

The upheaval of 1860, when fighting broke out between Druzes and Christians and the death toll of lives reaching the appalling total of 11,000, aggravated sectarian hatred,⁶ and it may have in one way or another offered secular nationalists another reason and justification to challenge the traditional elements in the society which still adhered to the concept of Islamic community and unquestioned Ottoman allegiance. There were already several factors fostering anti-Turkish sentiments in Lebanon: Western education, the political ideas of the French Revolution, revival of the Arabic language, the printing press and the publications of Arabic newspapers, travel abroad and the return of emigrants from the United States of America.⁷ However, the immediate result of the increasing activities of the Arab nationalists was the suppression of the literary clubs and other organized groups whose activities were held inimical to the Ottoman dynasty. By 1870 almost every Arab association was dissolved by the Ottoman authorities.

The secret political associations which were founded in Beirut, Damascus, Cairo and Constantinople during the period 1870-1908 were more precise than their forerunners in formulating their demands and defining their objectives.

⁶Antonius, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

⁷Zeine, *op. cit.*, p. 41.