 1961. . ., speech, Oct. 16, 1961, p. 312.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 314-315.

<sup>7</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 1st meeting, pp. 9-10.



could not accept to be treated on an equal footing with other groups in Syria. The Communists were beaten, but could not submit. There were other minor groups which could not accept the Union. Among these was the Syrian Social National Party which viewed the Union as "an artificial political project",<sup>8</sup> and which called for the dissolution of the Union<sup>9</sup> so as to restore Syria to its "natural condition."<sup>10</sup>

Each of these groups had its own grievances. It seems that the restriction placed on political liberties became intolerable to a nation made -- according to one of its sons, Lou'ay al-Atassi -- of four million Za'ims<sup>11</sup> (leaders).

We will examine below the attitude of the major groups under the Union.

#### A. The Ba'th

"The United Arab Republic is the beginning of a new history for the Arabs." <sup>12</sup>

"The United Arab Republic originated in the revolution of the Arab people and in its struggle."<sup>13</sup>

"The Arabs, and particularly the Syrians, have to unite their ranks and to rise above details and differences in order to meet in the larger goals of the nation."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>"Bayan at-Talbat al-Qawmiyyin al-Ijtima'iyyin Hawl al-Ittihad al-Shami al-Masri, Feb. 1, 1958," (leaflet).

<sup>9</sup>"Al-Minhaj al-Qawmi al-Ijtima'i lil-'Amal as-Siyassi," Manshourat "Imdat al-idh'at, Dec. 9, 1958 (leaflet).

<sup>10</sup>Letter to Abdel-Nasser from the former Secretary General of the Syrian Social National Party, "Abdallah Muhsen, May 1959, (leaflet).

<sup>11</sup>Unity Talks. . . , 2d phase, 4th meeting, p.103.

In such terms, the Ba'th welcomed the formation of the United Arab Republic. But within less than two years, the Ba'th expressed in bitter terms their disillusionment and broke away from the United Arab Republic. How it did come about that a party which worked for more than two years for the realization of that Union and which had a prominent share in the government of the Union, came to feel that it was no more possible to live under "the rule of the individual" and "the regional control"<sup>15</sup>? The answer to this question may be found in the Unity Talks of 1963, where much light was thrown on the experiment of Union between the Ba'th and Nasser, and in the Ba'th writings and Congresses since 1959.

During the Union, the Ba'th Party<sup>16</sup> passed through three consecutive phases: First the period of active participation in government, where the Ba'th had a privileged position in relation

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<sup>12</sup>Aflak, Fi Sabil al-Ba'th. . ., 'Aflak's statement on Feb. 23, 1958, p. 273.

<sup>13</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. III: Al-Qitr as-Suri, 1954-1959, Statement Feb. 8, 1958, p. 317.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>15</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat al-Qawmiyat, 1955-1961, secret publication on March 16, 1960, pp. 137-138.

<sup>16</sup>By Ba'th it is meant also Haurani and his followers since these did not break from 'Aflak's Ba'th till June 1962. See in that respect, An-Nahar, June 20, 1962.

to the other groups in Syria. This was also a period loaded with events which led to the Ba'th Third Congress of August 1959. The Second period opened with the resignation of the Ba'thists Ministers on December 30, 1959 and ended in February 1960 when, following an article in the Beirut Ba'thist daily, As-Sahafat, which criticized the insufficiency of the democratic basis of the United Arab Republic,<sup>17</sup> Nasser retaliated by attacking the Ba'th without however naming them. Finally, a period of open break, which started on February 22, 1960 and which -- except for a short interlude between March and May 1963<sup>18</sup> -- is still going on. The last two phases were rather an elucidation of the first one, in the sense that it was in that early phase that much of the Ba'th grievances originated.

The central problem for the Ba'th was the relationship between the role they had assigned to themselves and the role they were allowed to play during the Union. The Ba'th referred more than once to their "historical role"<sup>19</sup> in the formation of

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<sup>17</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . . . Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat al-Qawmiyat, 1955-1961, pp. 122-127.

<sup>18</sup>But even during that interlude the Ba'thists newspapers and Al-Ahram did not end their mutual criticism. Al-Ahram, March 31, 1963, pp. 1, 6, wrote a sharp attack against the Ba'th.

<sup>19</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . . . Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . . . The Declaration of the Ba'th Party High Command, issued on Oct. 10, 1959 following the Third Congress, pp. 96, 105; and the Secret Publication of March 16, 1960, p. 173. 'Aflak statement in Feb. 1962, Ma'rakat al-Masir. . . . p. 193. Bitar, As-Siyasat al-'Arabiyyat. . . . p. 129.

the Union and to their decisive role in giving to Arabism its modern meaning and its positive revolutionary content.<sup>20</sup> Even when the Ba'th Party dissolved itself, the Ba'thist leaders were nevertheless convinced that their ideology would be embodied in the National Union, while the Party would continue to exist in the other "Arab Regions."<sup>21</sup> The Ba'th could not really renounce the idea of being "the vanguard" (at-tali'at) which the Arab Nation required.<sup>22</sup> In fact, a party which views itself as "a vanguard party,"<sup>23</sup> as a "party of revolution,"<sup>24</sup> as a "live means for rule,"<sup>25</sup> as "a national party,"<sup>26</sup> that is for the Arab World as a whole, such a party cannot tolerate another system but its own, especially when that system comes as "a supplier of an ideology."<sup>27</sup> The Ba'th refused to consider the Revolution of 1952 as the beginning of the Arab Revolution;<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> 'Aflak's conference, April 7, 1960 on the thirteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Party, Fi Sabil. . ., p. 307.

<sup>21</sup> 'Aflak's improvised word in the headquarters of the Party in Damascus, 'Alloush, Al-Thawrat. . ., pp. 128-30. Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV; Al-Qiyadat. . ., pp. 201-202.

<sup>22</sup> 'Aflak, Fi Sabil. . ., 'Aflak's statement on Feb. 20, 1958, pp. 264-65.

<sup>23</sup> Declaration of Prime Minister Salah al-Bitar, al-Ahrar, (Beirut Ba'thist daily) May 24, 1964, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Ahrar, Jan. 7, 1965, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., secret publication, oct. 1960, p. 213.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Ahrar, Jan. 6, 1965, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Nasser's interview granted to William H. Stinger, Jan. 22, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 524.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Ahrar, July 22, 1964, p.1.

and one of their main criticism against Nasser was his lack of an ideology.<sup>29</sup> It is true that both the Ba'th and Nasser have recognized that there was no essential difference of opinion between them<sup>30</sup> -- their main objectives being the same, namely, unity, socialism, and freedom.<sup>31</sup> However, the experiment proved, and Nasser himself admitted, that the unity of goals is the weakest link.<sup>32</sup> What is as important is the approach to politics and the means to reach the objectives. It was over the approach and the means that Nasser and the Ba'th broke company. Nasser's pragmatism and the Ba'th's dogmatism proved to be irreconcilable. For instance, both equated socialism with Arab nationalism.<sup>33</sup> But Nasser's socialism did not proceed from a pre-established theory; it was originally guided by general principles and was

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<sup>29</sup>Zouhour, Fi al-Fikr. . ., Vol. I, p. 176, (Yassin al-Hafez, "Hawl Tajribat Hizb al-Ba'th,")

<sup>30</sup>Nasser's interview granted to the Lebanese magazine Kul-Shay', May 13, 1962, Speeches, 1962. . ., pp. 53-62. Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 1st meeting (Nasser's statement), p. 142; and 3rd meeting ('Abdel-Karim Zouhour's statement), p. 159.

<sup>31</sup>See the Ba'th Party Statute, Khalil, The Arab States. . ., Vol. II: International Affairs, pp. 663-70. The United Arab Republic, Charter, 1962.

<sup>32</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 3rd meeting, p. 156.

<sup>33</sup>'Aflak, Fi Sabil. . ., his statement of 1955, p. 112. Michel 'Aflak et al., Dirasat fi al-Qawmiyat (Beirut: Dar at-Ta'at, 1960), p. 28. Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 2d meeting (Nasser's statement), p. 82.

later formulated into a theory.<sup>34</sup> The Ba'th, on the other hand, advocated a socialist theory in the light of which socialism would be applied.<sup>35</sup> As to the protection of socialism, Nasser relies on the working power of the people to do it; the Ba'th also believe in the people's participation,<sup>36</sup> but 'Aflak said that what is needed in order to protect socialism is "the presence of a revolutionary party."<sup>37</sup> The Ba'th blamed Nasser for the absence of a socialist theoretical basis in his rule.<sup>38</sup> What is strange in that respect, is that two months after such judgement was passed by the Party General Command, 'Aflak said that the Party failed in performing a thorough socialist study.<sup>39</sup> However, during the Union and up to the Ba'thist Ministers' resignation, the contest between Nasser's pragmatism and the Ba'th dogmatism did not really take the form of a debate over systems of governments or ideologies. It centered rather around

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<sup>34</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 1st meeting, p. 142.

<sup>35</sup>Zouhour, Fi al-Fikr. . ., Vol. II, Jamal al-Atassi, "Mashakel an-Nidal al-Ishtiraki," pp. 105-106.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>'Aflak's interview granted to Al-Ahrar, Jan. 6, 1965, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>Nidal al-Bath. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., secret publication, March 16, 1960, pp. 145-46.

<sup>39</sup>Ahadith al-Ba'th al-'Arabi (Lebanon: Maktab al-Thaqafat wa-l-I'dad al-Hizbi, June 1960), p. 11.

the role of the Ba'th within the United Arab Republic. This was summed up by Bitar when he said that, although the Party had dissolved itself, "the ideas" and the "men" still existed; but as these were kept away from the leadership of the Union, the Union, which is a revolutionary act, could not exist without the participation of the revolutionary elements in its leadership.<sup>40</sup>

But Nasser had dissolved the political parties in order to avoid partisanship and divisions within the Syrian Region. He, therefore, refused to deal with the Ba'th as a party; or to consider the Ba'th as the spokesman of the Syrians. However, these were precisely the two things which the Ba'th had expected from the Union. Moreover, the Ba'th's behavior in the Syrian Region tended to alienate public opinion. In fact, once in power the Ba'thist Ministers fought their old antagonists and favoured their partisans. The Ba'th activities were felt in the First Army mainly when Haurani proposed to replace Colonel Jamal Fayçal, Commander of the First Army, by Mustafa Hamdoun.<sup>41</sup> It became known, later, that the Ba'th had attempted to obtain

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<sup>40</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 2d meeting, p. 149

<sup>41</sup>Abdel-Rahim, Qiyadat Hizb al-Ba'th. . ., p. 37.

from Nasser consent for the formation of a council to be composed of Nasser and themselves.<sup>42</sup> So the Ba'th tried to have the upper hand in the Northern Region but they soon realized the impossibility of accomplishing their aim -- Sarraj and 'Amer were not a futile hindrance to the Ba'thist scheme. When Haurani was removed to the Central Cabinet and away from the Syrian Region, the appointment was interpreted as the first breach in the relationship between Nasser and the Ba'th. But the Ba'th remained silent about the issue, perhaps because 'Aflak feared, as he said later, lest Haurani became "the ruler" of the Northern Region.<sup>43</sup> What is certain is that competition existed between the Ba'th leaders or more precisely between 'Aflak and Haurani.<sup>44</sup> If notwithstanding such intra-party struggles, the Ba'thist Ministers showed solidarity in their resignation, it was due to their common dissatisfaction.

The cold war between Nasser and the Ba'th started with the elections of the National Union. The Ba'th proposed the elimination of certain candidates<sup>45</sup> because they knew that in any free elections, they would be put into a minority. Nasser

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<sup>42</sup>Nidal-al-Ba'th . . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat . . ., p. 159. Unity Talks . . ., 2d phase, 2d meeting, p. 74.

