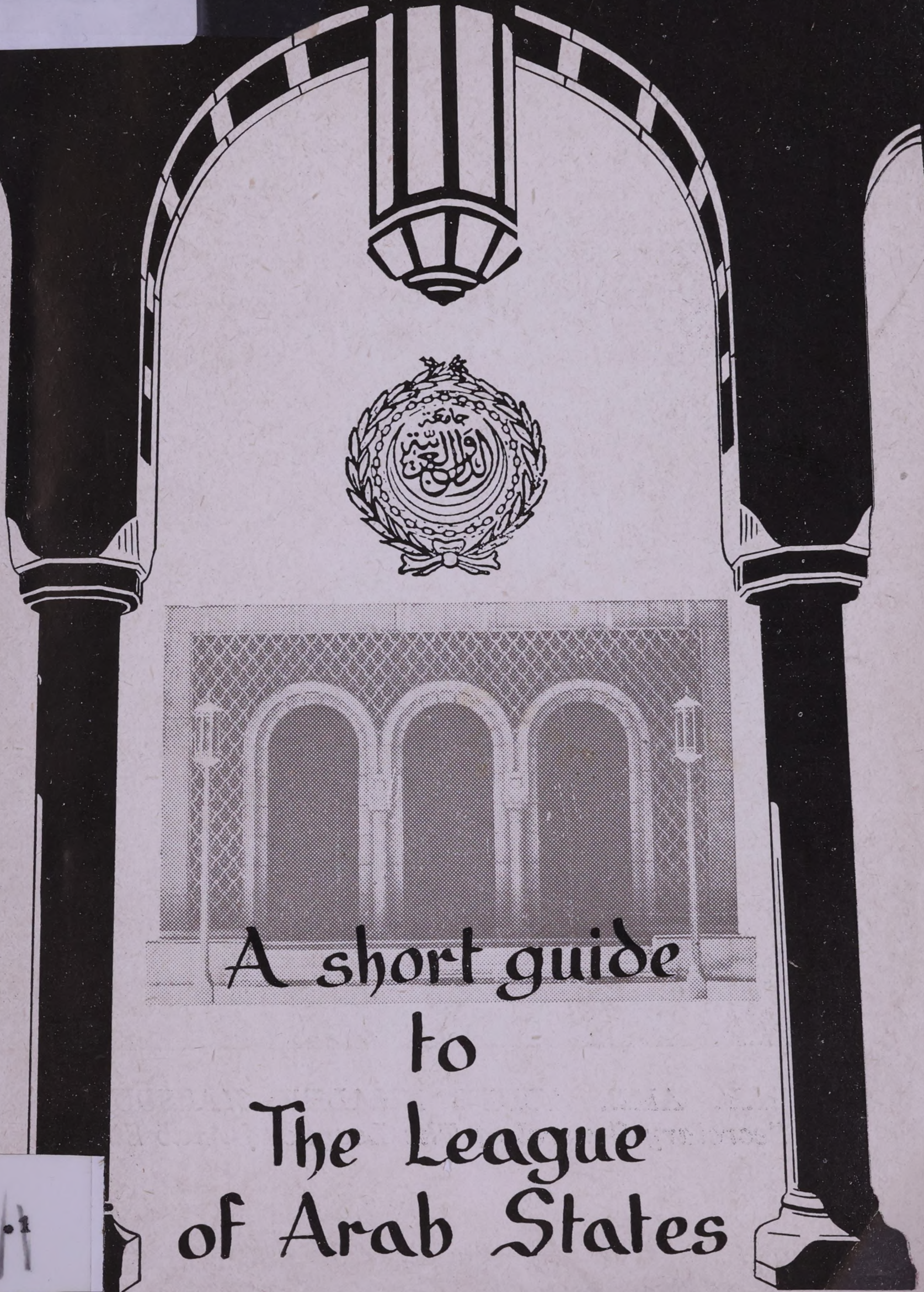


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A short guide
to
The League
of Arab States

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CENTRE FOR ARAB GULF STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
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BASIC ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT ARAB SITUATION

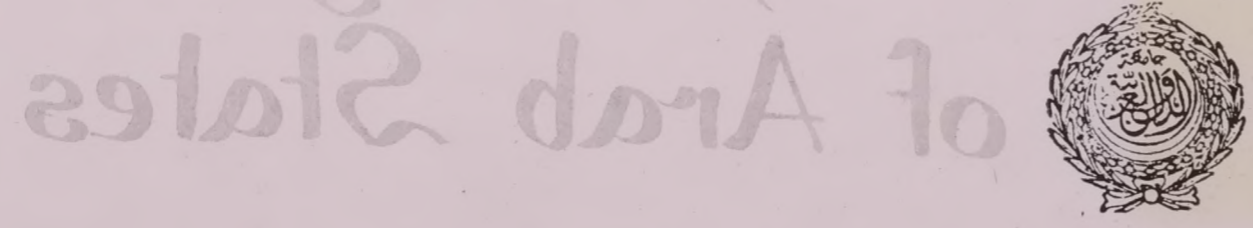
BY

H.E. AMB. ABDEL KHALEK HASSOUNA

Secretary-General of The League of Arab States



H.E. AMB. ABDEL KHALEK HASSOUNA
Secretary-General of The League of Arab States



Only in the historical perspective may one understand and appreciate either the present problematic phase of the Arab struggle for unity or the dynamics of the Arab contemporary scene. The resurgence of Arab nationalism which started as early as the middle of the nineteenth century was due in part to an awakening to Arab heritage and personality and a rediscovery of our assets whether national or regional, but was also due to a direct and stirring contact with the liberal spirit which pervaded Europe about that time. The response to the challenges of a glorious past and to a present permeated by the dazzling achievements of an industrial progressive West, far from evoking a blind imitation of the patterns of a civilization which had lied dormant for centuries due to extraneous factors, or an intellectual imprisonment to Western civilization and a blind acceptance of its terms of reference, has, in fact, set in motion a process of self-discovery : to achieve within ourselves a contact with our past that would provide the motive for our present and that can be regenerated to enable us to live in the twentieth century as an elevated society.

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In this manner we would bring the past achievements of our society plus the dynamism of our revolutionary status and on the other hand the inspiration of a coherent society and a coherent concept of man.

Arab Nationalism has thus evaded the pitfall of egocentricity which has rendered many nationalist movements aggressive, and eventually, expansionist. It has refused, in its basic current, an ascertainment of either its race or religion, although both race and religion have been moulding factors in making our society more cohesive. Yet what is essential in our nationalism insofar as it is a movement for liberation is that it has sought to bring about values of national as well as international nature which possess a relevance to the century to which we belong and a certain adaptability and accommodation for the new dimension which contemporary civilization, in its technological as well as industrial features, has introduced.

Our nationalism has, moreover, enabled us to have an open society, and to eclectically take from the world in order to be able to give the world from ourselves. The nationalism of the Arabs has not been motivated by a desire to ascertain an egocentric form of national personality but by a strong urge to liberate the national self and a commitment to egalitarian principles. By upholding this egalitarian principle, in the sense that the Arab nation was entitled to a status equal to other nations in the

world community, Arab nationalism helped eventually to set in motion a process of liberating those nations, which sought to dominate us, into a sense of equality with us. More far reaching still in its implication is the fact that the nationalist movement which has trained its masses into believing in the equality of their nation in the community of nations, has actually trained itself into the commitment to equality as an absolute value. Therefore, in various degrees it has been committed to a certain kind of social purposiveness that has been wrongly or rightly called socialism.

Independence, the first fruit of the nationalist movement (the other being unity) has come to mean initiative in terms of policy and it is in this initiative that we find the international outlook of the Arab nationalist movement more clear cut. The policy of non-alignment has become an integrated aspect of the Arab national scene. It stands at the outset from the cognizance of our national self, a refusal to be put into the ideological straight jackets of either East or West. It means that we take, in view of the societies and their ideological patterns, a certain eclectic position which means that we are neither anti to the final analysis nor are we pro in a satellite form. The policy of non-alignment which has emerged after the Two Arab Summit Conferences in Cairo and Alexandria as a final commitment is, therefore, a projection of the essence of dignity we possess, of the desire for rediscovery and, more so, the desire on our part to set in motion

within all the blocs in the world positive and liberating features arrested by the dangerous and precarious balance of nuclear powers.

