

The negotiations, began on September 11, 1954, in a spirit of mutual confidence and with a clear objective in mind. Considerable progress had been made by the time the United Nations General Assembly reached this item of its agenda and the Assembly decided to "postpone for the time being the further consideration of this item."

The Government of M. Mendes-France was defeated in February 1955, when the French National Assembly expressed lack of confidence in his North African policies. Terrorist acts again disturbed the peace in Tunisia but before the situation deteriorated seriously, the new Prime Minister of France, M. Faure, declared that his Government would pursue the objective of an autonomous Tunisia. Negotiations with the Tunisian leaders were resumed and although agreement was reached on most major points, a temporary impasse developed on the question of the future association of the territory with France. Prime Minister Faure broke the deadlock on this point by calling in M. Bourguiba, then in exile, who persuaded his colleagues to accept a compromise.

Consequently, a *protocole d'accord* was initialled on April 22, 1955, and was expanded into the series of Conventions which will henceforth be the basis of Franco-Tunisian relations.

### The Provisions of the Agreement

The Conventions, six in number, with the Annexed Protocols establish the relations between the two countries on the basis of mutual consent deriving from free and equal associations. France recognized the internal autonomy of Tunisia and renounced the right which it obtained under the Treaty of La Marsa of 1883 to introduce administrative, judicial and financial reforms. Tunisia is free to choose its own political and administrative institutions and the decrees of the Bey (i.e. Tunisian laws) will no longer require the approval of the French representative. On the local government level, the *caids* or local Tunisian authorities are no longer to be under the tutelage of French civil controllers. Within the Tunisian Government, the French directors who have headed the department of finance, public works, public education and communications (P.T.T.) have been replaced by Tunisian ministers. (This completes the gradual transfer of cabinet portfolios from France to Tunisia which began in 1945 when only two departments—Justice, and Local Affairs and Religious Foundations—were headed by Tunisians). The Resident-General of France in Tunisia has been replaced by a High Commissioner who will act as intermediary between the French and Tunisian Governments in all questions of mutual interest and will exercise those powers still belonging to France in Tunisia.

The transfer of powers relating to law and order will be made by specified stages over a period of 20 years. Jurisdiction in cases involving Tunisians becomes the responsibility of Tunisian courts upon the entry into force of the Conventions. The competence of French courts in questions involving a Tunisian and a non-Tunisian will gradually be reduced in favour of Tunisian jurisdiction; courts of mixed composition are to be established within five years and are to have a life of 15 years.

The Tunisian Government was given complete responsibility in internal financial and budgetary affairs but the economic and commercial interests of