<sup>43</sup>Unity Talks . . ., 2d phase, 1st meeting ('Aflak's statement), p. 56.

<sup>44</sup>Muta'war Safadi, Hizb al-Ba'th. Ma'sat al-Mawled, Ma'sat an-Nihayat (1st ed.; Beirut: Dar al-Adab 1964), pp. 251-52. Unity Talks . . ., 3rd phase, 2d meeting, pp. 150-51; 2d phase, 1st meeting, pp. 61-62.

<sup>45</sup>Unity Talks . . ., 2d phase, 1st meeting, (Nasser's statement), p. 5.



rejected such a proposal, and opened the elections for all, since he wanted the National Union to be a popular organization but probably also to evaluate the forces at work in the Northern Region and to put the Ba'th face to face with their real power. Following those elections, the Ba'th paper, Al-Jamahir, was suspended for having questioned the impartiality of the Authorities towards certain candidates. However, the Ba'th did not make a public statement in that sense at that time; but later the Ba'th expressed their disapproval of the fact that reactionary elements were allowed to enter the Republic<sup>46</sup> while "their own experience" was not taken into consideration.<sup>47</sup> The Ba'th, feeling themselves isolated and threatened by their own weakness, started (as was observed then) fighting for their existence.<sup>48</sup> Consequently a General Congress, the Third, was held "somewhere in the Arab World" (Beirut) between August 27 and 1 September 1959.<sup>49</sup>

The Third Congress met in order to solve "the crisis existing within the Party" and to adopt a policy capable of

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<sup>46</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., secret publication, Oct. 1960, pp. 182, 184-85.

<sup>47</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 2d meeting (Bitar's statement), pp. 152, 149, 73.

<sup>48</sup>New York Times, Oct. 25, 1959.

<sup>49</sup>As-Sahafat, Sep. 2, 1959, pp. 1,8.

meeting the developments in the Arab World at large.<sup>50</sup> The "crisis" was mainly due to the absence of an effective Party leadership and to the divergent currents within the Party regarding the attitude to adopt vis-à-vis the United Arab Republic. A faction led by 'Abdallah ar-Rimawi (former Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Fouad ar-Rikabi (former Iraqi Minister of Housing and former Minister of Rural and Municipal Affairs) were for the dissolution of the Party within the United Arab Republic. This attempt was condemned by the Congress because it aimed at abolishing the Party independence and making it an echo of the United Arab Republic.<sup>51</sup> But, despite its disapproval of such acts, the Congress itself approved the decision of the former Party Command to dissolve the Party. However, the very meeting of the Congress was a proof that the Ba'th were dissatisfied with their position within the Union and that they were no longer ready to support the United Arab Republic unconditionally.

Certain of 'Amer's acts, such as the lowering of tariffs -- which had been previously raised by Haurani --, and the formation of a committee to supervise the Agrarian Reform following the

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<sup>50</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., Text of the declaration issued on Oct. 10, 1959 by the Party High Command following the Third Congress, pp. 88-112.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

grievances of affected owners against the Minister of Agrarian Reform -- Mustafa Hamdoun who was accused of having refused to allow the affected owners to choose the lot of land they were allowed to keep, as prescribed by the Agrarian Reform Law -- had indisposed the Ba'th. Moreover, the removal of Riyad al-Malki, the Minister of Information, from his post on September 14, 1959,<sup>52</sup> alienated them; and it was reported in September that the Ba'th had fallen out with Nasser.<sup>53</sup> Finally the Ba'thist Ministers resigned collectively, though they maintained that they resigned separately.<sup>54</sup> These were: Salah ed-Din al-Bitar, Central Minister of Education and Orientation; Mustafa Hamdoun, Executive Minister of Agrarian Reform (Northern Region); 'Abdel-Ghani Qnout, Executive Minister of Works and Social Affairs; and Vice-President Akram al-Haurani.<sup>55</sup> The last Ba'thist Minister in government, Khalil Kallas, resigned on January 13, 1960.

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<sup>52</sup>U.A.R., O.G., 1959, No. 209 (Sep. 29, 1959), p. 4. The Arab World, Sep. 15, 1959, p. 2. Cahiers de l'Orient . . . Vol. XL, Chronique et documents (September, 1959), p. 230. The decision to remove Malki was taken following Malki's protest to the Presidential decision to separate the Broadcasting system of the Syrian Region from the Ministry of Information.

<sup>53</sup>The Arab World, Sep. 24, 1959, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup>Nidal-al-Ba'th . . . , Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat . . . , secret publication, March 16, 1960, p. 150.

<sup>55</sup>Decree No. 2351 of Dec. 30, 1959, U.A.R., O.G., 1959, No. 289, bis (Dec. 31, 1959), p. 906.

Reaction to the Ba'thist Ministers resignation was in general one of surprise. However, the semi-official Cairo daily Al-Ahram, announced the resignation without commenting on it.<sup>57</sup> As-Sahafat on the other hand, wrote that "informed circles" had expected such a decision but at the same time denied that there existed any struggle between Nasser and the Ba'thist Ministers, asserting that there was only a difference of opinion and that the Ba'th would remain faithful to the United Arab Republic and would defend it.<sup>58</sup> Within the Northern Region, the Ba'thist Ministers' resignation caused great satisfaction among the Conservatives and the Communists especially these latter who saw in that resignation evidence of the weakness of the regime. Al-Akhbar wrote that the fact that the Ba'th broke away from Nasser and this despite their weakness in Syria, proved the weakness of Nasser in Syria.<sup>59</sup> Outside the United Arab Republic, the Ba'thists' resignation was interpreted as an important development within the Republic. A Lebanese commentator wrote that it equalled in importance the proclamation of the United

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<sup>57</sup> Al-Ahram, Dec. 31, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> As-Sahafat, Dec. 31, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Akhbar, Jan. 3, 1960, pp. 1, 8.

Arab Republic.<sup>60</sup> For the Ba'th, as it was disclosed after the open break with Nasser in February 1960, their resignation was imperative since they were unable to discuss with Nasser the danger and the mistakes to which the regime would be exposed if certain of its aspects were not modified.<sup>61</sup> They resigned, they said, because Nasser had emptied the revolutionary, democratic principles of their ideological contents,<sup>62</sup> and had relied on experts and on his own advisers in a system where everything centered around "the person of the President."<sup>63</sup> They reproached Nasser for his Arab policies -- specially in Lebanon, where they blamed him for having resorted to destruction.<sup>64</sup> For these reasons, they asserted, the Ba'th preferred to resign, in order to avoid being identified with "the deviations" of the regime.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Nasser insisted that what the Ba'th wanted was a "free hand" in Syria.<sup>66</sup> He saw in their resignation a "premeditated crime -- a retirement not from the government but from the Union altogether."<sup>67</sup> It is not certain that in 1959

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<sup>60</sup> Michel Abu-Jawdeh, An-Nahar, Dec. 31, 1959, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>61</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., p. 177. Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 1st meeting (Bitar's statement), p. 137.

<sup>62</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al Qiyadat. . ., p. 169.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>66</sup> Unity Talks. . ., 2d phase, 1st meeting, p. 61.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 1st phase, 1st meeting, p. 12.

the Ba'th wished to leave the Union or the government -- though they did it later. What in fact happened to the Ba'th in 1959 was a miscalculation of their own strength and of that of Nasser. They thought that their resignation would make Nasser come to terms. This explains the reserve observed by the Ba'th for some time after their resignation. But, following the publication, on February 22, 1960, of the article in Al-Sahafat which requested more democratic liberties in the United Arab Republic, Nasser attacked the Ba'th, although he did not mention them by name, he said :

"If any group, faction, or political party tries to deceive this nation, they will not succeed. If any group among us comes forward and claims a monopoly of politics, we will tell them that our basic objective is to establish a society free from political exploitation."<sup>68</sup>

Thus the battle was joined. In a secret publication dated March 16, 1960 the Ba'th criticized Nasser for having "distorted" the struggle of the revolutionary parties before Union.<sup>69</sup> The said publication continued that, when the Ba'th accepted to dissolve the Party, they believed that the National Union was to become a revolutionary popular institution, but that they were

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<sup>68</sup>Speech, Feb. 23, 1960, Speeches, January-March, 1960 . . . , p. 91.

<sup>69</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th . . . , Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat . . . , p. 170.

soon deceived: for the National Union turned out to be a means of propaganda for the State, and (its door) was opened to reactionism, regionalism, and tribal fanaticism.<sup>70</sup> The National Union cannot lead to a socialist, democratic, and co-operative society, -- said the Ba'th -- unless it includes the masses that believe in such progressive principles; the National Union has included citizens who did not believe in such principles.<sup>71</sup> The Ba'th felt it necessary to reorganize its ranks and prepare a new plan of action.<sup>72</sup> So a new congress was convened.

The Fourth Congress was held in August, 1960 in Beirut.<sup>73</sup> (The dissident faction of the Ba'th held a congress at the same time in Syria). The Congress was a forum for extensive self-criticism, and called for the adoption of a "new revolutionary method." This Congress was a turning point in the relation of the Ba'th with the United Arab Republic. It declared openly the independent entity of the Party, which consequently resumed its activities on the national level. Having thus burned the bridges between the Party and the United Arab Republic, the

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 143-45, 154-55. <sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 166-67.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>73</sup>For the proceedings of this congress see, Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., pp. 180-219.

Congress disclosed much of the Ba'th's grievances. It stated that the dissolution of the Party was "an erroneous step" taken as a fait accompli, the Party having been put before a dilemma: it had to choose between secession and dissolution. The gravity of dissolution, declared the Congress, became obvious once the enthusiasm which accompanied the Union disappeared. The dissolution caused a shock among the Ba'th and their friends, said the Congress especially since the Ba'th Party in Syria was the prime mover of the Ba'th's activities in the Arab World as a whole. Consequently the Party organization has suffered, and the members and leaders were engaging in mutual accusations. The dissolution, added the Congress, was an expression of the weakness of the Party leadership and of the bad conditions within the Party in general.

Next, the Congress observed that Syria, which was the centre of popular action, had disappeared from the scene and had lost its leading position. It also observed that the absence of popular liberty and the police rule have paralysed any positive popular movement. For that reason, the Congress requested the United Arab Republic authorities to establish democracy in both Regions.



The policy adopted by the Fourth Congress remained that of the Party until Secession -- except for July 1961, when the Ba'th approved the socialist Laws, with some reservations.

The Ba'th grievances could have been given some credit had the Ba'th not signed the Tripartite Union Accord of 1963. Were they really convinced that "the rule of the individual" and "the police rule" could be changed by the simple fact that the Ba'th have stepped in with a new formula for union? Was the Declaration of the Union Accord of 1963 a sufficient guarantee against "the step into the unknown,"<sup>74</sup> as they called the previous Union? It is true that in the 1963 agreement,<sup>75</sup> the Ba'th saw many of their conditions adopted -- such as the Unionist Front within each component State, collective leadership,<sup>76</sup> etc... But the Ba'th should have known that, within the Front they were advocating, their position would be weak and would resemble that of the years 1958-1960. It was mainly over the formation of this front in Syria that this latter broke away from the still-born Federation. It is a fact that the Ba'th wanted to rule:<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Zouhour, Fi al-Fikr . . ., Yassinal-Hafez, "Hawl Tajribat Hizb al-Ba'th," p. 176.

<sup>75</sup>Declaration of the Union Accord, 1963.

<sup>76</sup>That front was to include Arab Nationalists, the Ba'th, the Socialist Unionists, and the United Arab Front.

