

Chapter 1

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire stood on the threshold of significant change. The Ottoman Empire was rapidly declining and the impact of the West was felt stronger than ever. The process of national formation was gaining momentum while Ottomanism was losing ground. In this chapter the author intends to shed light on the origins and development of the Arab national movement from its beginnings in the nineteenth century up to the present time. This survey of the national movement is deemed necessary in order to place the Arab Nationalists Movement in its right historical perspective.

THE GENESIS OF ARAB NATIONALISM

The process of national formation in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire may be attributed to several factors, the most important of which are:

First, the deteriorating conditions of the Ottoman Empire which were leading to the breaking away of its component parts. The triumph of nationalism in the Balkans reverberated amongst the subjects of the sultan in the Arab