= Michel Aflaq =

 Michel Aflaq (Arabic : ????? ???? , 1910 ? 23 June 1989) was a Syrian philosopher , sociologist and Arab nationalist . His ideas played a significant role in the development of Ba 'athism and its political movement ; he is considered by several Ba 'athists to be the principal founder of Ba 'athist thought . He published various books during his lifetime , the most notable being The Battle for One Destiny (1958) and The Struggle Against Distorting the Movement of Arab Revolution (1975) .
 Born into a middle @-@ class family in Damascus , Syria , Aflaq studied at the Sorbonne , where he met his future political companion Salah al @-@ Din al @-@ Bitar . He returned to Syria in 1932 , and began his political career in communist politics . Aflaq became a communist activist , but broke his ties with the communist movement when the Syrian ? Lebanese Communist Party supported France 's colonial policies . Later in 1940 Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar established the Arab Ihya Movement (later renaming itself the Arab Ba 'ath Movement , taking the name from Zaki al @-@ Arsuzi 's group by the same name) . The movement proved successful , and in 1947 the Arab Ba 'ath Movement merged with al @-@ Arsuzi 's Arab Ba 'ath organisation to establish the Arab Ba 'ath Party . Aflaq was elected to the party 's executive committee and was elected " ' Amid " (meaning the party 's leader) .
 The Arab Ba 'ath Party merged with Akram al @-@ Hawrani 's Arab Socialist Party to establish the Arab Socialist Ba 'ath Party in 1952 ; Aflaq was elected the party 's leader in 1954 . During the mid @-@ to @-@ late 1950s the party began developing relations with Gamal Abdel Nasser , the President of Egypt , which eventually led to the establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR) . Nasser forced Aflaq to dissolve the party , which he did , but without consulting with party members . Shortly after the UAR 's dissolution , Aflaq was reelected as Secretary General of the National Command of the Ba 'ath Party . Following the 8th of March Revolution , Aflaq 's position within the party was weakened to such an extent that he was forced to resign as the party 's leader in 1965 . Aflaq was ousted during the 1966 Syrian coup d 'état , which led to a schism within the Ba 'ath Party . He escaped to Lebanon , but later went to Iraq . In 1968 Aflaq was elected Secretary General of the Iraqi @-@ led Ba 'ath Party ; during his tenure he held no de facto power . He held the post until his death on 23 June 1989 .
 Aflaq 's theories about society , economics and politics , which are collectively known as Ba 'athism , hold that the Arab world needs to be unified into one Arab Nation in order to achieve an advanced state of development . He was critical of both capitalism and communism , and critical of Karl Marx 's view of dialectical materialism as the only truth . Ba 'athist thought placed much emphasis on liberty and Arab socialism ? a socialism with Arab characteristics , which was not part of the international socialist movement as defined by the West . Aflaq believed in the separation of state and religion , and was a strong believer in secularisation , but was against atheism . Although a Christian , he believed Islam to be proof of " Arab genius " . In the aftermath of the 1966 Ba 'ath Party split , the Syrian @-@ led Ba 'ath Party accused Aflaq of stealing al @-@ Arsuzi 's ideas , and called him a " thief " . The Iraqi @-@ led Ba 'ath Party rejects this , and does not believe that al @-@ Arsuzi contributed to Ba 'athist thought .

 = = Early life : 1910 ? 1939 = =

 Born in Damascus to a middle class Greek Orthodox Christian family , his father , Joseph , working as a grain merchant . Aflaq was first educated in the westernized schools of the French Mandate of Syria . In 1929 , he left Syria to study philosophy abroad at the Sorbonne in Paris . During his stay Aflaq was influenced by the works of Henri Bergson , and met his longtime collaborator Salah al @-@ Din al @-@ Bitar , a fellow Syrian nationalist . Aflaq founded an Arab Student Union at the Sorbonne , and discovered the writings of Karl Marx . He returned to Syria in 1932 , and became active in communist politics , but left the movement when the government of Léon Blum , supported by the French Communist Party (FCP) , continued France 's old politics towards its colonies . Aflaq , and others , had believed that the FCP followed pro @-@ independence policies towards the French colonies . It had not helped that the Syrian ? Lebanese Communist Party (SLCP) supported

the FCP 's decision . From then on Aflaq saw the communist movement as a tool of the Soviet Union . He was impressed by the organisation and ideology of Antun Saadeh 's Syrian Social Nationalist Party .