<sup>77</sup>The United Arab Republic, Statement by the Arab Socialist Union, Information Department (Cairo, Sep. 28, 1963), p. 4 (Arabic).

this is but a natural objective of any political party. That is why the Ba'th became suspicious of any form of Union where the "equality of components" is not safeguarded.<sup>78</sup>

Where the Ba'th could be blamed is the inconsistency of their thinking. In 1956, 'Aflak said that if Nasser disappears, the Arabs will fall backward for years.<sup>79</sup> After 1959, Nasser became a "dictator".<sup>80</sup> In October 1963, the Ba'th refused any union under the leadership of Nasser.<sup>81</sup> Finally in June 1965 Nasser became a "traitor".<sup>82</sup>

The Ba'th became uncertain whether or not the Arab masses were ready for revolution. A few days before the proclamation of the Union, 'Aflak said that the events which had happened in Syria and Egypt in the late fifties had completed the awakening of the masses.<sup>83</sup> Bitar also made a similar statement in 1957.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Salah ed-Din al-Bitar's Televised Press Conference, May 29, 1963, Arab Political Documents, 1963, (Beirut: The Political Studies and Public Administration Department of the American University of Beirut, 1963), p. 279.

<sup>79</sup> 'Aflak's statement, Nov. 9, 1956, Ma'rakat al-Masir..., p. 111.

<sup>80</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th..., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat..., p. 122.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Hayat (Beirut daily), oct. 29, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> During a popular meeting at Damascus held on June 2, 1965 and led by Amin al-Hafez and Munif ar-Razzaz, the new Secretary-General of the Ba'th Party, L'Orient (Beirut), June 4, 1965, p. 14.

<sup>83</sup> 'Aflak's statement, Dec. 6, 1957, Ma'rakat al-Masir..., pp. 181-82.

<sup>84</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th..., Vol. III: Al-Qitr as-Suri... p. 29.

But, since 1960, it seems that the Ba'th came to believe that the Arab masses had lost -- or had never really acquired -- such a quality, especially in Egypt where "the weakness in the level of awareness of the masses" was said to have contributed to the failure of the Union.<sup>85</sup> When the Union took place, said the Ba'th, the Authorities failed to organize the masses in such a way as to enable them to protect the revolution.<sup>86</sup> What they did instead, said the Ba'th Party High Command, was to extend to the Northern Region a bureaucracy which existed in the Southern Region, while the popular liberties were strangled.<sup>87</sup> This bureaucracy, according to the Ba'th, infiltrated the Army and the State -- the others being the Intelligence Service and the Police.<sup>88</sup> The popular forces were dismembered by "the rule of the individual," a fact which, they claimed, led to the failure of the Union.<sup>89</sup>

The Ba'th criticized also the form of Union which the United Arab Republic has adopted. 'Aflak reported in February

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<sup>85</sup>'Aflak, Ma'rakat al-Masir. . ., p. 201.

<sup>86</sup>Thawratuna, Wajhuna al'Arabi. . ., p. 29.

<sup>87</sup>Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV; Al-Qiyadat. . ., pp. 134, 142-43.

<sup>88</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 1st phase, 2d meeting (A.K. Zouhour), p. 17.

<sup>89</sup>The Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, "Bayan ila Jamahir al-Sha'b," May 1962 (pamphlet). The Ba'th were much criticized for the "regionalism" expressed in this statement; Husri, Al-Iqlimiyyat. . ., pp. 49, 81.

1962 that he was surprised when Nasser postponed shaping the form of Union till after the proclamation of the United Arab Republic.<sup>90</sup> But in February 1956, 'Aflak declared that his Party was for total union with Egypt;<sup>91</sup> and, in April 1956, he said that union between Syria and Egypt may be either a union or a federation.<sup>92</sup>

However, after their departure from the Union, the Ba'th denounced the unitary Union which was made up, wrote Al-Ahrar, of two Regions, while the State consisted of one Region a situation which led to a contradiction within the Republic.<sup>93</sup> The Congress which met in Homs in May, 1962 adopted a plan for a federation in an eventual union.<sup>94</sup> Sami al-Jundi (then Ba'thist) declared that any union which starts by total fusion will lead to failure.<sup>95</sup> The United Arab Republic, maintained the Ba'th, was a form of annexation where Egyptian regional

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<sup>90</sup>'Aflak, Ma'rakat al-Masir. . ., p. 195.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>93</sup>Al-Ahrar, March 27, 1964.

<sup>94</sup>"Bayan ila Jamahir. . ."

<sup>95</sup>Sami al-Jundi, a former Ba'th, was during the Union a "Nasserist". During Secession he became Socialist Unionist, and after the Ba'thist coup, March 8, 1963 joined the Ba'th. See his interview to L'Orient (Beirut), Oct. 4, 1963.

control over the Syrian Region was felt.<sup>96</sup> So, disagreeing with everything in the United Arab Republic, the Ba'th preferred to secede.

Two of the Ba'th leaders, Bitar and Haurani, signed the Manifesto of Secession ('Aridat al-Infisal),<sup>97</sup> though later Haurani alone was held responsible for that. On October 5, 1961, the Party High Command issued a statement in which it asserted that, had secession not occurred at <sup>the</sup> time it did, it was probably going to occur one day.<sup>98</sup> The Fourth Congress of October 1960 decided not to raise the standard of Union with the United Arab Republic or any other Arab State, but to work for union as a final objective and not as a political plan to be executed now.<sup>99</sup> In February, 1962 the Ba'th wrote that it was reactionary elements that had carried out the coup and that Secession was not an outcome of the failure of the Union, but a plot prepared by reaction.<sup>100</sup> This change of the Ba'th attitude was motivated by the fact that in September, 1961, they hoped to come back on the political scene, but, as the bourgeois regime was not willing to embark into Ba'th dogmatism, these latter started

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<sup>96</sup> "Bayán ila Jamahir. . ."

<sup>97</sup> Abdel-Rahim, Qiyadat Hizb al-Ba'th. . ., p. 45.

<sup>98</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. VI: Al-Qiyadat al-Qawmiyat; 1961-1963, p. 12.

<sup>99</sup> Nidal al-Ba'th. . ., Vol. IV: Al-Qiyadat. . ., p. 196.

<sup>100</sup> Aflak, Ma'rakat al-Masir. . ., p. 204.

to attack secession after having been the first group to secede from the United Arab Republic.

The inconsistency of the Ba'th behavior became even more obvious when they came to power in March, 1963. They have condemned Nasser's undemocratic rule and criticized him for having attacked political parties; but as soon as the Ba'th got hold of the government in Syria, they were determined "to crush" their opponents "like dogs."<sup>101</sup> The democratic liberties they were requesting from Nasser, came to mean the liberty of the Ba'th Party to strengthen its hold over Syria. However, the Ba'th did not openly express their objectives; or, when they did, they did so vaguely. Even when they came to power, they were still unclear about the policy to adopt towards certain problems. For instance, the Sixth Party Congress of October 5-23, 1963 called for the separation of the Party from the State while at the same time it entrusted the Party with the general policy of the State.<sup>102</sup> What does separation of the Party from the State mean when the Eighth

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<sup>101</sup>Amin al-Hafez speech following the Ba'th nationalization in Syria on Jan. 26, 1965, L'Orient (Beirut), Jan. 27, 1965, pp. 1, 12.

<sup>102</sup>Al-Hayat, Oct. 29, 1963, p. 3.

Party Congress (June 11-13, 1965)<sup>103</sup> was held in order to decide the policy of the Syrian government, and when the first resolution of that Congress was that power was to be exercised in the name of the Party.

The break between Nasser and the Ba'th was inevitable. It was a struggle for power over the Syrian Region; a crisis of non-confidence during which the Ba'th Party became a "fascist party" and a "liar" according to its former partner,<sup>104</sup> while this latter became a "dictator" in the opinion of his past allies. It was also a clash between two ideologies, though during the Union the contest was over leadership rather than over theories as already suggested. Nasser said that, during the Union, he felt that there were two or more Ba'th Parties and that any favour which he did to one of them, was likely to annoy the other.<sup>105</sup> It is a fact that intra-party quarrels and the dissidence of leaders are common features of

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<sup>103</sup>L'Orient (Beirut), June 12, 1965, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup>Nasser's speech, July 22, 1965 (radio). An-Nahar, July 23, 1965, p. 7. Statement by the Arab Socialist Union, September 18, 1963, Information Department, (Cairo, 1963).

<sup>105</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 2d meeting, p. 151.

the Ba'th Party; these features were manifest also during the Union, although the Party was dissolved.<sup>106</sup>

But, despite their shortcomings and errors, the sincerity of the Ba'th and their faithfulness to the Arab cause cannot be doubted. For their part, the Ba'th should follow the advice of one of their leaders -- who admonished them to put aside their fanatic partisanship and to be more open minded to other unionist forces.<sup>107</sup> It is unfortunate that energies, which could have been used against their common enemy, were and still are used to dismember further an Arab front already disintegrated.

#### B. The Communists

Union between Syria and Egypt took place when the Syrian Communist Party was rising in the firmament of Syria.<sup>108</sup> The Syrian Communists knew from the start that Nasser who had beaten the Communists at home,<sup>109</sup> was not going to tolerate

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<sup>106</sup> Aflak as it seems cannot tolerate a strong man in the Party. See An-Nahar, March 3, 1964; March 1, 1964, pp. 1, 2, 7.

<sup>107</sup> Dr. Jamal al-Atassi's interview granted to l'Orient (Beirut), June 23, 1963, p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> The Syrian Communist Party cannot be isolated from the Iraqi and Lebanese Communists who were during the Union the spokesman of the Syrian Communists.

<sup>109</sup> Speeches, 1952-1958. . ., speech, April, 19, 1954, pp. 125-26; interview granted to the United Press in the Middle East on Sep. 13, 1954, p. 220; speech, August 21, 1954, p. 203; interview granted to Look (American magazine), June 14, 1957, p. 656. Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 3rd meeting, pp. 160-61. Keith Wheelock, Nasser's New Egypt (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), pp. 49-52.



their activities in Syria. But the tide for Union in 1958 was so strong in Syria that the Communists did not dare oppose it. In fact, the Syrian Communist Party, as well as all Arab Communists, have not been sincere advocates of Arab Unity.<sup>110</sup> The literature of the Syrian Communist Party did not consider Arab Unity as one of its major goals. Arab Unity meant for their leader Bakdash, in 1943, rapprochement and co-operation between the Arab States in the economic and cultural fields.<sup>111</sup> While in his electoral speech of 1954, Bakdash declared that the two major issues were democracy and liberty.<sup>112</sup> This attitude was also that of the Soviet Union; but when this latter began to admit, at least publicly, the idea of Arab nationalism, the Syrian Communist Party followed suit. The reason behind the change was the advent of the Baghdad Pact. It was this Pact, much more than the Israeli raids on Arab territory, which made the Soviet Union welcome the Arab national aspirations and determined it to bless the Arms Deal (September,

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<sup>110</sup>For further reading about this period see Al-Hakam Darwazat, Al-Shuyu'iyat al-Mahaliyat wa Ma'rakat al-'Arab al-Qawmiyat (3rd ed.; Beirut: Muneimneh Library, 1963), pp. 110-11, 132-59, 161-69. Murkos, Tarikh al-Ahzab al-Shuyu'iyat, pp. 83-93.

<sup>111</sup>Khaled Bakdash, Ba'du Masa'ilina al-Qawmiyat, (Damascus: Manshourat Sawt al-Sha'b, 1943), pp. 9, 16.

<sup>112</sup>Bakdash, "Khitab Khaled Bakdash fi al-Mahrajan al-Intikhabi. . ."

