



**THE LEAGUE
OF NATIONS
WORK
AND
BUILDINGS**



Main Façade of Assembly Building

THE CONCEPTION OF THE LEAGUE

1. THE COVENANT

The Covenant is the League's fundamental charter. It was drafted in 1919 and placed in the forefront of the various treaties to which it forms the Preamble. It is, however, distinct from these treaties.

There are twenty-six articles in the Covenant.

2. WHO MAY BE MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE ?

The League of Nations aims at universality ; it is open to all self-governing States. The Assembly can admit new Member States by the vote of a two-thirds majority. States can withdraw from the League by giving two years notice.

There were forty-one Members at the beginning of 1920 and the number rose to sixty. On January 1st, 1939, it was fifty-four.

Germany, Italy and Japan are no longer Members of the League. The United States never became a Member, although the institution owed its inception to President Wilson. For a number of years past, however, the United States has maintained a very active collaboration with the League.

3. THE COMPETENCE OF THE LEAGUE

The League's purpose as laid down by the Covenant may be said to be twofold :

(1) To contribute to the preservation of peace and the settlement of international disputes by the following

methods : (a) arbitration, judicial settlement, conciliation, reconsideration of treaties ; (b) collective security and sanctions ; (c) reduction of armaments.

(2) To arrange for co-operation between peoples in many different fields, in the interest of the material and moral well-being of humanity (financial, economic, social, communications, health, intellectual co-operation questions, etc.).

4. THE ORGANS OF THE LEAGUE

The deliberative organs of the League are the Assembly and the Council. The *Assembly*, which is composed of representatives of all Members, normally meets only once a year ; the *Council*, consisting at present of fifteen Members,¹ holds at least three sessions annually. Both bodies may also hold extraordinary sessions when circumstances require.

Thus, the Assembly may be regarded as the supreme authority, while the Council, a smaller body which meets more often, would seem to be the active organ of the League.

The League's preparatory and executive organ is the *Secretariat*. It consists of international officials—*i.e.*, persons in the service of the League and not in that of the country to which they belong. Its position, in relation to the Council and the Assembly, is somewhat like that of the ministerial departments of each country in their relation to Governments.

Mention must also be made of the *Permanent Court of International Justice*, which is an international tribunal provided for in the Covenant and which sits at The Hague, and of the *International Labour Organisation*, an autonomous body charged with the international regulation of the conditions of work of wage-earners, the headquarters of which are at Geneva.

THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE LEAGUE

A glance at the work done by the League up to the present shows that it has rendered appreciable services.

1. In regard to political questions, the League has brought about, or helped to bring about, the peaceful settlement of a number of important disputes: those

¹ Four permanent Members, the Great Powers (United Kingdom, France, Italy, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), and eleven elected for a period of three years by the Assembly.



M. J. Avenol
SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE LEAGUE

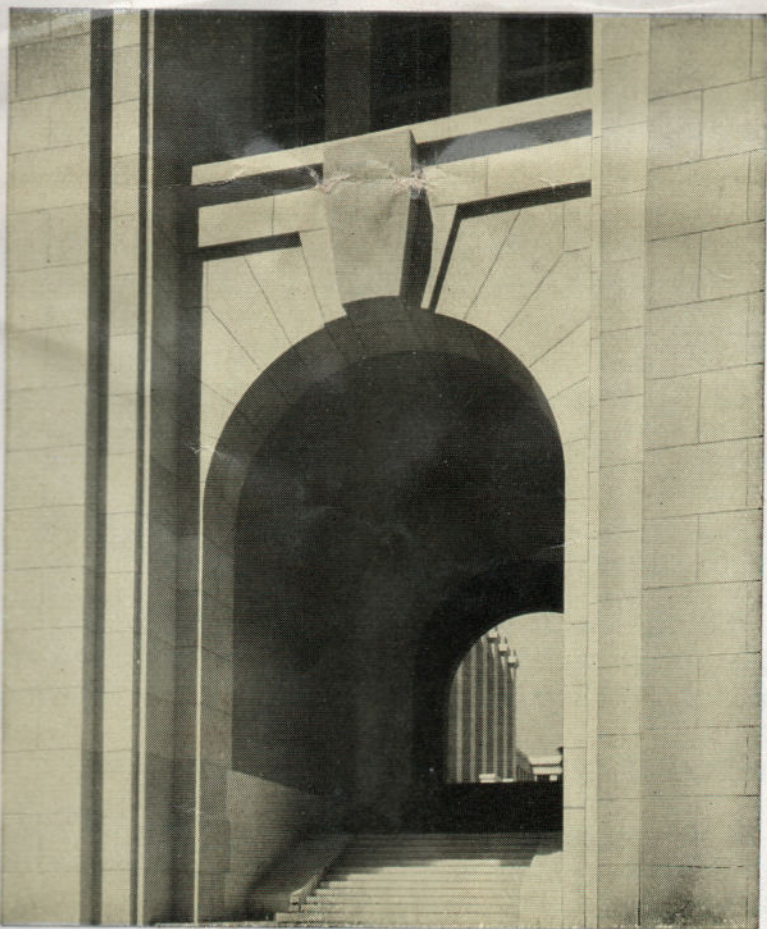
relating to the Aaland Islands, Mosul, the Albanian frontier incident, the Greco-Bulgarian dispute, Leticia, the Hungaro-Yugoslav affair, etc.