= = = Arab Ba 'ath Movement : 1940 ? 1947 = = =

Upon their return to Syria , Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar became teachers at Tajhiz all ' -Ula , " the most prestigious secondary school in Syria " . Aflaq taught history , while al @-@ Bitar taught maths and physics . By 1940 , Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar had managed to set up a student circle , which usually met on Fridays . That year , the Arab Ihya Movement , a political party , was established by Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar . They used most of their spare time in 1941 to agitate for the party . It was in 1942 that Aflaq showed his skills as " a compelling speaker " who was able to utilize the " theatrical pause " to great effect . The party changed its name to Arab Ba 'ath Movement to signify the radical changes which were sweeping the Middle East ; Rashid Ali al @-@ Gaylani , the Prime Minister of Iraq , had challenged Britain 's domination over Iraq . The replacement of the word " Revival " with " Ba 'ath " (Arabic : ??? , literally means resurrection / rebirth) signified that Arab revival had been replaced ideologically by the need for an Arab rebirth . The change of name led to Zaki al @-@ Arsuzi , leader of the Arab Ba 'ath Party , to accuse Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar of stealing his party 's name from him . Though both men were promoting a party platform based on an Arab nationalist stance , Aflaq and al @-@ Arsuzi became bitter rivals .
On 24 October 1942 , both Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar resigned from their teaching positions , now determined to devote themselves fully to the political struggle . In 1941 the Syrian Committee to Help Iraq was established to support the Iraqi Government led by Rashid Ali al @-@ Gaylani against the British invasion during the Anglo ? Iraqi War . Al @-@ Arsuzi , the leader of the other Arab Ba 'ath movement , was skeptical of the new committee , and opposed helping the Iraqis on the ground that they would lose anyway . In 1941 the movement began publishing documents under the name the " Arab Ihya Movement " . Later , in 1945 , Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar asked the French Mandate authorities to grant the movement a party license . The Arab Ba 'ath movement did not become an official party until 1947 , when it merged with al @-@ Arsuzi 's Arab Ba 'ath Movement to found the Arab Ba 'ath Party . The Arab Ba 'ath Movement , led by Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar , drew supporters from al @-@ Arsuzi 's Ba 'ath Movement ; during the 1940s , al @-@ Arsuzi started to seclude himself from the public eye , he developed a deep distrust of others and became , according to some of his associates , paranoid . When the two Ba 'ath movements merged and established the Arab Ba 'ath Party in 1947 , the only subject discussed was how much socialism to include ; Wahib al @-@ Ghanim and Jalal al @-@ Sayyid from the al @-@ Arsuzi led Ba 'ath movement wanted Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar to adopt more radical socialist policies .

= = Early political career and the UAR : 1947 ? 1963 = =

= = = Founding and early years = = =

The Arab Ba 'ath Party 's first congress was held in Damascus in 1947 . Aflaq took the pre @-@ eminent position of Amid , sometimes translated as ' doyen ' or as ' leader ' ; and was elected to a four @-@ member executive committee . Under the constitution adopted at the congress , this made him effective leader of the party , with sweeping powers within the organisation ; al @-@ Bitar was elected Secretary General of the National Command . Zaki al @-@ Arsuzi , the leader of the Arab Ba 'ath , was not given any position , or membership in the party . Aflaq as Amid was responsible for ideological affairs and became the party 's mentor , while al @-@ Bitar controlled the party 's day @-@ to @-@ day management . The merger would prove problematic , several members of the al @-@ Arsuzi @-@ led Ba 'ath Party were more left @-@ leaning , and would become , later in Aflaq 's tenure as leader , highly critical of his leadership .
In the late 1940s , Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar gave free lessons on Ba 'athist thought , and in 1948