The structural manifestation of Arab nationalism had perforce to be some form of unity. Yet the multiplicity of colonial regimes that existed in the Arab countries prior to their independence, and the divergence in the levels of development of various Arab States has rendered a constitutional unity a tardy and difficult pursuit. The establishment of the League of Arab States in 1945 has been the nearest proximation to the Arab quest for unity. It represented neither the ideal fulfilment of Arab hopes nor the extent of unity the Arabs seek to achieve. It did, however, represent the Arab sense of belongingness to one nation and to one destiny. It was an embryo of what was to come and that is why it assumed collective responsibilities and implemented unified decisions. While steering away from being a blueprint it insisted on being the framework of the nation it served. It considered the hard realities that prevented the Arab nation from becoming a State neither perennial nor perpetual. Its relevance to various international organisations operating in the region become more and more self-evident. Its tenacious fight for the liberation of the Arab countries and territories still under foreign occupation made a substantial contribution to the cause of freedom everywhere and further consolidated the quest for peace. Its specialized activities, whether in the economic field (the Economic Unity

Agreement, the Arab Common Market and the Arab Institution for Development with a capital of £ 25 million etc), in the cultural (The Arab Organisation for Culture, Education and Science), in the Social (Social Defence Agreement and Codification of Labour Laws), to cite only some instances, have had a cumulative effect in strengthening the bond of Arab national unity. This infra-structural and at time invisible and, consequently not always appreciated, development, has helped in fact to accelerate the pace of unity and permeated Arab national life with new dimensions of social consciousness. Meanwhile spectacular changes have been taking place in the Arab countries, the revolution in Egypt has set in motion a great liberating force which has stirred many healthy and progressive developments in other Arab countries. The independence of Algeria constituted a dynamic contribution to the Arab nationalist movement and enriched the Arab scene with the result of one of the most heroic and fascinating anti-imperialist struggles of modern times. The breakaway of Yemen from an anachronistic and obsolete system of government and its determined entry into the Arab framework as a viable and active entity, the installation of a new revolutionary government in Iraq, freed from the eccentricities of Kasseem and dedicated to the cause of Arab nationalism and unity and finally Syria's dismantling of the imposed separatist regime have all paved the way for a new blending process among the forces of the Arab vanguard. The first Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo in January 1964 brought

with it the realisation that the equation of Arab unity with centralised government is neither a correct nor a scientific equation. It is true that many arguments can be advanced to prove the efficacy of a centralised and unitary system of government, especially in developed societies, but to put this thesis on an ideological plane rather than to consider it as a structural and administrative postulate was one of the errors that was committed in the past. Now it is realised that a unitary or a federal or even a confederal structure are but projects to suit the objective realities and administrative requirements of a national situation. An intense analysis of the objective realities that obtain in the Arab countries at present will tend to lead towards some form of confederal structure which seems to be what emerged after the two Arab Summit meetings at Cairo and Alexandria. The Arab League has remained the framework of this historic development.

Today the League of Arab States which approaches the twentieth anniversary witnesses its most animated period. It shoulders heavy and increasing responsibilities. The blueprints drafted by its various organs-economic, cultural, political, informational, social and others were speedily translated into concrete forms and institutions. What will emerge as a result is a built-in infrastructure which will enable the channelling of the powerful unifying forces into paths that will lead to fulfilment and realisation.

Many have been surprised by the ease with which differences among Arab States have been erased during the two Arab Summit Conferences. This surprise is due to the fact that understanding of Arab conditions was inadequate and defective. Arab differences were treated as perennial and inevitable. In the West erroneous judgments were largely due to a legacy of domination, refined by the years but never really abandoned. In the Communist case this mis-assessment was due largely to an attempt to fit a situation into pre-conceived ideas and commitments.

When Arab destiny was seriously threatened by Israel's aggressive plans to divert the Jordan waters, it was obvious to us that the Arab States response will be immediate, affirmative, unequivocal and decisive. Israel is committed to a form of exclusive egocentric nationalism which has at all times rendered it inimical to the overall implications of the liberating functions and progressive objectives of Arab nationalism. To delay its growing isolation, obvious at the African Summit Conference and Non-Aligned Conference, and its inevitable structural disintegration, it provoked incidents, diverted Jordan waters and acted on behest of restoring neo-imperial order. With this new development in the Arab scene, the Arab States have, beside further consolidating the bonds that would further their unity, become alert and ready to forestall such dangerous plans and defend the Arab legitimate rights over Palestine.

INTRODUCTION

The Arab Renaissance is becoming a fact. Due to the movements of liberation throughout the Near and Middle East, a civilization which had in many respects been kept under for at least three centuries is again expressing itself, with regional diversities, it is true, but with a profound sense of community.

The League of Arab States, or Arab League, as the first concerted organization of the Arabs, has fostered the beginnings of the Arab Renaissance, and continues to be the major instrument of its growth.

The functions of the League cover every aspect of the life of the Arabs, and of their relations with the rest of the world. The League is the spokesman and handmaid of the peoples and the culture it serves, and of whose noble destiny in the brotherhood of nations all who work for the League are deeply convinced.

WHAT IS THE LEAGUE ?

To give a basic understanding of the nature and aims of the League, it may be as well to quote from the Preamble and Article Two of the Pact of the League of Arab States, signed 22 March, 1945, by the seven original signatories, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen.

«Desirous of strengthening the close relations and numerous ties which link the Arab States;

And anxious to support and stabilize these ties upon a basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of these states, and to direct their efforts toward the common good of all the Arab countries, the improvement of their status, the security of their future, the realization of their aspirations and hopes;

And responding to the wishes of Arab public opinion in all Arab lands;

Have agreed to conclude a Pact to that end and have appointed as their representatives the persons whose names are listed hereinafter, have agreed upon the following provisions : »

ARTICLE TWO

The League has as its purpose the strengthening of the relations between the member States; the co-ordination of their policies in order to achieve co-operation between them and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty; and a general concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. It has also as its purpose the close co-operation of the member States, with due regard to the organization and circumstances of each state, on the following matters :

- A) Economic and financial affairs, including commercial relations, customs, currency and questions of agriculture and industry.
- B) Communications; this includes railroads, roads, aviation, navigation, telegraphs, and posts.
- C) Cultural affairs.
- D) Nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgments, and extradition of criminals.
- E) Social affairs.
- F) Health problems.

The League's activities have been considerably enlarged, particularly in connection with the United Nations.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the League has one great design before it : Arab unity. That the Arabs themselves desire this is proved by the existence of the League itself.

Their material resources, their strategic position on the map, and above all their sense of common identity, gives force to the ideal. Unity is capable of realization, is in course of attainment. The minor internal differences are taken for granted as being on an inferior plane, subject to gradual adjustment; the common aim, the general desire, is steadfastly kept in sight by all the Arabs.

HOW THE LEAGUE CAME INTO BEING

There were many evidences of continuing Arab consciousness throughout the long Turkish domination. But the Ottoman Empire had been mortgaged to foreign powers or had lost the last vestiges of suzerainty to self-confessed colonialist occupiers or to less obvious means of alien control. After the Ottoman Empire's fall, Arab aspirations could expect nothing from the British or French, while such arrangements as the Sykes-Picot Agreement ensured the continued subjection of the Arabs, in the hands of new masters, whose profits from cotton, petroleum, and the Suez Canal alone made control of the Middle East worth while. No thought was given to the people who lived in this region, or to their rights. The Balfour Declaration robbed the Palestinian Arabs of their birthright, and created a wedge of foreign influence in the very heart of the Arab world. As President Nasser said of the Balfour Declaration, the British gave what did not belong to them to those who had no right to ownership.

When Europe plunged into the Second World War, it soon became obvious that after it was all over there would be big changes everywhere. From end to end of the Arab world, this was clearly understood; the national consciousness stirred, was given new hope, and public opinion became aware that now, of all times, was the chance for the restoration of Arab Unity.

The first Agreement which brought the Arab States together in a real manifestation of unity was the Alexandria Protocol, signed on 7 October, 1944. The general lines on which the Arab League was to be built were drawn out; a «special resolution concerning Palestine» was made, in which the Palestinian tragedy was foreseen : the recent persecutions of the Jews in Europe was deplored, but the intentions of international Zionism, already preparing the way for the act of brigandage which destroyed Palestine, were only too clear.

The Alexandria Protocol was followed by the Pact of the League of Arab States in March, 1945. The next important formatory act of the League was the Joint Defense and Economic Co-operation Treaty between the States of the Arab League, signed by Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi-Arabia and Yemen in June 1950, by Iraq in February, 1951, and by Jordan in February, 1952, and by the rest of the Arab countries at the Summit Conference in Alexandria in September 1964.

In the Pact of the League there is no mention of the United Nations, as the Pact actually preceded the United Nations Charter by a few months. The Joint Defense and Economic Co-operation Treaty, however, acknowledged in full the role of the U.N. in world affairs, and evidences the general Arab desire to co-operate with the international body, a desire which has been constantly manifested in general policy since that time.

