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Title: TUNISIA AND THE ARAB LEAGUE (1956-1966)

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Degree: M.A.

ABSTRACT

Since the time of the Arab conquest of North Africa, Tunisia has been involved in the broad context of the Arab world. After its achievement of independence in 1956, however, it played a minimal role in the affairs of the Arab League until 1961, when the League gave Tunisia its full support during the confrontation with France over Banzart (Bizerta). Tunisia reverted to a passive role in 1965 when President Būrqība's proposed solution to the Palestine problem was emphatically rejected by most other Arab leaders. In the months following the six days' war of June 1967, however, Tunisia resumed activity in the League. The main factors affecting Tunisia's behavior have been a mistrust of Egyptian leadership and intentions, a strong regional loyalty to the idea of a united Maghrib and an aloof pragmatism on the Palestine question, which contrasts with the emotional commitment of Mashriqi Arabs.

TUNISIA AND THE ARAB LEAGUE (1956-1966)

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by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

**Institute of Islamic Studies,
McGill University.**

February, 1969.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish first of all to express my gratitude to Professor Niyazi Berkes under whose guidance and encouragement this dissertation has taken shape.

I must acknowledge as well my debt to the staff of the Library of the Institute of Islamic Studies, especially Mr. Jan Weryho and Miss Salwa Ferahian for their assistance in acquiring necessary material.

To the half-dozen persons who typed parts of this dissertation in its various stages of development I am also grateful, but most of all to Mrs. de la Ronde whose labor produced the final copy.

As a library assistant, as a typist and proof-reader but most of all as an encourager and exhorter Margaret E. Fraser Brown's contribution to the easing of my task merits a gratitude beyond my means of expression. Finally, I should thank Kevin Brown for his filial cooperation and sacrifices during the long evenings of his father's labors.

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INTRODUCTION

In the confines of the Arab world, and especially in that world's major political organization, there have been numerous alignments and realignments as governments, personalities or circumstances changed under the influence of passing events. This thesis will seek to present the activities of one state, Tunisia, within this maze of interacting circumstances with the object of exposing the principal determinants of the type and scope of its participation in the affairs of the League of Arab States and its subordinate bodies. For convenience in analysis, the time of Tunisia's modern independent status has been divided into several periods, the length of which varies according to the ebb and flow of occurrences. Consideration of each period will conform to a broad, general pattern: first, Tunisia's behavior within the League as a whole will be assessed; then its relations with the various other members of the League will be examined, insofar as they affect Tunisia's place in the Arab community as a whole. By way of conclusion, the final chapter will offer a number of observations and assessments based on the assembled data.

CHAPTER I

TUNISIA AND THE ARAB WORLD BEFORE 1956

While it is possible to trace the history of close relations between what is now Tunisia and the lands of the eastern Mediterranean to the remote Phoenician past, and to count long centuries during which the two areas were held in common yoke by Rome and Byzantium, it is in the sweep of Arab conquests following the birth of Islam that we find the seeds of our study. This is so because the Arabs were the only conquerors of North Africa to achieve any lasting place in the social fabric of the region, providing the subdued territories with a new language and religion which, having once taken root, made them cultural provinces of an Arabo-Islamic empire even when they enjoyed political autonomy. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, efforts were made to absorb Islam into the indigenous setting and several Berber dynasties rose to power at the head of religious movements, while the Fāṭimī khalīfas established themselves first in Tunis, with Berber help, before capturing Cairo. When the ruler of Tunisia abandoned the Fāṭimī cause and embraced Sunnī Islam, the irate

khalīfa in Cairo unleashed the nomadic Hillālī and Sulaymī Arabs to punish him. Nowhere in North Africa was the effect of these tribesmen more profoundly felt than in the plains of Tunisia; while large Berber-speaking minorities still exist in Morocco and Algeria, Tunisia emerged from the holocaust a homogeneous society in which almost everybody spoke Arabic. Three centuries of relative stability under the Ḥafṣīs entrenched Arab culture at the same time as it began to give it a peculiarly Tunisian dimension, for the Ḥafṣīs' extensive commercial relations with the countries of southwestern Europe involved them more in the Angevin-Habsburg rivalries than in the contemporary cataclysms of the Arab east. The Turkish occupation dating from 1574 reasserted the oriental element in Tunisian affairs but it scarcely diminished contact between Tunis and its closer maritime neighbors.

Turkish suzerainty lingered until the French occupation but after 1705 the Ḥusaynī family ruled Tunisia with little interference. Caught in the wave of imperial rivalries, the Ḥusaynīs were less successful than the Sharīfs of Morocco and in 1881 accepted the "protection" of France. Almost at once, opponents of the Protectorate began to work towards its overthrow. At first, the nationalists focused their hopes on the

reformers within the Ottoman Empire, at a time when the eastern Arabs were scheming against the Constantinople regime for their own independence. Soon European mandates would take control of most of the Mashriq, however, and the erstwhile Young Tunisians, offended by the apparent irreligion and autocracy of Atatürk's movement, gave their support to the Dustūr (Constitutional) Party, which in name recalled the Ḥusaynī constitution of 1856 but in policy drew its inspiration from the Egyptian Wafd. Increasing scepticism in this party's effectiveness led to a split in 1934 and Ḥabīb Būrqība launched the Neo-Dustūr on a modernist platform that derived some of its philosophy from Atatürk but also drew heavily on the policies of the French Popular Front. With such non-Arab sources contributing directly to the mainstream of Tunisian nationalism (for Būrqība had quickly won the allegiance of the masses) it is not surprising that little effort was spent in integrating the Tunisian liberation tactic into a broader pan-Arab strategy.

The Second World War, like its predecessor, transformed the situation. Seeking to balance Egypt's preeminence in the proposed Arab League the Amīr of Transjordan suggested the inclusion of Tunisia and Morocco in the new alliance;¹ however, when the

¹Note of Amīr 'Abd Allāh to his prime minister, 24 August 1943, reported in Robert W. Macdonald,

preliminary congress gathered at Alexandria^{in October 1944}, observers from both Libya and Morocco were present, but there was no representative from Tunisia. Nevertheless, Tunisian and Algerian delegates joined their Maghribi neighbors in observing the inauguration of the League of Arab states on 22 March 1945. A few weeks before, on 18 February the Tunisian Muḥammad al-Khādir Ḥusayn had opened an office in Cairo for the Front for the Defence of the Maghrib and the Pact itself, in its second annex, pledges League support to the aspirations of Arabs in Palestine and North Africa. From 1946 to 1949 Būrqība found refuge in Egypt and involved himself in matters of general Arab interest; on 4 March 1946 he first enunciated his analysis of the Palestine problem as a colonial fact,² in a report of the Maghribi nationalists to the League Council. Much as one regrets misfortune suffered by a distant yet respected cousin, the North Africans were saddened but not bereft by the Mashriqis' military failure of 1948. Būrqība observed the debacle at first hand and lost his already meagre hope for effective support from the members of the League.

The League of Arab States: A Study in the Dynamics of Regional Organization (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 37.

²Muḥammad Baḥrī, "Le conflit israélo-arabe vu du Maghreb," Revue française de Science politique, XVI, 4 (August 1966), p. 775 f.

Back in Tunisia, Būrqība concentrated on local issues and neither sought nor received significant material support from the Arab League. Moral support was forthcoming, however, in the form of a decision of the League Council to take the Tunisian question before the General Assembly of the United Nations.³ Accordingly, six Arab states were among the thirteen sponsors of a request to put the Tunisian question before the General Assembly's seventh session.⁴ Again in May 1953, the League Council urged member states to promote General Assembly discussion of the Tunisian problem.⁵ During this period, Tunisian observers sat with other North Africans at meetings of the League Council and after the brief armed insurrection of the spring of 1954 shared a League grant of £E 15,000 for refugee relief with Morocco and Algeria. Mendès-France's promise of autonomy, given in a speech at Carthage on 31 July 1954

³Council of the League of Arab States Resolution 469, passed at the Council's seventeenth session, Cairo, October 1952; reported in Macdonald, op. cit., p. 356.

⁴The thirteen states were: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen; Afghanistan, Burma, India, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and the Philippines. The text of the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum is given in Muḥammad Khalīl, The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), I, 366-370.

⁵Council Resolution 523; English text in Khalīl, op. cit., II, 155.

led to negotiation of internal autonomy for 3 June 1955 and to the awarding of full independence on 20 March 1956. Throughout the period of discussions, the Arab League was left far in the background and the leaders of Neo-Dustūr saw independence as a Tunisian rather than an Arab achievement.

Tunisia thus began its career as an independent state with a certain ambivalence in its attitude to the League of Arab States. The League had sponsored the Front for the Defence of the Maghrib and consistently advocated North African independence in world assemblies. At the same time Būrqība's avowed appreciation of French culture aroused suspicion among Arab purists of the east. The Tunisian leader played a risky game of exploiting pan-Arabism as far as possible for the minimum commitment necessary on his own part. The Mashriq was, more than anything else, a counterpole to France, so it was quite to be expected that changing conditions could shift the emphasis in this duality and thus loosen Tunisia's bonds to the Arab heartland. Būrqība's conciliatory attitude to the French, especially evident in his acceptance of Mendès-France's gambit made the more adamant leaders uneasy. By the same token, Būrqība's confidence in amicable negotiation and his unflattering assessment of the Arab League's intransigence

on the Palestine issue made him vigorously determined to chart his own course. He set Tunisia into its classical Mediterranean context, emphasizing the benefits French culture had brought to Tunisia and relegating pan-Arabism to a very minor role in his campaign. This appeal to continuity won an enthusiastic response among the merchants of Tunisia, which has a relatively large middle class when compared with other Arab states. This same bourgeoisie endorsed Būrqība's decision to delay his demand for the withdrawal of French military forces rather than precipitate a rupture with the West, but this stance was decried not only in Egypt and Arab Asia but also among the Algerian nationalists, who had much to fear in a continued French presence in Tunisia. In 1955, an attempt by Ṣālīh Ibn Yūsuf to supplant Būrqība and infuse a stronger pan-Arabist strain into Neo-Dustūr policy failed utterly, although it was generally known that Ibn Yūsuf's party had the backing of the Egyptian government.

Indeed, relations with Egypt had already become the Tunisian nationalists' major stumbling block in their hope for goodwill with the Arab East. A considerable number of Tunisians had evaded French and British authorities and made their way across Libya and Egypt to join the Palestinian Arabs in the war of 1948.

Some of these, Zaytūnī students for the larger part, were of pan-Arabist sympathy, but the majority apparently joined the fray simply as an anticolonial struggle. The poor welcome these volunteers received in Egypt gave Būrqība's policy of aloofness added force.⁶ After 'Abd al-Nāṣir assumed the government of Egypt, however, his firm anticolonial stand won some respect while he in turn supported the armed revolts that erupted in the three North African countries during 1954. But, like the Algerian fighters, he saw Būrqība's acceptance of French concessions as a betrayal and lent his support to the Yūsufī rebellion.⁷ After his defeat, Ibn Yūsuf was guest of honor at a sumptuous reception in the Egyptian embassy at Tripoli, but in March 1956 Cairo refused his request for an entry visa, perhaps in the hope of improving relations with Būrqība on the eve of Tunisian independence. While sporadic attempts were made at coordinating North Africa's independence movements, Būrqība preferred to pursue opportunities as they arose. Libya provided a convenient haven for political refugees and occasional counsel; in December 1955, for example, a Libyan delegation tried to mediate between

⁶Baḥrī, op. cit., p. 778.

⁷Hisham B. Sharabi, Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World (The Middle East and North Africa) (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1966), p. 75.

Būrqība and Ibn Yūsuf. Contacts with Arab states in Asia during the protectorate period were generally confined to League meetings and consultations about the pleading of Tunisia's case before the United Nations.

As Tunisia achieved independence, then, its people viewed the Arab World with mixed emotions. The League had provided financial and psychological backing, but the Tunisian leaders found it difficult to believe that this aid came without certain encumbrances; their doubts were fortified by the circumstances surrounding Ibn Yūsuf's confrontation with Būrqība. With such grounds for suspecting subservion and wary of Egypt's apparent preeminence within the League, the leaders of the new state saw little merit in applying for membership, since joining the League might prove to be a mere transfer of one outside authority for another. Instead, Tunisia would seek cordial relations with the several member states and reserve judgment on the prospect of its own involvement.

CHAPTER II

INDEPENDENT TUNISIA OUTSIDE THE LEAGUE MARCH 1956 TO OCTOBER 1958

Although Tunisia acquired national status on 20 March 1956, a few problems of a colonial nature remained to be considered. Chief among these was the continuing French occupation of the naval base at Banzart (Bizerte); two days after his country had won independence, Būrqība suggested that the harbor could be transferred to NATO administration and that Tunisia might seek to enter the North Atlantic alliance rather than the Arab League.¹ As if to maintain political equilibrium, the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia on 13 April adopted the first article of the new constitution, asserting that the new state was of Islamic faith and Arabic speech. On 17 April Būrqība addressed the Assembly, promising to work for a peaceful solution to the Algerian war and to develop closer links with other Arab countries. He had already named his trusted associate Ṣādiq Muqaddam as a special envoy to establish diplomatic relations with the Mashriq. Speaking to the Egyptian parliament Muqaddam assured his

¹Interview with The Times, 22 March 1956, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XXXVI, 4 (April 1956), p. 267.

audience of Tunisia's intentions to assist the Arabs of Palestine. By September matters had progressed to such warmth that the Egyptian press ventured to guess that a Tunisian request for admission into the League was imminent, but on 26 September Būrqība repudiated the suggestion.

When the governments of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria adopted a resolution of neutrality late in February, 1957, Būrqība rejected their stance and emphasized the disadvantages to developing countries in such a position. Tunisia's friendliness to the Western powers, especially its continuing cooperation with France, prompted taunts from eastern Arab capitals to the effect that Tunisia was not yet completely emancipated. Nevertheless, Syrian authorities made arrangements in May to dispatch an economic delegation comprising representatives from all the Arab League states; in return, Tunis offered to extend the trading privileges enjoyed by France to any Arab government interested in economic collaboration.² But it was obvious that the West had more to offer in financial terms, so Būrqība continued to insist that Tunisia's economic and military liaisons with the West were in no way incompatible with his country's strong cultural and

² al-Naṣr (Damascus), 4 June 1957, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXVII, 6 (June 1957), p. 395.

ethnic affiliations with the Arab and Muslim world. These two strands together with North African co-operation and, possibly, union would form the fabric of Tunisian foreign policy.³ Just as Būrqība tried to balance the Arab and Western influences on Tunisia's policy, he sought to create finer balances with the two larger spheres. Friendship with the United States would prevent France's interest in Tunisia from assuming a neocolonial predominance, while feelers were put out to such Arab states as Libya and Iraq in the hope of forestalling Egyptian hegemony.⁴ When these overtures met a welcome reception, anticipation of Tunisia's adherence to the League charter rose anew; this time it was the task of the Tunisian ambassador in Beirut to dispel the false hopes, in the same breath as he reaffirmed his government's endorsement of the League's guiding principles.⁵

The first indication of a positive official attitude towards the League of Arab States came with

³ Habib Būrqība (Bourguiba), "Nationalism: Antidote to Communism," Foreign Affairs, XXXV, 4 (July 1957), p. 653.

⁴ Nevill Barbour, ed., A Survey of North West Africa (The Maghrib), 2d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 314.

⁵ Declaration on presenting his credentials, reported in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 35 (1957), p. 38.

the request of 2 March 1958 by Tunisia's Cairo ambassador for assistance against French interference along the Algerian border; apparently Secretary General 'Abd al-Khāliq Ḥassūna, displeased with Tunisia's reluctance to join the League, pigeonholed the petition. But in August events at the opposite extremes of the Arab world combined to propel Tunisia into the League. Iraq was encountering considerable difficulty in maintaining its opposition within the League to the new United Arab Republic and found a sympathetic audience in Tunisia for its appeal for assistance. Meanwhile the conservative administration in Rabat was fast succumbing to pressure from the left to apply for admission to the League. When in September 1958 Morocco submitted its application, Tunisia followed suit only five days later and on 1 October 1958 the two Maghribi states were formally accepted by the League Council. Even as it joined, however, Tunisia scarcely tried to conceal its suspicion of the Cairo regime and in his first speech to the Council Tunisia's delegate made several pointed references to the dangers inherent in allowing any member state to assume too preponderant a role in League affairs. His shafts found their mark, for the U.A.R. delegation left the chamber as he spoke and the session was suspended; the ambassador then distributed an explanatory

memorandum.⁶ A resolution passed without a dissenting voice on 14 October expressed the League's hope that Tunisia would apologize to the U.A.R. for the apparent attack, but it was ignored in Tunis and Tunisia's freshly acquired status as a member of the League took on the moribund pallor of indefinite suspension.

Having despaired of gaining Būrqība's confidence, Egypt had discarded its temporary coolness towards Ṣālīḥ Ibn Yūsuf and by the summer of 1956 it was furnishing his partisans in southern Tunisia with military equipment. This activity by no means prevented Cairo's adoption of a more positive official attitude, for on 19 August the Tunisian premier was formally invited to visit Egypt.⁷ Although Būrqība did not act on the invitation, he won much ground in Cairo with his castigation of the French government for its part in the Suez invasion and his underlining of "the natural sentiment of the Tunisian people towards the Egyptian."⁸ This ground was largely abandoned within the month when

⁶The text of the Tunisian memorandum is given, in French, in Charles Debbasch, La République Tunisienne (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit, 1962), pp. 125-133.

⁷"Developments of the Quarter: Chronology and Comment," Middle East Journal, X, 4 (August 1956), p. 425.

⁸Official note to the French ambassador in Tunis, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XXXVI, 11 (November 1956), p. 677.

the premier warned against the danger of replacing French with Egyptian domination and again in December when he demanded fair treatment for Tunisian Jews living in Egypt. Egypt's response was to give renewed asylum to Ibn Yūsuf following his expulsion from Libya in January 1957.

Relations between Tunisia and Egypt showed slight improvement during 1957. Cairo was able to overcome its annoyance at the Algerian rebels' decision to relocate their headquarters in Tunis and the Egyptian government lent vigorous support to Tunisia's efforts to have the French garrisons still on its soil evacuated. In June, the Cairo administration permitted the Islamic Congress to lend the Tunisian government ten thousand Egyptian pounds.⁹ In September, Radio Cairo compared France's refusal to ship arms to Tunisia to Egyptian and Syrian experience and urged Tunisia to turn to the Communists for weapons; President 'Abd al-Nāṣir went a step further and offered to sell Egyptian arms to Tunisia. Although small shipments of certain military equipment eventually reached Tunisia from Italy, Britain and the United States, the Egyptian weapons were accepted and Būrqība publicly acknowledged their receipt on 12 December 1957. Tunisian mistrust of Egyptian

⁹al-Ahrām, 23 June 1957, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXVII, 7 (July 1957), p. 483.

ambitions was rekindled by the proclamation of the union of Egypt with Syria on 1 February 1958. Three weeks later some thirty Yūsufīs were apprehended on the Libyan border; in their possession were the plans for an armed revolt and the assassination of Būrqība.¹⁰ More arrests followed and on 5 March an official protest was sent to Cairo regarding the assassination plot. The next day a further remonstrance denounced the U.A.R.'s sheltering of Ibn Yūsuf. Tunisia's threat of a diplomatic rupture was averted by the closing of the Tunisian section of Cairo's Maghrib Office, previously directed by Ibn Yūsuf and Tunisian Foreign Minister Muqaddam's sojourn in the U.A.R. capital in April passed without incident. But the atmosphere of mutual mistrust continued to simmer, only to erupt again in the circumstances of Tunisia's entry into the League. This cataclysm culminated in the long expected break in diplomatic relations, announced by Tunis on 15 October.¹¹

¹⁰ al-'Amal (Tunis), 28 February and 1 March 1958, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 3 (March 1958), p. 271.

¹¹ It was of some consolation to the Tunisian government that Sudan, Lebanon, and Iraq had also disagreed sharply with the U.A.R.; however, all these countries supported the League's censure of Tunisia's declaration of 11 October. The pertinent documents are in Muḥammad Khalīl, The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), II, pp. 183-204.

On attaining independence, Tunisia was especially eager to develop close bonds with Morocco. Both countries were suffering from the continuing warfare in Algeria as rebel missions and French retaliatory parties crossed the frontier virtually without regard for the interests of Moroccan or Tunisian cultivators or administrators. Without wishing to alienate Paris, both North African countries gave unequivocal support to the Algerian cause, although both tried to launch negotiations in an effort to end the fighting and achieve an amicable settlement around a conference table. A meeting of the Arab leaders of the three Maghribi lands was arranged to convene in Tunis in October 1956; the kidnapping of the Algerian delegates by French authorities only served to strengthen the resolve of Būrqība and Muḥammad V to sustain the liberation movement at all costs. Būrqība publicly denounced the abduction as a violation of international law and appealed, vainly, of course, to French public opinion to force the release of the captives. A common Tuniso-Moroccan note was delivered to the Quai d'Orsay on 25 October.