1955). So that in October, 1955 Bakdash declared in the Syrian Parliament that "the Arabs form one nation";<sup>113</sup> and in May, 1956 the Communist Party Command emphasized that "Arab Unity is a necessary need" and "an outcome of historical evolution."<sup>114</sup> However, the consternation of the Communists at the Unity negotiations of 1956-1958 proved that the Communists did not expect union to occur effectively. Until then, they had used Arab Unity as a sign-board for their activities; but when union between Syria and Egypt became imminent, they could not but acclaim it. Bakdash, then member of Parliament, declared, in his name and in that of his Party, their support to that "great event", namely the Government decision to negotiate with Egypt with a view to eventual federation between the two States,<sup>115</sup> while Khaled al-'Azam said that the Government decision expressed the wishes of all parties.<sup>116</sup> The only known obstruction which the Communists

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<sup>113</sup>Extracts from Bakdash's speech in the Syrian Parliament, Murkos, Tarikh al-Ahzab al-Shuyu'iyat. . ., Appendix, p. 237.

<sup>114</sup>Darwazat, Al-Shuyu'iyat al-Mahaliyat. . ., pp. 165-66.

<sup>115</sup>The Syrian Republic, O.G. Parliamentary Minutes, June-August 14, 1956, 4th Extraordinary Sess., 9th Sess. June 5, 1956, pp. 157, 163 (Bakdash's speech).

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

tried to exert at that time was their support for a federation instead of total merger.<sup>117</sup> However, when the Union was proclaimed, the Syrian Communist Party preferred not to isolate itself and so issued several leaflets in support of the United Arab Republic, a support which was more apparent than real and was anyhow shortlived. Bakdash, who a few months before had welcomed the Union, did not attend the Parliamentary session of November 17, 1957 when Parliament voted for the Union, nor did he attend that of February 5, 1958, when President Quwatly announced the birth of the United Arab Republic.<sup>118</sup> He left Syria soon after the proclamation of the United Arab Republic to start his offensive against the Union (though on February 2, 1958 he had given his support to that same Union<sup>119</sup>). At the Bulgarian Communist Party Congress (June 1958), he criticized the form of the Union and requested, besides the National Assembly, a popular council for each Region to be constituted by free elections.<sup>120</sup> This reaction

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<sup>117</sup>Extracts from Bakdash's interview to the Syrian Communist daily An-Nour, Feb. 3, 1958, Murkos, Tarikh al-Ahzab al-Shuyu'iyat. . . , p. 256.

<sup>118</sup>The Syrian Republic, O.G., Parliamentary Minutes, Oct. 14, 1957-Feb. 5, 1958, Sess. Nov. 17, 1957, pp. 367-83; Sess., Feb. 5, 1958, pp. 1-8.

<sup>119</sup>Darwazat, Al-Shuyu'iyat al-Mahaliyat. . . , p. 188.

<sup>120</sup>Extracts from Bakdash Speeches during 1958, Al-Akhbar, Oct. 8, 1961, p. 2. "Discours de M. Khaled Bakdash, Secrétaire Général du parti communiste syro-libanais au congrès du parti communiste bulgare, Juin 1958," Cahiers de l'Orient. . . , Vol. XXXVIII, Documents, p. 412-15.

expressed the Communists' disillusionment: no Communist was allowed to participate in the first government; Khaled al-'Azam was removed from the political scene; and, last but not least, General 'Afif al-Bizri was forced to resign from the First Army Command<sup>121</sup> -- the reason given for his removal was his intention to place Communist officers in key positions within the Army.<sup>122</sup> But, despite the resentment of the Syrian Communist leaders, the Syrian Communist daily, An-Nour, was loaded, during the first few months of the Republic, with articles in favour of the Union. The real stand of the Communists was freely expressed in the Lebanese Communist paper Al-Akhbar. This latter wrote that the role of "progressive parties" should not end with the proclamation of the Union; and that a federation would better suit the two countries.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, the communists did not open fire on the United Arab Republic till after the Iraqi Revolution -- when Qassem, strengthened by the Soviet Union, stepped in as the champion of Communists in the Arab World. From then on, the Communists carried on an uninterrupted campaign against the United Arab

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<sup>121</sup>Presidential decree of April 21, 1958, U2A.R., O.G., 1958, No. 8 (May 1, 1958), p. 5.

<sup>122</sup>Muhammad Hassanein Haykal, Ma al-ladhi Jara fi Suriyat ? (Cairo: Ad-Dar al-Qawmiyat lit-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr, 1962), pp. 79-81.

<sup>123</sup>Al-Akhbar, Feb. 3, 1958, p. 1. The Arab World, Feb. 4, 1958, p. 10.

Republic even when the relations between the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic were friendly. In fact, the only time that the Kremlin and the Syrian Communist Party adopted an identical hostile attitude towards the United Arab Republic was during the polemic of January-April, 1959 and that of May 31-June 5, 1961 between the United Arab Republic and the Soviet Union. Though Khrushchev did not approve Nasser's suppression of the Communists, he preferred not to identify the Soviet Union policy with the fate of local Communists especially after the straining of relations between it and the United Arab Republic (March-April, 1959). The Soviet Union hoped ~~by that~~ to appear as a disinterested power and hence gain Arab public opinion. On the other hand, Nasser and many Arab nationalists were, and still are, determined to distinguish between Communism and the Soviet Union.<sup>124</sup> For instance, Nasser attacked the Syrian Communist Party on December 23, 1958 for agitating against Arab nationalism and Arab Unity<sup>125</sup> while a few months earlier (October 21, 1958), 'Amer in Moscow praised the "sympathy" and

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<sup>124</sup>Speeches, 1958. . ., speech at Uzbekistan, May 4, 1958; speeches, May 16 and May 30, 1958; speech, April 30, 1958; interview granted to the Middle East News Agency, March 16, 1958. Speeches, 1959. . ., interview granted to R.K. Karanjia, April 17, 1959, p. 542. Muhammed Fawzi and Mahmoud Hafez, Dirasat fi al-Qawmiyat al-'Arabiyyat, Vol. I (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglo al-Masriyyat, n.d.), p. 178.

<sup>125</sup>Speech, Dec. 23, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., p. 353.

the "understanding" of the Soviet Union towards the Arab political struggle.<sup>126</sup>

In the light of such positions, the "real danger" which Hottinger speaks of, namely that a modern Arab State might copy to such an extent the political, social, and economic system of the Soviet Union that a "Soviet Anschluss" might take place,<sup>127</sup> does not exist. The success of the Soviet Union or even of Communist China among the Arabs is not primarily related to any internal problem within the Arab World, but is rather conditioned by an eventual threat which might face the Arabs and by the subsequent support of these States to the Arabs. In that respect, we have to remember that in 1955, Egypt bought arms from the Soviet Union when Israel attacked it and when the West refused to arm it; and that Egypt recognized Communist China when the West armed Israel.<sup>128</sup> So it is their legitimate need for defense against Israel and its Allies which make the Arabs search for a friendly nation -- and not for the adoption of a foreign ideology whether indirectly or through an

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<sup>126</sup>"Khitab 'Amer fi Moscow," October 21, 1958, The Soviet News, Vol. 37, Supplement (Oct. 26, 1958).

<sup>127</sup>Arnold Hottinger, The Arabs (London: Thames & Hudson, 1963), p. 299.

<sup>128</sup>Muhammed Hassanein Haykal, Al-'Uqad an-Nafsiyat al-lati Tahkum al-sharq al-Awsat (Cairo: Al-Sharikat al-'Arabiyyat Iit-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr, 1958), p. 82.

"anschluss." Nasser declared on January 27, 1958 that he was using the loans from the Soviet Union to build factories in order to combat Communism.<sup>129</sup> He also said on another occasion that he would attack the Soviet Union if it ever tries to exert pressure on him.<sup>130</sup> This has in fact occurred and Nasser did not hesitate to attack the Soviet Union (as will be shown in another place).

The relations between Nasser and the local Communists have never been good but they have never reached the point they attained in 1959. After the Iraqi Revolution and the subsequent rapprochement between Qassem and the Soviet Union, the Syrian Communists saw in Qassem their champion. They were encouraged by the Soviet Union which found in Qassem a better ally than Nasser -- for Nasser had proclaimed his independence vis-à-vis the East, and the West as well; had established friendly relations with Tito; and had dislocated the Communist Party of Egypt and that of Syria.<sup>131</sup> The Syrian Communists

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<sup>129</sup>Nasser's interview granted to the American Editors and Commentators on Jan. 27, 1958, Speeches, 1958. . ., p. 365.

<sup>130</sup>Press Conference held by Nasser at Athens on June 9, 1960, Speeches, April-June, 1960. . ., p. 134.

<sup>131</sup>Emile Delestre, "La République Arabe Unie face à l'Iraq et au Communisme," Orient (Paris), No. 9 (1er trimestre, 1959), p. 14.

wavered for few months between support, implicit criticism, and open hostility, till they finally chose this latter. According to Nasser, the Communists started agitating in September 1958;<sup>132</sup> and it was at that time, disclosed Nasser later, that a plot was prepared by Bizri and Bakdash to transform Syria into a Communist Soviet.<sup>133</sup> Nasser did not wait long to disseminate the Syrian Communists. It was reported that hundreds of Communists were arrested in the Syrian Region during January 1959.<sup>134</sup> Consequently, the silent struggle which was going on between Cairo and Moscow during December, 1958 became an open and violent quarrel towards the end of January, 1959.

During the Twenty-First Communist Party Congress held between January 27 and February 5, 1959 at Moscow, Khrushchev -- in his capacity as a Communist, not as Premier of the Soviet Union -- could not but defend the Communists against Nasser's attacks which he condemned as "reactionary . . . naive . . . /and/ unreasonable acts."<sup>135</sup> At that Congress too, Khaled

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<sup>132</sup>Speech, Nov. 26, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 477.

<sup>133</sup>Interview to R.K. Karanjia, April 17, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 536. Al-Ahram, April 18, 1959, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>134</sup>Cahiers de l'Orient. . ., Vol. XXXIX, Chronique et documents (Jan. 15, 1959), p. 63. Deadline Data, Jan. 1959.

<sup>135</sup>Orient (Paris), No. 9 (1er trimestre, 1959), pp. 123-24. Similar criticisms were made by Fouad Nasr, Secretary of the Jordanian Communist Party, and Nicolas Shawi, Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party, pp. 125-28.



Bakdash reminded "the Syrian people" that without the support of the Communist Party, the Syrian national struggle would have failed.<sup>136</sup> On another occasion, Bakdash warned the Syrian people against joining battle with the Communist Party in Syria; this battle, he said, profited only imperialism, since it was an "imperialist game."<sup>137</sup> Bakdash resentment was natural; he could not leave without regret or grudge a political scene where he had played an active role before Union. He also harshly criticized the Ba'th, whom he termed as "adventurers . . . spies . . . and trouble makers."<sup>138</sup> The Ba'th were reminded that they had collaborated with all the dictators of Syria,<sup>139</sup> and were accused for their contribution in the failure of Union.<sup>140</sup>

The Communists condemned what they called "the hysterical campaign" against them, in which they saw a mask to cover the bad economic situation in the Syrian Region.<sup>141</sup> So they

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<sup>136</sup> Al-Akhbar, Feb. 8, 1959, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Akhbar, Jan. 11, 1959, pp. 1,2; Jan. 18, 1959, p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> Al-Akhbar, Jan. 25, 1959, pp. 1, 2, 8, 10.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Feb. 1, 1959, pp. 1,8.

<sup>140</sup> "Appel du Parti Communiste syrien au peuple de Syrie," Orient (Paris), No. 13 (1er trimestre, 1960), pp. 147-53.

<sup>141</sup> Al-Akhbar, Feb. 15, 1959, pp. 1, 8.

continued unswervingly their attacks against the United Arab Republic and its leaders. Consequently the relations between the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic were strained. But as neither Nasser nor Khrushchev wished a break, so they attempted to remedy the situation by exchanging friendly messages and addresses;<sup>142</sup> nevertheless and despite their goodwill, their relations deteriorated following Colonel Shawaf's abortive uprising of March 8, 1959 in Iraq<sup>143</sup> and the subsequent attitude of Khrushchev. Thus a political crisis arose between Nasser and Khrushchev and lasted for two months, from March to April, 1959. Khrushchev accused Nasser on March

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<sup>142</sup>Nasser's speech, Feb. 21, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., pp. 33-35. For text of Khrushchev's speech of Feb. 24, 1959, see Orient (Paris), No. 9 (1er trimestre, 1959), p. 139.