The general trend of Arab League thought in the early days was that the League should come to represent all the Arab States, establishing loose ties between them, providing a limited, functional unity. Provision was made for closer links between those Arab States which might desire to effect stronger mutual bonds within the framework of the League. Article 9 of the Pact authorizes member States which desire «to establish closer co-operation and stronger bonds than are provided by this Pact», to «conclude agreements to that end.»

Besides defining the purposes of the League, and setting up the organization necessary to achieve those ends, the Pact also prohibits the use of force by member States in resolving disputes, as well as any efforts by a member state to change the established system of government of another.

In September, 1959, at Rabat, the Council of the League formed a committee for the study of proposals to amend the Pact with the purpose of achieving a closer overall unity than was originally provided for.

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKS

In many respects, the structure of the League resembles that of the United Nations. It has a Secretariat-General, headed by the Secretary-General, and numerous departments for political, economic, social, cultural, legal, health, communications, Pa-

lestine, Petroleum, and other affairs. These departments make studies and prepare reports which are submitted to the Permanent Committees composed of representatives of member States. The Permanent Committees in turn make recommendations and prepare draft treaties and other bases for action to the League Council.

The Council is the supreme authority of the League and is composed of ministers of member States or their representatives. It meets in ordinary session twice a year in March and September. Resolutions adopted by the Council are binding on states that approve them. The duties of the Council are «to achieve the realization of the objectives of the League. The Council is in charge of the League's international relationships as well as the arbitration of differences between member States. The Secretary-General is appointed by the Council. Extraordinary sessions are held whenever need arises, or at the request of two member States. The Presidency of the Council is held in turn by representatives of the different member States.

The Secretariat-General.

The Secretary-General and his staff prepare the draft budget of the League before the beginning of each fiscal year (1st July) and implement the decisions of the various committees. In 1964 the budget was £ 1,270,289 plus a separate budget for the subsidiary Organizations. The Secretary-General

is elected by the Council, but he may select his assistants with the Council's approval.

Additional Bodies.

Emanating from the principal bodies set up by the Pact are a number of additional principal and subsidiary bodies, specializing in various fields.

The chief of these are :

The Economic Council, which was established by the Joint Defense and Economic Co-operation Treaty of 1950, and composed of the Ministers of Economic Affairs of all the member States or their representatives.

The Council has the task of fulfilling the purposes of the Treaty and in the course of its work it may also seek the co-operation of the Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs.

The Joint Defense Council, also set up by the Joint Defense and Economic Treaty of 1950, for carrying out the provisions of that Treaty relative to joint defense. It consists of the Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers of the contracting states or their representatives. Decisions taken by a two-thirds majority are binding on all contracting states.

This Council is assisted by the Permanent Milita-

ry Commission, which, with the two preceding Councils, was established by the same treaty. It is composed of the representatives of the General Staff of the contracting states, and its main purpose is to draw up plans for joint defense by drafting necessary reports and submitting to the Joint Defense Council.

The military organization of the League was further enhanced during the Cairo Summit of January 1964 by the creation of an Arab High Command.

The League has set up several special bureaus.

The *Boycott Office* supervises the operation of the Arab boycott of trade with Israel. It studies the activities of commercial enterprises throughout the world, and is fearless of the most powerful Zionist-infiltrated organizations, which it places on the boycott list in spite of the outcries and protestations made by Zion-slanted public opinion.

The *Narcotics Control Office* works for the prevention of the illegal cultivation, sale, and consumption of narcotics among member States, and the smuggling activities which import and export them to and from the outside.

Other committees are composed of specialists in relevant fields, and are frequently attended by members of UNESCO, UNRWA, and other bodies.

COUNCIL OF KINGS AND HEADS OF STATE :

The Summit Meeting of Arab Kings and Heads of State, members of the League, in Cairo in January 1964, marked a new stage in the history of the League. The meeting was convened by the League at the request of President Gamal Abdul Nasser, to discuss the intention of Israel to divert the River Jordan for its own use, and, on the strength of the increased irrigation derived from the water, to introduce another million and half Jews into the Negeb.

The success of the Summit Meeting showed that the Council of Kings and Heads of State would remain as part of the structure of the League, as a kind of super council whose deliberations and resolutions would carry the League's automatic endorsement.

The Council of Kings and Heads of State also recommended the formation of an Arab Supreme Command, with which the Permanent Military Commission of the League now works in close conjunction, and which meets to discuss any special military situation likely to arise in the area.

At the time of the Summit, the Secretary-General, Mr. Hassouna, said «In its previous phase, the League was an institution where the representatives of the Arab States met to take decisions, without knowing, for certain, whether it was possible to

carry them out. Today, the League has taken a new turning by being transformed into a sort of Confederation which gives it life in conformity with the desire which the Arab nation has always expressed.»

THE LEAGUE AND THE UNITED NATIONS :

The Arab League has a permanent delegation to the United Nations in New York, and is recognized by the UN as a regional organization.

The Permanent Delegation of the Arab League began work in New York in 1954. A permanent observer of the League was accredited to the European Office of the UN in 1956. Article 52 of the United Nations Charter envisages regional organizations as the keepers of peace in their own areas, and calls upon member States of the UN to settle their local disputes peacefully through such organizations whenever possible.

Article 53 of the UN Charter specifies that the Security Council can delegate regional organizations to enforce action under its authority, while they are at the same time bound to keep the Security Council informed of any action they may intend to take for the maintenance of peace and security.

The permanent delegations of the League play an important part in co-ordinating the different Arab delegations to the United Nations.

This work of co-ordination often goes beyond the purely Arab sphere. The Arab League's delegation often acts as intermediary in occasional or permanent contacts with the UN by other states, notably those of the Afro-Asian group and Latin America.

The League is always ready to give its expert advice in preparing reports for any delegation to the UN which may request such services.

As time has passed, so the Arab League has worked in closer collaboration with the United Nations. There is mutual consultation and agreed common action in many different fields.

THE LEAGUE AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS :

In June, 1957, a formal accord was concluded between UNESCO and the Arab League regarding co-operation, mutual consultation, common action, the exchange of information and the administrative arrangements for collaboration.

In May, 1958, an accord with the International Labour Organization was signed, similar to those between the ILO and other regional organizations.

In May, 1960, an accord was concluded between the Arab League and the UN Organization for Food and Agriculture.

The World Health Organization and the Arab League signed an accord in August, 1961. The WHO has a permanent representative at the meetings of the Arab League Health Committee, and vice versa.

With these accords, the Arab League consolidated its international relationships. And, thanks to the Memoranda of Dag Hammarskjold addressed to the Secretary-General of the League in 1960 and 1961, the League received international recognition as a highly-evolved type of regional organization.

THE LEAGUE'S ACTIVITIES.

The first concrete action of the League was in 1945, in connection with Syria and Lebanon. The situation there was brought to the attention of the United Nations, and the League acted on behalf of these two countries, with such firmness and determination, that its action was an important factor in the withdrawal of the colonialist forces a year later, and the arrival of Syria and Lebanon at independence.

In March, 1946, the League was active on behalf of Egypt. The Council of the League gave all its support to Egyptian demands for the evacuation of the British forces of occupation, and informed the British Government of its unanimous support of Egypt's national aspirations. Each member State pursued the same course with regard to Britain's policy in Egypt, and over the years that followed,

the League constantly upheld the cause of Egyptian complete independence.

The League is active in support of the Afro-Asian conferences, and the League's premises in Cairo were, in July, 1964, the scene of the African Summit Conference.

Since its inception, the League has been involved in the Palestine question. It denounced the preparations of Britain and world Zionism to turn Palestine into a wedge of western influence in the Arab world in accordance with the pronouncements of the originator of the Zionist movement, Theodor Herzl, and of Lord Balfour. The League did all it could to avert the Palestine tragedy, and has since been tireless in its efforts to resolve the problem of the refugees in accordance with the innumerable resolutions of the United Nations, ignored by the Israelis, as it has been preoccupied with the countless Israeli aggressions on the borders.

The League works in close co-operation with UNRWA to alleviate the plight of the Palestinian refugees.

The League sponsored and supported the Committee for the Liberation of Libya. By activity in the United Nations, and continual contact with many member States of the UN, a favourable atmosphere was created for the achievement of Libyan independence.

The League has also supported the general Arab voice which requested — first through President Gamal Abdel Nasser — the withdrawal of the American and British from their military bases in Libya.