they established the newspaper al @-@ Ba 'ath (English : rebirth / resurrection) . Aflaq tested the Ba 'ath Party 's strength during the 1948 Arab ? Israeli War after early Syrian defeats ? he led several demonstrations against the government led by President Shukri al @-@ Quwatli . He personally led demonstrations , and claimed that al @-@ Quwatli , a landowner , was a corrupt and capitalistic politician , who was to blame for the Syrians army 's defeat . Aflaq called for al @-@ Quwatli 's resignation , and wrote several al @-@ Ba 'ath articles criticising his presidency and his prime minister , Jamil Mardam Bey . Aflaq was later arrested on the orders of al @-@ Quwatli 's prime minister Bey . Al @-@ Quwali 's government was brought down in a coup d 'état led by military officer Husni al @-@ Za 'im . Al @-@ Za 'im banned all parties , claiming that Syria was not ready to establish a liberal democracy yet . Aflaq , who had been set free , was rearrested during al @-@ Zai 'm's presidency and sent to the notorious Mezzeh Prison . Al @-@ Za 'im 's rule did not last for long , and in August 1949 , he was toppled , and Hashim al @-@ Atassi , who was democratically @-@ elected , took his place . Al @-@ Atassi established a national unity government , and Aflaq was appointed to the post of Minister of Education , the only government post he would ever hold ; he held it from August to December 1949 . Al @-@ Attasi 's presidency did not last for very long either , and in 1951 Adib Shishakli took power in a military coup .

Aflaq at first extended his support to the new government , believing that he and the Ba 'ath Party could collaborate with Shishakli because they shared the same Arab nationalist sentiments . His analysis of Shishakli proved to be wrong , and one of Shishakli 's first decisions as ruler was to ban all political parties , including the Ba 'ath Party . The Ba 'ath Party leadership , and several leading members , escaped to Lebanon in the wake of increased government repression . In Lebanon Aflaq and al @-@ Bitar agreed to a merger of the Arab Ba 'ath Party and the Arab Socialist Party (ASP) , led by Akram al @-@ Hawrani , to establish the Arab Socialist Ba 'ath Party in 1952 . The newly formed party worked as a base of operation against Shishali 's rule ? Aflaq and the rest cooperated with non @-@ Ba 'athist opposition forces too . Shishakli was toppled in February 1954 .

= = = Power politics : 1954 ? 1963 = = =

Following the overthrow of al @-@ Shishakli , Syria held its first democratic elections in five years . The Ba 'ath Party , led by Aflaq , al @-@ Bitar and al @-@ Hawrani , had 22 members elected to parliament . This increase in influence can largely be attributed to al @-@ Hawrani ? several old ASP strongholds voted for the Ba 'ath Party because of al @-@ Hawrani 's presence . By this time Aflaq was losing much of his power to al @-@ Hawrani and his supporters , who were in a majority in the party . A proof of this was the decision of the Ba 'ath Party to collaborate openly with the Syrian Communist Party (SCP) , a move Aflaq opposed . Aflaq was elected the party 's Secretary General of the newly established National Command , a title equivalent to ' party leader ' , by the party 's Second National Congress .

When , under the United Arab Republic (UAR) , Aflaq was forced by Nasser to dissolve the party , he disbanded the party by himself , instead of convening a congress on the matter . The UAR proved to be disastrous for the Ba 'ath Party ? the party was sidelined to a great extent by Nasser 's government . The Ba 'ath movement , which was on the verge in 1958 of becoming the dominant Arab nationalist movement , found itself in disarray after three years of Nasserist rule . Only a handful of Ba 'athists were given public office in the UAR 's government , al @-@ Hawrani became Vice President and al @-@ Bitar became Minister of Culture and Guidance . Several members , mostly young , blamed Aflaq for this situation ; it was he who dissolved the party in 1958 without consulting the National Congress . Hafez al @-@ Assad and Salah Jadid amongst others , eventually established the Military Committee to save the Syrian Ba 'ath movement from annihilation . The party 's Third National Congress in 1959 supported Aflaq 's decision to dissolve the party , but a 1960 National Congress , in which Jadid was a delegate representing the then @-@ unknown Military Committee , reversed the decision and called for the Ba 'ath Party 's reestablishment . The Congress also decided to improve relations with Nasser by democratising the UAR from within . A faction within the party , led by al @-@ Hawrani , called for Syria 's secession . When the UAR broke up in 1961 , some members applauded the dissolution , among them was al @-@ Bitar .