Involvement in the Algerian problem and a sentimental view of history led the Tunisian leaders to render increasingly devout allegiance to the dream of

Maghrib Muttahid, a united North Africa. On 3 January 1957, Būrqība himself asserted to his conviction that "from the unity of the four brother peoples of the Maghrib . . . there will issue not only a considerable material force, but also a still more considerable moral force which will help the forces of wisdom and peace to triumph in the world."¹² Sustained hostilities in Algeria necessitated the postponement of the dream's fulfillment, although the National Liberation Front was able to send representatives to several inter-Maghribi meetings as well as to the celebrations marking the first anniversary of Tunisia's independence.¹³

At that time Būrqība made an earnest effort to persuade the Algerians to accept France's offer of a neutral referendum but 'Abbās insisted that French recognition of Algeria's independence must precede any vote. Another obstacle to North African unity was Libya's lack of enthusiasm for the scheme, but the deciding factor lay in the apparent spirit of cooperation between Tunisia and Morocco, as indicated by the conviviality

¹²Quoted in Debbasch, op. cit., p. 120.

¹³The presence of Farḥāt 'Abbās at these functions was of considerable embarrassment to the French delegate (François Mitterand, who nevertheless elected to attend).

surrounding Būrqība's visit to Rabat at the end of March 1957 and the resulting treaty of friendship. However, these outward manifestations of harmony served only to veil a gradual but fundamental divergence in political philosophies and consequent social evolutions within the two countries.

This divergence surfaced with the proclamation of the Tunisian republic on 25 July 1957. The Moroccan court considered this action to be a dangerous precedent, although Būrqība took some pains to underline that the destitution of the Ḥusayni family was justified by the dynasty's generally poor performance, while the Tunisian assembly had no intention of judging the concept of monarchy as such or its suitability in other lands. In October 1957, one of Morocco's foremost ideologists, 'Allāl al-Fāsi attacked Būrqība's laicism ('almāniya) and reasserted the Moroccan ideal of a religious monarchy rooted in the fundamentals of Islam. Somewhat curiously, this more conservative Moroccan domestic outlook was coupled with a more aggressively neutralist position in foreign policy that contrasted with Tunisia's generally Western tendency. But the Algerian problem still provided a modicum of unity, as both governments feared a general North African war. Būrqība made a second visit to Rabat in November and joined with

King Muḥammad in an offer of mediation to the liberation front and the French government.

The hope for a united Maghrib attained a new apogee in April 1958 at Tangier, where delegates from the Algerian Front de Libération National and Tunisia's Neo-Dustūr attended a conference called by Morocco's Istiqlāl Party. Besides the war and the related problem of decolonization, this gathering examined the need for a North African union, its possible forms and tentative programs of transition. It concluded with the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat of Maghrib Muttahid. Morocco's Foreign Minister Aḥmad Balāfrīj met with Būrqība and 'Abbās in June 1958, at which time the friendship treaty of 30 March 1957 was ratified; although it would not be fully put into effect for another nine months,¹⁴ this treaty bore its first fruit in the form of a Tuniso-Moroccan air transport agreement concluded on 10 July. A few weeks later the Permanent Committee convened at Tunis, even as new fissures were appearing in the delicate structure of Maghribi unity. Tunisia's firm support for the Algerian revolutionaries did not prevent it from contracting with France to ship oil from

¹⁴The text of this treaty can be found in al-'Amal, 19 June 1958; an Italian translation is in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 7 (July 1958), p. 585 f.

the new field at Ijlī (Edjelē) by a pipeline passing through Tunisian territory and terminating at the Tunisian port of Qābis (Gabes). The F.L.N., however, denounced this agreement as an injurious betrayal of Maghribī fraternity. On the other hand, Tunisia reluctantly joined Morocco in adhering to the Arab League pact only to suffer a more stunning blow when Morocco added its voice to the unanimous condemnation of the Tunisian complaint against the U.A.R.

Among the members of the Arab League, Libya was the country with which Tunisia was able to establish and nurture the best rapport. In January 1957, Prime Minister Ibn Ḥalām visited Tunisia and signed a treaty of friendship which envisaged, among other things, the replacement of several Egyptian engineers and school-teachers then employed in Libya by Tunisians. Within a week of the signing of the pact, the Libyan government lent substance to its intentions by expelling Ibn Yūsuf. In May, a visit by Būrqība to Tripoli marked the occasion of the opening of radiotelegraph service between the Libyan and Tunisian capitals. A health agreement was published and a new cultural accord provided for teacher and student exchanges.

During 1957 Tunisia made some advances in its contacts with the Arab states of Asia in spite of its

reluctance to join the Arab League. The Tunisian government donated two thousand dollars to the United Nations fund for Palestinian refugees, apologizing that its economic situation precluded a larger disbursement.¹⁵ In February, King Sa'ūd paid a state visit to Tunis and his discussions with Būrqība took place in an "atmosphere of sincerity and friendship, with a perfect identity of viewpoint."¹⁶ Lebanese Prime Minister Sāmī al-Ṣulḥ was the next visitor from the Mashriq, arriving at Tunis late in March. His talks with his Tunisian counterpart resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the laying of plans for cultural and commercial cooperation. In July, a Tunisian parliamentary delegation toured Iraq, Syria and Lebanon for one week and the government requested that the Lebanese cabinet should send a number of teachers of Arabic language and literature to Tunisian schools. The only difficulty seems to have been with Syria; where President Quwwatli's meeting with Ibn Yūsuf, in November, prompted Tunisia to abandon plans to exchange ambassadors, but within a month Būrqība had relented and

¹⁵ al-'Amal, 12 January 1958, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 1 (January, 1958), p. 91.

¹⁶ Le Monde, 23 February 1958, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXVII, 3 (March, 1957), p. 205.

the Tunisian embassy in Damascus opened in January 1958. With most other Arab states, Tunisia decried the American intervention in Lebanon of July 1958, while in the same month Tunis was able to overcome its shock at the murder of Iraq's King Fayṣal and extend quick recognition to the republican regime lest Baghdad feel isolated from the Arab world and fall easy prey to Soviet designs.¹⁷ It was this new government of Iraq that prevailed upon Tunisia to join the Arab League but after Tunisia's stormy debut Iraq complied with the Egyptian demand for a general denunciation of Tunisia's position.

For two and a half years, Tunisia was able to build good relations with the eastern Arab states without entangling itself in the formal apparatus of the League, which it saw as an instrument of Egyptian foreign policy rather than a free association of sovereign and equal partners. Algeria's continuing colonial status and armed turbulence mitigated against any great progress towards the one supraterritorial plan with any appeal in Tunisia, a Maghribi union, while the ambiguity inherent

¹⁷ Būrqība, speech of 25 July 1958; reported by al-ʿAmal, 26 July 1958, in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 8-9 (August-September, 1958), p. 772.

in Tuniso-Moroccan attitudes further weakened the concept. Even when Iraq and Morocco finally cajoled Tunisia into abandoning its sympathetic aloofness and joining the League, it was still impossible for Tunis to erase its very real grievances against Cairo. But by the spectacular way in which it chose to air its unhappiness, Tunisia frightened even its closest friends within the League and lost much of the goodwill it had so laboriously cultivated. Two weeks after it had won admission to the League, Tunisia found itself in complete isolation in the Arab world and prepared to face a long period of exile from a community of which it had so briefly been a part, all the more convinced of Egypt's ability to dominate the League.

CHAPTER III

FROM ALIENATION TO ALLIANCE OCTOBER 1958 TO AUGUST 1961

President Būrqība was quick to assuage his country's injury at its traumatic introduction to Arab League membership, reminding his compatriots that within the year Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Sudan had all encountered serious difficulties in their dealing with Cairo. That Tunisia should deviate from the pattern of reconciliation set by these other opponents of the United Arab Republic is explained partly by Tunisia's confidence in its own political and economic stability and partly by its status as an initiate to the League which allowed it to extricate itself from a situation before it could become overly enmeshed. Since Tunisia's contacts with Egypt had been polite at best and usually cooler, and since Tunis had always criticized the League's apparent subordination to Cairo's dictates, the whole approach of the Tunisian government to adherence to the League Charter had been cautious and tentative, if not experimental. To compensate for its self-imposed exclusion from the Arab community, Tunisia took an increasing interest in the emerging countries of Africa

and turned to tackle with renewed zeal the task of welding a united Maghrib to provide a counterpole to Egypt in Arab Africa. The Tunisian constitution of 1 June 1959, reflected Tunisia's external priorities with its references to membership in an Arab community contrasting to affirmations of an ardent desire for North African unity.¹

Let us pause here to review in some detail the various accusations and recriminations emanating from the speech of Tunisia's Ambassador Shaṭṭī to the Arab League Council on 11 October 1958, and the reactions it elicited among the member states. In his speech, Shaṭṭī characterized the League as "an organization in the service of an individual ('Abd al-Nāṣir) and acting according to his commands." In return, the representative of the United Arab Republic denounced the Tunisians for mouthing the propaganda of colonialist agencies and, concluded that "Tunisia's attitude presages little good. We must prevent the Arab League from becoming an instrument for the separation of the Arab peoples rather than for union." The U.A.R. delegation then left the chamber, promising to return

¹William Sands, "Prospects for a United Maghrib," The Arab Middle East and Muslim Africa, ed., Tibor Kerekes (New York: Praeger, 1961), p. 87 f.

only when Tunisia had retracted its accusation. Immediately, the other delegates tried to persuade Shaṭṭī to retract, but he insisted on first consulting his government. The following day, Radio Cairo described the confrontation as an imperialist manoeuvre "by which Būrqība sought to attack not only Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, but Arab nationalism and its anti-imperialist struggle." Both the radio and the Egyptian press enumerated Tunisia's many "coloniophile" positions and suggested, not without some foundation, that the motive for the criticism of the day before was Tunisia's pique at Ibn Yūsuf's continued stay in Egypt. On the same day, Tunisia's press published the text of the Tunisian memorandum which Shaṭṭī had distributed at the League meeting. This document stressed the long record of Cairo's alleged interference in Tunisian affairs which had brought "our relations with Egypt . . . to the point that any cooperation between the two states is practically impossible. The trust which Tunisia could formerly place in the government of the United Arab Republic has ceased to exist. . . ." As a consequence, "it is impossible for the Tunisian government to collaborate, within such a regional organization as the League of Arab States, with a state which inspires it with no confidence, which has openly provoked it and

which is trying to interfere in its internal affairs."

The Tunisian newspapers also alluded to the role of Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yūsuf, but they saw him as an arch-traitor and pawn of Egyptian ambitions. Meanwhile, Ambassador Shaṭṭī told a press conference in Cairo that his government hoped the League could resolve the difficulty so that Tunisia could resume its seat in the Council.²

The League Council reconvened on 13 October with both the U.A.R. and Tunisian delegates absent. At the suggestion of the Chairman (the Saudi representative) the Council rejected the Tunisian complaint and instructed the Chairman and the Secretary General to invite the United Arab Republic delegation to rejoin the sitting. The chiefs of the various missions expressed their solidarity with the U.A.R. and President 'Abd al-Nāṣir. On 15 October, the Egyptian press launched an intense campaign against Būrqība as Tunisia broke diplomatic relations with the United Arab Republic. Later that day the League Council unanimously endorsed the U.A.R.'s point of view; then in a further resolution it ordered the dispatch of a message to Tunis underlining the

²Quotations from Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 10 (October, 1958), p. 790. The texts of the Tunisian memorandum, the reply by U.A.R. Ambassador 'Abd al-Hamīd Ghālib and the Egyptian resolution (no. 1498, session 30, schedule 3) of 13 October are all given in Muḥammad Khalīl, The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), II, 198-203.

League's singularity of attitude and inviting Tunisia to accede to this position and return to full participation in the League.³ The episode closed with Būrqība's public assessment that the time was not yet ripe for Tunisia to accept active membership in the League.⁴

Tunisia sought to turn its new situation to advantage by advertising its voluntary abstention from the meetings of the League in which it was now entitled to play a role. Late in November, Cairo challenged Tunis to permit Iraq to mediate in their disagreement, through either the United Nations or the Arab League. On 2 December, Tunisia welcomed the proposal and Baghdad's ambassador in Cairo announced his government's willingness to conduct the conciliatory inquiry. A Tunisian communique of 19 December emphasized the lack of any Tunisian grievance with the League itself, and restated its stand that it could not resume its place in the League until the difference with Cairo had been resolved "within the framework of the League Charter."⁵

³Resolution 1499, Session 30, Schedule 5; Khalīl, op. cit., II, 204.

⁴Interview with Le Monde, 30 October 1958, reported in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 11 (November, 1958), p. 927.

⁵"Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 37 (1959), p. 42.

In spite of the dispute with Egypt, Tunisia spoke for the states of the Arab League in the U.N. General Assembly debate of the Algerian question which transpired during this same month of December.

The Tunisian boycott was first implemented as the Arab League Economic Council opened its fifth session in Cairo on 5 January 1959. Here, as at the thirty-first League Council meeting in the first week of March, Tunisia was the only absentee. Later in March, however, Iraqi President 'Abd al-Karīm Qāsim was nearly overthrown by Nāṣiri partisans. One result of this incident was a renewed warmth in relations between Baghdad and Tunis, which marked the beginning of a slow process of reintegrating Tunisia into the Arab League. At first, however, Iraq joined Tunisia in self-imposed exile. Thus, when Arab foreign ministers were called to a conference to be held in Beirut from 2 to 7 April, Tunisia refused to attend because its complaint against the U.A.R. was not on the agenda, while Iraq chose not to acknowledge the invitation. Jordan also was unrepresented, but this fact was apparently due simply to the absence of both the King and the Prime Minister abroad at the time of the gathering. Even with these three absences, the meeting was still incapable of achieving unanimity, as Sudan dissented from the final

communique. Nine days after the close of the Beirut conference, the first Arab Petroleum Conference opened in Cairo and again Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia were unrepresented. The League Council met from 30 July to 2 August and the same three countries declined to attend, although Jordan advised the Council in a note of its approval of the meeting's resolutions. Tunisia was alone in snubbing a conference on Palestine, convened in Beirut on 8 August, but Iraq found cause to resume its boycott when the venue for the thirty-second League Council meeting was set at Casablanca when the Iraqi government claimed to have entered a prior invitation to Baghdad. In spite of their reluctance to attend League functions, however, both Iraq and Tunisia affixed their signatures to a League report on the Palestine refugee problem presented to U.N. Secretary General Hammarskjöld.

Tunisia's endorsement of the Palestine memorandum encouraged 'Abd al-Khāliq Ḥassūna, Secretary General of the Arab League, to visit Būrqība in Tunis from 20 to 23 August. The tranquil atmosphere in which the talks took place and Ḥassūna's apparent appreciation of the Tunisian point of view, prompted some journalists to predict an early Tunisian return to the League chamber.⁶

⁶ al-'Amal, 25 August 1959, reported in Oriente Moderno, XXXIX, 8-9 (August-September, 1959), p. 675.

The locating of the Council's September 1959 meeting at Casablanca was an added lure to the Tunisians and at its opening sitting, the Council voted unanimously to annul its censure of Tunisia passed (also unanimously) at the October 1958 session. Tunisia demurred, insisting on a public disavowal by the Egyptians of any aspiration to hegemony or at least a partial confirmation of King Muḥammad's remark at the opening of the deliberations at Casablanca to the effect that "the Egyptian period of the League is over; the Maghrebian period has begun."⁷ Tunisia's absence gave this claim a hollow ring that was only partially muffled by the presence of representatives of the provisional government of Algeria; Iraq was the sole member to share Tunisia's recalcitrance. Neither Iraq nor Tunisia sent anyone to the fourth Arab cultural conference, held in Damascus from 5 to 16 September. While Iraq apparently felt obliged to attend a meeting of the provisional council of the proposed inter-Arab economic union in October, Jordan and Sudan joined Tunisia on the sidelines. But Tunisia was the only absentee at an Arab petroleum conference held at Judda

⁷I. William Zartman, Government and Politics in Northern Africa (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 182.

later the same month, as well as at a November convention of Arab Chambers of Commerce in Kuwayt. Both Iraq and Tunisia boycotted the Arab communications conference which sat in Cairo from 7 to 15 November.

To compensate for its lack of involvement in the activities of the Arab League, Tunisia found room in two other contexts to keep itself in good standing with the so-called third world. A Tunisian delegation joined groups from several other Arab countries, Pakistan, India, Ceylon and Indonesia in a six-day Islamic conference at Jerusalem late in January 1960. During the same week, Tunis itself was the scene of the second All Africa Peoples' Conference. Meanwhile the Arab League was showing some anxiety at Tunisia's prolonged absence from its functions. After Tunisia and Iraq sent no representatives to an Arab pharmaceutical conference in Cairo and declined to take their places at a League Council meeting in the same city, the Council officially threatened the two states with expulsion on 29 February. Nevertheless, neither of the truants appeared at the Arab economic conference, also in Cairo, the following week; nor were they in Cairo for the Council's thirty-third regular session from 31 March to 10 April. Iraq apparently relented to attend an Arab Postal Union convention in Riyadh later in April, but

Jordan and Tunisia were not represented. However, only Tunisia did not participate in a conference called to reaffirm Arab solidarity with the United Arab Republic in the face of alleged Israeli and American designs against Arab shipping.⁸

When the third Arab communications conference met at Tripoli on 4 August 1960, a Tunisian delegation was in attendance; this time Iraq was the lone absentee. But when a special meeting of the League Council was convened the next week at Cairo's request (to consider common action in the event of Iranian recognition of Israel), Tunisia was the sole member not to attend. Similarly, Tunisia's was the only vacant chair, at the Arab foreign ministers' conference held at Shtura^(Lebanon) from 22 to 29 August. In explaining his absence, Tunisia's Foreign Minister Şādiq Muqaddam made this observation:

The dispute which exists between the Tunisian Republic and the United Arab Republic resulting from attempts to infiltrate and interfere in internal affairs has not been adequately studied and examined by the League in order to resolve it in a definitive manner and to restore mutual understanding and collaboration among the members of the League.⁹

⁸Communique issued at Cairo on 5 May 1960, quoted in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 43 (1960), p. 147.

⁹al-'Amal, 23 August 1960, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XL, 11-12 (November-December, 1960), p. 724.

And while the meetings were in progress, President Būrqība cast his shadow on their deliberations in an interview he astutely granted to a Lebanese journalist, in which he declared that "the normalization of our contacts with Cairo and our return to the Arab League cannot be effected as long as the profound motivations of our dispute with Cairo are obstinately ignored."¹⁰ Accordingly, Tunisia maintained its boycott as the League Council began its thirty-fourth session at Shtura on 1 September. All the other League members attended this meeting. Tunisia was again the only country not participating in the Second Arab Petroleum Conference at Beirut in October, but when Arab economic experts gathered at Cairo in November, Morocco and Iraq refused to attend because of differences with the U.A.R. government. In December, however, every member state but Tunisia took its place at Cairo for the seventh session of the Arab Economic Council. But once again circumstances were combining to induce Tunisia to take its chances on full participation.

Just as in the autumn of 1958, the two major external influences that brought Tunisia to the Arab League Council table on 31 January 1961 originated in

¹⁰Quotation reported in Charles Debbasch; La République Tunisienne (Paris: Librairie Générale de Droit, 1962), p. 135.

Morocco and Iraq. In December 1960, Casablanca was the seat of an important conference of Africa's militant neutralists, including both the United Arab Republic and the provisional government of Algeria.¹¹ By failing to attend this conference, Tunisia had probably risked losing its respected place in African circles and certainly isolated itself within the Maghrib. But every country in the Mashriq had some complaint against Cairo and sought balances to Egypt's dominant role in their affairs. "The leading proponent of Tunisian participation anew was Iraq, which hoped to strengthen the League as a means of restraining pan-Arab nationalism and limiting the idea of unity to a formal co-operation between sovereign states."¹² Furthermore, Tunisia was becoming somewhat sensitive to suggestions that it was no longer behaving as an Arab country at all.

At first, Tunisia declined President Qāsim's invitation to the projected Arab foreign ministers' conference. A week before the conference was to begin, the Tunisian ambassador in Amman said Tunisia would attend only if its complaint against the U.A.R. would be

¹¹The other participants were Ghana, Guinea and Mali.

¹²Charles F. Gallagher, "North African Crossroads - Part III, The Tunisian Hour," American Universities Field Staff Reports Service, North Africa Series, VII, 4 (Beirut, May, 1961), p. 5.

discussed. Then on 25 January, Muqaddam flew to Baghdad with a secret message from Būrqība to Qāsim. The Tunisians must have found some satisfaction in what Qāsim had to say, for on 30 January, the day before the meetings began, it was announced that Muqaddam would be present at the gathering even though there was to be no consideration of the grievances against Cairo. At the conference, the U.A.R. clashed with Jordan, Libya, Sudan and Tunisia over the questions of Algeria and foreign military bases on Arab soil but the Iraqi foreign minister was able to restore order and win unanimous passage for a compromise resolution on Algeria.¹³ It was Tunisia, however, which robbed the conference of its hopes for unanimity by withholding its support from Morocco's claims on Mauritania. For the next few months Tunisian delegations appeared at a small number of congresses of Arab League organizations with no apparent pattern behind the choice of which to attend and which to ignore. It expended much of its energy in this period on the Fourth Conference against Colonialism in the Mediterranean, which met in Tunis from 14 to 17 February and passed resolutions on such Arab problems as Algeria, Bahrayn, Oman and Palestine

¹³al-Ahrām, reported in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 45 (1961), p. 6 f.

as well as the Maltese question.