The League did all it could to assist Algeria in its heroic struggle for independence. It established a North African Office in Cairo, and even before Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria won their freedom, representatives of these countries were present at all the League's meetings.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL

The Economic Council of the League depends primarily on two important Conventions, both signed September, 1953. One is for «Settlement of Current Transactions and the Transfer of Capital», the other «Facilitating Trade Exchange and Regulating Transit Trade».

These Conventions guarantee exemption from customs and import duties on basic commodities between member States. They facilitate the transfer of capital between member States for constructive enterprises, and provide safeguards against the leakage of capital and dissipation of hard currency. There are also facilities and concessions between member States for payments of diplomatic and consular missions, students' expenses, payment of insurance premiums, organization of trade fairs and exhibitions.

The Arab Financial Institution for Economic Development is an important creation of the Economic Council. Original total subscription by member States was well in excess of £ 24 millions. The Institution is now better known as the Arab Development Bank.

The Economic Council's other activities include :

A Federation of Commercial, Industrial, and Agricultural Chambers.

An Arab Tourist Association (whose latest activities include the planning of hotel training schools throughout the Arab world), and the formation of :

An Arab Maritime Association,

A Postal Union,

A Stamp Museum (at the League's building in Cairo)

An Arab Broadcasting Union,

An Arab Aviation Company,

An Arab Potash Company,

An Arab Oil Pipeline Company,

An Arab Tanker Company,

An Arab Aviation Company.

Between 1953 and 1963, the Economic Council held annual sessions in which 237 decisions and recommendations were made, with regard to mutual aid and the stand Arabs have taken against the exclusivist economic doctrines which represent a reactionary economic viewpoint.

THE ARAB COMMON MARKET

Each Arab State understands the necessity of group action in order to accomplish objectives individually unattainable. Rivers extend beyond political frontiers; pipelines cut through boundaries en route to the sea; canals and highways transport the produce of a variety of soils.

Although the population of the Arab world totals over 90 million, distribution is uneven. Half the Arab countries have populations of under 5 million, while Jordan, Lebanon and Libya have less than 2 million each. The oil-producing countries have a large capital surplus; those which have no oilfields have a heavy deficit. Free flow of capital, provided by co-operative agreements, will permit the financing of regional development projects. The disposal of their surplus crops between the member countries of an Arab Common Market would permit regional absorption of these surpluses, which would assist the economies of these countries, and help raise the general living standard.

Unified policy leads to stabilization of export

commodity prices, assures a steady raise of economic growth; this growth would be further stimulated by the attraction a single Arab market area would have for large-scale industries and investment from abroad.

The latest move by the Economic Council of the League has been to set in motion the machinery for creating an Arab Common Market. The Arab Common Market Agreement was signed in Cairo On 13/8/1964 and considers the tariff exemptions already in force as the foundation of the Common Market.

These exemptions are to be gradually extended, and, after a period of five to ten years, all trade barriers between Arab States will be lifted.

Balance of payment agreements and capital transfers are made still more easy by the terms of the Agreement, and double taxation in currency movements between member States has been eliminated, permitting the return of capital to its source and the easy transfer of profits accrued from capital investment.

It is hoped that the development projects scheduled in the Five and Ten Year Plans of different Arab countries will gradually lose the awareness of frontiers as Common Market activity extends. Mutual marketing boards (eg cotton), a unified Commission of Energy and Water Resource, will all have an integrating effect.

The Economic Council gave birth to the Arab Financial Institution for Economic Development in 1957, with an initial capital of £ 24,000,000.
Petroleum :

A commission of oil experts was appointed in 1957 to discuss the Arab oil industry, in connection with production, distribution, and transportation. The Arab Petroleum Congress and Exhibition was held in Cairo in 1959. The League's Permanent Committee on Petroleum gives careful study to the relationships of the major foreign oil companies and the Arab States, and to the Status and security of workers employed by the companies. An accord between member States, the co-ordination of Petrol Policy, established the need to work for increasing the percentage of revenues accruing from petrol to the producing countries (July, 1964, President Ben-Bella of Algeria declared that this should now be a 50/50 basis), and to fix prices with the consent of the producing countries.

Under the League's auspices, many petrochemical studies have been, and are being made throughout the Arab world, and the possibilities inherent in the region's large supply of natural gas are being explored.

Perhaps most important of all, is the realization that the future of Arab petrol must be placed squarely in Arab hands. With this in view, a generation of new Arab technicians and experts is being train-

ed which will eventually be able to reduce the near-monopoly at present existing of foreign technical experts in the field.

COMMUNICATIONS

Between 1956 and 1961 the League's Commission on Communications set up :

The Arab Postal Union

The Arab Telecommunications Union

The Arab Radiocommunications Union

The revival of the Hejaz railway, to avoid Israel, as well as a scheme to link up the Arab countries between Morocco and the Arab Gulf by autostrade are in the preparatory stages.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Arab unity is nowhere more realizable than by the diffusion of culture and the education of the masses, imbued with the traditions of Arab culture and paving the way for its further development as an expression of the total Arab consciousness.

Conferences and committees on cultural education, on science and archaeology have been held, with the useful effect of unifying legislature on digs and finds in the Arab world, of providing funds where necessary, and of standardizing archaeologi-

cal terminology in the Arabic language.

In the spring of 1952, Baghdad was the scene of celebrations of the millenary of Ibn-Sina (Avicenna) at which international orientalists presented papers. The Department published the proceedings of this event in Arabic and English, entitled «Golden Book of the Commemoration of the Thousandth Anniversary of Ibn-Sina».

The Arabic Manuscript Institute and the Institute of Advanced Arabic Studies provide facilities and services for students, orientalists, and Arabists all over the world.

A general index of manuscripts and a very large microfilm library are available at the League's Headquarters.

The League also has a large library available to students in Cairo, and the Institute of Advanced Arabic Studies awards a diploma on completion of a set two-year course.

The Cultural activities of the League culminated in 1964 in establishing at the recommendation of Arab Ministers of Education, of the Arab Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization.

The establishment of an Institute for Nuclear Research has also been decided upon at the Arab Prime Ministers' meeting in Cairo in January 1965.

INFORMATION :

The Information Commission and the Department of Information and Press of the League have been supplemented by a superior organization, the Council of Information Ministers, (February, 1964). This Council is to meet annually and is composed of Arab Ministers of Information or their representatives, and deals with propaganda, cultural unification, and mass media.

The Commission outlines the programme of Arab propaganda, informs the public on questions related to the Arab world, and counters hostile propaganda campaigns.

HYGIENE AND SOCIOLOGY

The League has Permanent Commissions on Social Affairs, Hygiene, and Labour. These study problems which are endemic or accidental to Arab society. They are in constant touch with the various UN organizations. Twenty six medical congresses have been held up to 1964, and numerous conferences on social welfare have resulted in concerted action for child welfare, Palestinian refugees, and the training both of social workers and of the people themselves in an awareness of the principles of hygiene and the fundamentals of sociology.

Arab statistical organizations and societies are encouraged and assistance is given in starting them

where required. The first statistical seminar of the UN was held in Cairo, and the League was able to assist helpfully to its work.

Centralization of the Red Crescent is also under way.

CRIMINOLOGY, PENOLOGY, JUVENILE CRIME.

The Social Affairs and Welfare Commissions take part in international conferences on these subjects, and are contributing much to an understanding of crime and the criminal in the Arab world, and to juvenile delinquency in the context of the Arab world and its social patterns.

LAW AND JURISPRUDENCE

The Legal Commission has done notable work in unifying Arabic legal terminology and laws. An Arab International Social Defence Organization against crime, and an International High Court of Justice are to be set up. A unified company law, and a common Arab Law covering patents and designs are being prepared for acceptance by member States.

Six accords laid the foundation of the Commission's work. These are :

- 1) Agreement on the Execution of Judgments,

- 2) Agreement on Extradition,
- 3) Agreement on Serving Summonses and Interchange of Juridical Powers,
- 4) Agreement Concerning the Nationality of Arabs Residing in Countries Other than those of their Origin.
- 5) Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the League of Arab States.
- 6) Agreement on Nationality.

INFORMATION CENTRES :

The League has now set up a number of Arab Information Centres in many foreign capitals and cities.

They are to be found at :

NEW YORK : Arab States Delegations Office,
Arab Information Center
757 Third Avenue,
Suite 1001,
New York N.Y. 10017 - U.S.A.

NEW DELHI : League of Arab States Office,
Chanyakapuri, 27 Sardar Patel Road,
New Delhi 21. - India.

SWITZERLAND : Bureau des Delegations Des
Etats Arabes,
7, Avenue Kreig,
Geneve - Suisse.