The Ba 'ath Party captured 20 seats , down from 22 , in the 1961 election . In 1962 , after four years , Aflaq convened the Fifth Congress in Homs . Al @-@ Hawrani was not invited ; cells that had stayed active and defied Aflaq 's orders , and Ba 'athists who become Nasserists during the period of the UAR , were not invited to the congress . Aflaq was reelected the National Command 's Secretary General , and ordered the reestablishment of the Syrian @-@ regional Ba 'ath organisation . During the congress , Aflaq and the Military Committee , through Muhammad Umran , made contact for the first time ; the committee asked for permission to initiate a coup d 'état ; Aflaq supported the conspiracy . Following the success of the February 1963 Iraqi coup d 'état , led by the Ba 'ath Party 's Iraqi Regional Branch , the Military Committee hastily convened to hatch a coup against Nazim al @-@ Kudsi 's presidency . The 8th of March Revolution , a military coup launched in 1963 , proved successful , and a Ba 'athist government in Syria was established . The plotters first order was to establish the National Council of the Revolutionary Command (NCRC) , consisting entirely of Ba 'athists and Nasserists , and controlled by military personnel rather than civilians from the very beginning .

= = The struggle : 1963 ? 1968 = =

= = = The beginning : 1963 ? 1964 = = =

The relationship between the Ba 'athists and the Nasserists were at best , uncomfortable . The Ba 'ath Party 's rise to power in Iraq and Syria put Nasser , as he put it , " between the hammer and the anvil " . The establishment of a union between Iraq and Syria would weaken his credentials as a pan @-@ Arab leader . Nasser started launching bitter propaganda attacks against the party ; Aflaq was dismissed as an ineffectual theorist who was mocked as a puppet " Roman emperor " and accused of being a " Cypriot Christian " . In several Ba 'ath Party meetings Aflaq responded with pure anger , and became an anti @-@ Nasserist . Because of the position he took , Aflaq had a falling out with al @-@ Bitar who still believed there was a chance to reestablish good ties with Nasser .
The break with Nasser weakened the original leaders of the Ba 'ath Party , which in turn gave the Military Committee room to expand . After taking power , the Military Committee looked for theoretical guidance , but instead of going to Aflaq to solve problems (which was usual before) , they contacted the party 's Marxist faction led by Hammud al @-@ Shufi . At the Syrian Ba 'athist Regional Congress , the Military Committee " proved " that it was rebelling equally against Aflaq and the traditional leadership , as against their moderate social and economic policies . The Military Committee was bent on removing Aflaq from a position of power , believing that he had become old and frail . At the Sixth National Congress held in October 1963 , Aflaq was barely able to hold on to his post as Secretary General ? the Marxist factions led by al @-@ Shufi and Ali Salih al @-@ Sadi , in Syria and Iraq respectively , were the majority group . Another problem facing Aflaq was that several of his colleagues were not elected to party office , for instance al @-@ Bitar was not reelected to a seat in the National Command . Instead of the traditional civilian leadership , a new leadership consisting of military officers was gradually growing ; Jadid and Amin al @-@ Hafiz from Syria and Ahmed Hassan al @-@ Bakr and Salih Mahdi Ammash from Iraq were elected to the National Command . While the Military Committee was in fact taking control over the Ba 'ath Party from the civilian leadership , they were sensitive to such criticism , and stated , in an ideological pamphlet , that civilian @-@ military symbiosis was of major importance , if socialist reconstruction was to be achieved . To the outside world Aflaq seemed to be in charge . As the Tunisian newspaper L 'Action tunisienne put it ; " The philosopher who made two coups [Iraqi and Syrian coups] in a month " .
The Ba 'ath movement was not running as smoothly as the rest of the world believed ; the Iraqi Regional Branch was already starting to lose membership . The Iraqi military and the party 's militant arm , the National Guard , detested each other . Al @-@ Sadi , the Regional Secretary of the Iraqi Regional Branch , was eventually exiled to Madrid , Spain on 11 November by several military officers and moderate Ba 'athists . An anxious Aflaq hastily traveled from Syria and dissolved the