No Tunisian representative attended the opening of the thirty-fifth session of the League Council in Cairo on 21 March but, in a somewhat coquettish gesture, the Tunisians arrived the following day. (At this session the League voiced its first protest against the budding friendship between Bonn and Tel Aviv.) In April, Tunisia was the only member state not to send a delegate to a conference of Arab Chiefs of Staff relating to the Palestine question and particularly Israeli plans to develop an atomic bomb. And Tunisia was inexplicably absent from a special meeting of the Arab League's political committee called to discuss the French program of atomic experiments in the Algerian Sahara. Yet in May, Tunisia finally entered the Arab Postal Union, thus severing mail links with Israel, while Būrqība intensified his public criticism of the Zionist state. Tunisian representation at meetings of the various organizations of the League gradually increased as the League became the main focus of Tunisia's external energies. On 3 June, Tunisia made its debut on the committee for the revision of the League Charter and two days later the first Tunisian joined the Boycott Office in Jerusalem. But Tunisia chose to attend neither the meeting of the League's

Defence Council; held in Cairo from 10 to 18 June, nor the Arab Economic Conference which convened the following week in Damascus. Obviously, Tunisia did not feel even yet that the time had come for it to absorb itself in the activities of the League; nevertheless, it was already preparing for a test in which the League would prove its sturdiest external bulwark.

Weary of being stigmatized in certain Arab and African quarters for its good relations with the West and its continued toleration of the presence of French troops within its borders, Tunisia decided in July 1961 that the hour was at hand to wrest the naval base at Banzart from France. Not only would such a feat alleviate the risk of French interference in Tunisian affairs but it would refurbish Tunisia's fading image in Africa and provide the coup de grâce to the long labor of rapprochement within the Arab world. So on 4 July, Neo-Dustūr demanded the evacuation of Banzart and the next day the Tunisian government officially approached Paris with the object of fixing a schedule for the French withdrawal and the adjustment of the southern boundary. By 11 July, several thousand "volunteers" had arrived at Banzart and on 19 July, at the government's suggestion, they blockaded the base as Tunisian artillery opened fire on French aircraft.

Within two days, the French troops had occupied the city and on 22 July, Morocco was able to arrange a cease-fire. Thirteen hundred Tunisians had died in the fighting and France refused to comply with a United Nations appeal that it withdraw. The United States and Britain, "taken aback by his sudden shift from gradualist tactics, did not give Tunisia the support it requested."¹⁴ To save himself from a humiliating defeat Būrqība had to rely upon the very country and organization he had so recently castigated for interfering in his country's affairs. But fortunately for him, both the United Arab Republic and the League of Arab States rallied to his banner at his hour of need.

In Cairo the League Council concluded its sitting of 20 July with a resolution condemning "French colonial aggression" and proclaiming its own "total support for sister Tunisia in her struggle against French colonialism and its assistance for her in her struggle for liberation from French colonialist forces."¹⁵ On

¹⁴Clement Henry Moore, Tunisia Since Independence: The Dynamics of One-Party Government (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 99.

¹⁵Resolution quoted in al-Ahrām, 21 July 1961, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XLI, 9 (September, 1961), p. 652.

24 July (the day Tunisia promised an early resumption of diplomatic ties with the United Arab Republic), the League Council resolved to send military equipment and volunteers to Banzart. A special committee, composed of the representatives of Tunisia, the U.A.R., Morocco and Libya, was constituted to take any necessary action in the name of the League. Five days later, Secretary General Ḥassūna was in Tunis conferring with the appropriate authorities on the specific forms in which aid could be best put to use. As it had before, the Arab League had shown its unity in time of crisis, but once Paris had agreed to negotiate, new dissensions emerged from the shadows. Now, however, Tunisia had proved itself a worthy partner in the freedom campaign and so found itself in the unusual position of siding with the majority as it voted for Kuwayt's admission to the League and pledged 200 soldiers to the emergency force mustered to obviate the prospect of an Iraqi annexation of the newly independent principality.

The arduous route of Tunisia's return to the bosom of the Arab League was paralleled by a similarly difficult path to an understanding with the United Arab Republic. From the beginning of its boycott of League activities, Tunisia made no secret of the fact that the major obstacle to its return was apprehension of the

U.A.R.'s attitude and actions:

For my own part, I find it impossible to collaborate with a state as long as it interferes in my affairs. The expulsion of Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yūsuf from Cairo would be a favorable element in the resumption of normal relations with the United Arab Republic, but not sufficient: Ibn Yūsuf's actions have only revealed certain intentions which stand at the base of our disagreement.¹⁶

In their turn, Egyptian spokesmen portrayed Būrqība as a "lackey of imperialism" who had sold his country to the Americans and as "the new Nūrī al-Sa'īd" who would "not remain long as chief of state."¹⁷ On 23 November,¹⁹⁵⁸ Būrqība announced the arrest of several Egyptian officers who were allegedly involved in a Yūsufī plot to assassinate him and usurp the government. His pronouncement drew the immediate and indignant observation from Cairo that "the only answer which it is possible to give to the President of the Tunisian Republic is the word 'liar' (kadhdhāb), since everything Mr Būrqība has said is false," insisting that there were no U.A.R. military personnel in Tunisia.¹⁸ Some fifty

¹⁶Būrqība, interview with Le Monde, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 11 (November, 1958), p. 927.

¹⁷Communique of the U.A.R. embassy in Rabat, quoted in al-'Amal, 23 October 1958, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 11 (November, 1958), p. 929.

¹⁸Declaration of the Director of Information of the U.A.R., 23 November 1958, quoted in al-Ahrām, 24 November 1958, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XXXVIII, 12 (December, 1958), p. 982.

persons were arraigned before the Tunisian High Court of Justice the next day and a month later ten were acquitted, five condemned to death and the remainder sent to forced labor. On 30 December, President Būrqība commuted the death sentences but confirmed the Court's condemnation in absentia of Ibn Yūsuf and four companions to capital punishment. But at no point was any of the accused identified publicly as an Egyptian. Meanwhile, however, mediation attempts by Morocco and Iraq had come to naught and the last link with the U.A.R. was severed on 10 December when the Tunisian government banned airline flights between the two states.

During the first half of February 1959, the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a White Paper on its quarrel with the United Arab Republic. This document dealt with seven aspects of the dispute: "the activity of Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yūsuf in Libya, the Cairo plots, Tunisia's diplomatic approaches to the Cairo government, the confrontation in the Arab League, the complicity of the Egyptian officers, the attacks by Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir against the regime in Tunis and Tunisia's Arabism as explained in the speeches of the President."¹⁹ The

¹⁹Oriente Moderno, XXXIX, 3 (March, 1959), p. 227. The White Paper was printed in serial form by al-'Amal, beginning 14 February 1959.

matter was then dropped by both sides until the U.A.R. lent partial support to a new attempt at conciliation undertaken by Secretary General Ḥassūna in the hope of securing Tunisian participation in the September meeting of the League Council at Casablanca. The U.A.R. recommended the recission of the Council's condemnation of Tunisia but balked at the Tunisian demand for a public apology from Cairo. The atmosphere of tension remained fairly constant for another fifteen months, with each side taking occasional potshots at the other. For example, Būrqība told a press conference on the fourth anniversary of his country's independence that the U.A.R. wished to impose its policies "under the pretext of Arab solidarity. If it abandons the desire to unify all the Arab states into one whose capital would be Cairo, I see no obstacle to a resumption of normal relations between it and Tunisia."²⁰ On the other hand, Radio Cairo described Būrqība's refusal to meet with Patrice Lumumba as evidence of the "depth of the hatred he nurses towards every nationalist leader who may brandish the standard of independence against imperialism. Pushed by this very hatred, Mr. Būrqība boycotted the Arab League meeting. . . ."²¹

²⁰"Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 42 (1960), p. 25.

²¹Broadcast of 24 August 1960, quoted in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 43 (1960), p. 156.

When Tunisia finally returned to League activities, it stressed that its reentry was in no way due to any new understanding with the U.A.R., but rather in spite of the continuing rupture. At the Baghdad conference of Arab foreign ministers, however, Tunisia's Şādiq Muqaddam held several long conversations with the U.A.R.'s Maḥmūd Fawzi. These talks resulted in a mutual accommodation that pledged the two countries to a propaganda truce; Tunisia dropped demands for Ibn Yūsuf's expulsion from Cairo in exchange for an assurance that all political refugees would be kept in closer check. In April, Fawzi received the Tunisian ambassador to Beirut to lay the groundwork for a renewal of direct ties, but it was the confrontation with France over Banzart in July that finally submerged the differences between the two governments. On 21 July, U.A.R. Minister of State 'Abd al-Qādir Ḥātim published a communique proclaiming his country's support for Tunisia against "the imperialist invaders" and promising to send arms and equipment; the next day President 'Abd al-Nāṣir offered Tunisia "all the political and military help it may need."²² Diplomatic relations between the

²²Quoted in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 61 (1961), p. 230.

two states were restored on 3 August, after a break of nearly thirty-four months. Būrqība was singing a new song when he met the press on 11 August:

President 'Abd al-Nāṣir wants to free the Arab world from foreign influence. . . . The causes of the dissention which existed between the United Arab Republic and the Tunisian Republic have vanished and full mutual understanding, sincere friendship and fruitful brotherhood have become the firm bases on which relations between the two brother states are to be set, because their chiefs have asserted that sincerity and fairness are the bases of the struggle of all. . . .²³

Two weeks later, the Tunisian president vindicated himself before the Egyptian public in an interview with *Ṣawt al-ʿArab*: "the battle of Banzart revealed to the eyes of the people of the U.A.R. the true face of Tunisia, of its government and of its leaders. It has clearly demonstrated that the accusations which people had believed about a supposed alignment of Tunisia with the West were erroneous. . . ." ²⁴ In the midst of this wave of camaraderie, Cairo allowed itself to overlook the assassination of its erstwhile protégé, Ibn Yūsuf, in a Frankfurt hotel on 12 August.

²³Quoted in *al-Ahrām*, 12 August 1961, as reported in *Oriente Moderno*, XLI, 12 (December, 1961), p. 948 f.

²⁴Quoted in Debbasch, *op. cit.*, p. 137 f.

Hopes for Maghrib Muttahid, so prevalent in Tunisian policy in its first two years of independence, diminished as the differences in attitude among the leadership of the three countries most concerned asserted themselves at the expense of a dream for which nobody seemed willing to make the necessary sacrifices. Tunisia was the chief advocate of the Algerian case at the United Nations during the sessions of 1958 and 1959 but relations between the Tunisian government and the Algerian provisional government (which had its headquarters in Tunis) gradually cooled as the former tried to regulate the movements of units of the Liberation Army within Tunisia. The claim put forward by Tunis to parts of the Sahara alarmed the Algerian leaders, who even found cause for dismay at Būrqība's timing of the Banzart incident, since he precipitated his confrontation just as they were seeking to conclude a settlement with France. Nevertheless, the provisional government promised military support for which Būrqība was doubtless grateful, although he viewed the increasing preponderance of the radical faction within the liberation front with growing anxiety.

Some stress had already appeared in Tuniso-Moroccan links before Morocco's support of the League's censure of Tunisia. Tunisian resentment of this stand

contributed to the frustration of an attempt by Moroccan Prime Minister Aḥmad Balāfrīj to reconcile Tunisia and the United Arab Republic in the weeks following the rupture of October 1958. Nevertheless, the two countries signed six new conventions, dealing with information media, health and labor, telecommunications, cultural affairs, the abolition of visas and extradition, on 30 March 1959. In August 1960, Morocco was one of five Arab countries that tried in vain to overcome Tunisia's suspicion of Cairo and coax it to attend the League Council meeting at Shtura. In spite of its disappointment in this regard, the Moroccan government proceeded with a previous agreement to send fifty-three young people to Tunisia for training in aviation and other technical fields. The apparent calm in intra-Maghribi affairs was soon to shatter, however, when Tunisia not only recognized the newly independent state of Mauritania, but also agreed to sponsor its application for membership in the United Nations Organization. This act made Tunisia the only Arab country to defy Moroccan claims to sovereignty over Mauritania's territory and brought an immediate break in relations at Morocco's request. The Tunisian government professed complete surprise at this turn of events and at the vehemence of

Rabat's denunciation of Tunisia's conduct.²⁵ Matters began to improve in the tragic atmosphere of King Muḥammad V's funeral, where Būrqība joined Farḥāt 'Abbās and the young King Ḥasan II in reaffirming their "determination to build the Greater Maghrib,"²⁶ and regained their original cordiality with Morocco's support of Tunisia during the Banzart crisis, and especially with its arranging of the cease-fire of 20 July.

Relations between Tunisia and Libya had been fairly warm and apparently survived the cataclysm of October 1958 without excessive strain. But when in February 1959, Būrqība proposed that the North Africans pool the Saharan oil and gas fields, Libya's attitude cooled distinctly and the implementation of the friendship treaty of January 1957 was postponed indefinitely. There was no abrupt break, however, and contacts were maintained at a polite level; Libya was one of the states involved in the unsuccessful attempt to secure a Tunisian presence at the Council session of August 1960. Mutual confidence was sufficiently restored by February 1961 that Libyan Prime Minister Muḥammad 'Uthmān al-Ṣayd

²⁵White Paper of November 1960, quoted in Debbasch, op. cit., p. 133.

²⁶Joint communique of 2 March 1961, quoted in Debbasch, op. cit., p. 124.

spent ten days in Tunisia for medical treatment and convalescence; on 9 February he met with President Būrqība and Vice-President Bāhī al-Adgham. Eight accords signed on 25 March, covering such topics as communications and commercial development, gave life to the long dormant friendship treaty. A week's visit by Foreign Minister Muqaddam to Tripoli in June produced another set of agreements, including the ratification of the Franco-Ottoman boundary conventions of 1910 and 1911. Thus, except for an occasional jolt, rapport between Libya and Tunisia continued on a basis of neighborly cooperation.

For most of this period Iraq held its position as Tunisia's principal contact in the Mashriq. In December 1958, it nearly persuaded Tunisia and the U.A.R. to discuss their differences. This attempt at mediation failed, of course, but Tunis and Baghdad maintained amicable relations. In June 1959 an Iraqi delegation touring the Arab world to promote cooperation among Arab governments received a warm welcome on its arrival in Tunis. During the months when both countries were boycotting the Arab League, Iraq and Tunisia grew closer together in spite of the striking discrepancies in their general international postures. This strange accommodation of views was in itself an

unwilling recognition of the U.A.R.'s preeminence within the League and it did not escape acid commentary from the Egyptian press: "Not wishing to remain alone in the club of those who have abandoned the Arab nation, Būrḡība is glad to welcome the new member 'Abd al-Karīm Qāsim . . . Būrḡība and Qāsim are united by a common desire to do the work of the imperialists in the Arab world."²⁷ In any case, an Iraqi mission to Tunis in October 1959 laid the groundwork for a commercial agreement between the two countries signed in Baghdad on 28 January 1960. By August, Iraq had overcome its complaints against the League but was unable to convince Tunisia of the merits of renewing activity in the League until the following January, when Interior Minister Aḥmad Muḥammad Yaḥyā made a special trip to Tunis to prevail upon Muqaddam to attend the Baghdad meeting. Iraq's vocal support for Tunisia in the Banzart question was perhaps to be expected. But Baghdad was more than surprised when Tunisia voted with the majority in favor of Kuwayt's admission to the League. Tunisia was not prepared to ruin its first contentment with the Arab League simply to follow Iraq

²⁷Akḥbār al-Yawm, quoted in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 41 (1959), p. 352.

into renewed exile, especially when its sensitive international conscience could not deny the validity of Kuwait's claim to autonomy. Under the circumstances of the hour, Tunisia could not even endorse Iraq's demand for Secretary General Ḥassūna's dismissal, a proposal for which it might once have summoned considerable enthusiasm.

Contacts between Tunisia and the other Arab states in Asia were few but friendly. In July 1959, Bahjat Talhūmī, chief of the royal cabinet, led a Jordanian goodwill mission on a three-day visit to Tunis; a few days later thirty Lebanese students arrived to spend a month studying Tunisia's "social and cultural progress".²⁸ Both Jordan and Lebanon played a part in the attempt to realize Tunisia's presence at the August 1960 meeting of the Arab League, and in September of the same year Tunisia's Secretary of Justice visited Beirut to recruit law professors and to gather information on the organization of law courts. While all the Arab states sided with Tunisia in its quarrel over Banzart, King Ḥusayn actually dispatched a company of infantry to the scene of the

²⁸Il Corriere di Tunisi, 25 July 1959, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XXXIX, 8-9 (August-September 1959), p. 677.

fighting. And, as we have already observed, Tunisia joined the majority in accepting Kuwayt's application for membership.

Tunisia's unfortunate debut in the League of Arab States had introduced a prolonged period of mutual recrimination and suspicion between Tunisia and the United Arab Republic, while other factors had contributed to a souring of intraMaghribi relations. But Tunisia was able to stay on good terms with Libya and Arab Asia, particularly Iraq, until it gathered sufficient resolve to rejoin the League Council in January 1961. Tunisia's rehabilitation really came to pass, however, six months later when it shocked its Western friends and defied France over the continued occupation of the naval base at Banzart. It was not without pride that Būrqība told his countrymen how the events of Banzart "opened the eyes of international opinion on Tunisia, on its struggle and on the true nature of its objectives and the means it takes to achieve them."²⁹ Tunisia's support for Kuwayt was symptomatic of its new feeling of belonging it had gained from the Banzart experience and in the autumn of 1961 Tunisia seemed ready at last to assume the mantle of full League membership.

²⁹Charles Debbasch, "La Politique de Bizerte," Annuaire d'Afrique du Nord, II (1963), p. 206.

CHAPTER IV

TIMES OF CONTENTMENT AUGUST 1961 TO JANUARY 1964

The euphoria of Arab solidarity during the Banzart crisis initiated a period of unprecedented harmony in Tunisia's participation in the League of Arab States. In return for the psychological and material support it had received in its confrontation with France, Tunis sent a contingent of two hundred soldiers to serve in a League army organized to defend Kuwayt against the threats of Iraqi annexation. The Tunisians joined troops from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and the United Arab Republic, under a Saudi commander; they would remain in Kuwayt until February 1963. When the League Council met in mid-September 1961 Banzart was the main item on the agenda. At this meeting the Council endorsed the candidacy of Tunisia's Munjī Salīm for the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly's sixteenth session, to which post he was duly elected the following week. The healing wounds were nearly reopened, however, when Tunisia asked for a special meeting of the League's political committee to consider the effects of Syria's secession from the U.A.R.

Cairo protested that such action would be interference in its private affairs and Tunisia withdrew its proposal. Tunisia's absence from the Arab petroleum conference which convened at Alexandria in October was explained by its lack of oilfields and the consequent lack of any reason for its presence.

This explanation was largely vindicated by the increased interest which Tunisia displayed for other League problems. On 24 January 1962 Tunisia took its place in a conference on Palestine held at Cairo, but it is uncertain whether Tunisia was represented at the Khartum conference of Israeli boycott offices in March.¹ In any case, Tunisia's Foreign Minister Šādiq Muqaddam presided at the League Council's thirty-seventh session which assembled at Riyadh on 31 March and pledged support to a number of its members in their quests for executive positions in various United Nations agencies. For its part, Tunisia won approval of its bid for a place on the Council of the World Health Organization. Tunisians also attended such gatherings as the Arab

¹"Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 48 (1962), p. 11 says that Iraq was the only absentee; Oriente Moderno, XLII, 4 (April 1962), p. 321, basing its report on Sudan Daily, 16 March 1962, does not include Tunisia in a list of countries represented. "Chronology," Middle East Journal, XVI, 3 (Summer 1962), p. 337 reports the meeting but makes no mention of which countries attended.

Medical Congress (Baghdad, 5 to 10 March), the Arab Pharmaceutical Congress (Cairo, 6 to 10 March) and the convention of the Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce (Beirut, 7 April), while their government participated in the Arab Telecommunications Commission's conference in Cairo from 20 to 30 March and the Arab Information Ministers' seminar at Kuwayt in late April. Tunis sent a delegation to the League Economic Council's session in Cairo but it chose not to sign an economic unity agreement drawn up by six other member countries (including Morocco) at the conference's conclusion on 6 June. Meanwhile Tunisia had been cultivating its other fields of external relations by securing the election of Ahmad Talili as president of the Confederation of African Trade Unions, a group boycotted by Morocco and the United Arab Republic.