ENGLAND : League of Arab States,
Arab Information Centre,
1/11 Hay Hill,
London, W.1. ENGLAND.

ITALY : Arab Information Office,
PIAZZALE Belle Arti 6,
Rome - Italy,

GERMANY : Delegation der Liga der Arabischen
Staaten
Meckenheimer Allee 155
Bonn - W. Germany.

BUENOS-AIRES : Delegation de la Liga de Los
Estados Arabes,
827, Sargento Cabral - Plaza San Martin,
Buenos-Aires - Argentina.

BRASIL : Delegação de liga dos Estados Arabes,
Praia de Botafogo 110 - Apt. 101,
Rio-de-Jeneiro - Brasil.

THE PALESTINE QUESTION :

The Arab League has been an active rallying point throughout the Palestinian tragedy, from the time when it was seen what was going to happen, through the Zionist armed takeover and the massacres and evictions of the Arabs which accompanied it, and over the intervening years, when Zionist intransigence and refusal to accord the Palestinians their rights have been repeatedly condemned in the forums of the humanitarian nations of the world.

This is not the place for a discussion on occupied Palestine, of the sinister designs of Zionism in the Middle East, nor of the foreign powers who support Zionism. These questions have been written about at length in many Arab League publications, produced by the various Arab Information Centres in the United States and Europe. The work of the Arab Information Centres is of prime importance in the Arab League's unceasing efforts to obtain a just resolution to the Palestinian issue. It is almost virtually impossible for the Arabs to obtain a hearing for their point of view via the mass media of the West, and the Arab Information Centres produce a continuous flow of books, pamphlets and magazines which speak the truth and plead for justice.

The League was largely instrumental in getting Palestinian representation at the adhoc committees of the United Nations on Palestinian refugees. The League has worked for the general recognition of

the Palestinian entity, which has had a number of positive results such as an increased sense of national awareness among exiled Palestinians everywhere.

The League works in close co-ordination with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees, finds means to provide the refugees with material assistance, and brings public attention to their plight.

The Summit Conference of Arab Kings and Heads of State was called to discuss a matter close to the Palestinian question : the River Jordan.

The Plan and counter-plan for the use of the waters of the Jordan had been prepared by various bodies and agencies. Early Zionist schemes to divert the Jordan for the exclusive use of Israel were answered by a Jordanian government plan in 1952, which at first had the support of UNRWA, later withdrawn under pressure from Washington. This was followed by the American Government's proposals, presented by the later Mr. Eric Johnston under President Eisenhower's administration. These proposals ignored completely the acute political problems implicit in the use of the Jordan, disregarded Arab and Palestinian rights, and would have forced an *ipso facto* recognition of Israel by the Arabs. The Israelis, on the other hand, did not care for the proposals because although they were to have a good share of the waters, it was not enough.

The Cotton Plan which followed, was another American device to force the Arabs to work with Israel in a deal profitable principally to Israel.

In 1954, the Technical Committee of the Arab League presented to Mr. Eric Johnston an alternative proposal for the use of the river. In this plan, each riparian State was to be guaranteed an equitable allocation of water sufficient to irrigate all cultivable lands in the watershed of the Jordan and its tributaries. An evaluation of the irrigation needs of Zionist-Occupied Palestine was made, in fair proportion to the rest. Proposals for hydro-electric schemes on the Jordan tributaries were included in the proposals, and the use of Lake Tiberias as a reservoir was objected to on the grounds that this would put Jordan at the mercy of Israel.

Israel, then, in 1956, came up with a plan which would literally divert the entire Jordan for the benefit of the Jewish colons. The likelihood of Israel actually beginning to implement this scheme was the immediate cause of the Arab Summit Conference in January, 1964.

As a result of the Summit, work has already started to implement the suggestions of the Arab League's Technical Committee in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, which will retain 250 MCM of the precious waters for Arab irrigation.

Meanwhile, in their own words, the Israelis are

anxious to «reduce the Jordan to little more than a seasonal trickle, so that the Negev shall live » - at the Arab's expense, as has been the whole of the Israeli adventure.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN THE OCCUPIED SOUTH

The Arab League has constantly opposed the British imperialist policies in Southern Arabia, which have culminated in the formation of the «Southern Arabian Federation» to protect the armed camp of Aden to keep an ascendancy over the rest of the area.

The Arab League has been the meeting point of Southern Arabian rulers and Workers' Representatives who have been consistently subjected to British pressures, imprisoned, or exiled from their own homelands.

The conflict between the people of the Occupied South and the British, long smouldering, has now burst into constant warfare, the might of British arms directing hammer blows at helpless women and children, and resorting to starvation blockades to subdue the «rebels». The Arab League makes constant appeals to the Red Cross and the Red Crescent to assist the wounded in remote desert and mountain areas, and forwards to the appropriate U.N. agencies reports of disease and hunger in the region.

The dismemberment by the British of the sultanates of Muscat and Oman continued for many generations, a process which reached a climax in 1955 by a double aggression; an armed surprise attack on the Saudi Arabian oasis of Buraimi, and the invasion of Oman a few months later by the British in order to force economic concessions and exploitation rights from the elected Imam.

The Political Committee of the Arab League Council fully discussed the Omani question, condemned the British aggressions, organized Arab protest in the U.N., and set before the Bandung Conference the full facts of the case.

Meanwhile, Republican Yemen is a member of the Arab League, and the League looks forward to the complete liberation of the Arab South.

INSIDE THE ARAB LEAGUE :

The Arab League building was designed by Egyptian architect Mahmoud Ryad, and was completed in 1960. It forms a group on the Nile Corniche with the Hilton Hotel in the middle and the Cairo Municipality Building, also by Mahmoud Ryad, on the far side. The dazzling, elegant Hilton contrasts but does not clash with the two flanking official buildings, from which it is separated by well laid-out gardens and walls of different materials which break the lines of view in a satisfactory way.

Both the Municipality and the Arab League are works of serious architecture, of aesthetically superior quality, constructed from the beautiful pale buff limestone which has been used for centuries of building in Egypt.

The Arab League is planned round an impressive threesided «cour d'honneur» approached by a broad shallow flight of steps. Here the main entrance portico is situated, on the right on the left, three double doors lead to what is known as the «Ambassadors' Vestibule».

On the east side, on Maidan Tahrir, is the administrative entrance at the base of the long, slim 9-story main block of the building, which from the front gives the appearance of being a clock tower. The overall design provides a vehicle for the interpretation of classical Arab forms and details. The use of mushrabbiyah lattices is particularly attrac-

tive, giving animation to planes which are generally austere. The architect at every turn has demonstrated, in his use of space, and by the ample, happy proportions of the building, the perpetual adaptability of classicism to new requirements. The facade on Maidan Tahrir is discreet, the simulated tower forming a vertical line of interest. The facade on the «cour d'honneur» is the most striking, while the river frontage is notable for the immense window which forms one side of the Conference Hall.

The exterior, solid, harmonious, and well-finished in every particular, prepares for what is to be found within.

The makeshift gimcrack, the vulgarity and uncertainty which combine to produce so much of modern taste is altogether absent here. There is not a single superfluous ornament, the effects are contrived by the rooms and their furnishings, a better course than the preference of certain modern patrons of the arts who litter building with cheap-looking objects and sculpture off the assembly line.

The atmosphere is one of dignified serenity. The eye is delighted and refreshed by cleverly-devised vistas, changes in height and light. Everything is solid, well put together. The doorhandles are handsome, the doors wide; even the workaday administrative offices are well-arranged, light, with broad corridors.

The furnishings are chiefly well designed variants of Arab or Hispano-Mauresque styles. Inter-

national. «Scandi-temporary» is happy absent.

After the entrance vestibule on the lower ground floor, reached by an interior flight of marble stairs from Maidan Tahrir, its walls covered with ceramic tiles, the visitor is conducted upstairs to the first floor. Above, in the stairwell, hangs a magnificent twelve-foot high lantern in dulled gold filigree. The Long Gallery is the first apartment, opening through heavy gates of bronze and glass from the head of the staircase. It is about 60 feet long. The walls and the pilasters of the semicircular arches are in limestone, the returns of the arches brightened with inlaid blue mosaic.

There are five splendid chandeliers in the Arab style of richly fretted brass, reflecting in the polished marble floors, chequered in white, black, and two shades of brown marble. The windows are curtained in Venetian red, and the upholstery of the tabourets and chairs is in matching red and blue. The ceiling is coffered in many small panels; the total result achieves great harmony and dignity.