Regional Command of the Iraqi Regional Branch , exclaiming that the National Command would rule Iraq in its place until a new Regional Command was elected . This was not greeted warmly by the majority of Iraqi military officers and Ba 'athists ? the idea that a Christian was to rule over a Muslim country was considered " insensitive " .

The situation in Iraq did not improve , Abdul Salam Arif , the President of Iraq and a Nasserist , plotted a coup against the Ba 'ath Party on 18 November , which succeeded . The dream of cornering Nasser 's pan @-@ Arab project was over ; instead , it was Nasser and the Nasserists who were cornering the Ba 'ath movement . On hearing the news , Aflaq and several Ba 'athists fled Iraq for Syria .

= = = The schism : 1964 ? 1965 = = =

After a falling out with the Military Committee , of which he was a member , Muhammad Umran told Aflaq about the Committee 's secret plans to oust the civilian leadership , led by Aflaq , and take over the Ba 'ath Party . Shortly after , Umran was sent into exile as Ambassador to Spain for supporting the Aflaq faction . Aflaq responded to the threat posed to his leadership by invoking his office as Secretary General , and calling for the National Command to dissolve the Regional Command . He was forced to withdraw his request , when the majority of Ba 'ath Party members proved to oppose such a move . A contest for power , between Aflaq and the Military Committee , ensued in the open ; but it was a struggle Aflaq was losing . It was plain from the very beginning that the initiative lay with the anti @-@ Aflaq forces . To counter the military threat , Aflaq invoked party rules and regulations against them . To counter this , the Military Committee befriended a staunchly anti @-@ Aflaq civilian faction calling themselves the " Regionalists " ? this group had not dissolved their party organisations as ordered by Aflaq in the 1950s .

The Regional Congress of the Syrian Regional Branch , in March 1965 , devolved power from the center , the National Command , to the Regional Command . From then on , the Regional Secretary of the Regional Command was considered Syria 's ex officio 's head of state . The Regional Secretary had the power to appoint the Prime Minister , the cabinet , the chief of staff and top military commanders . Aflaq was unsettled by the way things were moving , and in May he convened the Eighth National Congress to get a showdown between his followers and those of the Military Committee . However , this never came to fruition . Several civilian members of the National Command , such as the Lebanese Jibran Majdalani and the Saudi Ali Ghannam , advised caution , believing that if he pressed the Military Committee too hard the military would take over the Syrian Regional Branch , and then the Ba 'ath Party ? as had happened in Iraq following the ousting of the Iraqi Regional Branch . Because of their concerns , Aflaq kept quiet . But to his astonishment , keeping quiet caused him to lose his post as Secretary General ? Aflaq was succeeded as Secretary General of the National Command by Munif al @-@ Razzaz , a Jordanian of Syrian origin . However , the power between the two camps was unexpectedly reshuffled when Amin al @-@ Hafiz defected to Aflaq 's camp . In contrast to other military officers al @-@ Hafiz had very little influence within or outside the party . Al @-@ Hafiz 's defection led to a resurgence of activity within Aflaq 's faction , al @-@ Bitar and Umran were brought back from Spain to form a new government .