In August Tunisian schoolteachers met with colleagues from other Arab states at a conference in Lebanon but no Tunisian arrived in Gaza for an Arab lawyers' congress. Tunisia joined its fellow-members in welcoming Algeria into the League on 16 August. At a special meeting of the League Council at Shtura, called to consider a Syrian complaint against the United Arab Republic, Tunisia worked with Lebanon, Libya and Morocco to effect a compromise. The Syrians,

backed by Jordan and Saudi Arabia stood fast, however, and on 28 August Cairo announced its intention to pull out of the League. Accordingly, no U.A.R. representative attended the Council's September meeting, in spite of its location at League headquarters in Cairo and its election of its Egyptian Secretary General to another five-year term of office. In October Tunisia was once more part of the majority, this time to bring official League recognition to the republican faction in the Yemeni civil war; in this instance Jordan and Saudi Arabia constituted the minority. But the best evidence of Tunisia's involvement in the League during this period is the choice of Tunis as the site for a UNESCO conference on secondary education in the Arab world (attended by seven other League members), which met in August, and for the eleventh Congress of Arab Chambers of Commerce in November, with only Iraq and the U.A.R. absent and with a special delegation from Aden in attendance.

Two years after its reluctant return to the ranks of the League, Tunisia was behaving as a model member. Although it was in arrears on membership dues, only Kuwayt and Sudan had paid in full; furthermore, Tunisia offered no opposition to a budgetary measure, announced 9 February 1963, providing that all future

League meetings be located in Cairo. When Syria dissociated the Israeli Boycott Office, quartered at Damascus, from the Arab League and condemned the increasing "Egyptianization" of the League,² Iraq quickly and enthusiastically applauded but Tunisia made no comment. Tunisia participated in the fifth conference of experts on Palestine and endorsed the conference's recommendations that League members should revise their relations with Iran in view of "that country's co-operation with Israel, since this cooperation is acquiring alarming proportions" and that the Arab states should achieve closer economic and cultural links with Turkey to forestall Israeli advances in that direction.³

Lest the world think Tunisia's new policy of participation to be a reflection of a growing impatience for Arab union, Foreign Minister Munjī Salīm told the Foreign Press Association in Tunis on 12 March that the question of Arab unity was premature and that the Arab states must first acquire an experience of common problems before pondering the practical aspects of such a merger. One step towards eventual union, observed

²al-Ahrām, 26 January 1963, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XLIII, 1-2 (January-February 1963), p. 28.

³"Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 51 (1963), p. 10.

Salīm, was "the re-establishment of stability in the various Arab countries of the Middle East."⁴ His comments were balanced on 9 April by Aḥmad Mastirī, Tunisian Ambassador to Algeria and a member of Neo-Dustūr's political bureau in a public address which sharply criticized the Syrian Ba'thī leader Michel Aflaq's exclusion of Tunisia from his list of "liberated" Arab countries: "The Tunisian people is proud of its independence and freedom, which it won with the blood of its martyrs."⁵ Meanwhile within the League, the Syrians and Egyptians had accommodated their differences and the Council meeting that had been interrupted at Shtura the preceding August reconvened in Cairo on 23 March with only Jordan absent. At this meeting the Yemeni Republic was admitted to membership. A week later, the thirty-ninth session of the Council opened with perfect attendance. On 5 April Tunisia accepted the League budgetary apportionment, by which it was to pay 4.88% of the total.⁶

During April, the Tunisian minister of education met with his counterparts from other Arab

⁴Ibid., p. 24.

⁵Ibid., p. 24 f.

⁶A full list of these apportionments can be found in Chronology of Arab Politics, I, 2 (April-June 1963), p. 91.

states and Tunisia sent a representative to the Arab Oil Experts Committee's ninth session in Cairo, while the Arab petroleum workers' congress which gathered at Beirut included a delegation from the Tunisian union.

The summer of 1963 was the calmest and most amicable the League of Arab States had known for many years. Tunisia shared in the aura of sweetness, taking part in all the major reunions held under League sponsorship. Typical of these were the fifth Arab Telecommunications Congress, which met in Cairo for a month and adopted a number of technical terms to be used as standard Arabic; the sixth session of the Permanent Arab Information Committee, and two professional conventions held in Algiers the second Arab Medical Congress in July and the third conference of Arab school-teachers in August. As part of his African tour, the League's Secretary General, 'Abd al-Khāliq, Ḥassūna, spent three days in Tunis early in August in what he described simply as "an exchange of viewpoints on problems of common interest among the Arab states and the handling of some international problems."⁷

Every member state was present at the fortieth League Council meeting from 9 to 19 September, which

⁷al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, I, 3 (July-September 1963), p. 249.

considered the situations in Palestine and Yemen in a generally cordial atmosphere. Tunisia continued to share fully in the League's activity, attending an Arab economic development conference in Cairo in October and a convention of The Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce in Beirut the next month. During November Tunis was the site of two special conferences; the first discussed the use of "Arabic" numerals, while the second sought a means to establishing a uniform lunar calendar to be used throughout the Arab world. However, Tunisia sent no delegation to the Arab Petroleum Conference in Beirut, nor was it represented at the League Defence Council's meeting in December. Meanwhile, on 8 October the Arab League's summer of tranquillity had dissolved in gunfire along the Algero-Moroccan frontier. Būrḡība and 'Abd al-Nāṣir each sought to mediate in the dispute but the Algerian government preferred the Organization of African Unity as a conciliator, even to a special Arab League commission in which both Tunisia and the United Arab Republic had agreed to participate, together with Libya and Lebanon. The League's discussion of the conflict between its two westernmost members revealed a growing antipathy between the radical republicans of Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad and Algiers on the one hand and the conservative monarchies of Riyadh, Amman, Tripoli and

Rabat on the other. Tunisia, once condemned to the periphery of Arab politics, now shared a comfortable middle ground with Lebanon since its domestic progressivism could not be easily criticized by the socialists while its "scrupulous" foreign policy won the trust of the royalists.⁸ That the Tunisian government still shied from any excess of enthusiasm for Arab unity was nevertheless made clear by President Būrqība in a speech marking the final French withdrawal from Banzart on 13 December. With 'Abd al-Nāṣir beside him on the platform Būrqība first expressed his homage to the ideal of Arab unity and his country's gratitude for Arab support in the struggle that had finally wrested the French agreement to evacuate. But he went on to recall the existence of important differences among the Arab states and to conclude that "it would be ill-advised and unrealistic to close our eyes to all that separates us and to believe that all the problems are solved, that unity is within our grasp, from the moment we speak the same language, Arabic."⁹

⁸Charles F. Gallagher, "The Tunisia Way: Moderation and Progress in the Maghrib," American Universities Field Staff Reports Service, North Africa Series, IX, 11 (Tunis, November 1963), p. 14.

⁹Quoted in Charles Debbasch, "La Politique de Bizerte," Annuaire d'Afrique du Nord, II (1963), p. 214.

Delegates from all member states attended a League economic conference in Cairo in mid-December which set up a provisional committee to prepare a plan for an Arab common market. Member states promised "to establish no bond incompatible with the interests . . . of the Arab Economic Union and to grant no privilege to the countries of the E.E.C."¹⁰ Towards the end of the same month increasing pressure from various quarters prompted President 'Abd al-Nāṣir of the U.A.R. to suggest an Arab summit conference on the question of utilization of the Jordan waters and the Palestine problem generally. By 26 December every state but Syria had acceded to this proposal and three days later the opening was scheduled for 13 January following the departures of Pope Paul VI from Jordan and of Chou En-lai from Tunisia. Late in December a Tunisian delegation was sent to Cairo to attend a meeting of the Arab Postal Union's executive committee, while Tunis began 1964 with a reunion of the council of the General Union of Arab Schoolteachers, which recommended that every school in the Arab world should set aside one week for discussions of the situation in Palestine.

¹⁰Communique of 14 December 1963, reported in "Les Pays du Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 1 (January-February 1963), p. 22.

'Abd al-Nāṣir's motivation for advancing the novel idea of an Arab summit lay in the potential embarrassment he foresaw in public reaction to his cautious approach to the Palestine question, which contrasted with the Syrian government's desire for sustained military action. To give some shine to his tepid though prudent attitude, the Ra'īs decided to gather the other Arab chiefs of state about him to sanction his position.¹¹

Before the principals arrived in Cairo, Egyptian diplomats had won the League Council's approval of their government's stand on the Jordan waters question and acceptance of its proposed agenda. For four days the leaders of the Arab world met behind closed doors, emerging on 16 January with a seven point communique that could have surprised nobody: another summit would be convened at Alexandria in August, the chiefs of state condemned Zionism and supported Arab solidarity and the principles of the Bandung and Addis Ababa conferences; they encouraged anticolonialist struggles in Africa and Asia and acclaimed both the recent Treaty of Moscow and the Charter of African Unity.

¹¹See the analysis of 'Abd al-Nāṣir's course of action in Pierre Rondot, "De l'Arabisme populaire à la formule des 'Sommets' arabes," *L'Afrique et l'Asie*, 71 (third quarter, 1965), p. 25.

The communique did not mention the conference's decision on the matter it was called to discuss but it was apparent that the U.A.R.'s position had gained endorsement from all members but Syria. Opposition to Zionism, as expressed by the conference, was more than a sentimental statement, however, since it proclaimed that Arab states would "establish their international political and economic relations on the basis of the attitude of other countries vis-à-vis the legitimate Arab struggle against Zionist obsessions."¹²

For the first time, the states of North Africa had participated fully in a discussion of the Palestine issue and all its subsidiary problems. Būrqība, Binballā and Ḥasan II had formerly limited themselves to verbal support of the Palestinians but at the summit conference they not only pledged their countries to full material involvement but also "introduced new plans of their own into a context which their eastern counterparts had come to find rather barren after fifteen years of stalemate." The three Maghribi leaders urged the creation of a liberation front on the Algerian model and offered to organize and train its personnel in guerrilla warfare. Besides

¹²Marcel Colombe, "Remarques sur la crise germano-arabe," Orient (Paris), 32-33 (December 1964-January 1965), p. 8.

putting two Tunisian brigades at the disposal of the Joint Arab Command, Būrqība won new respect in the Arab world; having reached personal understandings with both Binballā and 'Abd al-Nāṣir before the conference began, the Tunisian president was indeed able to fill an invaluable role as "major conference catalyst".¹³

The amelioration in Tunisia's relations with the United Arab Republic which had begun with the resumption of diplomatic connections on 3 August 1961 continued to flourish in the months that followed. Presidents Būrqība and 'Abd al-Nāṣir spent several hours discussing questions of mutual concern during the conference of nonaligned countries held at Belgrade in early September. Although this new cordiality was dampened somewhat by new Tunisian suspicions of Egyptian subversive activity later that month, the threatened deterioration was arrested and matters progressed fairly smoothly to the point in March 1962 when the two republics concluded their first commercial agreement. It provided for a program of gradually increasing trade in such Egyptian commodities as Egyptian cotton and film, in return for an expansion of

¹³Alan W. Horton, "The Arab Summit of January 1964: Some Observations on Inter-Arab Relations," American Universities Field Staff Reports Service, Northeast Africa Series, XI, 1 (February 1964), p. 12.

the market for Tunisian metals and vegetables. Six months later, Tunis supported Cairo in defying the Arab monarchies and recognizing the republican government proclaimed in Yemen on 26 September. Following the discovery of a conspiracy against the President, led by one Azhar al-Sharā'iṭī, Būrqība publicly acknowledged that the U.A.R.'s ambassador in Tunis had discouraged Sharā'iṭī when he sought his help and refused to see him a second time. As if this revelation were not a sufficient token of Tunisia's goodwill, Būrqība went on to state that "at the most critical moment of our disagreement over Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yūsuf, Egypt generally constrained itself to respect diplomatic customs."¹⁴

Algerian independence had removed Cairo's last legitimate locus of influence in the Maghrib by elevating the provisional government to real authority over its own national territory. Subsequently, Egyptian attempts to involve itself in North African politics seemed even more than before to have a more negative than positive effect. Such was the case when the U.A.R. tried to mediate the Algero-Tunisian estrangement that followed the uncovering of Sharā'iṭī's plot or

¹⁴Speech of 18 January 1963, quoted in al-ʿAmal, 20 January 1963, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XLIII, 1-2 (January-February 1963), p. 117.

when it sought to resolve the Algero-Moroccan border war. Būrqība tried to find a new grounding for Egyptian relations with the Maghrib and specifically Tunis by personal diplomacy; accordingly, he met frequently with 'Abd al-Nāṣir at the African summit meeting at Addis Ababa in May 1963 and on his return home he was able to tell his countrymen of his success.¹⁵

The differences between us arose from a difference in conception of the unity of the Arab nation. We are for the union of homelands. Now President 'Abd al-Nāṣir seems similarly to be adopting an approach which takes account of the necessity for evolution by stages towards the unification of the Arab world. This involves a process which would pass first through cooperation, then federalism, without setting a time limit on the stages.

At the Banzart celebrations of 13 December 1963 the two presidents testified together to the brotherly sentiments that had blossomed between them. "For long years," avowed 'Abd al-Nāṣir, "imperialism had separated us but God has restored what it divided,"¹⁶ while Būrqība assured a press conference two days later that "Suez facilitated the evacuation of Banzart, or at least rendered it less difficult."¹⁷ In such a context of

¹⁵Speech of 25 May 1963, quoted in "Chronique de l'Orient contemporain," Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, 52 (1963), p. 185.

¹⁶al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, I, 4 (October-December 1963), p. 552.

¹⁷Quoted in "Les Cérémonies de l'Evacuation de Bizerte," Maghreb, 1 (January-February 1964), p. 9.

fraternity, it should have surprised nobody when Būrqība, like Binballā and ʿArif received a special welcoming embrace from ʿAbd al-Nāṣir upon arriving in Cairo for the Arab summit conference in January 1964.¹⁸

Tunisia's integration into Arab League activities and its development of warm relations with the United Arab Republic were not reflected in any similar trend to a greater North African solidarity. Although Tunisia and Morocco both boycotted the African Congress of January 1962 because no invitation had been extended to the provisional government of Algeria, the very day the Congress opened Moroccan authorities banned the sale of Tunisian newspapers and forbade the domestic press from printing Tunisian articles carrying "unjust attacks on Morocco,"¹⁹ without indicating the nature of the offending material; the ban was lifted three months later. The summer of 1962 saw Algeria acquire its freedom but while Tunisia rejoiced at the successful culmination of the long struggle, its relations with independent Algeria got off to a bad start when Būrqība supported the moderate wing of the provisional government

¹⁸Alan Horton, however, was surprised, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁹"Developments of the Quarter: Chronology and Comment," Middle East Journal, XVI, 2 (Spring 1962), p. 202.

in its losing battle against Aḥmad Binballā for control of the new state. In return, Binballā gave prominence to a delegation of Yūsufis who attended the festival of the revolution in Algiers on 1 November.

The implication of a number of Algerians in the Yūsufi plot against President Būrqība led by Azhar al-Sharā'īṭī precipitated a diplomatic rupture on 19 January 1963. In spite of the failure of an attempt at mediation by its foreign minister, Aḥmad Balafrīj, the Moroccan government was able to bring the Maghribi foreign ministers together in Rabat on 11 February and even to secure plans for holding regular meetings in the future. By March, Būrqība could see some improvement in rapport with Algeria and most satisfactory progress in contacts with Morocco since the Mauritanian question had been "overtaken by events".²⁰ Negotiations with Algeria continued to the point when Foreign Minister Salīm visited President Binballā in Algiers and on 25 May ambassadors were exchanged anew following a friendly meeting of Binballā and Būrqība at the Addis Ababa African summit conference the day before.

On 1 September Tunisia and Algeria concluded an agreement for economic cooperation, covering such

²⁰Quoted in "Chronology," Middle East Journal, XVII, 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1963), p. 105.

matters as air transport, telecommunications and the coordination of customs regulations and facilities. Four days later direct telephone and telegraph contact between Tunis and Algiers, originally disrupted by military operations in the freedom struggle, was finally restored. A further economic accord, dealing with the marketing of natural gas and petroleum as well as the supplying of Algerian electricity to Tunisia, was signed on December 11. In the meantime, however, Tunisia's good offices had failed to stop the border war that erupted between Algeria and Morocco on 8 October and even the Arab League conciliation team, of which Tunisia was a member, returned from Rabat and Algiers in frustration as the Algerian Foreign Minister, 'Abd al-'Azīz Būtaflīka, insisted on referring the dispute to the Organization of African Unity. This open hostility between Tunisia's two North African partners did not prevent President Būrqība from reviving the old dream of Maghrib Muttahid even as he spoke of his more recent interest in Arab unity to the crowds at Banzart on 13 December: "Banzart will, I hope, have made a substantial contribution to the reconciliation of all the Maghribi and Arab peoples."²¹

²¹Quoted in "Les Cérémonies de l'Evacuation de Bizerte," Maghreb, 1 (January-February 1964), p. 9.

The Tunisian National Assembly ratified the friendship treaty with Libya in January 1962, six months after it had been signed, but it was not until 26 August 1963 that the provisions in the agreement for cooperation in information and judicial matters were finally put into effect, along with a new accord for postal coordination, agricultural quarantines and commercial affairs. This renewed effort at fortifying Tuniso-Libyan relations coincided with a visit by Libyan Prime Minister Muḥyī al-Dīn Fikīnī to the Tunisian capital. Tunisian contacts with Sudan in the years 1962 and 1963 were confined within the framework of the general operations of the Arab League.

As before, Tunisia's major interest in the Mashriq during this period of integrated activity lay with its most remote sector, Iraq and Kuwayt. In April 1962 Tunisian Foreign Minister Muqaddam delivered a special message from President Būrqība to President Qāsim urging Baghdad to resume its place in the League, just as Iraq had beseeched Tunisia sixteen months earlier. His mission did not succeed; instead matters took a turn for the worse when Tunisia's formal recognition of Kuwayt on 27 July led to Iraq's breaking diplomatic ties with Tunisia on 8 August. Similarly, Iraq withdrew from the Tunis Trade Fair in October

because Kuwayt was participating. In December, a Kuwayti economic delegation visited Tunis to explore possible avenues of financial aid to Tunisian industry. Along with the other Arab states, Tunisia wasted little time in recognizing the new Iraqi government led by 'Abd al-Salām 'Arif following the coup d'état of 8 February 1963, and rejoiced when this administration accepted Kuwayti independence on 4 October. Finally, in December 1963, Kuwayt advanced a loan of six million dinars (about twelve million dollars) to finance Tunisian hydroelectric and irrigation projects.

The years 1962 and 1963 saw an awakening of Tunisia's interest in the lands of the Arabian peninsula. In January 1962, a group of Tunisian officials stopped in Judda during a tour of the Arab world. Tunisia supported the republican side in the Yemeni civil war, but with some reservations arising from the apparent dominance of Egypt in the government's affairs. The Imam of Oman, Ghālib bn 'Alī, visited Tunis during September 1963 and won a declaration of Tunisia's support of his cause against British suzerainty. In December, another liberation group won a sympathetic hearing, for the Palestinian leader Aḥmad Shuqayri told a press conference after the Banzart evacuation ceremonies that he had obtained from the Tunisian

government "moral and material support".²²

Relations with Jordan, Lebanon and Syria remained generally friendly during this period, even if in the case of Jordan this situation may largely have been attributable to the lack of any significant contact. Lebanon and Tunisia signed an agreement for cultural and artistic exchange on 6 February 1962 and in November of the same year the two states agreed to launch a joint initiative at resolving the conflict in Yemen. On 2 December 1962 the two countries announced new accords for cooperation in the fields of broadcasting and information, as well as a bilateral judicial convention, and from 16 to 23 December 1963 Tunis was the site of a Lebanese cultural exhibition. Tunisia was the third Arab state, after Jordan and Saudi Arabia, to recognize the secession of Syria from the United Arab Republic effected on 29 September 1961. President Būrqība sent a personal message of congratulations to the new leaders on 9 October. Būrqība was somewhat disappointed in Aflaq's exclusion of Tunisia from his list of "progressive" Arab states the following spring but Tunis seems to have harbored no ill will towards Damascus on this account. However, Tunisia could not

²²"Chronologie," Maghreb, 1 (January-February 1964), p. 45.

endorse Syria's bellicose attitude to the Palestine issue and concurred in the more moderate position adopted at the January 1964 Arab summit conference, which left Syria as the League's new odd man out.

The cataclysmic events at Banzart during the summer of 1961 had opened the way for Tunisia to move into the political mainstream of the Arab League while Iraq and Syria filled the role of maverick. For two and a half years the work of consolidation continued as Tunisia's involvement in the League activities and its rapports with other member states steadily increased. By the time of the first Arab summit conference in January 1964, therefore, Tunisia found itself in good standing within the League and on excellent terms with its sister Arab countries, with the single exception of Syria, the current outcast. Furthermore, the prospects for the extension of such happy circumstances into the future seemed quite free of any possible obstacle.

CHAPTER V

THE DESCENT FROM THE SUMMIT: JANUARY 1964 TO JANUARY 1965

In their first summit conference, in January 1964, the Arab chiefs of state had achieved such scintillating success in welding their various points of view into an acceptable and feasible united front that it was only to be expected that they would resort to the same expedient when this edifice of unity seemed again to be threatened. Consequently, a second Arab summit was convened at Alexandria on 5 September, while in January 1965 another conference brought together the heads of the Arab governments. As the year advanced, however, the splendor of the first summit gradually diffused and the various Arab countries came to assert their own identities at the expense of the unity that once again proved itself to be so transitory. This reversion to particularism was perhaps especially true of Tunisia which once more began to suspect Egyptian motives and to resent the dominant role which the U.A.R. was playing in the League.