From the Long Gallery lead the conference and committee rooms; workmanlike, pleasant, panelled, looking out on to the gardens. At the end of the gallery is a very pretty vestibule, whose walls are covered with lustrous blue-diapered ceramic tiling, and in the centre a graceful marble fountain.

The substantial doors are here patterned in geometrical designs reminiscent of 14th century Isla-

mic woodwork.

This vestibule leads into the impressive «Ambassadors' Vestibule», whose length, and low coffered ceiling, gives an impression of massivity. The colours here are brilliant, the walls faced with green and gold tiles and mosaics, small stained glass windows in blue, yellow, pink and green. The divans are upholstered in sombre green, and there are four handsome Persian carpets. The entrance lobby is approached from the «cour d'honneur» by massive, carved doors, separated from the vestibule by columns in green mosaic, and further embellished by a pair of fountains.

On both sides of the main Conference Hall there is a suite of ante-rooms and small occasional offices. The ante-rooms are decorated with dark brilliant tiles, the standard green upholstery and Persian carpets; each contains a handsome lobby large enough to hold a dozen people, the centre filled with exotic plants from the State nurseries across the river. These rooms, which have something of a club atmosphere, would perhaps be improved by the presence of a few large, valuable objects. The light fittings here, as everywhere in the building, are worthy of comment. Traditional themes have been turned to profitable use; the lanterns and wall-acandelabra are all of beautiful workmanship and quality.

The main Conference Hall is most noteworthy for its immense window (see photograph) against which stands the rostrum. The auditorium is uphol-

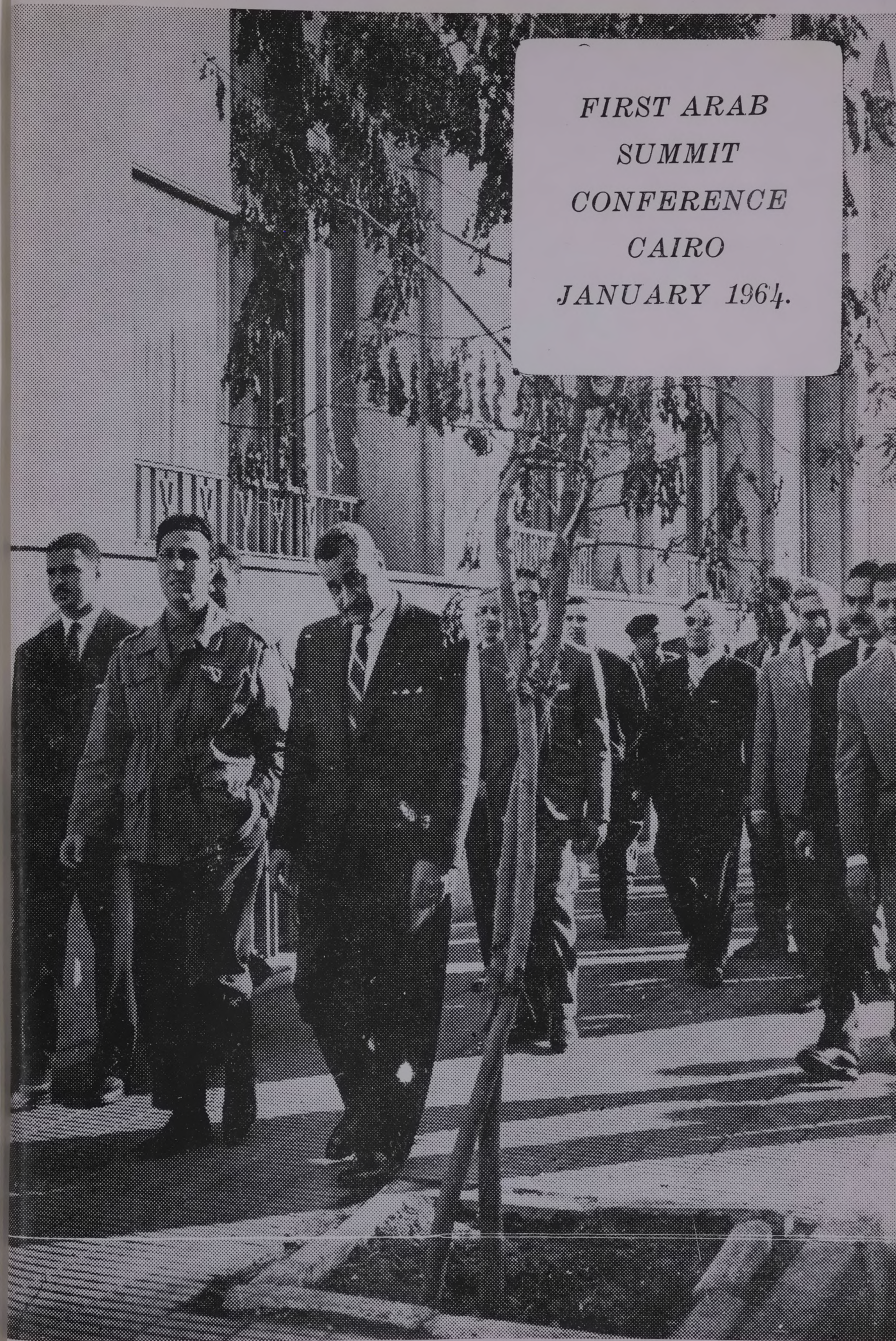
stered in red leather and fitted with every possible device for the convenience of conferees, the press, radio, television and the public. The architect has not succumbed to the temptation of allowing himself to be described by the most appalling of 20th century words applied to the arts, «exciting».

He has set out to make a conference hall, not an «exciting» conference hall; the result is sensible aesthetically pleasing and suitable.

The Library is panelled in light wood, softly waxed, with matching parquet. A clerestory of small square windows of fretted limestone filled with stained glass provides an opportunity for showing off one of Cairo's most delightful crafts. The ceiling is extremely elegant, plastered in a design in high relief of four pointed stars and octagons and painted almond green, buff, and oyster. At the end of the room is a panel inscribed with the following verse from the Koran : «Read, in the name of a generous God who has given the written word to man so that he might learn new things.»

The ground floor of the building contains restaurants, tea rooms, and a simple mosque. A large drawing-room off the main tea room contains a very fine and unusual carpet, about 24×36 feet, showing Noah's Ark with all the animals. These lower floors have the same logical planning as the rest of the building; room leads from room in sensible sequence, there is never a suggestion of cramping or blind alleys.