= = = Downfall : 1966 ? 1968 = = =

Al @-@ Razzaz , Aflaq 's successor as Secretary General , came from the pro @-@ Aflaq faction . With the defection of al @-@ Hafez , he ordered that the National Command was the de jure ruling body of the Ba 'ath Party . He appointed al @-@ Bitar Prime Minister , Umran defence minister , Mansur al @-@ Atrash as Chairman of the National Council of the Revolutionary Command and al @-@ Hafiz retained his post as President of Syria . Salah Jadid , the Military Committee 's strongman , responded by arresting several Umran supporters . Umran responded by dismissing a handful of pro @-@ Jadid officials . The most important of these dismissals was the removal of Ahmad Suwaydani from the post of head of the country 's military intelligence to head of the Officer

Administration . On 23 February a coup d 'état led by Jadid and Hafez al @-@ Assad overthrew the Syrian Government and the Ba 'ath Party leadership . Aflaq was exiled from Syria , and ordered never to return his homeland . Members of the party 's other factions fled ; Aflaq was captured and detained , along with other pro @-@ Aflaq supporters , in a government guest house . When the new rulers launched a purge in August that year , Aflaq managed to make his escape , with the help of Nasim Al Safarjalani and Malek Bashour , both closely trusted friends and colleagues , and hence was able to flee to Beirut , Lebanon , and later to Brazil .

Aflaq 's downfall caused a split within the Ba 'ath Party ; the party was de facto dissolved and two Ba 'ath Parties were established , one Iraqi @-@ led Ba 'ath Party and one Syrian @-@ led Ba 'ath Party . The Syrian @-@ led party was led by Jadid and his supporters and hailed Zaki al @-@ Arsuzi , the founder of the Arab Ba 'ath in 1940 , as the father of Ba 'athist thought , while the Iraqi @-@ led party led by Ahmed Hassan al @-@ Bakr and Saddam Hussein , still proclaimed Aflaq to be the founder of Ba 'athist thought . In February 1966 at the Ninth National Congress , held after the coup which ousted the pro @-@ Aflaq faction , the Iraqi delegation split with the Syrian Ba 'athists . The Iraqi 's held the true Ninth National Congress in February 1968 in Beirut , and elected Aflaq as Secretary General of the National Command . Aflaq 's election to the Secretary Generalship also proved to be his final break with al @-@ Bitar ; before the congress convened al @-@ Bitar announced that he had left the Ba 'ath Party and given up on the Ba 'athist movement as a whole .

= = Iraqi @-@ led Ba 'ath Party : 1968 ? 1989 = =

Aflaq moved to Baghdad following his reelection to the Secretary Generalship in February 1968 . He stayed there until 1970 , when the Jordan ? Palestine War broke out , he criticised the Ba 'ath leadership of doing too little to help Palestine during the conflict . During the conflict , Aflaq lobbied extensively for Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation . Aflaq wanted Iraqi intervention ; al @-@ Bakr , however , refused to get Iraq involved in such a conflict . Because of this , Aflaq returned to Lebanon in self @-@ imposed exile . The government of Hafez al @-@ Assad , the President of Syria , condemned Aflaq to death in absentia in 1971 .

= = = Until his death = = =

After four years of self @-@ imposed exile Aflaq returned to Iraq In 1974 , a year before the Lebanese Civil War broke out . He refrained from taking part in Iraqi politics . He published several works during this period , the most notable being The Struggle Against Distorting the Movement of Arab Revolution in 1975 . Aflaq regained some of his influence when he befriended Saddam Hussein , President of Iraq from 1979 until 2003 . During the Iran ? Iraq War the Iranian leadership accused Hussein of being under the control of a Christian , and Aflaq himself was labelled " a Christian infidel " . Effectively , throughout his tenure as Secretary General in Iraq , Aflaq was given all due honour as the founder of the Ba 'ath movement , but on policy @-@ making , he was ignored .

Aflaq died on 23 June 1989 in Paris , after undergoing heart surgery there .