Tunisia started the year in the pleasant shadow of the first summit and on 23 January two divisional generals were assigned to the League command

which the summit conference had proposed. During February, Tunisian physicians at the Arab medical congress in Baghdad helped to launch the Arab Union Against Cancer, while Tunisian journalists attended the founding convention of the Arab Press Union. Tunisia was also represented at an Algiers conference on standardization of scientific terms and the sixth Arab Cultural Congress, at Constantine, which recommended a unified Arab educational system. At the ministerial level, Tunisia's Minister of Education joined his Arab counterparts at Baghdad, where agreement was reached on an Arab Statute of Education, Instruction and Culture, as well as on such matters as teacher exchanges and the preparation of an Arabic encyclopedia. From 4 to 6 March the Arab foreign ministers met behind closed doors in Cairo to plan a major diplomatic offensive on behalf of the Palestinian nationalists. At the same time Tunisia's cautious optimism and sense of participation in the Arab League were reflected by the remark of Finance Minister Aḥmad Ibn Ṣāliḥ, on his departure from Tunis for economic talks in Cairo: "The unity of the Arab peoples can be realized if it is prepared in a serious and rational manner. The factor of civilization must guide all our actions towards this

goal."¹

March 1964 was a busy month in the annals of the Arab League and Tunisia took its place at all the various functions except the first conference of Arab university women, at Beirut; the only African member of the League to be present at this conference was the U.A.R. Typical of the gatherings attended by Tunisia was the productive meeting of the Arab ministers of information in Cairo, which concluded with the creation of a federation of news services and the signing of a treaty to co-ordinate television programming. The most important reunion was the League Council's forty-first session which adopted over 250 motions, most notably a condemnation of recent British raids on the Yemeni frontier. On 10 March a special Arab League delegation visited Tunisian officials in an effort to stimulate Tunisia's interest in inter-Arab economic cooperation and the League's newly formed Economic Council, as well as to assess the Tunisian attitude to a project to unify the Arab financial structure. While these visitors received no real commitment from the Tunisian government, partly because Tunis did not wish to compromise its negotiations with the European Economic Community, Arab

¹Quoted in "L'Orientation nouvelle de la Politique Tunisienne à l'Égard de l'Égypte et de la Ligue arabe," Maghreb, 3 (May-June 1964), p. 9.

solidarity motivated the first common North African action vis-à-vis the European community when Tunisia joined Algeria and Morocco in protesting the granting of tariff privileges to Israeli citrus fruit. A few days later, Israel appeared in a different context when President Būrqība told a reporter from al-Yawm of Beirut that it was up to the Arabs, "who themselves bear chief responsibility for the triumph of Israeli colonialism in Palestine, to uproot this cancer," and asserted that Tunisia would comply with any "unanimous" Arab decision to fight, but that he hoped that such a choice would not be made, since he feared a detrimental result.²

From 4 to 11 May 1964 Tunis was the site of the tenth Inter-Arab Communications Congress, which discussed proposals for a uniform Arab highway code and a standard for Arab railway transport, as well as plans to open an Arab civil aviation council and a special technical bureau at the League Secretariat. The holding of such a conference at Tunis was certainly an indication of Tunisia's full participation in the League but a more significant event in this regard was the promulgation on 11 May of a law expropriating foreign

²Quoted in Maghreb Digest, II, 5 (May 1964), p. 36 f.

landowners, since it greatly enhanced Tunisia's flagging esteem among the "revolutionary" or "liberated" Arab leaders in Cairo, Algiers, Baghdad and Damascus. At the Arab League Council meeting a week later Tunisia endorsed an Egyptian resolution expressing League support for the Arab rebels in Aden. Although Tunisia had never signed the Economic Unity Agreement of 1957, it sent observers to the Council for Economic Unity's meeting of 3 June 1964, but decided not to adhere to the compact at that time because neither of its Maghribi neighbors was joining and Libya had ignored the council. On the other hand, Tunisia gladly concurred in the decision of the Inter-Arab Tourism Union's fourth conference to build a pan-Arab highway from Tangier to Baghdad.

Tunisia took no part in the negotiations which laid the groundwork for the long-awaited Arab Common Market during July, nor was it a party to the plan's adoption, since this was the province of the Council for Economic Unity. Tunisia was invited to join the council (and the market) before the anticipated inaugural date of 1 January 1965, but no action was taken on the invitation. Nor did Tunisia send any delegation to the Arab Medical Congress at Jerusalem. But during August Tunisia participated in two Arab

radio and television conferences which gathered at Cairo and Alexandria respectively and resulted in a project to broadcast a weekly "Arab Rendezvous". Both Algeria and Morocco had sent representatives to the trade union seminar, but Tunisia turned the tables on its neighbours when it was the only North African country to take its place at the Arab Petroleum Conference in Cairo, where it promised to boycott oil companies dealing with Israel. At the end of August Munjī Salīm flew to Cairo to confer with the other Arab foreign ministers and to help arrange the agenda for the impending summit conference.

A hint of Tunisia's renewed uneasiness at Egyptian leadership of the League was betrayed by Būrqība's diplomatic malady and his decision to send his Defence Minister, Bāhī al-Adgham, to Alexandria in his stead. Nevertheless, al-Adgham involved himself fully in the conference's deliberations and on 7 September he received a reporter from al-Ahrām, to whom he emphasized the necessity for greater political and military coordination among the Arab states bordering Israel, reiterating his president's affirmation of Tunisian solidarity with the Arabs of the Mashriq. The next day, Būrqība sent a message to the conference suggesting a "little summit" of the leaders of Israel's

neighbours; the conference accepted the idea and Tunisia was put on the committee set up to put it into effect. On 9 September Tunisia joined Algeria, Libya and Sudan in adhering to the League's Collective Security Pact, thus bringing the full League membership into the defensive system. Tunisia also assured the right of passage to Algerian troops dispatched to Palestine and promised to detail military personnel of its own in the event of a new outbreak of fighting. The liberation front that the North African chiefs of state had recommended in January had been formally launched at a rally in Jerusalem in May and the September conference recognized this Palestine Liberation Organization as the political voice of the Palestinian people. The kings and presidents also decided to meet each September and to prevail upon their Prime Ministers to gather once every three months. The broad consensus which the conference expressed was certainly a sign of the mutual goodwill then pervading Arab affairs, but it was also a reflection of the successful application of Egyptian diplomacy, for the resolutions of the conference closely paralleled the official position of the United Arab Republic.

That Tunisia's concern over Egypt's reviving hegemony within the League had not yet reached the

point of alarm was amply demonstrated by its hospitable reception of the sixth Arab Telecommunications Conference, which lasted a full three weeks; besides adopting a number of technical terms, this conference extended its postal coordination facilities to include the new Palestine Liberation Organization. Tunisia's increasing public support for the Palestinians found a sequel in a charge of persecution raised by Israelis of Tunisian origin, but the government's only response was a speech by the Chief of Protocol, 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Mahīrī, in which he offered the President's greetings to Tunisian Jews on Yom Kippur. During September Tunisia also sent delegations to Arab pharmaceutical and information conferences in Lebanon and a meeting of Arab newsagencies in Cairo. At the end of the month, Tunisia attended the League Council's forty-second session and added its support to Jordan's bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council.

A conference on Arab popular art took place at Tunis from 17 to 31 October 1964 with delegates in attendance from most of the Arab world. As if to underline the breadth of Tunisia's integration in the Arab macrocosm, a contingent of officers from the United Arab Command, led by Marshall 'Alī 'Amr visited Tunis while the cultural conference was in progress. In

November the Arab ministers of communications gathered in Beirut to reaffirm their hopes for a pan-Arab highway and to lay plans for an Arab airway and an Arab maritime company. Tunisian delegations were present at a trade union conference in Port Said in December and at a convention of Arab lawyers in Baghdad; the union meeting was especially noteworthy because Tunisia had participated in pan-Arab workers' rallies only in a frankly desultory fashion. A special meeting of personal representatives of the Arab chiefs of state on 25 November adopted a common Arab policy for the forthcoming debate on Palestine in the United Nations General Assembly, while a week later the League's Economic Council urged the formation of Arab blocs in such organizations as the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Tunisia took part in both these gatherings, but it sent no representative to a conference on the boycotting of Israel held in Bahrayn at the end of December. Tunisia began its new year in the Arab League with the representation at a scientific conference on nuclear energy in Cairo and the meeting of Arab ministers of labor at Baghdad which approved the creation of an Arab labor organization and the preparation of an Arab labor charter. But when the Arab kings and presidents gathered

in Cairo for their third summit conference Būrqība was absent, with Bāhī al-Adgham again in his place. This conference designated a committee to work on revision of the Arab Defence Charter and accepted a detailed plan for exploitation of the Jordan waters, but its most significant decision in the context of Tunisia's future role in the Arab League was to adopt a common course of action to be followed with regard to any country establishing diplomatic relations with Israel or extending military assistance to the Zionist State.

In spite of the resurrection of Tunisian misgivings about Egyptian motives in securing Arab unity, relations between Tunis and Cairo remained friendly through the year 1964. As Tunisia's Finance Minister Aḥmad Ibn Ṣāliḥ was leaving Tunis to attend the financial consultations in Cairo mentioned earlier in this chapter, he underlined the similarities he saw in the attitudes of the two countries: "Our orientation and the philosophy of our two revolutions are identical as to objectives and even as to methods of action."³

In Egypt Ibn Ṣāliḥ was able to conclude a major commercial treaty with the U.A.R., while Munjī Salīm had further discussions on economic cooperation

³Quoted in "L'Orientation nouvelle de la Politique Tunisienne à l'Egard de l'Egypte et de la Ligue arabe," Maghreb, 3 (May-June 1964), p. 9.

when he visited Cairo in June. Later that month an Egyptian trade delegation travelled to Tunis to sign a further accord. After President Būrqība had promulgated the land nationalization law on 12 May, France had withdrawn financial aid, so the new arrangements with the U.A.R. came at a most opportune time. In October the Arab Socialist Union's secretary general, Ḥusayn Shāfi'ī, who was also a vice-president of the United Arab Republic, was warmly received in Tunis, while similar hospitality greeted a special Tunisian delegation sent to Cairo on the occasion of the inception of regular air service between the two capitals.

The similar attitudes of the three Maghribi chiefs of state during the Arab summit conference of January 1964 accelerated the reawakening of the dream of a united North Africa. On his return to Tunis on 18 January, President Būrqība spoke of "fruitful contacts" with King Ḥasan and expressed a belief that "the difficulties and misunderstandings which have lasted nearly five years have now been overcome," while with Algeria, "our brotherly relations have been strengthened, for we cooperated very closely during the conference."⁴ The North African student federation met at Sūsa (Sousse)

⁴Interview with Maroc Informations, quoted in "La Conférence Arabe au 'Sommet'," Maghreb, 2 (March-April 1964), p. 6.

in early February and urged the creation of an all-Maghribi university as well as a unified educational curriculum. Later in the same month an Algerian delegation toured Tunisia to gather some ideas on social planning, while in April, officials from the states of the Maghrib met at Tangier to plan a schedule for industrial harmonization. On 24 April Morocco and Tunisia resumed diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level, ending three years of semi-isolation during which chargés d'affaires had conducted necessary business.

On 8 June, Tunisia and Algeria concluded a comprehensive treaty on youth affairs, including athletics. The Algero-Tunisian customs treaty came into force on 24 June, at least insofar as the exchange of police and tariff information was concerned; implementation of the projected joint administration of the frontier stations was indefinitely postponed. Representatives of the two countries signed a new cultural accord on 7 July and a week later it was announced that a commission for industrial integration had been set up, to coordinate glass, nitrate, metal and vehicle assembly operations within Algeria and Tunisia. On 1 August an air transport treaty came into force in the two republics. Meanwhile Moroccan Information Minister Aḥmad al-ʿAlawī visited President Būrqība on 18 June to

discuss North African unity and problems common to the states of the Maghrib; this gesture was returned on 3 July with the visit of Ḥabīb Būrqība, junior to King Ḥasan's palace. The general atmosphere of goodwill was further advanced by a special reunion of the three chiefs of state during the African summit conference held at Cairo during July.

This new congruity in the outlook of the Maghribi states was underlined at the time of the second Arab summit, for Būrqība with his political ailment and Ḥasan II, who was "too busy", were the only two active chiefs of state to stay home.⁵

Shortly after the conference closed, Tunisia and Morocco joined with Jordan in forming the Organization of Phosphate Producers, while the two North African states were also drafting eight accords designed to heal the old wounds lingering from the Mauritanian affair. Maghribi economics ministers met at Tunis at the end of September and launched a new economic consultative committee to make pertinent suggestions on the industrial integration of the region. On 14 October Būrqība reaffirmed his belief in the necessity for the North African unity, citing religion,

⁵Crown Prince Fayṣal of Saudi Arabia was the real ruler of that state. King Ḥasan was represented by his brother, Prince ʿAbd Allāh; Būrqība by Defence Minister Bāhī al-Adgham.

language, the struggle against colonialism and the problems of development as the common factors most conducive to the realization of this unity.⁶

The Tunis meeting of ministers of economic affairs was followed by a further gathering at Tangier late in November, supervised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The consultative committee was revamped and structured on a permanent basis and a Centre for Industrial Studies was created to make detailed studies for the committee's consideration. The Moroccan Foreign Affairs Minister, Tayyib Binhīma took King Ḥasan's personal congratulations to President Būrqība on the latter's re-election to Tunisia's highest office; eleven days later, on 24 November, Binhīma's Tunisian counterpart, Munjī Salīm, attended National Day celebrations at Rabat. Then on 5 December Ḥasan himself arrived at Tunis for a week's stay, during which the dormant cultural, social and technical treaties of 1959 were revived and put into effect. Speaking at Qayrawān, His Majesty extolled the Maghrib's recent moves towards material cooperation, but observed as well that any meaningful unity would also require "friendship and mutual confidence, factors which govern our rapports

⁶Interview with Radio Lausanne, as reported in Oriente Moderno, XLIV, 10-12 (October-December 1964), p. 765.

with President Būrqība."⁷ A month later a Tunisian parliamentary delegation received a warm welcome when it visited Algiers to discuss the possibilities of founding a Maghribi parliamentary association.

On 8 January 1964 Tunisia signed its first trade agreement with Sudan, the terms of which anticipated the shipment of Sudanese cattle and cotton to Tunisia and Tunisian exports of cement and wheat to Sudan. Throughout 1964, Tunisia's renewed enthusiasm for Maghrib Muttahid was reflected in a growing friendship with Libya. In February, a Libyan team visited Tunisia to study social planning techniques, while on 14 April the two countries formed a joint navigational company, with Libya as the major shareholder, in what was locally considered "a new step towards Libyo-Tunisian unity in the economic sector."⁸ Libya was represented at all three of the year's North African economic conferences, at Tangier in April and again in November, and at Tunis in September. The year ended on a most cordial note as Tunisian officials provided a warm welcome for the Prime Minister of Libya, Maḥmūd

⁷Quoted in "La Visite du Roi Hassan II en Tunisie," Maghreb, 7 (January-February 1965), p. 11.

⁸al-ʿAmal, 15 April 1964, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XLIV, 3-4 (March-April 1964), p. 254.

al-Muntaşir, during his sojourn in Tunis in the last week of December.

Tunisia's rapports with the states of Arab Asia remained friendly during 1964, especially in June when Foreign Minister Salīm and President Būrqība's son toured the Mashriq in search of assistance after France had suspended its aid program in retaliation against the expropriation of foreign-owned land. The loan agreement signed with Kuwayt in December 1963 was ratified in May, while a new loan for four million Kuwayti dinars (about twelve million dollars) was negotiated in June and ratified in July. A special Iraqi trade delegation visited Tunis at the end of June and a commercial accord signed on 6 July provided for an increase in Iraqi imports from Tunisia. Saudi Arabia was more reticent in its support of Tunisia and Salīm apparently left Judda with neither loan nor treaty but he met King Fayṣal again in November when he was able to report a strengthening of the bonds between the two governments, although he still had nothing concrete to show for his pains. As noted earlier, Jordan joined Tunisia and Morocco in founding the Organization of Phosphate Producers in September.

On 6 April President Būrqība received Muḥammad 'Alī Jaffari, one of the leaders of the independence

movement in South Arabia; the President's concern for the partisans' cause against the British was sufficient to place Tunisia on the Arab League's special committee on South Arabia which met during the autumn. Tunisia continued to express support for the Palestinian freedom fighters, promising to send troops if the necessity arose. In fact, Foreign Minister Salīm attended the founding congress of the Palestine Liberation Organization, held at Jerusalem from 28 May to 2 June. Relations with Lebanon maintained the friendliness they had enjoyed for some time; Salīm spent four days in Beirut in January in amicable discussions, while a judicial treaty covering extradition and other questions was signed in March. But it was with Syria that Tunisia made the greatest advances in fraternal rapports; commercial and cultural treaties were signed in June and actually ratified in November, and the Syrian Ba'th sent its Assistant Secretary General, Shiblī 'Aysamī at the head of a delegation of observers to the General Conference of the Tunisian Constitutional Party (Neo-Dustūr's new title), which began on 19 October.

The year 1964, then, saw Tunisia climb down slightly from the dizzy heights of involvement reached at the Arab summit in January. Relations remained good

or even improved with every other member and with the Arab liberation forces in both Palestine and Aden. But the recrudescence of Egyptian leadership within the League struck the muted chords of Tunisian particularism and prompted a gradual and unobtrusive transfer of Tunisian priorities from the concerto-like arrangements of the League to the more intimate harmonies of the Maghribi ensemble. This renewed shyness was firmly but politely typified by the replacement of President Būrqība by his defence minister at the second and third summit meetings, but it is also indicated in the total absence of Tunisian personnel among the League's 150 employees.⁹ Until January 1965, however, Tunisia's descent was measured and so smooth that few observers could have suspected how sharp a precipice lay just around the corner.

⁹See Robert W. Macdonald, The League of Arab States: A Study in the Dynamics of Regional Organization (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 130 for a national breakdown of League employees. Besides Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Kuwayt were unrepresented.

CHAPTER VI

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF DISENGAGEMENT: JANUARY TO APRIL, 1965

The year 1965 dawned calmly on the Arab world as the members of the League pledged solidarity in the face of any move by any other state towards closer links with Israel; even as the chiefs of state were conferring in Cairo, a colloquy on the Arab League was quietly proceeding at the Tunisian resort of Hammāmāt. At the same time, however, a chain of events had begun that would soon plunge the Arab League into a new crisis. Annoyed with West Germany's continuing practice of shipping weaponry to Israel, President 'Abd al-Nāṣir invited the East German leader, Walter Ulbricht, to Cairo on 14 January 1965. On 1 February, the Federal German ambassador was recalled from Cairo and on 7 March the Bonn government announced its intention to establish formal contacts with Israel. As the tension mounted, the U.A.R. sought support among its League partners in what it considered the first test of the solidarity undertaken at the summit conference. Several member states were reluctant to see an end to the bountiful aid they had been receiving from Bonn, but

most felt obliged to fall in line with Cairo's stand. In the face of a broadening consensus, Tunisia's president decided to make a special tour of the Arab East in the interest of what he felt to be political realism.

The U.A.R. was asking its partners to break with Bonn, seize West German property and recognize the Pankow government; the series of actions would doubtless put a severe strain on relations between Arab states and all the Western powers. Nevertheless, the Arab ambassadors in Bonn unanimously urged a tough and united stand, which would involve a concerted countermove to every Federal German initiative, even before the chiefs of state had held their third reunion.¹ Bonn's assurance that only nonmilitary goods were being sent to Israel was accepted in Cairo, but on 17 February the Federal German government warned that a visit to Cairo by Ulbricht would result in the suspension of West German aid to the U.A.R. Two days later, on 19 February, 'Abd al-Nāṣir drew a close parallel between Bonn's proposed recognition of Israel and the U.A.R.'s

¹"Recommandation des ambassadeurs arabes en Allemagne fédérale," 7 December 1964, quoted by 'Abd al-Nāṣir in his speech of 13 March 1965, as reported in "La crise germano-arabe à travers les textes," Orient (Paris), 32-33 (December 1954-March 1965), p. 314.

threatened establishment of relations with Pankow.² In the same interview, when he was asked how many other Arab states supported his government's position, he replied with one word: "All."³ He would soon find ample grounds to believe his estimate had been somewhat over-optimistic.

Būrqība arrived at Cairo before Ulbricht and held a series of quite friendly encounters with 'Abd al-Nāṣir, apparently acknowledging the U.A.R. leadership in the Arab community and joining in a denunciation of Bonn's attitude without committing himself to any recourse to the ultimate diplomatic rupture. Similar feelings were evident in the communique released by the League Council on 22 February, the day Būrqība left for Saudia Arabia, but the Council had also evaded public mention of the eventuality of Federal Germany's recognition of Israel. Insisting that the Palestinians themselves should work their way to independence by stages, as the Tunisians had, Būrqība addressed himself to the threefold waste he saw in the situation of the refugees, who were "sterilized in their personal destiny, useless to Arab development and incapable of

²Interview with Süddeutsche Zeitung, quoted in "La crise germano-arabe," p. 320.