It supervises the administration of the mandated territories. One such territory—Iraq—has even been emancipated by the League and is now a Member.

It has provided for the application in certain countries of Treaties and Declarations which guarantee the rights of racial, religious or linguistic minorities.

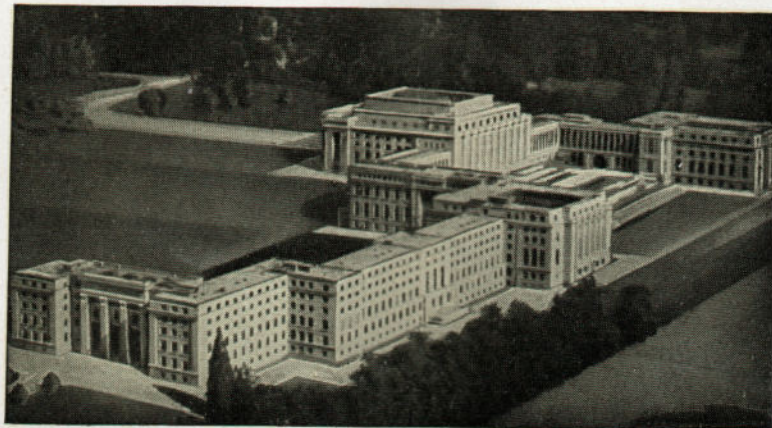
It administered the Saar Territory and carried out with entire success the plebiscite which enabled the population to express its wishes in regard to its political allegiance.

2. In regard to technical questions, the League's activities cover a wide field. After the war, it promoted the financial recovery of a number of States, endeavoured to diminish the obstacles to international trade and encouraged the conclusion of many Conventions to facilitate communication by sea, river, land and air. In the matter of health, it has set on foot a world plan of campaign against specially dangerous epidemics and diseases and



Close-up View of Constructional Work

against the evil of dangerous drugs. Its social and humanitarian services work for the protection of women and children, and of refugees victims of the war and the disturbances that followed it. It has also endeavoured to develop co-operation between peoples in the realms of the intellect (science, art, teaching, literature), to



The League Buildings from the Air

encourage a *rapprochement* and to promote a better understanding between them.

3. Generally speaking, the frequent meetings at Geneva of statesmen from almost all countries have established between them a quasi-permanent contact which is of the greatest value for the settlement of disputes and for the continuity of international co-operation.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN THE PAST AND IN THE FUTURE

1. Side by side with its notable achievements, the League has undoubtedly had to admit some failures. The international crisis had an unfavourable effect on its activities.

To what can those failures be attributed? The nature of the League has often been misunderstood. Its birth on the morrow of the world war was hailed by an outburst of popular enthusiasm and it has thus sometimes been wrongly considered as a sort of supernatural force, able to command States and capable, in spite of universal hostility, indifference or apathy, of establishing peace, justice and prosperity through its own power. But the League is merely an association of States. It is what its Members desire it to be. If it succeeds, it is because its Members—that is, the peoples represented by their Governments—have the will to apply its principles. If they have not that will it cannot but fail.

The setting-up of an international order implied the existence of a spirit of collaboration; a desire to settle disputes by the appropriate peaceful procedure, to bring about a general reduction and limitation of armaments; the will to meet aggression with collective resistance. The League represented the instrument by which these aims might be achieved. It was essential, however, that there should be a real desire to achieve them and that the nations should be prepared to pay the price, to make the necessary sacrifices for that achievement. But the international spirit was lacking and the hopes placed in the League were disappointed. To-day the world is realising what happens when the spirit of co-operation is repudiated and its methods abandoned; it sees the results of opposing the effort of which the League was a symbol.

Nevertheless, the League is the first attempt at an international organisation for the purpose of regulating and governing by peaceful methods the general relations between peoples. It has established and put to the test a technique which has proved adequate.