<sup>143</sup>Colonel Shawaf rose in Mossoul on March 8, 1959 against Qassem but the uprising was crushed. Qassem accused Nasser for instigating the uprising, Al-Akhbar, March 15, 1959, p. 1. Nasser rejected Qassem's allegation and described Shawaf's uprising as a reaction to Qassem's terroristic rule, Nasser's speech March 15, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., p. 152. Amin Said, Al-Jumhuriyat al-'Arabiyyat al-Muttahidat, Vol. II (U.A.R.: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyat, 'Issa al-Baba al-Halabi & Co., 1960), pp. 249-30. "L'affaire Mossoul," Orient (Paris), no. 9 (1er trimestre, 1959), pp. 161-64.

16, 1959, of attempting to attach Iraq to the United Arab Republic.<sup>144</sup> Nasser retaliated, on March 17, 1959 by denouncing Khrushchev's interference which he said was a challenge to the unanimous will of the people.<sup>145</sup> Khrushchev retorted by describing Nasser as a "hotheaded" young man who took upon himself more than he could bear.<sup>146</sup> The polemic was thus heated. Nasser blamed the Soviet Union for encouraging the Communists of the United Arab Republic to act as a fifth column in the Arab World.<sup>147</sup> He denounced the Syrian Communist Party for receiving instructions from abroad, and accused Qassem of protecting it.<sup>148</sup> That Party, said Nasser, could not forgive the Union for having thwarted its plan, namely the establishment of a Communist government in Syria.<sup>149</sup> According to Nasser, this plan was prepared after the Iraqi Revolution, and aimed at creating a Communist fertile crescent made of Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Kuwait.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Extracts from Khrushchev's speech at the Kremlin, March 16, 1959, Orient (Paris), No. 9 (1er trimestre, 1959) pp. 151-54.

<sup>145</sup>Speech, March 17, 1959, Speeches, 1959 . . . , p. 159.

<sup>146</sup>Khrushchev's interview granted to the American Agency on March 19, 1959, Orient (Paris), No. 9 (1er trimestre, 1959) pp. 157-58.

<sup>147</sup>Speech, April 25, 1959, Speeches, 1959 , pp. 224, 230.

<sup>148</sup>Speech, March 12, 1959, Speeches, 1959 . . . , p. 127.  
Speech, Feb. 16, 1960, Speeches, January-March, 1960 . . . , p. 36.

<sup>149</sup>Speech, March 30, 1959, Speeches, 1959 . . . , p. 200.

The eradication of the Communists by Nasser, especially in the Northern Region,<sup>151</sup> was not impeded when friendly relations were re-established between the United Arab Republic and the Soviet Union.<sup>152</sup>

For their part, the Syrian Communists were displeased with everything within the Republic.<sup>153</sup> With Bakdash in the forefront, they requested more than once the formation of a national front to be made of "progressive national elements," and which would save Syria from "anarchy and dictatorship."<sup>154</sup> They also asked for a reconsideration of the basis and the form of union with Egypt.<sup>155</sup> Nasser's despotism, said they, was a

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<sup>150</sup> Interview granted to R.K. Karanjia on April 17, 1959, Speeches, 1959. . ., pp. 536-37; and speech, March, 13, 1959, p. 131.

<sup>151</sup> Al-Akhbar: March 22, 1958, p. 2; April 5, 1959, pp. 1, 7; April 12, 19, 1959, pp. 1, 1 and 4 respectively; May 17, 1959, pp. 1, 8; August 20, 1959, p. 2; and Sep. 6, 1959 pp. 1, 7-8.

<sup>152</sup> Al-Ahram, May 19, 1959, pp. 1-2. Cahiers de l'Orient... Vol. XL, Chronique et documents (August 7, 1959), p. 233.

<sup>153</sup> I'tirafat al-Shuyu'iyin as-Suriyyin (2 Vols.; Cairo: Ad-Dar al-Qawmiyat lit-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr, 1959).

<sup>154</sup> Al-Akhbar: Dec. 12, 1959, pp. 1, 8 (Bakdash's speech in the 7th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Party); Feb. 14, 1960, p. 1 (Bakdash's speech in the 9th Congress of the Italian Communist Party); August 21, 1960, p. 1; Jan. 17, 1960, p. 1; and Nov. 3, 1963, p. 9.

<sup>155</sup> Al-Akhbar: Jan. 1, 1961, p. 1; Oct. 8, 1961, pp. 1-4.

means to Egyptianize Syria.<sup>156</sup> It was through this domination, wrote Al-Akhbar, that Nasser tried to divide Syria.<sup>157</sup> This policy was expressed by the local administration which they said was imposed to divide the national entity of Syria as had been done before by the Ottoman and French administrations.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, claimed the Communists, the Egyptianization of Syria led to the ill-treatment of the Syrians by the Egyptians; and it was this fact which, they said, has determined the Syrians to liberate themselves from the Egyptians.<sup>159</sup>

The most paradoxical criticism against the United Arab Republic was the Communist's blame of Nasser for what they called his suppression of democratic liberties, such as the press, associations, and meetings.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Extracts from "Appel du Parti Communiste," Orient (Paris), No. 18 (2e trimestre, 1961), pp. 207-210. "Manifeste du Général Afif al-Bizri, Mai 10, 1959" Orient (Paris), No. 10 (2e trimestre, 1959), p. 208. Al-Akhbar, August 28, 1960, p. 2; and Nov. 6, 1960, pp. 1, 8, Sep. 11, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> Al-Akhbar, Sep. 24, 1961, p. 7.

<sup>158</sup> Al-Akhbar, Oct. 11, 1959, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>159</sup> Al-Akhbar, Oct. 8, 1961, p. 1; declaration of the Syrian Communist Party, Al-Akhbar, Oct. 1, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>160</sup> Hassib Nimr, "Dans la pyramide de la démocratie la base doit prendre la place du sommet. Juillet, 1959" Orient (Paris), No. 10 (2e trimestre, 1959), pp. 165-169. Al-Akhbar, April 19, 1959, pp. 1, 4 (Bakdash's interview to the French Communist daily, l'Humanité).

They condemned Nasser's regime, which they considered as an imperialist and dictatorial regime.<sup>161</sup> Nasser, they said, isolated himself from the people and governed Syria through a high commissioner ('Amer) and a totalitarian governor (Sarraj).<sup>162</sup> The "black terror" which, they said, the rulers installed in the Syrian Region was an outcome of the fear of the rulers from the wrath of the people.<sup>163</sup> Thousands of citizens were, according to Communist circles, in the Syrian prisons.<sup>164</sup> This campaign against the Communists was viewed by Bakdash as a cover to hide the protection given by the authorities to the reactionary forces, the imperialists, and the agents within the Arab World.<sup>165</sup> The Communists could not forgive the United Arab Republic leaders for the death of Ferjallah al-Helou and Artin Madoyan, two active

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<sup>161</sup>Al-Akhbar, Oct. 11, 1959, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>162</sup>Al-Akhbar, Sep. 25, 1960, pp. 1, 5.

<sup>163</sup>Al-Akhbar: Jan. 31, 1960, pp. 1, 8; Sep. 4, 1960, p. 1; Sep. 11, 1960, p. 1; Dec. 4, 18, 25, 1960, pp. 2, 2, and 1 respectively.

<sup>164</sup>Al-Akhbar, Oct. 4, 1959, pp. 1, 2 (Bakdash's speech at Peking in the presence of Mao-Tse Tung and Chou-en-Lai, Sep. 30, 1959). Cahiers de l'Orient. . . , Vol. XLVI, Chronique et documents (May, 1961), p. 277. Al-Akhbar: Jan. 8, 1961, p. 1; June 4, 1961, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>165</sup>Al-Akhbar, Oct. 4, 1959, pp. 1, 2 (Bakdash's speech at Peking).

Communists. The Communist literature concentrated for more than two years upon the former -- whose death in the Syrian Region created, in May and June, 1961, a crisis between the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic. Nasser rejected the allegation that Helou died in prison and said that he knew nothing about that man except what he had read in the papers.<sup>166</sup>

The "Pharaonic rule" (as they liked to call Nasser's rule) did not spare the workers because, wrote Al-Akhbar, the liberties of trade-unions were strangled: the workers could not present candidates for membership in trade-unions.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, they maintained that this right was given to the National Union.<sup>168</sup> This was a mockery, said they, because the National Union was made of feudalists and of members of the Intelligence Bureau and hence could not serve the cause of trade-unions.<sup>169</sup> They added that the workers of the Syrian

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<sup>166</sup>In his press conference at Ray Bhaven, April 10, 1960, Speeches, April-June, 1960. . ., p. 36. And in his interview granted to Columbia Broadcasting System & Television, August 25, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., pp. 208-209.

<sup>167</sup>Al-Akhbar, Sep. 4, 1960, p. 2.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Al-Akhbar, Feb. 7, 1960, pp. 1, 8.

Region were greatly harmed by the reduction of the daily hours of work to seven since many of these workers needed to work more than fifteen hours to make a living. Moreover, they said, bonuses were abolished; the 10 per cent share of the profit was insufficient; and the firms (according to the workers themselves, wrote Al-Akhbar) had become like military barracks, where the least error was severely punished by the officer in charge of the firm.<sup>170</sup>

The Northern Region faced a "massive unemployment," which the Communists attributed to three major reasons: the stagnant economy, the bankruptcy of some firms, and the interruption of work in several construction projects due to the rumours of nationalization of buildings.<sup>171</sup>

The fate of the peasants seemed, to the Communists, to be not brighter than that of the workers. Communist critics reported that the peasants were starving.<sup>172</sup> This was due, they said, to the maladministration of the Agrarian Reform and the resultant weak agricultural output;<sup>173</sup> and also to the consequences of the drought, such as the shortage of cereals

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<sup>170</sup> Al-Akhbar, August 20, 1961, p. 9; August 27, 1961, p. 9

<sup>171</sup> It was reported that during August 1961, there were 1,400 unemployed. Al-Akhbar, Nov. 1, 1959, pp. 1,5, reported that 50,000 workers went to Lebanon.

<sup>172</sup> Al-Akhbar, April 24, 1960, p. 1.

<sup>173</sup> Al-Akhbar, Oct. 27, 1960, pp. 1-2.



and the death of livestock, both of which could have been palliated had the government taken the appropriate measures in time.<sup>174</sup>

The general economy of the Syrian Region was another target of their criticisms. Bizri declared in May, 1959 that the deliberate stagnation of the economy had profited the Egyptian Region.<sup>175</sup> Similarly, the absence of hard currency was interpreted as a plot directed against the Syrian currency; and it was reported that L.S. 20 million were circulating unprotected.<sup>176</sup> The reason for that was the strangling of trade. That is why the Communists called for the opening of the "natural markets" of Syria.<sup>177</sup>

The economic policy of the United Arab Republic was also criticized for having allowed the Trojan Horse -- as they called the American loans -- to enter the Syrian Region.<sup>178</sup> Another criticism was what they called the precedence of foreign investments over national ones.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Al-Akhbar, Sep. 18, 1960, p. 7.

<sup>175</sup> Al-Akhbar, May 24, 1959, pp. 1,8. (extracts from Bizri's declaration. See also 'Afif al-Bizri, "At-Tami'oun Laysou Wahdewiyyin," Damascus, June 14, 1962 (pamphlet).