*FIRST ARAB
SUMMIT
CONFERENCE
CAIRO
JANUARY 1964.*

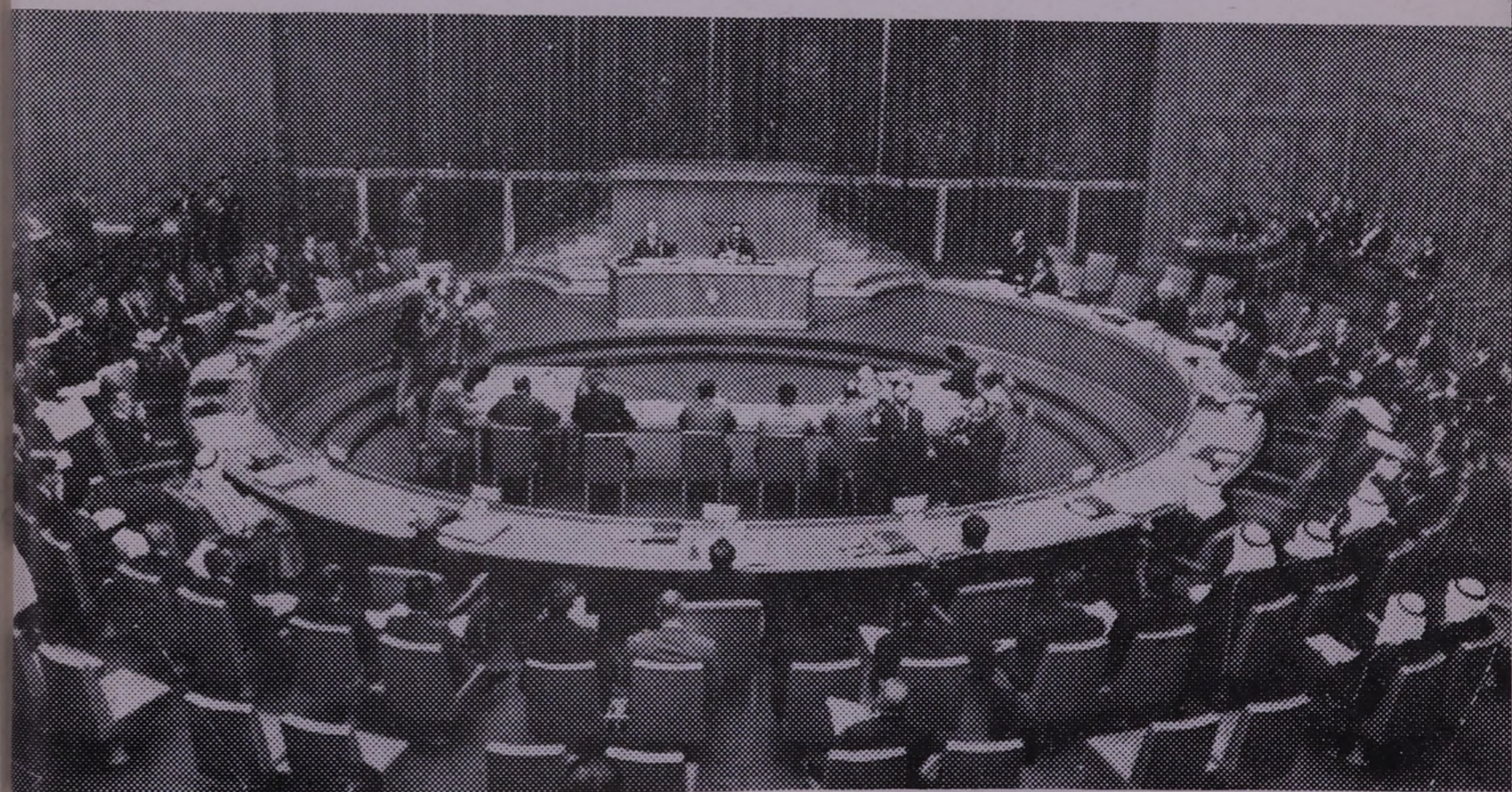




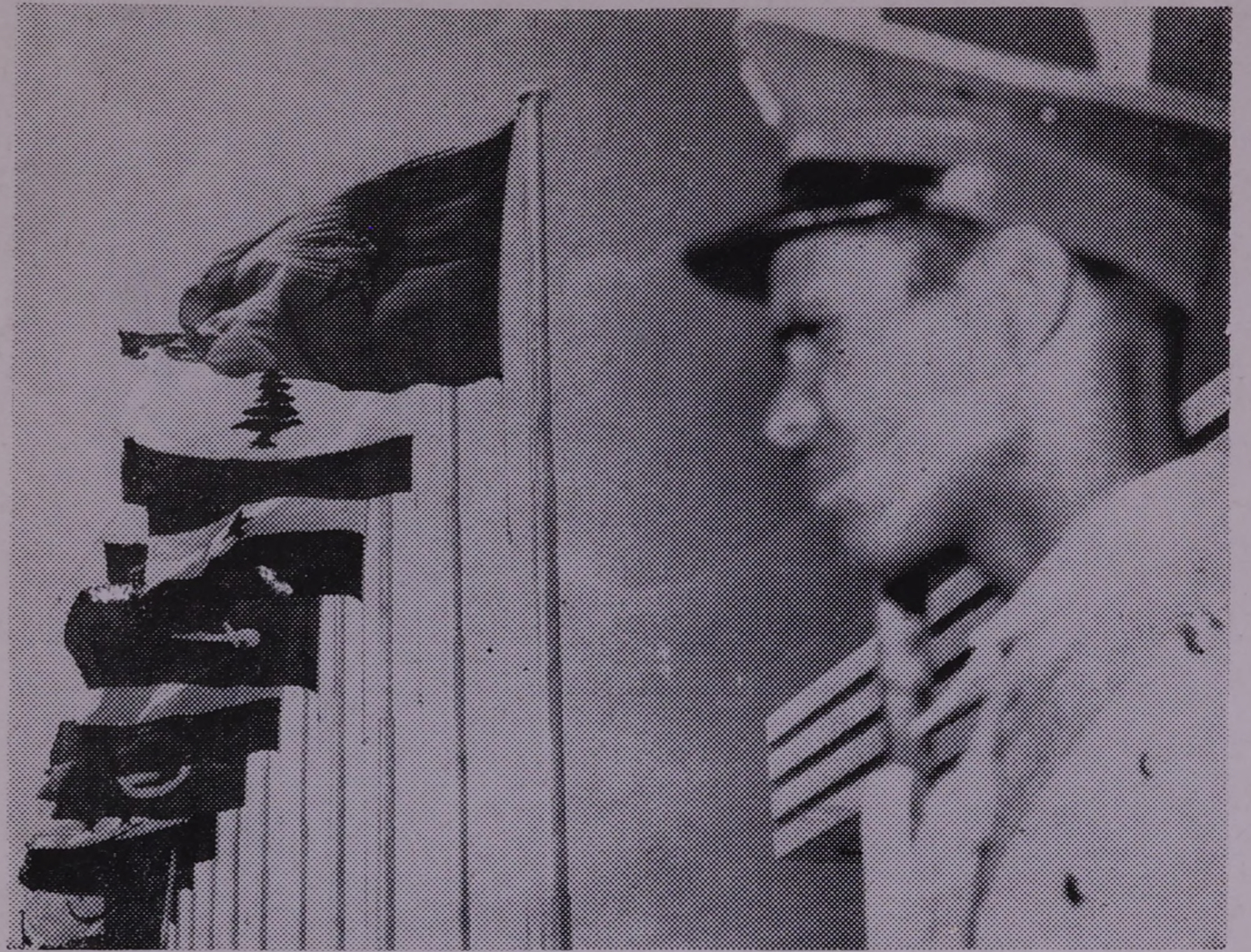
*Arab Kings and Heads of State
at the First and Second Arab Summit Meetings*



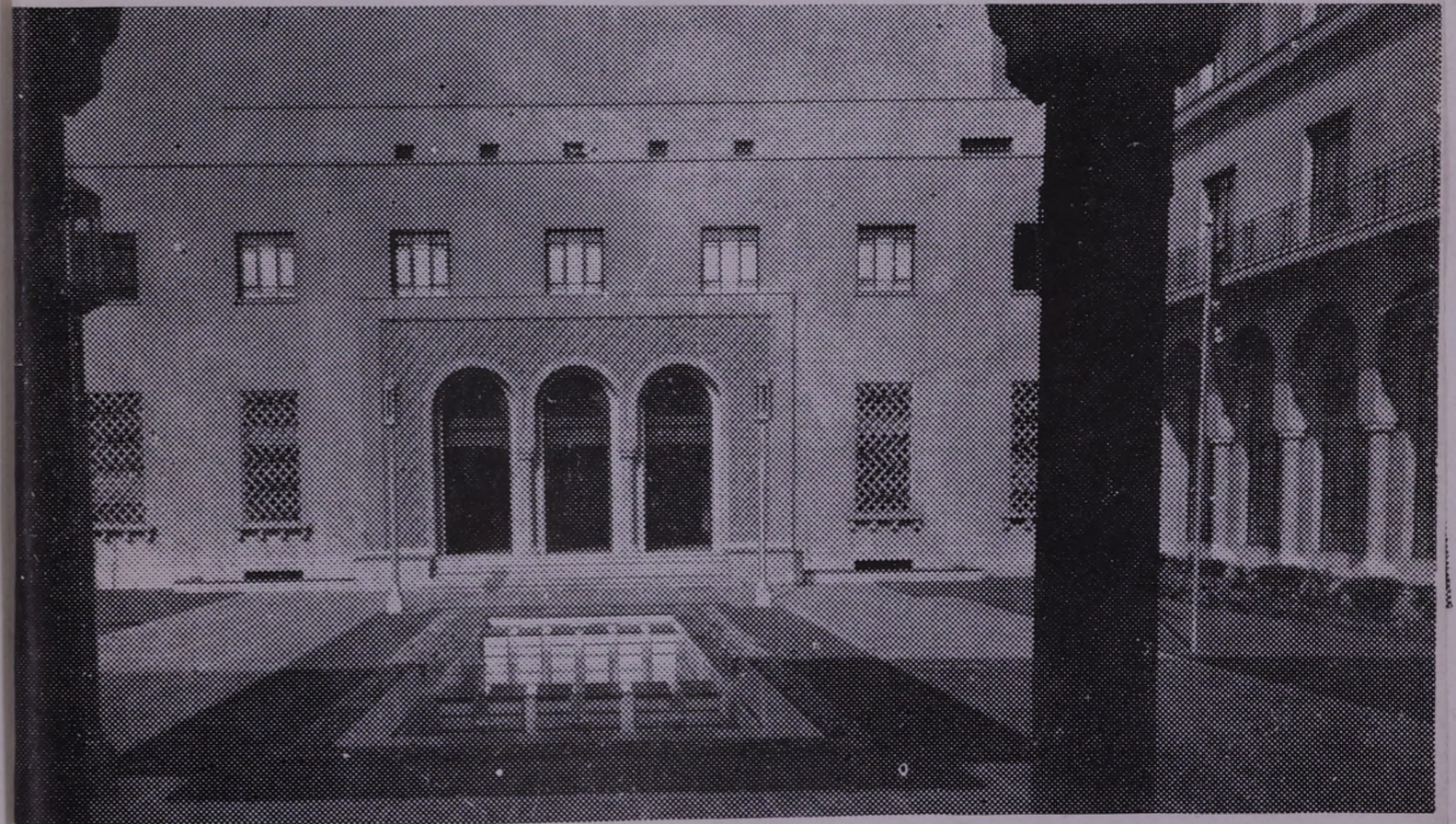
*King Feisal of Saudi Arabia Presides over
Second Arab Summit Conference.*