³Ibid., p. 321.

applying the moral pressure on the West which the League had hoped."⁴ So neatly had 'Abd al-Nāṣir woven the German question into the fabric of the Palestine problem, however, that Ulbricht's arrival at Cairo on 24 February sealed the fate of Būrqība's earnest effort to explain his policy to audiences already sceptical and opened the door not only to a confrontation between the U.A.R. and the West but to a bitter internecine alienation as well.

Besides engaging in intimate chats with al-Ra'īs, Būrqība took time in Cairo to hold a large press conference during the course of which he elaborated Tunisia's ideas of Arab unity and unified action. Unity, he submitted, "should not be a simple propagandistic word; we must recognize that the general situation in the Arab countries does not yet present all the conditions for unity. It is therefore our duty to create all these conditions. . . ." Stable union could come only with a growth in social and economic uniformity and, more important, a common ideology. Tunisians were proud to be part of the Arab people, but it was impossible to erase a country's past: "It is true that we are united in our objectives but local interests

⁴Pierre Rondot, "Bourguiba, un arabisme à plusieurs voix," Signes du Temps, 20 (May 1965), p. 8.

built up over the centuries make unity difficult." Nevertheless, he hoped his visit would constitute some contribution towards the goal in the renewed understanding and dedication it could stimulate. Furthermore, Tunisia remained firm in its loyalty to the decisions of the three Arab summit conferences, which were important "not only for the Palestine problem but also for clarifying the position of the various Arab states in the broad terms of the common policy."⁵ Not surprisingly, the joint communique issued by the two presidents on Būrqība's departure again affirmed a common faith in the eventual realization of the dream of unity and pledged the Tunisian and Egyptian governments to work towards this goal. Meanwhile, Tunisia had joined the other members of the League Council in sustaining the U.A.R.'s position vis-à-vis Federal Germany and pledging united retaliation to any unfriendly gesture Bonn might undertake. Similar resolutions were passed by the League's Economic Council the following week. All the while Tunisia continued to participate in a multitude of special Arab conferences, such as the Arab Press Union congress at Kuwayt and a literary convention at Baghdad.

⁵Press conference reported in Oriente Moderno, XLV, 2 (February 1965), p. 120.

Except for the press conference and a few festive gatherings, Būrqība's activity in Egypt was on the whole restricted to private discussions with various Egyptian authorities. Similarly, in Riyad he conversed with King Fayṣal and other dignitaries and did not address the public. His message for both leaders was doubtless the same line he had been pressing for at least a year, that the Palestinians should conduct their own war with supplies from other Arab states and refuge in states bordering Israel. Arriving in Jordan on 27 February, he seemed to be following the same pattern of conduct as he went behind closed doors with King Ḥusayn and his advisors. However, after Ulbricht had left Cairo on 2 March, with an economic agreement in his pocket, Būrqība changed his approach and took his argument to the people of Palestine. Whether he had originally intended to preach his gospel to the crowds in the refugee camps is of course open to speculation, but the circumstances suggest that he would not have assumed the firm public posture he did had he not felt some new obligation to publish openly what he had been urging privately. The implications of the U.A.R.'s entente with East Germany very probably made the Tunisian president feel that intergovernmental diplomacy was proving inadequate for the task at hand,

so he adopted the obvious alternative. Another factor in his decision to switch tactics may have been the depressing experience of visiting camps near Jericho on 3 March, where he found the refugees "sustained at once by chimeric hopes and sterile hatreds,"⁶ which rendered any lucid consideration of their plight virtually impossible.

As everybody expected, Federal Germany reacted to the U.A.R.'s accommodation with Ulbricht by breaking with Cairo and cutting all foreign aid to the U.A.R. Promising not to send arms to Israel, Bonn took no action against any other Arab state but warned against any further involvement with Pankow. 'Abd al-Nāṣir's call for a show of solidarity in the face of Bonn's challenge was similarly anticipated, but Būrqība at least had no intention of complying. After "more than thirty years in the front rank of political action," the Tunisian president "could not concede this kind of a right of seniority in the Arab struggles, which the Ra'īs could claim without a contest in the East."⁷ Būrqība, ever the pragmatist, realized that

⁶Quoted in "Les Relations germano-arabes, Israël et le Maghreb," Maghreb, 9 (May-June, 1965), p. 5.

⁷Pierre Rondot, "Les chemins difficiles de l'arabisme," Études (July-August, 1965), p. 65.

the Western powers would not permit Israel to be defeated, so he began to shift the emphasis in his declarations on Palestine to the negotiation side of the balance, much in the way he had alternated force with suasion in his campaign for his own country's freedom. By publicly advocating negotiation, and by implication favoring some type of recognition for Israel, Būrqība was trimming his sails full against the hot winds of polemic that had prevailed for twenty years; his new course of action was indeed an injection of realism into the middle of the Arab dream.⁸

Accordingly, on 6 March, President Būrqība told a press conference at Amman that since Arabs had not persecuted Jews, "cooperation with them is possible on the basis of mutual respect."⁹ On the same day, he told a public meeting in Jerusalem that the Palestinians ought to draw up a program for a gradual settlement, stressing the merits of moderation. At another press conference, in Beirut the following day, Būrqība again expounded on the need for discussions with the Israelis. In spite of his unconventional remarks,

⁸Ibid.

⁹Quoted in al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 1 (January-March, 1965), p. 100 f.

Būrquiba was warmly received by Lebanese President Charles Ḥalū, who lent a sympathetic ear to the Tunisian plan for a "third force" in Arab politics and especially a proposal to mediate between the U.A.R. and Saudi Arabia in their Yemeni dispute. Both presidents reaffirmed their support of the League's policy on the question of Federal German recognition of Israel. When on 8 March, 'Abd al-Nāṣir told a crowd at Asyūt that his government was simply following Tanzania's courageous example in defying Bonn's jealous prohibitions against contacts with Pankow, Būrquiba must have caught a certain hollowness in this subtle appeal, for his own close rapport with numerous black African leaders had made him aware of their general sympathy for Israel in the Palestine confrontation. At the same time, these friendly contacts in Africa allowed Būrquiba to risk isolation within the Arab world by assuring him a place in African society, especially if he adopted a moderate stance on the Palestine question.

On 9 March, 'Abd al-Nāṣir won his first ally in the German affair with the Kuwayti parliament's decision to break with Bonn and seek contacts with Pankow. The same day, the League's special committee on relations with Germany published its four recommendations: recall of all Arab ambassadors in

Bonn; a warning to Bonn that relations would be severed once Bonn sent an ambassador to Israel; solidarity with the U.A.R. if West Germany continued its "aggressive" policy and a threat to break relations with all states which might continue to aid Israel. 'Abd al-Nāṣir applauded the Kuwayti move and assured an assembly at Minya that all Arabs were united and that German hopes of bribing some dissidents would fail. In spite of his claim, the Maghribi leaders had little to relish in throwing away valuable aid for the sake of a position they had but reluctantly endorsed, and they were all the more reluctant to react to a crisis which they had done nothing to aggravate. Būrqība found much irony in the affair, recalling how sixty years earlier, Mashriqi Arabs had plotted in Paris against the Turks without a thought for France's own Arab subjects.

Tunisia's delegate was in his place when the Arab League's special committee on South Arabia met at Cairo on 11 March 1965.¹⁰ Even as this normal act of participation was being made on Tunisia's behalf, however, the republic's chief of state was uttering statements before a press conference in Beirut that

¹⁰The other members of this committee were Kuwayt, Saudi Arabia, U.A.R. and Yemen.

were in both content and effect far from routine. He first reiterated his idea of a gradual alternation of negotiation and coercion, which he claimed to have sold to the refugees themselves, but insisted that Tunisia would stand with the League. He then pointed out that thirty African countries had established relations with Israel with no complaint from any Arab state. In any case, West Germany had dropped its plans to recognize Israel because it would not accept Israel's condition that arms shipments should be resumed. For these two reasons, Būrqība opposed any plan to boycott Federal Germany, especially since the Arabs would lose much more from such a manoeuvre than their intended victims. Nevertheless, while Būrqība spoke orders were being issued recalling all but four Arab ambassadors from Bonn. The next day Algeria summoned its envoy from the Rhine for consultation, leaving only Libya, Morocco and Tunisia represented in the federal capital.

Journalists throughout the Arab world seized Būrqība's solution to the Palestine problem and most Arab newspapers commented at length on what many construed to be a capitulation. The cordial warmth of Būrqība's welcome in Cairo, Riyadh and Amman flamed into a most inimical heat after his declarations in Beirut; the Lebanese government arrested a number of Syrians who

were apparently plotting against the Tunisian's life. Erhard's conciliatory gestures were virtually overlooked, for most Arab governments and editors had already reinterpreted the crisis: "it was no longer a matter only of West Germany and Israel but of Israel and Būrqība."¹¹ In a speech at Mansura, on 13 March, 'Abd al-Nāṣir insisted that Tunisia was bound by the League Council's decision of 2 April 1963 to break with Bonn because of the West German support for Israel's military buildup. The hour of trial had come to Arab unity, he continued: "it is no longer time to make philosophy; it is time for firmness and action. It is not time for dickerings and advances by stages; the situation requires initiative."¹² The Arab Nationalist Movement took a similar stand on the Palestinians' behalf, proclaiming that the way to serve the Arab masses was not by "the call to national surrenders and bargainings but by the recognition of the legal rights of the Arab people and perseverance in asserting them."¹³ On the other hand, Būrqība got some scraps of encouragement; for example,

¹¹"Les Relations germano-arabes," loc. cit.

¹²Quoted in "Extraits de discours du Président Djamal 'Abd al-Nāṣir," Orient (Paris), 32-33 (December 1964-March 1965), p. 351.

¹³Quoted in al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 1 (January-March, 1965), p. 104.

the Lebanese daily L'Orient observed that "we have long thought with President Būrqība that the Arabs need leaders with the courage to face up to emotional reactions with a rational policy."¹⁴ And, for what it was worth, the Syrian government found Būrqība's attitude to be no worse than that of 'Abd al-Nāṣir, although Syria was the only Arab state to endorse the demand of the Palestine Liberation Organization for Tunisia's expulsion from the League of Arab States.

As Būrqība arrived in the relative quiet of Tehran on 14 March, the Arab foreign ministers were gathering in Cairo. While the conference formally asserted the intention of breaking with Bonn as soon as Federal Germany established relations with Israel, Tunisia was able to rally Morocco and Libya in dissociating itself from this resolution, thus denying what 'Abd al-Nāṣir had referred to as the minimum obligation only five days before. The foreign ministers were able to achieve unanimity only in a reaffirmation of the decisions of the two Arab summit conferences, the only question on which the three dissident delegations felt no need to consult their governments. That the U.A.R. could discriminate between the reservations of

¹⁴Quoted in Oriente Moderno, XLV, 3 (March 1965), p. 150.

Tunisia and Morocco was amply demonstrated by the warm welcome accorded King Ḥasan during his official visit to Cairo following the conference, while the Egyptian press maintained its denunciations of President Būrqība. And lest anyone seek to explain away the divergence of views in the context of a ~~Maghribi~~-Mashriqi dichotomy, it must be noted that Algeria was quite prepared to forfeit its considerable aid from Bonn in its enthusiastic endorsement of the United Arab Republic's position.

In spite of the furor Būrqība's Palestine proposals had evoked, Tunisia took its place at such Arab conferences as the Permanent Committee for Information's meeting, from 15 to 21 March, and the fifth Arab petroleum congress, from 16 to 23 March, both at Cairo, as well as the special meeting of the Political Committee called to mark the twentieth anniversary of the League's inception. Nevertheless, Būrqība accepted the Iraqi government's warning that it could not guarantee his safety and cancelled his plans to visit Baghdad. On the same day, 16 March, Lebanese demonstrators denounced the Tunisian, Moroccan and Libyan governments for their lack of solidarity with the other League members; during the following week, hostile crowds also besieged the Tunisian embassies in Cairo and Sana. On 17 March, Secretary General Ḥassūna

impressed upon the governments in Rabat, Tunis and Tripoli, "the gravity of their stand on the Palestine problem, since this stand would open a gap for the Zionist and imperialist forces in the effort to unify the Arab states. . . ." ¹⁵ The Tunisian representative at the foreign ministers' conference replied only with a request that the League Secretariat publish the objections of the three states to show the public the reasons for their hesitancy, while the Tunisian Press Association protested to the Union of Arab Journalists against the campaign of denigration to which Tunisia had been subjected. Tunisia and Libya both declined to host a conference of Arab prime ministers in April; the meeting was eventually situated at Cairo. Steering clear of the storm, Būrqība in the meantime made his way from Tehran through Ankara and on to Belgrade, before finally returning to Tunis on 9 April.

On his return home, President Būrqība held a series of interviews and press conferences in an effort to elaborate his opinions on the Palestine question. He urged the Arab states to accept the United Nations resolutions of 1948 in the hope that the refugees could

¹⁵al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 1 (January-March 1965), p. 17.

eventually be settled in Nazareth and other areas to be restored to Arab sovereignty. If the Israelis refused to comply with the resolutions, at least the Arabs would have placed themselves on the side of international approbation. Būrqība found 'Abd al-Nāṣir's statements along this line to be too vague, since they tried to circumvent the resolution which had created Israel, whereas the Tunisian president argued that the only way to restore the refugees' land was to accept the compromise implied in the U.N. resolutions. Not only did he do his utmost to publicize this heterodox doctrine, but he also insisted that "what I have said aloud is what other Arab chiefs of state are thinking."¹⁶ At the same time, he sent a personal message to 'Abd al-Nāṣir urging the Ra'īs to negotiate on the Arabs' own ground before they might lose the initiative. Then when Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir offered to meet Būrqība, the Tunisian president evaded embarrassment by claiming that the Israelis should deal first with the United Arab Republic, which he recognized as the "leader" of the Arab countries.¹⁷ Closer to home, when the fourth Arab medical congress, meeting in Tunis from 11 to 16 April,

¹⁶"L'actualité à travers les textes," Orient (Paris), 34 (June 1965), p. 141.

¹⁷"Les Relations germano-arabes," p. 6.

became embroiled in a heated debate of Tunisia's position on the Palestine issue, Būrqība refused to receive the delegates. However, seven of the eleven delegations (including those of Morocco and Algeria), dissociated themselves from the highly critical stance assumed by the Jordanian and Egyptian representatives. On 15 April, President Būrqība spoke at some length on developing events, administering his sharpest public blow to date by characterizing Cairo's policy as "an alibi for inaction," and suggesting that the U.A.R. had fallen victim to its own propaganda.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the Tunisian minister of information joined his Arab colleagues at a conference in Amman, where he helped found the Union of Arab Press Agencies and announced Tunisia's intention to enter the Arab Broadcasting Federation. Meanwhile, President Būrqība continued his public criticism of the U.A.R.'s attitudes on Palestine and Yemen. The Tunisian press defended Būrqība against Egyptian newspapers' charges of treason. On the same day that Deputy Prime Minister Abba Eban of Israel rejected Būrqība's proposals, demonstrators stoned the Tunisian embassy in Cairo. The governments of Iraq, Jordan, Kuwayt, Lebanon, Sudan and

¹⁸"L'actualité," p. 143.

Syria joined the U.A.R. in repudiating the Tunisian position. In a seemingly desperate attempt to resolve the issue, Būrqība sent a special message to 'Abd al-Nāṣir on 26 April, insisting on the identity of principle to be found in the recent statements of both men and re-affirming Tunisia's fidelity to the summit resolutions and the common defence agreement. This gambit was also rebuffed and on the following day the embassies of the U.A.R., Iraq and Syria were besieged by disgruntled Tunisians. This move was parried by the sacking of the Tunisian embassy at Cairo by some two thousand students. Diplomatic bonds between Tunisia on the one hand and Syria, Iraq and the U.A.R. on the other were suspended; just before leaving Cairo, the Tunisian representative to the U.A.R. laid a final personal protest from President Būrqība on President 'Abd al-Nāṣir's desk.

Aḥmad Shukayrī, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, called for Tunisia's expulsion from the League of Arab States. But the personal representatives of the Arab chiefs of state, gathered at Cairo for a special conference on 28 April, refused to take so drastic a step and contented themselves with a refusal to consider any negotiations with Israel.¹⁹

¹⁹ The text of the pertinent resolution was published in al-Ahrām, 30 April 1965; French translation in "L'actualité," p. 153.

Būrqība, unconcerned, told the West German television audience that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Federal Germany and Israel would not affect rapports between Bonn and Tunis. And even as he spoke, two disparate but equally impressive accolades were going to press: the Algerian daily "Le Peuple" declared that Būrqība's proposals would undoubtedly "embarrass" Israel, while an Israeli newspaper characterized the Tunisian President as "the most intelligent and the most dangerous of our adversaries."²⁰

The fabric of events in the Arab world in the early months of 1965 was so closely woven that the separation of any single thread, and especially that of specifically Tuniso-Egyptian affairs, poses more than usual difficulty. That relations between the two countries deteriorated during these months is apparent from the general discussion in the preceding paragraphs. But just as the earlier era of Tunisian equanimity within the Arab community had featured a broad mutual understanding with the United Arab Republic, this new dénouement was reflected most vividly in a renaissance of the bitterness that had forestalled this understanding so often before. Between Munjī Salīm's friendly visit

²⁰"Le Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 9 (May-June 1965), p. 10.

to Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir at the end of January and the angry manifestations of the Tunisian crowds before the U.A.R. embassy three months later, Tunisian public opinion, as shown by the editorial trends of the local press, had sharply turned against Cairo as the most formidable opponent of Tunisia's own policies.

President Būrqība arrived in Cairo on 16 February, to be greeted by "one of the most enthusiastic welcomes ever given a foreign chief of state by the Egyptian people."²¹ While visiting an armaments plant the next day, Būrqība referred to the Ra'īs as "the root and wellspring of the reviving spirit of the Arab nation."²²

On the date of Būrqība's departure for Judda, the presidents signed a cultural accord and issued a joint communique reaffirming their countries' faith in Arab unity. But two weeks after he had so glowingly praised 'Abd al-Nāṣir, Būrqība revealed his own plan for a solution to the Palestine question as he addressed a group of refugees at Jericho. This project differed so sharply from the U.A.R.'s policy that Būrqība must certainly have expected some debate. Whether he had foreseen how quickly this disagreement would embitter

²¹Radio Cairo, quoted in Maghreb Digest, III, 4 (April, 1965), p. 26.

²²al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 1 (January-March, 1965), p. 148.

the rapport between Cairo and Tunis that had been so painstakingly erected is his secret, but he apparently saw it as his duty and privilege to present his ideas to the people most affected by the continuing stagnation of the Palestine crisis.

In reply to Cairo's charge that he was destroying Arab unity, Būrqība reminded his press conference in Beirut on 11 March that the U.A.R. government had "received Ulbricht without consulting anybody, so it has no right to drag the other Arab states into something incompatible with their interests."²³ But it was still possible for the two presidents to exchange polite telegrams to mark 'Abd al-Nāṣir's re-election to the U.A.R.'s presidency. Indeed, al-Ahrām first denounced Būrqība only on 26 March, when it equated his tactics to concession.²⁴ Even then, the two countries were able to conclude a civil aviation agreement on 12 April. Diplomatic bonds withstood the growing strain until the Tunisian demonstrations of 27 April, following which the U.A.R. ambassador was recalled from Tunis and the Tunisian embassy in Cairo was set ablaze. However, the fire was extinguished by the police while the vacant

²³Ibid., p. 103.

²⁴"Le Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 9 (May-June 1965), p. 9.

U.A.R. embassy in Tunis was similarly given strong police protection. The Tunisian embassy was nevertheless closed, along with the Tunisian consulate in Alexandria; thus there remained no direct avenue of communication between Tunis and Cairo after 29 April.

Tunisia's relations with the other states of North Africa continued their smooth development during the early part of 1965 in spite of the reverses suffered in Tunisian rapports with the Arab East. Morocco and Libya shared Tunisia's view of the German question and maintained a cautious neutrality in the confrontation on Palestine; in any case they were not about to forego the bountiful aid they were receiving from Bonn for the sake of what seemed to them to be a diplomatic game. Furthermore, they were little inclined to jostle the delicate negotiations their representatives were then conducting with officials of the European Economic Community. A statistical conference at Tangier in mid-January and a youth congress at Algiers a month later are typical of the various Maghribi conventions of this period, while governmental cooperation was advanced by such agreements as that concluded on 15 March by Algeria, Libya and Tunisia to study the water resources of the Sahara under the auspices of UNESCO. The long-heralded Permanent Economic Consultative Committee held its

first meeting at Algiers five days later, and the initial gathering of the Maghribi Committee for the Coordination of Postage and Telegraphs was opened at Tunis on 29 March. During April, two special conferences on industrial cooperation were convened, the first at Tunis and the second at Tripoli. Bilateral connections were also maintained, as a Tunisian economic delegation toured Libya in February while a joint Algero-Tunisian committee explored possibilities of cooperation on public works, transportation and communications. And on 5 April, the King of Morocco granted a private audience to Ḥabīb Būrqiḇa, junior. Algeria's support of the U.A.R.'s position on Germany and Palestine was not permitted to damage the trend to Maghribi regional cooperation. Indeed, the only Arab African capital besides Cairo with which Tunis encountered any problem was Khartoum, where the Sudanese minister of information expressed his government's disapproval, on 24 April, of "any compromise concerning the right of the Palestinian people to the land of their ancestors."²⁵ Nevertheless, an accord was signed two days later providing for an early exchange of ambassadors between Tunisia and Sudan.