<sup>176</sup> Al-Akhbar, May 29, 1960, p. 1; Jan. 1, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>177</sup> Al-Akhbar: May 29, 1960, pp. 1,7; July 2, 1960, pp. 1,2; June 25, 1961, p. 1; July 23, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> Al-Akhbar, July 2, 1961, p. 7/

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., April 2, 1960, pp. 1,8; August 28, 1960, pp. 1,2; Oct.30, 1960, p. 1.

In sum, what Nasser's regime did in Syria (declared Bakdash on September 11, 1961) was as follows: the imperilment of the economy; the stagnation of trade; the decrease of agricultural output; unemployment; high prices; the loss of the workers' gains; the weakening of the Army; the suppression of democratic liberties; despotism; and the spread of libertinage, opium, and anarchy.<sup>180</sup>

The Communists' hostility to the United Arab Republic was a natural consequence of their ideology : Arab Unity has no value if it is accomplished outside the Communist orbit. How could the communists admit the existence of a National Union and believe in its efficiency when they often said that the National Union can succeed only in a society like that of the Soviet Union where society is not made of contradictions and hence the National Union itself would be free of contradictions.<sup>181</sup> Or how could they accept a president who has declared on more than one occasion that he accepts the friendship of the Soviet Union but rejects the activities of local Communists in his country. How could the Communists be conciliated with Arab nationalism when nationalism is for them

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18      <sup>180</sup> Bakdash's declaration, Al-Akhbar, Oct. 8, 1961, p. 4.

<sup>181</sup> Al-Akhbar, April 19, 1959, p. 4.

the creature of the bourgeoisie? However, at no time did they attack the idea of Unity which had drawn together Syria and Egypt. They were careful to point out to the mistakes of the Union and to condemn them as having been the causes of its failure, so as to appear as supporters of the Union of 1958-1961 but without its shortcomings. So, in order to avoid such shortcomings, said Bakdash, the special circumstances of each Arab State must be taken into consideration in any eventual union.<sup>182</sup> But in reality the intentions of Bakdash and his friends are not difficult to be comprehended especially when for them Arab Unity is before anything else the "liberation from imperialism."<sup>183</sup>

#### C. The Secessionists

The Secessionists<sup>184</sup> were made up, mainly, of the Syrian Bourgeoisie. They included also all those who opposed Nasser's regime during the Union — excluding the Ba'th, the Communists, and the military officers.

The fact that this principally bourgeois group took over after the break-up of the Union gave the coup its reactionary

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<sup>182</sup>Extracts from Bakdash declaration made during Jan. 1958, Al-Akhbar, 8, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>183</sup>Bakdash's speech at the 21st Congress at Moscow (Jan. 25-Feb. 5, 1959), Al-Akhbar, Feb. 8, 1959, pp. 1,8.

<sup>184</sup>They formed a class rather than a group.

colour. Nasser viewed the Coup as a reaction against the social revolution of July, 1961;<sup>185</sup> and as a coup supported by foreign elements.<sup>186</sup> These accusations were rejected by the Secessionists.<sup>187</sup> These latter claimed that the Coup aimed at saving the true meaning of unity from the deviation into which it fell under the Union,<sup>188</sup> and at re-establishing democracy and liberty.<sup>189</sup> As to the authors of the Coup, they declared that during the 'Amer-Sarraaj quarrel of September 18-28, 1961, 'Amer mobilized the Army to occupy certain public buildings; and it was these same troops which carried the Coup,

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<sup>185</sup>Speeches, 1961. . ., speech at the Opening of the Preparatory Committee of the National Congress for Popular Powers, Nov. 25, 1961.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid., speech; Dec. 23, 1961; and speech, Sep. 29, 1961, pp. 349-59, and p. 266 respectively. Adly Hishad and Attieh 'Abdel-Jawad, Sugout al-Infisal (Cairo: Ad-Dar al-Qawmiyat lit-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr /1963/), pp. 56-57.

<sup>187</sup>Dr. Mustafa Baroudi (then Minister of State for Propaganda, Information, Radio, and Television), text of his declaration in Munajjed, Suriyat wa Masr. . ., p. 223. An-Nasr, August, 10, 1962.

<sup>188</sup>Wahdatuna al-Kubra. . ., pp. 31-32.

<sup>189</sup>An-Nasr, August 17, 1962.

because they were certain that they would find support among the Army and all political factions.<sup>190</sup>

Like most Syrians, the Secessionists had unconditionally supported the proclamation of the Union; but they had come, later on, to denounce the entire regime of Nasser. The various official statements and communiqués issued after the Coup, gave the official reasons for secession;<sup>191</sup> while, on the popular level, an important literature appeared dealing with the failure of Union.<sup>192</sup>

Prime Minister Ma'moun al-Kuzbari explained that the reasons behind secession were the shackling of constitutional liberties, the removal of honest citizens, the dictatorial rule, and the various decrees which harmed the economy.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> In fact most of the officers who carried the Coup belonged to 'Amer's office in Damascus, some of these were Colonel 'Abdel-Karim an-Nahlawi, Major Muwaffaq 'Asasa and Major Hisham 'Abd Rabbo. An-Nahar, Sep. 28, 1962.

<sup>191</sup> See Haqiqat al-Thawrat wa-Ahdafulha in two volumes which was published by the Directorate of Public Affairs and Moral Guidance of the Syrian Arab Army in 1961. This work includes most of the communiqués and declarations of the Secessionist Government and the High Arab Revolutionary Command of the Armed Forces, till Oct. 1961.

<sup>192</sup> The Syrian press, between Sep. 1961 and March 1963. Many books were written by Secessionist, such as the Black Book, the Red Book (Arabic), and others. Some of these will be mentioned in this section.

<sup>193</sup> An-Nahar, Sep. 30, 1961.

The suppression of public liberties was mentioned by almost all Secessionist groups as having been the measure which caused the greatest harm to the Union.<sup>194</sup> It was the Provisional Constitution which, they said, heralded the dictatorial rule by its vagueness.<sup>195</sup> President Quwatly said that the system of government was a "police system"<sup>196</sup> and an executioner of the people.<sup>197</sup> During the Shtaura meeting,<sup>198</sup> the Syrian delegates accused Nasser of having used the State of War with Israel to impose martial law, under which many atrocities were committed (such as arrest without warrant and torture of

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<sup>194</sup>President Nazem al-Qoudsi's speech in Damascus, An-Nasr, August 10, 1962. Dr. Ma'moun al-Kuzbari's declaration, An-Nasr, August 9, 1962. An-Nasr, Nov. 19, 1962, An-Nahar, June 20, 1962, published a statement which, though unsigned, was attributed to Haurani.

<sup>195</sup>Arabi, Madha Yajri fi Suriyat. . ., pp. 202-205. .Muttale' /pseud./, As-Sarraj wa-Mu'amarat an-Nasiriyat /more commonly known as the Red book/ (2d ed.; Damascus: Dar al-Hayat li-s-Sahafat wa-t-Tiba'at wa-n-Nashr /1962/), pp. 126-27.

<sup>196</sup>Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . ., pp. 230-34.

<sup>197</sup>Salah ed-Din Shukry, Fada'eh al-Mu'amarat an-Nasiriyat (Damascus: Maktab as-Sahafat lil-Sharq al-'Arabi /1962/), p. 4.

<sup>198</sup>The Council of the Arab League met in Lebanon at Shtaura to examine Syria's complaint against the United Arab Republic (August, 1962).

of citizens at the hand of Nazi experts).<sup>199</sup> Some went as far as to mention the names of those Nazis who were allegedly given Arab names.<sup>200</sup> The said "Nazis" brought to torture the twenty thousand prisoners of the Northern Region, maintained a Secessionist spokesman.<sup>201</sup>

Another grievance, also mentioned by all Secessionists, was the presence of Egyptians in Syria. They felt that 'Amer's presence in Syria was a means to strike at Haurani and his group; Colonel Hamzawi (head of the Egyptian Criminal Investigation Bureau) was sent to watch Sarraj, and Major Hussein 'Abdel-Majid, General Anwar al-Qadi, and others (all Egyptians)

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<sup>199</sup> Abdel-Nasser Bada' fi Dimashq wa-Intaha fi Shtaura, ed. Al-Akhbar (Syrian daily) (Damascus; Alef Ba' al-Adib /1962 or 1963/), K. al-Kallas, the Syrian representative, at the seventh meeting, p. 173. Cited hereafter as Shtaura... An-Nasr, Jan. 6, 1962 (Statement by A. Nafouri, Minister of Land reform). An-Nasr, Dec. 24, 1962. The regulation of the Martial Law was done through the following Presidential Decrees : No 162 of Sep. 27, 1958 and No. 1174 of Sep. 27, 1958, U.A.R., O.G., 1958, No. 29, bis (b) and (c) (Sep. 29, 1958), pp. 1-3 and 1 respectively.

<sup>200</sup> Ibrahim Shureiqy, Ad-Dictatoriyat wa-l-Isti'mar (Damascus: Matba'at Dar al-Jami'at /1962/), p. 32 He gives the following names : Yohanes Von Leerss (Amin Othman), Hantz Heirch (Ahmed Hussein), Lans Schmith (Mustafa Hassan). Cahiers de l'Orient..., Vol. XLVII, Chronique et documents (Dec. 29, 1961), p. 411, reported that Radip Damascus announced the presence in Syria of three former members of the Gestapo who were given to Sarraj by Nasser. The most prominent was said to be Georges Fisher, former associate of Eichman.

<sup>201</sup> Ghadri, Al-Kitab al-Aswad..., pp. 92-93. Nasser denied the existence of more than 95 political prisoners; speech, Oct. 2, 1961, Speeches, 1961..., p. 276.

were said to have been given key posts in the First Army.<sup>202</sup> It was reported that there were thirty-five thousand Egyptian officers and soldiers in the Northern Region.<sup>203</sup> Colonel Haidar al-Kuzbari, one of the authors of the coup, declared that there was a plan aiming at receiving three hundred thousand Egyptian fellahs in the Jezira province.<sup>204</sup> Nasser denied this allegation, insisting that the Egyptian officers were on the battlefield in the Northern Region, while Egyptian civilians were engineers, doctors, and teachers, all of whom were needed in the Southern Region but were sent to the Northern Region where they were also needed.<sup>205</sup>

Being advocates of the free enterprise system, the Secessionists were dissatisfied with Nasser's economic policy. In this respect, Khalil al-Kallas issued a statement in which he denied that Syria's Treasury was in deficit in 1958, as held

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<sup>202</sup>An-Nasr, Sep. 27, 1962.

<sup>203</sup>Al-Ayyam, Nov. 25, 1962. The Arab World reported on April 1, 1958, p. 7, that a mission of Egyptian policemen was sent to occupy certain police duties in the Northern Region.

<sup>204</sup>An-Nasr, August 20, 1962, reproduced H. Kuzbari's declaration where he stated that he was sent in a mission headed by Gen. Zahreddin to disarm the tribes of Jezira a few days before the Coup so as to prevent any resistance when the Egyptian fellahs would arrive at Jezira.

<sup>205</sup>Speech, Oct. 2, 1961, Speeches, 1961. . ., pp. 282-83.



by Nasser in his speech of July 22, 1958. On the contrary, he said, Egypt was indebted to Syria.<sup>206</sup> In that same statement, Kallas exposed what he considered as the economic mistakes of the Union. His two main criticisms were directed towards the restriction of trade, which was responsible for Syria's need of hard currency, and towards the Five-Year Plan, which was designed without the Syrians' knowledge. Moreover, this Plan (said Kallas) provided for the Northern Region such industries as barrels and boxes. Kallas held also that the maritime transportation was monopolized by an Egyptian company. Another Secessionist claimed that air transportation was mobilized by the United Arab Airlines.<sup>207</sup>

The judicial system did not escape Nasser's undemocratic decisions, declared Ahmed Sultan, then Minister of Justice; Nasser blew up the judicial system, continued the said Minister, by abolishing the Court of Appeal and by establishing administrative courts for workers and peasants.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Khalil al-Kallas, "Aradnaha Wahdat wa-Aradouha Mazra'at" (Damascus: Matba'at al-Jumhuriyat, May 18, 1962). Pamphlet.

