

societies introduced political overtones, and George Antonious maintains that the Syrian Scientific Society, founded in 1857, uttered the first cry of Arab nationalism.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing factors, i.e., the deteriorating conditions of the Ottoman Empire, the introduction of defensive reforms and the impact of the West had a lasting effect upon the traditional social structure and political system of the Empire. The educated Arabs were compelled to react to the demands and pressures of the new age. Through their literary clubs and learned societies they played an important role in awakening the national consciousness of the Arab subjects of the Empire. In this period, which runs from around the middle of the nineteenth century to about 1870, the seeds of national thinking were sown in the midst of a general environment which was far from absorbing the real dimensions of the nationalist thought which was still foreign to the Islamic community.

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<sup>5</sup>George Antonious, The Arab Awakening (New York: Capricorn Books, 1965), p. 54. For other views see Hourani, op. cit., pp. 260-323; Sylvia G. Haim (ed.), Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), pp. 3-72; Hazim Zaki Nuseibeh, The Ideas of Arab Nationalism (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), and Zeine, op. cit. Dr. Nuseibeh traces the roots of Arab nationalism to pre-Islamic sources while Prof. Zeine traces them to the years 1909-1914 when the Young Turks became increasingly nationalists. The author does not intend to indulge in this controversy which is not within the scope of this study.