²⁵ al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 2 (April-June 1965), p. 258.

President Būrquiba's goodwill tour to the Mashriq produced the antithesis of its objective, for by the end of April his country's repute in Arab Asia had reached an all-time low. It was of no avail to remind the world that Neo-Dustūr had espoused the cause of the Palestinians as early as 1937; this could only underline the magnitude of the current disaffection. Welcomed as a hero to Amman on 27 February, Būrquiba jolted his hosts with his address to the refugees at Jericho but partially reassured them, at his press conference of 6 March, with a reaffirmation of loyalty to Arab solidarity. The cultural and economic accords signed on his last day in Amman soon lost their standing, however, when the Jordanians denounced Būrquiba's position as enunciated in his press conference at Beirut as an encouragement for "the surrender of Palestine to Zionism."²⁶ Saudi Arabia and Tunisia had signed a trade agreement on 17 January, and Būrquiba's sojourn in that kingdom passed without major incident; of all the eastern Arab states, Saudi Arabia probably felt most sympathetic to Būrquiba's approach, but Riyadh was more than reluctant to jar its unsteady rapport with Cairo so it studiously refrained from commenting

²⁶Oriente Moderno, XLV, 3 (March 1965), p. 211 f.

on the controversy aroused by the Tunisian proposals. As for Yemen, President Sallāl joined the chorus of reprobation on 24 April with a statement characterizing Būrqība's plan as "an attempt to shirk responsibility for the defence of Arab rights in Palestine."²⁷

As he began his goodwill tour, only Syria posed a problem for Būrqība; his visit there was first postponed (13 February), then cancelled (27 February) on the advice of 'Abd al-Nāṣir and 'Abd al-Salām 'Arif. It was probably no surprise, then, that some of the most violent demonstrations against Būrqība's policies on Palestine erupted in such provincial towns as Aleppo and Latakia, as well as in Damascus. During the manifestations in Tunis in late April, the Syrian consulate was under a heavy police guard until the two countries suspended diplomatic relations on 27 April. But Lebanon, on the other hand, was the place where Būrqība might have expected the most friendly reception of his tour. He was indeed warmly received at Beirut on 7 March and spent a pleasant four days in the small republic. The joint communique issued on the day of his departure testified to a common dedication to the Arab cause, especially in Palestine. Before leaving, however,

²⁷ al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, loc. cit.

he held a press conference to explain his views on the German question and his plan for the liberation of Palestine "by stages". This plan failed to enthuse the Lebanese press, but it was only after Būrqība had refused to break with Bonn that violence emerged, with the stoning of the Tunisian Bank building in Beirut on 16 March. Two days later, Būrqība won the ambivalent endorsement of the Lebanese Phalange; he would be much happier to learn that the public prosecutor in Beirut had suspended the newspaper al-Muḥarrir for publishing material offensive to the Tunisian president.²⁸ On 23 April, Prime Minister Ḥusayn 'Uwaynī dissociated his government from the Tunisian position and rejected any compromise on Palestine; on the same day, however, Works Minister Pierre al-Jimayyal criticized strong reactions to Būrqība's project, insisting that what the Tunisian leader was saying resembled quite closely the declarations of Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir in this regard: "The meaning is the same even though the style may differ."²⁹

Iraq had long been Tunisia's best friend in the Arab League, but President 'Ārif refused to guarantee Būrqība's safety after the press conference

²⁸Ibid., p. 285.

²⁹Ibid., p. 257.

in Beirut, so the Tunisian president cancelled his plans to visit Baghdad. On 13 April, the Iraqi ambassador in Tunis took a personal message from 'Arif to Būrqība with no apparent result. After his embassy was attacked on 28 April, the ambassador was summoned home; his Tunisian counterpart was similarly recalled. The next day, Iraq formally requested a change of venue for the conference of Arab labor ministers slated for Tunis in March 1966. Relations between Tunisia and Kuwayt followed the same general pattern: a senior official of the Kuwayti economics ministry visited Būrqība on 11 January, and Būrqība spent four days in Kuwayt after he left Beirut; the joint communique issued on his departure stressed the right of nations to self-determination. But on 24 April the Kuwayti National Assembly censured Būrqība in familiar terms: "Talk of compromise is imperialist, Zionist talk which no sincere Arab can accept."³⁰

In four months Tunisia had moved from the inner circles of the Arab constellation to an erratic path on the remote periphery. Whatever his intentions, Būrqība's attempt at "realism" had served only "further to heighten the passions and to increase tension".³¹

³⁰Ibid., p. 258.

³¹P[aolo] M[inganti], Oriente Moderno, XLV, 3 (March 1965), p. 141.

And by expressing his heterodox views publicly in the Mashriq, Būrqība seemed to have offered 'Abd al-Nāṣir the first serious Maghribi challenge to his preeminence in the League. The Ra'īs had long claimed that Arab unity would be the work of a hero, in the face of Ba'thi insistence on a partisan revolution and the religious fundamentalism of the Saudis. Būrqība's pluralism was in a way simply another theory to compete for Arab loyalties, but in the Arab world of the day it was potentially more dangerous than appeals to Islam and almost as menacing as the aggressive Ba'thi programs, for pious and socialist alike could be susceptible to the centrifugal implications of Būrqība's ideas. The one way 'Abd al-Nāṣir could maintain his position of leadership was to rally the umma around the Palestinian standard. In the circumstances, he had little difficulty and Būrqība found himself, and his country, ostracized once more from the Arab community.

CHAPTER VII

INTO THE WILDERNESS

Although the failure of President Būrqība's proposed settlement of the Palestine crisis was due less to any efforts on Cairo's part to frustrate it than to its political impracticability for most of the Arab governments of the day, it was Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir who assumed the leadership of those who rejected the Tunisian position. (The Ra'īs may even have been a bit grateful to Būrqība for giving him a middle position, offsetting the Syrian demands for an immediate war, the likely military, economic and political consequences of which were all too ominous.) On 1 May, President 'Abd al-Nāṣir delivered a lengthy Labor Day speech in which Būrqība was one of the major targets for reproach, since the Tunisian plan "constituted a violent shock for the Arab nation at a time when the Palestine problem was passing through a decisive phase." Būrqība had betrayed his commitments to Arab solidarity and ignored the proper protestations of the Arab peoples. 'Abd al-Nāṣir emphatically rejected Būrqība's claim that their views were similar, insisting that the U.A.R. opposed

negotiation with the Zionists: Būrqība had "adopted the position of Israel." Furthermore, suggested the Ra'is, "Būrqība's quarrel is not with me;" referring to the manifestations against himself in Tunis; he concluded that Būrqība "demonstrates and attacks but the battle is not joined with me but with the Arab people. The problem is not mine but that of Arabs everywhere."¹

The next day Būrqība issued the expected rejoinder accusing 'Abd al-Nāṣir of aspirations to be dictator of the Arab world. On 3 May he further explained his thesis that a solution could only be found if the Arabs would "recognize reality" and work for "an evidently just compromise, advantageous compared to the present situation; . . . a solution not of hatred or hostility, but of peace."² But the strained atmosphere notwithstanding, Tunisia was represented at the meeting of the Arab committee on fairs, held at Cairo from 11 to 14 May to discuss participation in the international exhibition projected for the summer of 1967 at Montreal. On 12 May, Tunisia received an official reminder that it had not paid its annual assessment to the Arab

¹The French translation of this speech, from which the quotations are taken, is in "L'actualité à travers les textes," Orient (Paris), 34 (June 1965), pp. 149-153.

²Interview with the Journal Combat, quoted in "L'actualité," p. 143 f.

League Treasury. However this information was overshadowed by the news that Bonn had finally agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv. The next day all the Arab states but Tunisia, Libya and Morocco had broken with Federal Germany, although the United Arab Republic held back from implementing an earlier threat to exchange ambassadors with East Germany. Tunisia was indeed in the minority but not as isolated as 'Abd al-Nāṣir had hoped.

Tunisia's status in the Arab community continued to decline, however, for external causes as well as for reasons of its own making. On 17 May, Israeli premier Levi Eshkol rejected Būrqība's plan and put his own suggestions before the Tel Aviv parliament, but four days later he pronounced himself willing to meet the Tunisian leader in a neutral country. While he managed to overlook Eshkol's advance, Būrqība added his own faggots to the burden by telling the national council of the Dustūrian Socialist Party that Tunisian friendship for the United States would remain strong and that Tunisia might not attend future meetings of the Arab League. This threat found its first substantiation the next day in a message from the Tunisian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Ḥabīb Būrqība, junior) to the Secretary General of the League

of Arab States, explaining why no Tunisian delegation had attended the Arab conference on common defence, which had met in Cairo on 28 and 29 April; two reasons were offered: the placing on the agenda of the committee of the representatives of the Arab chiefs of state of a discussion of President Būrqība's declarations on Palestine, and the attacks of demonstrators on the person of President Būrqība's representative on that committee. Furthermore, the message continued, the Tunisian government could not consider Cairo as an appropriate venue for a free exchange of views and would accordingly send no spokesman to the Arab Prime Ministers' Conference scheduled to open on 26 May. On 24 May the Order of Tunisian Advocates formally decided not to attend a conference of Arab lawyers, meeting the same day in Cairo. Finally, on 26 May, the Tunisian government officially suspended its membership in the Arab League.

Reaction to this Tunisian move was immediate and hostile. The U.A.R.'s foreign minister, Maḥmūd Riyāḍ, accused Tunisia of "violating the resolutions of the Arab summit conferences, departing from the Arab consensus and injuring the Palestinian cause,"³ and

³Al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 2 (April-June 1965), p. 266.

President 'Abd al-Nāṣir wondered publicly "if President Būrqība had specific proposals on the Palestine question, why he did not present them to the summit conference or the conference of Arab prime ministers."⁴ At the same time, the League Secretariat assured the Tunisian foreign minister that it "guaranteed the dignity of Tunisia and its president within the League."⁵ Whether unimpressed or unconvinced, Tunisia left its chair vacant when the prime ministers assembled on 27 May to hear the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization list five charges against Būrqība in support of his demand for Tunisia's expulsion from the League: Būrqība had advocated peace with Israel, he had proposed economic cooperation between Israel and neighbouring Arab states, he had characterized the war of liberation as "aggression" and "illegitimate warfare", he had accused the Arab peoples of succumbing to demagoguery and he had sent his son and foreign minister to Washington in the specious guise of an "Arab spokesman".⁶ While the prime ministers conceded the gravity of President Būrqība's

⁴Ibid., p. 267.

⁵Ibid., p. 186.

⁶Extracts from the speech are given, in French translation, in "L'actualité", p. 156 f.

behavior and rejected his proposals, they chose not to comply with the P.L.O.'s request to expel the dissident.

The month of May 1965 ended, as it had begun, with a major address by the president of the United Arab Republic. 'Abd al-Nāṣir's speech of 31 May sought to clarify the middle course between Syrian "overbidding" and Tunisian "defeatism": Israel's refusal to abide by the United Nations resolutions and the unwillingness or incapability of other states to constrain it to do so presaged an armed conflict, but the time to fight had not yet come, since the Arab states were not strong enough to win and "some partners" were likely to drag their heels. Once genuine unity could be achieved, the Arabs would act with confidence in an early victory. "Būrqība had sold the Arab nation to imperialism and Zionism," and the Ra'īs suggested that he be punished by boycott just as other supporters of Israel were treated by the Arab states.⁷ Reaffirming his own government's complete break with Tunisia, the Ra'īs explained the League's decision not to exclude Tunisia from membership as a gesture of reluctance to render any return of the prodigal more difficult than was necessary. But he did not foresee any immediate

⁷"Discours du président 'Abd al-Naser devant le Congrès palestinien (31 mai)," Orient (Paris), 34 (June 1965), p. 182.

reconciliation.

Tunisia was joined only by Morocco in refusing to participate in an Arab boycott of a West German trade fair planned for the forthcoming autumn. On 15 June (the day after the boycott was announced), the Ba'th international council's criticism of the U.A.R.'s "soft" stand on Tunisia and Germany and request for a unified Arab military force confirmed the continued existence of three competing camps within the Arab world; a fourth emerged on 19 June following Hawārī Būmadyan's replacement of Aḥmad Binballā at the helm of Algeria. The composition of the convention of the Arab Parliamentary Union which opened at Cairo on 20 June underlined the confused state of affairs: the U.A.R., Algeria, Jordan, Kuwayt, Lebanon and Libya participated, while only observers attended from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Iraq, Morocco and Tunisia were not represented at all. Tunisia was the only absentee, however, when the Arab Tourist Union met at Rabat from 29 June to 5 July.

Būrqība's next public comment on Arab affairs was his declaration on 23 July (the anniversary of Egypt's revolution) that a crisis really existed: "the Arabs have never been so disunited . . . someone is

trying to unite them by force."⁸ Furthermore, he told his West German television audience, pan-Arabism was "a product of the fantasy of Nasser and his entourage."⁹ Only Tunisia sent no representative to the first meeting of the Arab League's special Palestine Committee, but both the Libyan and the Moroccan delegates expressed some reservations on the committee's resolution giving Palestinians the right to work and liberty of movement within the Arab world. When the Arab foreign ministers assembled at Casablanca on 9 September, Tunisia was again the only member of the League without representation. Two days later, the Dustūrian Socialist Party formally resolved that Tunisia should not participate in the third Arab summit conference: on 13 September, the day the conference began in Casablanca, Būrqība confirmed his party's decision by announcing his intention not to attend. For the first time, an Arab summit conference assembled without the full participation of all League members.

Both Munjī Salīm and Ḥabīb Shaṭṭī, two of the Tunisian president's most trusted confidants had remained at the conference site until the hour it opened,

⁸"Le Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 11 (September-October 1965), p. 10.

⁹Maghreb Digest: North Africa Perspectives, III, 8 (August 1965), p. 40.

hoping to win acceptance for the conditions Būrqība had set on his attendance. 'Abd al-Nāṣir would concede nothing, so Būrqība chose to remain in Tunis and circulate a memorandum among the chiefs of state.

"There is not in the entire Arab world a single state," he charged, "Cairo has not tried to destroy whenever it has shown signs of insubordination,"¹⁰ and he concluded his diatribe with a clarification (as if one were needed!) of his earlier allusion to Arab disunity:

"Never have the Arabs been so divided, never have they more fiercely fought one another than since the day Egypt assigned itself the sacred mission of uniting them and unifying their objectives."¹¹ "The best means to cooperation among states is that each of them should mind its own business," and, for its part, Tunisia "was not prepared to continue its participation in the deliberations of the League on any other basis."¹² The

¹⁰Quoted in Axel Steden, "Der Wandel in der arabischen Welt: Burgiba und die Konferenz von Casablanca," Orient (Hamburg), VI, 6 (December 1965), p. 184.

¹¹Quoted in Pierre Rondot, "Autour du sommet arabe de Casablanca," Revue de Défense Nationale, November 1965, p. 1698.

¹²al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 3 (July-September 1965), p. 357. The complete text of this memorandum is given, in Italian translation, in Oriente Moderno, XLV, 7-9 (July-September 1965), pp. 592-604.

decision of the Arab foreign ministers not to include discussion of the memorandum on their leaders' agenda in no way prevented the kings and presidents from learning of its contents and Būrquiba's unseen presence was felt throughout the summit talks. On 14 September, the chiefs of state suspended all press and radio warfare and on the following day a committee was established to prepare revisions for the League charter. Then on 16 September, the leaders signed an agreement banning interference in one another's domestic affairs. Shaṭṭī, who was at that time Tunisia's ambassador to Morocco, was apparently kept informed of the conference's proceedings.

However placatory Tunisia may have considered the summit resolutions, its chair was empty on 18 September as the forty-fourth session of the League Council convened in the chambers just vacated by the chiefs of state. When the Arab states petitioned the Security Council of the United Nations on 5 October to consider the question of Aden, Tunisia was the only member of the Arab League that was not among the signatories of the appeal. But Tunisia did participate in the twelfth congress of Arab chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture at Algiers from 9 to 12

October.¹³ After a five-day visit to Morocco President Būrqība made his first public remarks about the third Arab summit to a press conference in Rabat on 23 October, expressing the hope that its resolutions would be consistently applied but admitting to misgivings about both their motivation and their practical intent.

The Algiers congress was alone among the several Arab gatherings of October 1965 to include a Tunisian delegation. For the remaining two months of the year the boycott persisted; Tunisians appeared at neither such official encounters as the meeting of Economic Council of the League (at Cairo from 7 to 12 December) nor professional conventions like the Arab lawyers' congress (at Jerusalem from 24 to 29 November) or the Conference of Arab trade unions (at Cairo from 14 to 19 December); not even the Red Cross-Red Crescent Association could enlist its Tunisian branch to attend its reunion (at Amman from 13 to 16 December). But Tunisia was represented at a conference on social security held at Tripoli from 15 to 18 November under the auspices of the International Social Security

¹³Although Tunisia was reported absent by "Le Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 12 (November-December 1965), p. 14, both the Maghreb Digest, III, 12 (December 1965), p. 37, and Oriente Moderno, XLV, 10 (October 1965), p. 806 (reporting from Le Petit Marocain, 14 October 1965) include Tunisia among the participants.

Organization rather than those of the Arab League. It was, nevertheless, attended only by Arab countries,¹⁴ and so stands out as the single example of Tunisian interaction with the general Arab community in the last weeks of 1965. January and February 1966 witnessed the ultimate reduction in participation as no Tunisian spokesman appeared at any Arab conference of an extra-Maghribi nature. The one evidence of continued interest in Arab affairs on Tunisia's part came ironically in an address by President Būrqība to the B.B.C., as he commented on 'Abd al-Nāṣir's charge (published in Izvestia) that a Saudi proposal for an Islamic pact was an imperialist manoeuvre. Būrqība characterized the Ra'īs as a "pseudo-revolutionary", but in replying to a questioner in the program he confessed that "he no longer cared to be involved in the Palestine problem."¹⁵

Tunisia resumed its random pattern of attendance in March with the dispatch of a delegation to an Arab industrial development conference in Kuwayt, but chose not to send anyone to a scientific congress

¹⁴Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and U.A.R.; Maghreb Digest, IV, 1 (January 1966), p. 51.

¹⁵Quoted in Maghreb Digest, IV, 4 (April 1966), p. 70.

in Baghdad later in the same month. Most meetings in Cairo and all official League reunions were ignored by the Tunisian government, which even withdrew the invitations it had sent to the Arab ministers of labor for a gathering in Tunis during March. When the Arab prime ministers' conference opened in Cairo on 14 March, Tunisia was again the sole member of the League unrepresented. At the conference, 'Abd al-Nāṣir succeeded in avoiding a discussion of the proposed Islamic pact, but the day the premiers were returning home, Būrḡiba publicly renewed his support for King Fayṣal's idea. He went a step further two days later (19 March) when he told a group of Tunisian pilgrims about to embark for the holy cities that the Saudi ruler was "better able to reunite the Muslim world than any other leader because he represents the holy places of Islam;"¹⁶ a group of these ḥajjīs represented Tunisia at the Universal Islamic Congress held at Makka from 19 to 21 March. During the same three days, another contingent of Tunisians made a rare official journey to Cairo, to attend study sessions on the training of information personnel. This did not interrupt a month-long series of anti-Egyptian editorials that appeared in the *Dustūrian*

¹⁶Quoted in Maghreb Digest, IV, 5-6 (May-June 1966), p. 155.

Socialist Party's bilingual daily (L'Action, al-'Amal), focusing on what the Tunisians described as repression and dictatorship. The theme of these attacks received the highest possible endorsement on 24 March with Būrqība's assertion of Tunisia's intention to "continue to boycott the League of Arab States because it remains under the influence of Cairo."¹⁷ Thus, ten years after winning independence, Tunisia's attitude to the Arab League and Egypt had again come full cycle and Būrqība's republic was once more the Arab world's odd man out.

Relations between Tunisia and the United Arab Republic had continued to worsen following 'Abd al-Nāṣir's denunciation of Tunisian policies of 1 May 1965 mentioned earlier. Even as he spoke, Būrqība was pursuing his own criticism of the U.A.R. in an address to the people of Safaqs (Sfax). On 26 May Cairo issued an official denial of any "personal rivalry between it and Tunis,"¹⁸ but in his 31 May speech the Ra'īs asserted that "there is a complete break between Tunisia and us," and reminded his audience that the U.A.R.'s policy as a state was much more severe than the conciliatory attitude it had hopefully endorsed within

¹⁷Al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, IV, 1 (January-March 1966), p. 14.