When the nations desire to return to the ways of peace and to resume international co-operation—which will

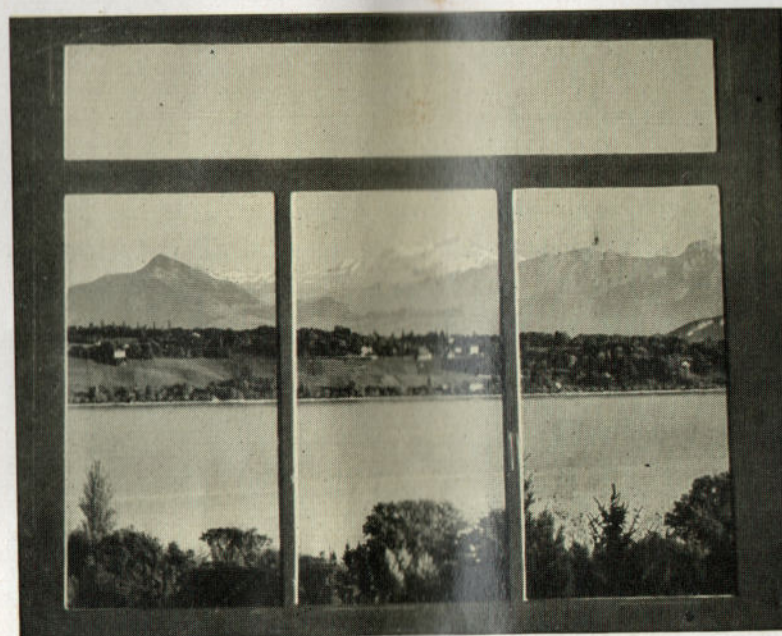


Main Entrance of Assembly Building

inevitably come about, whether the present crisis ends in peaceful settlement or in war—they will be bound to use the methods initiated and practised by the League of Nations.

2. The future of the League is closely bound up with the political evolution of the world. Will men prefer peace to war, order to anarchy, and justice to the brutal use of force?

The organisation of the League may evolve. The form which it has assumed up to the present must not be considered as unchangeable. The Covenant may be adjusted; more elasticity given to its application so as to allow of a graduation of obligations according to the political and geographical situation of States. Before that can come



Mont Blanc, seen from the Secretariat

about, however, the spirit of war must be abandoned and men must resolve to establish peace.

THE LEAGUE BUDGET

The expenses of the League are borne by the States Members in the proportion decided by the Assembly. The last budget was divided into 932 units. In this way the United Kingdom pays 11.74% of the total, France 8.69%, Switzerland 1.84% and Panama 0.10%. One unit at present amounts to 22,288 gold francs. The total for 1938 was therefore 932 times 22,288—*i.e.*, 20,806,754 gold francs.

THE LEAGUE BUILDINGS

In 1924, the Assembly decided that new buildings should be erected for the League. The work was entrusted to five architects selected by competition: M. Nénot (Paris), M. Broggi (Rome), M. Flegenhimer (Geneva), M. Lefèvre (Paris) and M. Vágó (Budapest).

In 1929, the foundation stone was laid in Ariana Park. On November 6th, 1933, the symbolic crowning of the roof-tree marked the end of the constructional work.

The three chief buildings are situated on a Court of Honour 130 metres wide. That for the Assembly is in the centre, and, symmetrically on each side, but still facing the lake, are those of the Council and Library, the last mentioned being a gift of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

ASSEMBLY AND COMMITTEE ROOMS

Halls and committee rooms are shown to the public only when not in use.

1. THE ASSEMBLY HALL

The Assembly Hall, which will accommodate nearly 2,000 persons, is one of the largest of its kind in the world. On the right and the left of the auditorium are two great bronze doors designed by the architect Moreux and decorated with figures by the French sculptors



Assembly Hall

Auricoste and Couturier. The four entrance doors to the hall are surmounted by mural paintings representing four different conceptions of peace, by the French artists Vuillard, Roussel, Maurice Denis and Roger Chastel. A bronze balustrade by Yencesse completes the gift of the French Government. The furniture of the President's tribune, in dark Australian walnut, was presented by the Australian Government.

2. THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY

On the top floor of the building, reserved for the use of the President of the Assembly. Walls veneered with New Zealand wood; furniture in green Indian wood, the gift of India.



Council Chamber: "The Solidarity of Peoples"

3. COUNCIL CHAMBER

Impressive wall decoration (given by Spain), artist José-Maria Sert; done in sepia on a gold ground; walls partly faced with beige marble. Parapet of gallery gilded in gold leaf. Council table and chairs covered with green morocco.