= = = Disputed conversion to Islam = = =

Saddam Hussein claimed that Aflaq had converted to Islam prior to his death ? according to nameless Western diplomats . This claim was later disputed by nameless members of Aflaq 's own family - although Aflaq 's son Iyad confirmed that his father thought about conversion already in 1980 . Upon his disputed conversion he had taken the first name of Ahmad . According to the German orientalists Martin Robbe and Gerhard Höpp the conversion happened before 1988 . Even so , Aflaq was given an Islamic funeral . For the Berkley Center , Aflaq 's disputed conversion is considered by anonymous members of his family as a tool used by Saddam Hussein to disassociate Ba 'athism from Christianity . The tomb constructed on the orders of Hussein was later used by

American soldiers after the 2003 American invasion of Iraq as a military barracks for troops stationed within the Green Zone . According to Aflaq 's family , the tomb was badly damaged during the invasion .

= = Memory and Legacy = =

Upon his death in 1989 he was given a state funeral . A large tomb and mausoleum were erected to form a shrine for him . The tomb , widely regarded as a work of great artistic merit , designed by Iraqi architect Chadagee , was located on the western grounds of the Ba 'ath Party Pan @-@ Arab Headquarters , at the intersection of Al @-@ Kindi street and the Q?disiyyah Expressway overpass . Currently it is a part of a US Army base . Although there were rumors and accusations that his tomb was destroyed during the 2003 Iraq War , the burial chamber and building above it were left untouched . Its blue @-@ tiled dome can be seen above the concrete T @-@ walls surrounding the Camp 's perimeter .

= = Thought = =

= = = " Unity , liberty , socialism " = = =

The Arab Socialist Ba 'ath Party slogan " Unity , liberty , socialism " is the key tenet of Aflaq 's and Ba 'athist thought . Unity meant the unification of the Arab people into one nation , the Arab Nation . The creation of an Arab Nation would have direct implications on Arab development . The establishment of this new state would lead to an Arab Ba 'ath (literally meaning " Renaissance ") . The Arab nations of his time could only progressively " decline " if not unified ; these nations had various ailments ? " feudalism , sectarianism , regionalism , intellectual reactionism " . The only way to " cure " the Arab nations was , according to Aflaq , through a revolutionary movement . Aflaq was influenced by Marxism in that he saw the need for a vanguard party to rule the Arab Nation for an indefinite period of time (the period would be a transition from the old to the new) .

The need for liberty was one of the defining features of Ba 'athism , however , liberty not in the sense used by liberal democracies . Aflaq was a strong believer in pluralism of thought , but paradoxically , against pluralism in the form of votes . In theory , the Ba 'ath Party would rule , and guide the people , in a transitional period of time without consulting the people because the party knew what was right .

The last tenet , ' socialism ' , did not mean socialism as it is defined in the West , but rather a unique form of Arab socialism . Aflaq coined the word Arab socialism for his variant of socialism . Socialism , in its original form in the Arab world had , according to Aflaq , first come into being under the rule of Muhammad . The point of Arab socialism was not to answer questions such as : how much state control was necessary , or economic equality ; but instead Arab socialism was a system that freed the Arab people from oppression and enslavement , which in turn created independent individuals .

Aflaq opposed Marx 's view that dialectical materialism was the only truth , but believed that the " importance of material economic conditions in life " was one of the greatest discoveries in modern history . Even so , Aflaq was critical of both capitalism and communism , and did not want either of the two power blocs to collapse during the Cold War ? believing that the Cold War was a sort of check and balance on their power .

= = = Role of Islam = = =

What Aflaq saw in Islam was a revolutionary movement . In contrast to other nationalities , the Arab awakening and expansion was attributed to a religious message . Because of this , Aflaq believed that the Arab 's spirituality was directly linked to Islam , therefore , one could never take Islam out of the equation of what is essentially , and essentially is not , Arab . Arab nationalism , just as Islam had been during the lifetime of Muhammad , was a spiritual revolutionary movement , leading the

Arabs towards a new renaissance : Arab nationalism was the second revolution to appear in the Arab world . All Arab religious communities should , according to Aflaq , respect and worship the spirituality of Islam , even if they did not worship Islam in a religious sense ? Aflaq was a Christian who worshipped Islam . Aflaq did not believe it was necessary to worship Muhammad , but believed that all Arabs should strive to emulate Muhammad . In the words of Aflaq himself , Arabs " belong to the nation that gave birth to a Muhammad ; or rather , because this Arab individual is a member of the community which Muhammad put all his efforts into creating [?] Muhammad was all the Arabs ; let us today make all the Arabs Muhammad . " The Muslim of Muhammad 's days were , according to Aflaq , synonymous with Arabs ? the Arabs were the only ones to preach the message of Islam during Muhammad 's lifetime . In contrast to Jesus , who was a religious leader , but not a political leader , Muhammad was both ? the first leader of Islam and of the Arab world . Therefore , secularisation could not take the same shape in the Arab world as it did in the West .