¹⁸Ibid., III, 2 (April-June 1965), p. 320.

the counsels of the League.¹⁹ Recurrent editorial criticism of Cairo in al-'Amal eventually provoked a charge by al-Ahrām that Tunisian and Syrian newspapers had conspired with an Israeli radio station to arrange demonstrations against the U.A.R. in Algiers.²⁰ As we have already noted, Tunisia's refusal to attend Arab League functions was consistently explained in terms of mistrust of the United Arab Republic. An extended lull in verbal hostilities that had begun with the Casablanca summit ended on 20 November with President 'Abd al-Nāṣir's charge that Būrqība's Palestine program was only a device for obtaining American aid; the Ra'īs hoped that Tunisia would remain aloof from the Arab world, which had no use for "a fifth column that can be bought at any time for five or six million dollars."²¹ The two governments adopted opposite sides of the debate on Fayṣal's plan for an Islamic summit, which Būrqība endorsed only to be told by the Ra'īs that he was "a very poor Muslim".²²

¹⁹Op. cit., p. 184.

²⁰Al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 2 (April-June), p. 334 f.

²¹Quoted in Maghreb Digest, IV, 1 (January 1966), p. 47.

²²Speech of 22 February 1966, quoted "Le Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 14 (March-April 1966), p. 10.

While Tunisia's status in the Arab League and its contacts with the U.A.R. were steadily deteriorating, the Tunisian government could find much encouragement in the sustained support the country enjoyed with its North African neighbors. When Federal Germany established diplomatic relations with Israel on 12 May, most Arab states, including Algeria, broke their links with Bonn; the Moroccan and Tunisian ambassadors, however, delivered a strong protest to Chancellor Erhard but remained in the German capital. All the states of the Maghrib participated in a trade conference at Rabat from 15 to 18 May and in an Arab cultural festival in the same city the following week, at which there was a single pavilion for the four Maghribi countries. The four economics ministers signed a protocol at Tripoli on 27 May which envisaged more cooperation in exporting and research as well as the coordination of a North African steel industry. At the end of the month, the Tunisian public works minister spent a week as the guest of the Algerian government. And when the Arab chiefs of government gathered in Cairo on 26 May, the Algerians and Moroccans not only thwarted the Syro-Palestinian effort to expel Tunisia from the League, but they even voted against the compromise resolution of condemnation. It was not difficult for Tunisians to

contrast "the growing serenity of intramaghribi relations" with the "atmosphere of vain and passionate discussions which is developing in the meetings at Cairo."²³

During the summer of 1965, discussions continued, in Algiers regarding the integration of the North African steel industry and in Tunis regarding intramaghribi cooperation on alfalfa marketing. Morocco's foreign minister Aḥmad Binḥīma visited President Būrqība for three days in June and his counterpart Ḥabīb Būrqība, jr. returned the courtesy with a call on King Ḥasan in mid-July. The June meeting resulted in a bilateral tariff reduction, while the July encounter prompted the Tunisian foreign minister to remark that the position of the two states on North African questions was "more than close".²⁴ Tunisia accepted, indeed welcomed, the coup of 19 June in Algiers, and on 21 June the special envoy of the National Council of the Algerian Revolution was received by President Būrqība, who sent his own personal message to President Būmadyan

²³al-ʿAmal, 26 May 1965, quoted in Pierre Rondot, "L'Evolution Présente de l'Arabisme: Pluralisme ou Hégémonie?" Revue de Défense Nationale, August-September 1965, p. 1373.

²⁴"Le Maghreb dans les Organismes Internationaux," Maghreb, 11 (September-October 1965), p. 9.

the next day and dispatched Munjī Salīm to assure the new leader of Tunisia's friendship.

From 3 to 6 August Idrīs Muḥammadī, special Moroccan envoy, visited President Būrqība to promote King Ḥasan's hopes for a Maghribi summit meeting. He won no commitment but this did not mean Tunisia's enthusiasm for North African cooperation had cooled in any way; for Munjī Salīm spent three days in Rabat (10 to 12 August) and two in Algiers (13 and 14) to "reinforce Maghribi unity and plant new guide posts for the unification of the greater Arab Maghrib."²⁵ At the same time, an element of caution was displayed in a speech by Aḥmad Binṣalāḥ to a student congress, with his assessment of immediate North African political union as premature "because of the diversity of regimes."²⁶ The overall Tunisian attitude was presented by the president himself on 31 August, when he acknowledged the Maghrib's vocation to establish "a common homeland, a common state or at least a common culture and a complementary economy."²⁷ During August

²⁵Ibid., p. 10.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

the Algerian minister of education also visited Tunis, while the president of the General Union of Tunisian Workers journeyed to Rabat and Algiers. The three national teachers' unions held a meeting in Tunis on 8 and 9 September, and the Maghribi Industrial Harmonization Commission met in Rabat from 15 to 20 September. King Ḥaṣan and President Būmadyan saved Tunisia from censure during the Casablanca summit conference and even cajoled their colleagues into indirect consultation with President Būrqība before the conference's resolutions were adopted. Similarly at the reunion of the League's Defence Council, Morocco successfully urged official acceptance of Tunisia's position on noninterference.

From 4 to 7 October the Maghribi Tourist Commission met at Algiers; Libya sent a representative. The Maghribi conference on transport and communications, meeting at Tunis from 6 to 9 October, also included a Libyan delegation. This conference recommended the formation of a Maghribi airline, a Maghribi ocean fleet, common frontier stations and special quadripartite commissions on various aspects of transportation. The Tunisian government staged a four-nation conference on illiteracy from 16 to 23 October, while the four ministers of economics met at Rabat from 21 to 26 October

to discuss trade policies, with special reference to the region's four major exports: olive oil, citrus fruit, alfalfa and wine. On 27 October Algeria and Tunisia announced tariff reductions designed to increase commerce between the two states. President Būrqība was in Rabat from 18 to 23 October; at the close of his stay he acceded to King Ḥasan's desire for a North African summit conference.

The round of intramaghribi conferences continued through November, with an industrial commission meeting at Rabat to promote automobile and glass manufactures, a railway congress at Marrakech and an airline reunion at Casablanca. On 28 November, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco sent a combined delegation before the European Economic Community's council of ministers to protest a new European tariff on citrus fruit. At the end of the month Tunisia and Algeria announced the last of a series of commercial and tariff adjustments that had begun in 1963. During December the committee on motor vehicles and glassware met again, this time at Algiers, which was also the site of a reunion of the Permanent Consultative Committee and a congress of Tunisian and Algerian physicians and public health workers. And from 25 to 31 December there was a seminar on women's rights at Tunis, resulting in the formation of the Federation

of Maghribi Women with a permanent coordinating committee.

In January 1966 a group of thirty Algerians arrived in Tunis to begin a course in hostelry and tourism under the auspices of the Permanent Consultative Committee. From 4 to 7 February the four North African education ministers met at Tunis to establish a permanent committee on education and instruction. Meeting at Algiers from 8 to 11 February, the four economics ministers agreed to locate the Permanent Consultative Committee's headquarters at Tunis and made provision for a full time secretariat. Later in February representatives of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mali and Nigeria gathered at Tunis to discuss a Trans-Sahara highway project. Tunis was also the scene of a North African colloquium on public administration from 18 to 20 March. On 10 March the Tunisian National Assembly ratified a judicial agreement, covering such matters as extradition and the delivery of writs, to which Algeria and Libya were also parties. Morocco and Tunisia exchanged warm congratulations as the two countries celebrated their first decade of renewed independence, while telecommunications between Algiers and Tunis, broken shortly after Tunisia's accession to sovereignty, were restored on 13 March. Clearly

Tunisia's difficulties with the United Arab Republic and its displeasure with the League of Arab States had not prevented a continuing cooperation among the countries of the Arab West.

Contacts between Tunisia and Libya had remained cordial during 1965; Libya had defended Tunisia in the League Council and refused to break diplomatic ties with Federal Germany, although it had briefly recalled its ambassador from Bonn. At the Casablanca summit conference Libya and Saudi Arabia were the most insistent member states in their opposition to any public reference to President Būrqība. Tunisia's links with Sudan, never very close, had finally resulted in an agreement to exchange ambassadors signed on 26 April 1965, but on 22 May the Tunisian government announced its decision to close its embassy in Khartum "for economic reasons".²⁸

President Būrqība's Palestine proposals had a markedly pejorative effect on Tunisia's relations with the states of Arab Asia, although in some cases, notably Lebanon's, contacts were minimized without souring appreciably. The Jordanian government maintained ties with Tunis in the hope of persuading Būrqība of the

²⁸al-Ahrām, 23 May 1965, quoted in Oriente Moderno, XLV, 5-6 (May-June 1965), p. 531.

merits of the majority's opinions on Palestine, and Jordan was a party to the judicial treaty ratified by the Tunisian assembly on 10 March 1966. Būrqība's best friend in the Mashriq at this time was undoubtedly Saudi Arabia, which had its own reasons to resent the United Arab Republic's preeminent place in the League. Būrqība supported Fayṣal's call for an Islamic pact and afforded a warm reception to a Saudi economic mission which visited Tunis in August 1965. Saudi Arabia joined Libya in preventing open reference to Būrqība during the Casablanca summit conference and King Fayṣal sent a personal messenger to President Būrqība in mid-October. On 26 December a bilateral commercial treaty was signed at Judda; it was ratified by both parties by 2 January 1966. In his own Labor Day speech (1 May 1965), Iraq's President 'Arif declared that President Būrqība's Palestine plans "amount to a departure from the decisions taken by the Arab summit conferences" and were "unacceptable in whole or in part."²⁹ On 7 May the Tunisian embassy in Baghdad was closed and on 18 September, the day after the summit conference in Casablanca had ended, President Būrqība received a

²⁹al-Waqā'i' al-'Arabiyya, III, 2 (April-June 1965), p. 260.

representative of the Kurdish rebels. As for Kuwayt, all economic aid to Tunisia from that principality was stopped on 27 May 1965.

During the year that followed President Būrqība's sortie into the Mashriq and his heterodox statements on the Palestine problem, Tunisia had once more suspended its participation in the League of Arab States and again it had attributed its uncomfortable position within the Arab community to Egyptian pretensions to leadership. Even Tunisia's friends in Arab Asia found it judicious to keep contacts to a minimum and some former friends (especially Iraq) had become hostile. On the other hand, Tunisia was on the best terms ever with its North African neighbors and continued to find a place in Arab politics through the fullest participation in intramaghribi affairs.

CHAPTER VIII

POSTLUDE AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Suspicion and recrimination remained the major themes of Tunisia's contact with the rest of the Arab world for the whole year 1966, culminating in a complete break in diplomatic relations between Cairo and Tunis on 3 October. The League Council met at Cairo in June and the Arab foreign ministers, in September, but no Tunisian attended the gatherings. But just as the Banzart confrontation of 1961 had helped reintegrate Tunisia into the Arab community, the six days' war of June 1967 erased much of the animosity that still lingered over Būrqība's call for negotiations, and on 12 June Tunisia and the United Arab Republic reopened diplomatic relations. However, Tunisia was not represented at the June meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Kuwait. Nor did it send a delegate to the foreign ministers' assembly at Khartum or the subsequent summit conference in the same city, both in August, but Syria, Algeria and Morocco were similarly unrepresented. Tunisia resumed participation in

League affairs in September when the Arab information ministers met at Banzart. Tunisia also attended a conference of economics ministers at Algiers in November and when the League's foreign ministers assembled at Cairo in December, all member states were on hand. Since then Tunisia has joined in the activities of the League with a fairly consistent pattern of attendance at its various conferences.

From the multitude of events and statements set forth in the preceding chapters, three major themes can be discerned and it is these dominant themes which we must analyze as we seek to distill our assessment of Tunisia's role in the Arab community. Tunisia's relationship with Egypt has set the tone for its behavior within the League as a whole, so we shall begin by considering this particular topic. Then in a more general way, we shall examine Tunisia's part in the development of the Maghrib, where geography and history have combined to encourage regional thinking and activity. Finally, we must come to Tunisia's concept of the Arab nation and its consequent view of the purpose of the Arab League.

Friction between Tunisia and the United Arab Republic has stemmed from differences in personality in the presidents of the two states, their divergent

attitudes towards the Palestine question and their disparate ideas of the nature of the Arab community. For five years, starting even before Tunisia had acquired independence, the Egyptian government involved itself in a series of attempts to replace Ḥabīb Būrqība with Ṣāliḥ Ibn Yūsuf, whose espousal of Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir's claims to Arab leadership was evidently much more congenial to Cairo than the aloof autonomism practised by Būrqība. Būrqība, for his part, insisted that Tunisia was not prepared to exchange French domination for Egyptian. While the Banzart confrontation produced the reconciliation that facilitated the quiet disposal of Ibn Yūsuf and began a period of brotherly trust, animosity bloomed anew when 'Abd al-Nāṣir tried to carry the League along on his German adventure by acting to "bind and orient" the positions of member states in a way Būrqība felt prevented them "from adopting any attitudes except those decided in Cairo."¹ Būrqība's complaint was thus more subtle than such other challenges to 'Abd al-Nāṣir's preminence, since it could be neither diluted by a blend of piety and

¹Quoted in "Le Maghreb indépendant et le Nassérisme," Maghreb, 14 (March-April 1966), p. 4.

progressivism as the Saudi remonstrances nor subverted by political intrigue as the Syrian criticisms, because Būrqība's opposition was not to a philosophy nor even directly to an individual; rather it was phrased in terms of the single principle of personal power, and to this there was no answer beyond a vehement denial that left the Tunisians, and others, unconvinced.²

On the Palestine question, Būrqība took the initiative of publicly voicing dissent from the general Arab antipathy to negotiation with Israel. Since Egypt had long considered itself the leader of the Arab nations interested in the liberation of Palestine, this open appeal to "moderation" seemed a direct challenge to the authorities at Cairo. The U.A.R. was able in this instance to marshal League sentiment to its cause and the Tunisians could not avoid the impression that other member states were meekly falling into line with Cairo's wishes. Only Tunisia with its virtually bloodless achievement of independence, its relative social homogeneity and its geographic remoteness from the theatre of war, could seriously advocate an evolutionary solution to the problem of Palestine; the U.A.R.'s position, while perhaps giving more smoke than fire,

²Cf. Pierre Rondot, "L'Evolution présente de l'Arabisme: Pluralisme ou Hégémonie?" Revue de Défense Nationale, August-September 1965, p. 1367.

was a truer reflection of the obscurities and complexities of the actual situation. Privately, 'Abd al-Nāṣir might go so far as to acknowledge the possibilities of a negotiated settlement but neither his allies in the struggle nor his own constituency would allow him to adopt such a posture without seeming to sacrifice Arab rights and Arab dignity. On the other hand, Tunisians seem to have dismissed this dilemma as hypocrisy and failed to grasp the real yearnings of the refugees in the camps. The difference between the Tunisian and Egyptian attitudes on Palestine, then, is like that between a benign detachment ready with moderate counsel and moral support and a passionate commitment to a cause which must in no way be compromised.

Allusion has been made to Tunisia's differences with the U.A.R. on the nature of the Arab community in connection with the personal rivalry between Presidents Būrqība and 'Abd al-Nāṣir, but this contrast between pluralism and hegemony can be seen at all levels of political and social intercourse: "despite Egypt's clear cultural leadership among the Arabs of both the East and the West, there appears to be too much political manipulation and too little real empathy."³

³Leonard Binder, The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East (New York: Wiley, 1964), p. 90.

Tunisia accepts and shares the aspirations for Arab unity but here as elsewhere Tunisia has preferred to work by stages, beginning with North African economic and cultural cooperation and delaying political union until the populaces have become sufficiently assimilable, while Egypt has sought immediate mergers under Cairene leadership: the year 1958 saw the foundation of both the Syro-Egyptian union and the Maghrib's Permanent Consultative Committee.

Indeed, even when Tunisia has felt most unhappy with the Arab League, it has generally strived to maintain good rapport with its Maghribi neighbors. Although there have been some lapses, especially with regard to Tunisia's recognition of Mauritania and its claims to a share of the Sahara, Tunisia has succeeded in remaining on cordial terms with both Morocco and Algeria. The three states share a double culture stemming from a common Arab and French colonial past that distinguishes the North African from both European and Mashriqi. Since the attainment of independence the appeal of Africanism has given a third perspective to the Maghribi horizon, but the focus has increasingly centred on the Arab East with Europe and Africa providing weak counterbalances. These counterweights were necessary at first to offset a certain feeling of

inferiority the emergent states may have felt in the company of their cousins who had already enjoyed a generation of sovereignty and who, in any case, occupied the traditional heartland of Arabic culture. This diffidence was soon shed, in both Morocco and Tunisia, once the leaders of the newly freed states became resentful of Mashriqi paternalism and suspicious of Egyptian intentions and methods. Gradually, as Maghribi self-consciousness has transformed itself from this merely negative response to reliance on its own regional potential, the need for external counterpoise has faded away.

Tunisia's pragmatic social progressivism, Algeria's more radical revolutionary socialism and Morocco's cautious royal liberalism betray scant likelihood of developing very quickly into a cohesive philosophy for a united Maghrib, even without the personal monarchic conservatism of Libya. Realizing these wide divergences of national political structures, the four states of the Arab West have concentrated their immediate endeavors towards unity in cooperating for tangible economic achievements such as mutual tariff concessions and the coordination of the steel industry and alfafa production in the hope that eventually they may forge a common economy. On a

secondary plane, they have sought cultural assimilation through a series of professional congresses and such educational measures as standard curricula and teacher exchanges. Already these efforts have proved more fruitful than similar attempts in the broader and less manageable context of the Arab world at large. Perhaps even sooner than the Maghribi leaders had themselves hoped and quite probably in a manner they did not expect, this economic and cultural cooperation has given rise to increased political interaction. Each of the North African countries has sought, usually with success, to mediate in disagreements between the others, and the various political camps in the different countries have made contact with groups of like mind throughout the Maghrib.⁴

Between its confrontations with Egypt and its involvement in the Maghrib, Tunisia has evolved a more or less consistent attitude towards the League of Arab States and the cherished dream of wahda (unity). As the Mashriq lost its status as a counterpole to Europe in the face of growing Maghribi self-confidence, new relationships of mutual respect developed between the

⁴Cf. George Liska, The Greater Maghreb: From Independence to Unity? (Washington: Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research, 1963), p. 7.

Arab states of Asia and those in Africa. To some extent, parallels emerged between the political situations in the two areas and Tunisia assumed a role similar to Lebanon's: paying homage to the idea of unity but wary of too close a relationship with larger, stronger neighbors whose political stability and maturity were sometimes quite open to question. Involvement with France and the encouragement of French-Arabic bilingualism have exposed Tunisia to suggestions of continued colonialism and the toleration enjoyed by Tunisian Jewry has strained Mashriqi credence in Tunisia's commitment to Arab solidarity. Tunisia has tried to allay these misgivings by reducing its links with France and supporting League resolutions on Palestine as well as through its endorsement of King Fayṣal's plan for an Islamic pact and its provision of troops for the defence of Kuwayt. Even Tunisia's dissent from the general attitude on Palestine was predicated on its fear of military failure, yet when this apprehension was vindicated in June 1967 Tunisia paradoxically ended its isolation and began to re-integrate itself into the framework of the League.

In any case, Tunisia's dissatisfaction with the League was always expressed in terms of opposition to Egyptian hegemony without any sustained hostility

for any other member state. Syria, Iraq and Jordan have all expressed similar discontent and found themselves the lepers of the League for varying periods. Each eventually returned, as Tunisia seems now to have returned and each eruption has initiated a period of egalitarian cooperation. Whether this new honeymoon can revive the closeness that Būrqība shared with 'Abd al-Nāṣir in the spring of 1964, whether Tunisia's proposals on the Palestine problem will be revised, reheard or even accepted and whether the growing cooperation among the states of North Africa will lead to a regional fusion that may serve as a basis for a pan-Arab union are questions which we must leave to the vagaries of history to answer. All the difficulties of Tunisia's first decade of contact with the League (external attractions, suspicion of Egypt, the continuing problem of Palestine, regional commitments, to mention only the most salient) persist although they have for the moment given way to the spirit of brotherhood and consensus originally envisaged by the proponents of Arab unity, at least insofar as Tunisia is concerned (Syria is the current odd man out). The cyclic character of Tunisia's involvement in the League to this time makes it impossible to speculate on the durability of this revived content.

This study has set forth the numerous factors and trends that have governed and reflected Tunisia's part in the activities of the League of Arab States and it has offered an assessment of the problems that have hindered the realization of Tunisia's full potential as a member of the Arab community. Since it has dealt with a sequence of events that is far from ended, it is impossible to summarize its findings in a neat, consummate conclusion. Its contribution lies in its presentation of one country's behavior within the League for a given period: the varying measure of that country's commitment to the League and its ideals, the stresses and supports that have acted on that commitment and the extent to which relations with the several other members have affected its own involvement in the affairs of the totality. If similar studies were done on a number of other Arab countries, especially Egypt and Iraq, it might be possible to develop a new analysis of the character of the League as a whole. But this far exceeds the purpose at hand and it must suffice us here to end our examination with the hope that it has itself furnished some new information and prompted some new reflection about the Tunisian republic, the League of Arab States and, most of all, the relation between the two.

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