<sup>207</sup> Arabi, Madha Yajri fi Suriyat. . ., p. 30.

<sup>208</sup> Al-Jumhuriyat (Beirut), special issue, Sep. 28, 1962, pp. 8-9.

Nasser was accused of having lowered the standard of the educational system.<sup>209</sup> He was also blamed for having spent lavishly from the Treasury of the Northern Region, in order to instigate trouble in the Arab World.<sup>210</sup>

In sum, the Secessionists claimed that Syria had lost too much under the Union because the merger developed into "a matter of annexation" instead of becoming one of "sharing."<sup>211</sup> This belief was reflected in the plan which the Secessionists presented for future unity, and which provided for a loose confederation.<sup>212</sup>

In reality, and as in the case of the Communists, the conflict between the Secessionists and Nasser was not simply a matter of differences over mistakes; it was rather a clash between two different ways of thinking. For the Secessionists, any social reform performed at the expense of political liberties -- in the sense of parliament and political parties -- kills

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<sup>209</sup>An-Nasr, Jan. 8, 1963.

<sup>210</sup>Ghadri, Al-Kitab al-Aswad. . ., p. 39, where he reported that only during the Lebanese insurrection, the Syrian Treasury lost L.S. 500 million spent on the authors of the insurrection; on p. 60, Ghadri listed the name of these Lebanese: Rashid Karamé, Sabri Hamadé, Saeb Salam, Kamal Jumblat etc. . .

<sup>211</sup>Wahdatuna al-Kubra. . ., pp. 4-6.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-35 (The Syrian Address to the Nation from the High Arab Revolutionary Command and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, Oct. 10, 1961).

humanity,<sup>213</sup> while for Nasser, as we have seen, a hungry man cannot say "yes or no" and "political parties are means of exploitation."<sup>214</sup> The Secessionists Government expressed its belief in the individual effort.<sup>215</sup> This is a heresy in the eyes of Nasser's socialist co-operative system.

Having thus reviewed the main grievances of the Secessionists, we turn to inquire into the causes which enabled the Secessionists to break the Union.

First, the fact that the Secessionists were not alone in their discontent, gave them a free hand to act without fear of opposition in the Northern Region. Second, the officers who carried the Coup had thorough links with the Syrian Bourgeoisie, though they held important positions in the First Army. This was specially so in the case of Colonel 'Abdel-Karim an-Nahlawi, a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, and who reportedly also had links with Iraq. Similarly Colonel Haidar al-Kuzbari, one of the leaders of the Coup, was a relative to 'Adel al-Khuja, President of the "Five-Man Company". These officers were not

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<sup>213</sup>An-Nasr, Dec. 23, 1962 ('Azm's declaration on Dec. 21, 1962).

<sup>214</sup>See chaps. iv, A, n. 8; and iii, D, 1 of the present Thesis.

<sup>215</sup>Khaled al-'Azm's declaration, Dec. 15, 1962, An-Nasr, Dec. 16, 1962.

the only dissatisfied bloc within the First Army. As already mentioned, each Syrian political party had its own friends within the Army, thus, Ba'thists and Communist Army Officers did not oppose Secession. Third, though the Syrian Bourgeoisie was politically weakened in the pre-Union years, and though it received several blows during the Union, it had retained a certain vitality due to its economic power, which was manifested during the Union by the passivity of the Bourgeoisie and by the flight of capital. Finally, events in the Northern Region had reached a climax during the last two months of the Union so that time was ripe for action.

D. The Arab Nationalists

The movement of the Arab Nationalists started among the students of the American University of Beirut in 1948 and it then spread in the Arab World.<sup>216</sup>

The Arab Nationalists hold that the only way to put an end to poverty and social injustice is by uniting the Arab World.<sup>217</sup> They also advocate socialism -- although their active champion-

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<sup>216</sup> Alloush, Al-Thawrat . . . , pp. 54, 109-110, 145.

<sup>217</sup> L'Orient (Beirut), June 24, 1963, p. 4 (interview of Nuhad al-Qassem, "Nasserist" leader in Syria); and June 26, 1963, p. 5 (interview of Dr. Abdel-Wahab Hounad, Syrian "Nasserist").

ship of socialism is relatively recent, and does not go farther back than 1961.

This movement has supported Nasser and adopted all his stands. When Union was proclaimed, the Arab Nationalists in Syria identified themselves with Nasser's regime, a fact which conferred more liberties on their activities during the Union.

Unlike the Ba'th, the Conservatives, and the Communists, the Arab Nationalists did not suffer from the dissolution of the political parties, since they did not form a party and in any case did not have a strong base in Syria before 1958. In fact, it is after the proclamation of the Union that the Arab Nationalists started to strengthen themselves and to expand in Syria. However their political activities were in the form of cultural meetings; and officially their share in the regime was meagre. Few of them were elected to the National Union while only two were appointed to the National Assembly.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Personal interview with Mr. Al-Hakam Darwazat (Arab Nationalist and author of several political works) on June 29, 1965, Beirut.

They approved Nasser's economic and social policies, but they have admitted that the Union failed to organize the masses.<sup>219</sup> The National Union which was established for that purpose did not succeed for two main reasons, maintained the Arab Nationalists : first, this organization was too diffused within the masses, and second it inherited the contradictions of Syrian society, namely the feudalists, the bourgeois, the fundamentalists, the leftists, and others who were all included within it.<sup>220</sup> The Ba'th held a similar view but they rejected the National Union and the United Arab Republic altogether, while the Arab Nationalists preferred reforms within the framework of the United Arab Republic. The Ba'th offered their own party as an alternative to the National Union, while the Arab Nationalists felt that since they had no alternative to the National Union, it would be better to work towards the formation of a new popular organization. The Ba'th offered their own system to replace the "dictatorial rule" (as they called Nasser's rule), while the Arab Nationalists stood by the side of Nasser's regime. The Arab Nationalists feared that

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<sup>219</sup>Ibid.

<sup>220</sup>Ibid.

the break of the Union, by creating a vacuum, would profit the Right who were ready to step in.<sup>221</sup> In fact this was what happened in 1961. The Ba'thists were disorganized (we have seen how the party was torn by internal dissensions and how the party had not yet recovered since its dissolution); the Communists were also disorganized and their leaders either dead, imprisoned, or away from Syria; so that, when the Coup took place, the Conservatives (whom as already suggested, had kept a certain vitality) stepped in and took the situation in hand.

For the Arab Nationalists, whatever the mistakes were, they could not be met by secession.

#### E. The Army

"Had it not been for the mistakes committed within the Army, Secession would not have been possible, since the Army is the striking force. . . while the economic and political, and mistakes in all other fields, are simple matters. . ." <sup>222</sup>

Thus spoke an independent Syrian officer during the Unity Talks of 1963.

It is a fact that, without the Army intervention, the Union would have continued. However, many of the then concerned

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Statement by Major Fawaz Muhareb, member of the Syrian National Revolutionary Council of 1963, Unity Talks. . ., 1st phase, 2d meeting, p. 17.

Syrian officers will not admit that nothing harmed the Union except the "mistakes" committed within the Army. In fact the so called mistakes were one of the factors, perhaps the major one, which determined the Syrians to secede.

The Syrian officers' enthusiasm towards union with Egypt was unequalled except by that of the Ba'th. On January 11, 1958 the General Command of the Army and the Armed Forces issued a memorandum in which the Army pledged itself to execute at any price "all orders and directives of the Unified General Command."<sup>223</sup> The Syrian officers accepted also Nasser's condition, namely to remain away from politics. But this good will did not last long. Rumours about friction between the Egyptian and the Syrian Army officers soon started to circulate, especially after the resignation of Bizri, the then-Commander of the First Army (March, 1958).<sup>224</sup> In his Manifesto of May 10, 1959,<sup>225</sup> Bizri

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<sup>223</sup>'Abdel-Karim, Adwa' . . . , pp. 92-96. He reproduces the text of the Memorandum signed on Jan. 11, 1958 by General 'Afif al-Bizri, Commander in Chief of the Army and the Armed Forces. This Memorandum was also signed by the following officers who represented all blocs within the Syrian Army: Amin an-Nafouri, 'Abdel-Hamid as-Sarraaj, Ahmed 'Abdel-Karim, Ahmed Huneidi, To'mat al-'Awdatallah, Akram Deiri, Mustafa Hamdoun, 'Abdel-Ghani Qnout, Mustafa Hamdani, Yassin Ferjani, 'Abdallah Jassouqa, Muhammed an-Nisr, Lou'ay al-Shitti, Amin al-Hafez, Ibrahim Farhoud, Hussein Hiddeh, Ghaleb al-Shaqfat, Jamal as-Soufi, Bashir as-Sadeq.

<sup>224</sup>An-Nahar; March 25, 1958, p. 7

<sup>225</sup>"Manifeste du Général Bizri. . .," Orient (Paris), No. 10, 1959, pp. 209-210.



declared that the whole security apparatus of Syria was placed under Egyptian officers and that a great number of honest Syrian officers were dismissed while others were transferred to the Southern Region and placed in subordinate posts. Towards the same period Al-Akhbar wrote about "wounded Syria" where hundreds of national Army officers were being dismissed.<sup>226</sup> However, most of the Army grievances were not made public till after the Coup of 1961.<sup>227</sup> The First Army was affected by the blocs within its ranks, by the general dissatisfaction which grew as time went on in the Northern Region, and finally by the "mistakes" which grieved the First Army.

There were mainly three major blocs and a minor one within the Syrian Army before the merger; according to Muhammed

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<sup>226</sup> Al-Akhbar, April 26, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>227</sup> See Hagiqat al-Thawrat. . .; we have used for this Thesis extracts from this work, collected by Munajjed in Suriyat wa Masr. . .; see also the proceedings of Shtaura, the speeches of the Syrian delegation are reproduced in 'Abdel-Nasser Bada' fi Dimasha. . ., Unity Talks. . ., 2d meeting; and Orient (Paris), No. 18 (3ème trimestre, 1961), when some of the Communiqués issued on Sep. 28, 1961 by the High Arab Revolutionary Command, are reproduced.

Hassanein Haykal, there were twenty-two blocs.<sup>228</sup> These supported the major groupings in Syria, namely, the Conservatives, the Ba'th, the Communists, and the independents. The Syrian officers continued to support their friends during the Union despite the promises of the Army to the contrary. In this way, the dissatisfied politicians found echoes to their grievances among their military friends just as was the case before the Union.

Another factor which seemed to have motivated the behavior of the First Army was the discontent which grew in the Northern Region and affected the general mood within the First Army.<sup>229</sup> Stories about the strangling of liberties and the tortures in Mazzeh Prison<sup>230</sup> were widely circulated in the Northern Region. In its first Communiqué issued on September 28, 1961, the High Arab Revolutionary Command of the Armed Forces stated that the Army moved to save the legitimate rights of the people, and to put an end to corruption and tyranny.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Haykal, Ma al-ladhi Jara fi Suriyat ?, p. 32. This was also discussed during the Unity Talks . . ., 1st meeting, 2d phase, pp. 12, 57.

<sup>229</sup> Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . ., p. 43 (extracts from the introduction of Haqiqat al-Thawrat. . .).

<sup>230</sup> It is the famed Syrian military prison where most Syrian leaders have passed by at one time or another of their career.

<sup>231</sup> Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . ., p. 45.