 Aflaq called on all Arabs , both Muslim and non @-@ Muslim alike , to admire the role Islam had played in creating the Arab character . But his view on Islam was purely spiritual , and Aflaq emphasised that Islam " should not be imposed " on state and society . Time and again Aflaq emphasised that the Ba 'ath party was against atheism , but also equally against fundamentalism . For him , any fundamentalism represented a " shallow , false faith . " According to Ba 'athist ideology , all religions were equal . Despite his anti @-@ atheist stance , Aflaq was a strong supporter of secular government , and stated that a Ba 'athist state would replace religion with a state " based on a foundation ? Arab nationalism , and a moral ? freedom . "

 = = Legacy = =

 Fouad Ajami criticised Aflaq for a lack of real substance , stating , " Nearly three hundred pages of text yield no insight , on his part , into what went wrong and what needed to be done ; there is only the visible infatuation with words " and " Aflaq summons the party to renounce power and go back to its ' pure essence ' " . There is some truth in this critique . Aflaq spent much time and energy writing optimistically about the future , and the past , of the Arab Nation , and of how the Arab World could be unified . As Kanan Makiya , the author of Republic of Fear : The Politics of Modern Iraq , notes : for " Aflaq , reality is confined to the inner world of the party . " In contrast to other philosophers , such as Karl Marx or John Locke , Aflaq 's ideological view of the world makes no clear stand on the materialistic or socioeconomic behavior of humanity . While other philosophers make distinctions between what is real and what is not real , that is between prescriptive and descriptive analysis , Aflaq did not as a rule define what is and what ought to be . In his thought both are molded into the same category : that which is attainable .

 In contrast to his longtime friend and colleague Salah al @-@ Din al @-@ Bitar , who was more practical when it came to politics , Aflaq was a " visionary , the dreamer rather unfitted for political life " . Aflaq was described by his associates as an " ascetic , shy and intense figure living a simple and unpretensious life . " He has been accused of seeking help from other people instead of fulfilling his goal by himself or with others he led ; Aflaq collaborated with Gamal Abdel Nasser , Abd al @-@ Karim Qasim and Abdul Rahman Arif in 1958 , to Ahmed Hassan al @-@ Bakr and Ali Salih al @-@ Sadi in 1963 and finally in the 1970s to Saddam Hussein . There are several Ba 'athists , mostly from the Syrian @-@ led Ba 'ath Party , who believe Aflaq stole Ba 'athist ideology from its original founder , Zaki al @-@ Arsuzi . These individuals have denounced , and labelled , Aflaq as a " thief " .

 In his writings Aflaq had been stridently in favor of free speech and other human rights and aid for the lower classes . During the Military Committee 's gradual take over of power in Syria , Aflaq rallied against what he saw as the establishment of a military dictatorship , instead of the democracy for which Aflaq had planned . These ideals were never realized by the governments that used his ideology . Most scholars see the Assad government in Syria and Saddam Hussein 's government in Iraq to have only employed Aflaq 's ideology as a pretense for dictatorship .

 = = Selected works = =

?? ???? ????? (English : On the Way of Resurrection , published 1947)

Itihad Souriyya wa Misr (English : Unity Between Syria and Egypt , published 1958)

Ma 'rakat al @-@ Masir al @-@ Wahid (English : The Battle for One Destiny , published 1958)

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Al @-@ Nidal did Tashweeh Harakat al @-@ Thawra al @-@ Arabiyya (English : The Struggle Against Distorting the Movement of Arab Revolution , published 1975)