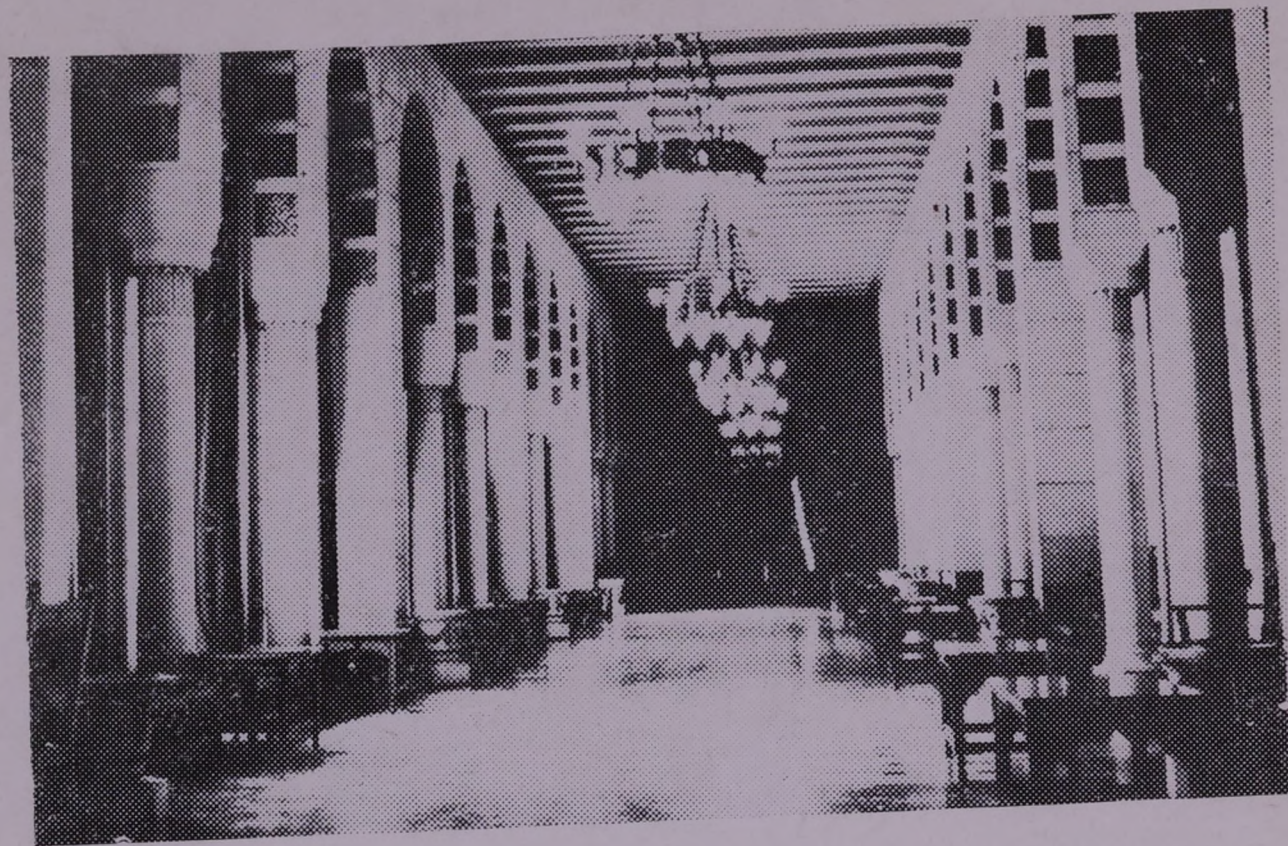
The Assembly Hall.



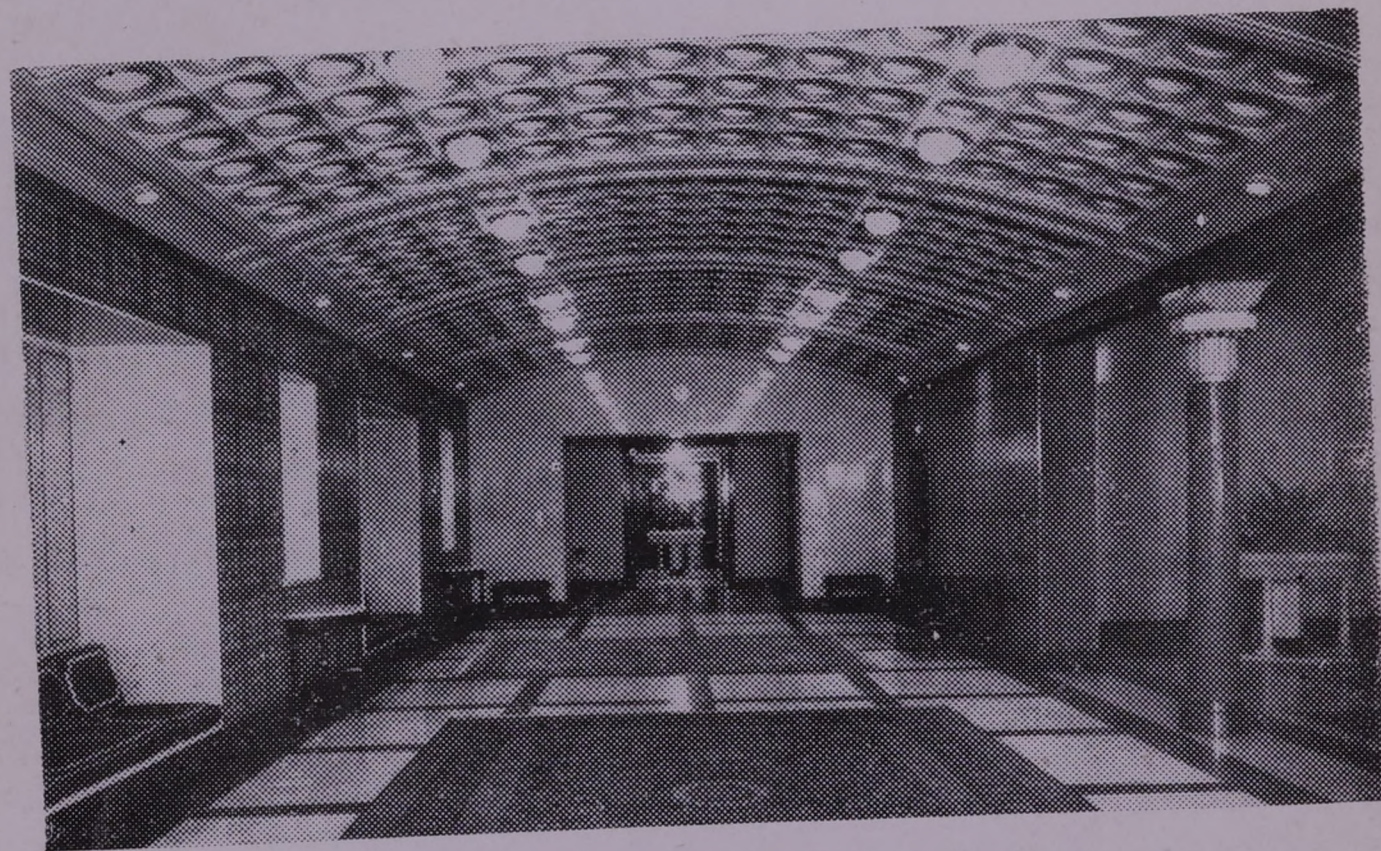
*Arab Flags Hoisted at the Main Entrance
of the League of Arab States.*



The three-sided «cour d'honneur»



Delegates Gallery



«The Ambassadors' Vestibule»

of The League
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