The paintings symbolise the efforts of humanity throughout the ages to overcome the ills that threaten to overwhelm it, and, last of all, war. The solidarity of peoples, represented in the centre of the ceiling by five hands grasping one another, is the only way to victory.

4. COUNCIL ANTE-ROOM

Decoration and arrangement by a French firm. Walls coloured salmon pink. Large mirror in squares and decorative panel in engraved glass by Kaskoff. Furniture in mahogany and rosewood.

5. PRIVATE COUNCIL ROOM

Decoration and arrangement by an Austrian firm. Walls covered with woodwork in African pearwood. Large Persian carpet, made specially for the room, given by Iran. Tables and chairs in walnut.

6. PRIVATE ROOM OF PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Walls covered with flexwood—very thin layer of wood glued on to fabric. Large carpet, gift of Iran. Furniture (given by Sweden) consists of large oval inlaid

table (showing a map of the world), chairs in old dark oak, grey panelled desk and small table with engraved glass top; the subjects of the engravings are drawn from industry and agriculture in Sweden.

7. LOUNGE FOR DELEGATES

Gift of the Czecho-Slovak Government. Decoration and arrangement by K. Caivas.

8. SECRETARY-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Gift of the Netherlands. Arranged by Luthmann, The Hague. Panelled in light sycamore. Wainscot in dark marble. Planisphere in inlaid wood.



Secretary-General's Office

9. WAITING-ROOM OF SECRETARY-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Given by Hungary. Woodwork in walnut. Decoration by Szablya-Frischauf. Modern tapestries, by Basilides, representing popular scenes: harvest, vintage and gathering of fruit.

10. COMMITTEE ROOMS

Room 3.—Woodwork in dark-grained birch and pearwood. Wall paintings by Barraud, Geneva, representing harmony (gift of Switzerland). Moquette carpet.

Room 5.—Decoration by an English firm. Walls covered with fibrous coating in different shades of green. The principal decoration of this room is a large map of the world, moulded in plaster, showing the influence of the League of Nations represented by a torch shedding light over all lands. Green moquette carpet. Clock face in relief.

Room 6.—Gift of Switzerland. Large frescoes by Hügin, Zurich. On the wall on the side of the entrance doors subjects from Swiss history: the Oath of Grütli (unity), the capture of William Tell (courage and intrepidity), Nicolas de Flüe (wisdom and forethought). Two large panels facing each other: the indictment of the living by a dead soldier, laid out in a white shroud, and some symbols of human generosity: St. Martin, St. George, the Good Samaritan and the Good Shepherd. Woodwork in natural oak.

Room 7.—Decoration by a French firm. Five large bays, surrounded by framework lacquered in dark brown. Chairs in oak; those on platform covered in red, and on floor in green leather.

Room 8.—Decoration by a Danish firm. Walls covered with birchwood in three shades. Inlaid planisphere copied from an old map.

Room 9.—Given by South Africa. Woodwork of stinkwood; chessboard decoration.

Room 10.—Given by Latvia. Decoration by Birznieks, in Latvian woods. Above the panels, scenes from popular life in Latvia.

Room 11.—Arranged by a Dutch firm. Walls panelled in leather.

Rooms 12 and 13.—Arranged by an Italian firm. Wainscot in travertine, polished and gilded in parts. Ceiling in gilded coffers. Large wall frescoes by Campigli, representing the construction of the League buildings.

Being the largest of the Committee rooms, this room is arranged to serve also for cinematographic performances.

Room 14.—Arranged by a French firm. Decoration in varnished ash with mahogany lines.

SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat building for the League officials has five storeys with more than 400 offices for the various sections, the central services and the auxiliary branches.

THE LIBRARY

The League Library is a valuable centre of information on all international questions relating to the League's work.

A reader's card is issued to any person whose written application is approved. This latter should be addressed

to the Director of the Library. The Library is open every working day from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m.



Library Wing

LEAGUE PUBLICATIONS

The *Monthly Summary of the League of Nations* describes succinctly the chief events in the League's current work. It is published in English, French and Spanish, and the subscription is 10 Swiss francs a year. The English edition costs 8/- or 2 United States dollars.

For a closer study of the League's proceedings, the *Official Journal*, containing Minutes of sessions and the chief official documents, is most suitable; or the special publications of the different Sections of the Secretariat.

Essential Facts about the League of Nations (price 1 Swiss franc, published in five languages) appears yearly, giving a concise and general account of the League's work.

A detailed prospectus of publications will be sent on request by the Publications Service of the League of Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, or by any of the authorised agents in various countries.