The Revolutionary Command declared also that the Army did not carry the Coup for its own benefit, but that it did it in the name of the people in order to save the situation from "the dictatorial mind" which had strangled liberties, forged elections, monopolized legislation, and ruled through Martial Law and terror.<sup>232</sup> The Communiqué No. 21 denounced the National Union as having been a toy in Nasser's hand and a democratic veil to hide dictatorial rule.<sup>233</sup> As to the great projects such as the Rastan Dam, the Ghab project and others, the Revolutionary Command declared on September 29, 1961 that these were begun before the Union but were deliberately slowed down during the Union.<sup>234</sup>

Much was said about the "mistakes" which would have been simple military decisions common to any army, had it not been for the resentment felt by the Syrian officers for the "Egyptian officers" and their fear lest Nasser aimed at dissolving the First Army.<sup>235</sup> The Egyptian officers were accused of having behaved as if each of them was Nasser.<sup>236</sup> Egyptian

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<sup>232</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-65.

<sup>233</sup>Ibid., pp. 104.

<sup>234</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>235</sup>Ibid., pp. 42, 46, 103. Interview granted by Sami al-Jundi (Ba'th) to L'Orient (Beirut), Oct. 4, 1963. Speech of General 'Abdel-Karim Zahreddin, Commander of the Armed Forces, at the first anniversary of the 28th Sep. 1961, Al-Jumhuriyat (Beirut), special issue, Sep. 28, 1962, p. 6.

<sup>236</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 1st phase, 2d meeting, p. 15 (statement by General Rashed al-Qattini, assistant to the Commander of the Armed Forces, Syria, 1963).

officers like General Anwar al-Qadi and Colonel 'Abdel-Muhsen Abu-n-Nour were accused of dominating the First Army.<sup>237</sup> It was rumoured that the accounts of some Egyptian officers in the banks of the Syrian Region amounted to millions.<sup>238</sup> Other Egyptian officers were considered either as members of the Criminal Investigation Bureau<sup>239</sup> or as smuggler of opium.<sup>240</sup> These were also criticized for coming secretly to the Northern Region so as to appear to be on some secret mission, a fact which created distrust between the Syrian and the Egyptian officers to such an extent that, when the Coup occurred, it found no opposition within the First Army.<sup>241</sup> In that respect, the clashes between "Syrians" and "Egyptians" was not only on Army level. Much was heard from Syrians about the "Egyptians" in the Northern Region and the disappearance of the "Syrian national Anthem." Likewise, the Egyptians regretted the abandonment of the "Egyptian flag" and the loss of the name of "Egypt". This

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<sup>237</sup> 'Abdel-Karim, Adwa' . . . , p. 197.

<sup>238</sup> Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . . . , p. 121.

<sup>239</sup> Shukry, Fada'eh al-Mu'marat. . . . , p. 12. Shureiqy, Ad-Dictatoriyat. . . . , p. 70. The Arab World, June 13, 1960. Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . . . , p. 43.

<sup>240</sup> Shtaura. . . . , A. an-Nafouri, p. 185.

<sup>241</sup> Unity Talks. . . . , 1st phase, 2d meeting, p. 15 (statement by Qattini).

patriotism, however, was most surprising in a Syria where the idea of Arab Unity is so vived and the call for Arab Unity so strong.

The Syrian officers claimed that their positions within the Army was threatened because, said they, there existed a plan for liquidating them.<sup>242</sup> They declared that many of them were removed from the Army,<sup>243</sup> others were appointed in ministries,<sup>244</sup> while others were either transferred to the Southern Region where they used to sit idle with no responsibility,<sup>245</sup> or put on retirement although many of them had not yet reached the age limit.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup>Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . ., p. 102-121 (text of the Declaration of General Zahreddin on Oct. 2n 1961).

<sup>243</sup>Shtaura. . ., p. 177. Anabtawi, Arab Unity in Terms. . ., p. 186. An-Nasr, Sep. 28, 1962.

<sup>244</sup>Shtaura. . ., p. 178. Simon Jargy, "La Syrie Province de la République Arabe Unie," Orient (Paris), No. 8 (4e trimestre, 1958), p. 26.

<sup>245</sup>Unity Talks. . ., 2d meeting, statements by General Qattini and Ziad al-Hariri (commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces); 2d phase, 4th meeting, p. 107; 2d phase, 1st meeting, p. 62 where Lou'ay al-Atassi (Brigadier General and president of the Revolutionary Syrian Council), said that the presence of national officers in Cairo, made the Coup possible at the hands of those that were left in the Northern Region; a similar statement was made by Munif ar-Razzaz, on June 3, 1965 An-Nahar, June 4, 1965, p. 7.

<sup>246</sup>Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . ., p. 113 (Zahreddin's declaration of Oct. 2, 1961).

What also grieved the Army, was the transfer of arms and military equipment from the Northern Region to the Southern one, and that, not for any defense requirement but only for the purpose of weakening the First Army.<sup>247</sup>

The exchange of officers between the two Regions was necessary since the fusion of the two systems was being carried out on all levels in both Regions. But the Syrian officers who had acquired such an important position ever since 1949 -- we have seen how decisive was the role of the Syrian Army especially between 1955-1958 -- could not really renounce their privileges. So that following the Coup of 1961, a communiqué was issued on October 10, 1961 stating that in any future union, each Arab State is to have its own army besides a mixed army representing all Arab States.<sup>248</sup> During the Unity Talks, the Ba'thist delegates suggested that certain military questions such as transfers, advancement, appointment, and other similar problems should be left to the autonomous authority of each Region.<sup>249</sup>

Frictions and dissensions within the First Army proved that "regionalism" existed in the Army more than anywhere else

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<sup>247</sup>An-Nasr, Oct. 1, 1962.

<sup>248</sup>Wahdatuna al-Kubra. . ., p. 33 ("An-Nida" as-Suri" of Oct. 10, 1961).

<sup>249</sup>Statement by Taleb Shebib (Iraqi Foreign Minister), Unity Talks. . ., 3rd phase, 5th meeting, p. 22.

and this despite Syria's sincere desire for, and enthusiasm about, Arab Unity. This fact was admitted during the Unity Talks of 1963, and the Declaration of the Union Accord (1963) provided that "the affairs of local commands shall be run by the authorities of the regions during the transition period deemed suitable for each region."

The Syrian Army intervention has created too many convulsions before 1961 and after it. Nasser said that "if the army does not move who else will?"<sup>250</sup> But in Syria the Army has moved so often, and is still doing so, that it allowed none to move without its consent.

The High Arab Revolutionary Command declared that the Coup of 1961 was the last resort of the Syrian Army, because they had previously exhausted all efforts to obtain reforms from the Union's Authorities without success.<sup>251</sup> This argument has become a classical one not only in the Syrian military patches but also in all Middle Eastern ones. Unfortunately, the military patch which sets for itself the goals of ending confusion and restoring stability, liberty, progress, etc. . .

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<sup>250</sup>The Philosophy of the Revolution, p. 21.

<sup>251</sup>Munajjed, Suriyat wa-Masr. . ., p. 116 (Communiqué No. 1, Sep. 28, 1961).

not often fails to fulfill its aims but usually inherits the weaknesses of the preceding regime, plus the confusion and paralysis which accompany any military coup. What is even more unfortunate is the tendency to confuse a revolution with a simple military putch. If the former is sometimes necessary, the latter is always useless. However, even in case of revolution, the army and any political party cannot and should not mean one and the same thing;<sup>252</sup> nor should the army be invited to participate in a "national political work"<sup>253</sup> especially within the framework of a political organization; nor should the army be indoctrinated.<sup>254</sup>

As long as the army in the area is determined to make politics, military coups will be the rule; even "national

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<sup>252</sup>In an interview granted by three members of the Algerian Political Bureau (of June 19, 1965), the political party was erroneously identified with the Army, An-Nahar, July 9, 1965, p. 7 (originally this interview was granted to the French daily "Le Monde").

<sup>253</sup>Unity Talks . . ., 3rd phase, 4th meeting, p. 186 (Nasser's statement where he invited the army to participate in politics).

<sup>254</sup>Prime Minister S. al-Bitar declared that an Army with no ideology is a "mockery army . . . an army of tyranny and coup d'état," An-Nahar, May 24, 1964, p. 1.



politics" cannot guarantee that dissensions will not arise within the army on one side, and between the army and the politicians on the other.

The Syrian Army was deeply involved in politics; when attempts were made to put an end to its activities, it rose and restored its pre-Union privileges. However, in its Coup of 1961 the Army did not stand aloof: dissatisfied officers were joined by other opponents of the United Arab Republic in Syria who were made of hostile Ba'thists, antagonistic Communists, grudging landlords, passive capitalists, frightened merchants, and tired common men. So that when Secession took place, it found no resistance except in Aleppo and Deir Ezzor, where elements faithful to Nasser tried to oppose the Coup, but were overcome by the seceding forces.

## CONCLUSION

The impact of the Union on Syria was quite profound, especially if the short lifetime of the Union is taken into consideration. The political, social, and economic policies of the Union left with the masses the flavor of revolutionary changes -- which, ironically enough, were largely responsible for the failure of Union. The traditional order of things could no longer be tolerated. Though, before Union, the factions and the political parties were feuding among themselves, they had nevertheless succeeded, through certain combinations such as the coalition governments, the "national unity", and others, to co-exist even if not always peacefully. But this was no longer possible after Secession. We have seen how the efforts of the Secessionists to re-establish the pre-Union economic and political system were futile.

Another effect of the Union on Syria was the guilt complex which the Syrians have acquired since Secession, namely the fear of being held responsible for the break of Union. Consequently, all those who attacked the Union made it clear that it was from Nasser's regime -- and not from unity

as such -- that they seceded. Moreover, the Secessionists presented their own plan for unity as an alternative to the Union of 1958; while the Ba'thists' attempt in 1963 to federate with Egypt and Iraq was partly a manifestation of this guilt complex -- besides being a tactic to strengthen their position in Syria. However, the Syrians should not alone possess this guilt; all those who engineered the Union were responsible for its break.

The speed with which the Union was proclaimed should not have entailed a similar speed in the integration of the two Regions. It is quite understandable that the Union would have been artificial had each Region kept its own political, social and economic system, but what was necessary was a slower implementation of an overall unified plan for both Regions. Too much was done in a very short period. Too quickly, the Syrians found themselves without political parties, with no political activities except those offered by the National Union, with restricted economic liberties, with a new administration, and, above all, with the suppression of all opposition. The revolution which Nasser introduced in the Northern Region raised too many economic, social, and political problems. These problems were aggravated by the police rule of Sarraj and the subsequent psychological tension

it created. This was specially unfortunate because the enthusiasm with which the Syrians welcomed the Union did not justify such repressive measures.

Besides such avoidable problems, the Union faced some inevitable difficulties which also contributed to the failure of Union. The absence of common frontiers between the two Regions was a hindrance to the process of integrating the two systems and to the tempering of a certain regionalism which had re-emerged with the Union. Movement between the two Regions was restricted to a certain class so that interaction between the masses, a fact which would have facilitated the task of the Administrator, was not possible.

Above all, one has to remember that the United Arab Republic of 1958-1961, was an underdeveloped State where economy and politics were entangled and where -- as in all underdeveloped countries -- the drive towards progress was restrained by the limited resources; hence discontent, unrest, and accusations against the system of government.

Any study of the Union and of its failure is incomplete if the intrigues of Arab and foreign States are not taken into consideration. As in the pre-Union years, these were still interested in Syria. Dissenters from the Union found refuge in neighbouring Arab States, and there, started their campaign

against the United Arab Republic. Moreover, and although the Coup was made possible by the strong opposition in Syria, it is believed that the Coup of 1961 was financed from outside Syria.

Many have criticized the form of Union, namely the Unitary Union, as having been a factor in the failure of the Union. It was therefore held that a federation would have better suited the conditions of the two countries, by providing for the existing differences between them. But now that this form also has been tried and found wanting, and now that six other attempts at unity have been undertaken in vain, we are tempted to reach the conclusion that the ill does not lie in constitutions, policies or mere forms, but in men.

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