

Africa in the 1950s

- The 'winds of change were blowing through the continent.
- At the start of the decade, 10 countries in Africa were independent.
- At the decades close, in 1960, there were 26.



Tunisia

Part of the Ottoman Empire, Tunisia became a French Protectorate in 1881. In June 1954, a new French Prime Minister, Pierre Mendès France, came to power and started negotiations with Tunisian nationalists. In November 1955, France granted Morocco independence, and on March 20, 1956 Tunisia became independent.

Tunisia, for example:

- France's North African territories, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are all experiencing unrest in the 1950s, with militant nationalist movements.
- MRA/IofC is active in reaching out to all three countries.
- Indeed at this time, Caux welcomes delegations from many other African countries moving towards independence from the Western, colonial powers: Ghana and Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroun.
- MRA/IofC teams visit many of these countries.

Mohamed Masmoudi

- In Caux, Masmoudi, a young nationalist, met French 'who were different'. He was not yet 30 years old.
- 'Honest conversations' took place.
- Masmoudi experienced something of a change in his own attitudes and mentality.
- If you want to make peace, you must bring enemies together.



Initiatives of Change

Building trust across the world's divides



Mohamed Masmoudi, Tunisia

Mountain House
Caux-sur-Montreux
Le 28 septembre 1953
11 heures

Armand de MALHERBE

Le prochain orateur est tunisien. Il y a un drame qui se déroule en ce moment entre l'Afrique du Nord et la France. Pour nous, Français de France, il ne s'agit pas de nous réveiller soudain à ce drame et d'agir sentimentalement. Il s'agit surtout pas de nous endormir et de nous dire : c'est la responsabilité du gouvernement, c'est la responsabilité des Français de là-bas. Je crois qu'il est de notre responsabilité de faire face, au travers de ces quatre critères du Réarmement moral, à notre propre qualité de vie de voir comment, par notre égoïsme personnel, par notre manque d'honnêteté personnelle, par notre irresponsabilité, nous permettons aujourd'hui qu'il se fasse une politique dont on a dit qu'elle était basée sur l'hypocrisie. Les problèmes sont difficiles et ils ne seront pas résolus en disant simplement : pardon, oublions le passé, allons de l'avant, tout va bien.

Mais il est certain que, si les Tunisiens, les Marocains, les Algériens et les Français peuvent se trouver sur la base de l'honnêteté absolue, en ayant confiance les uns dans les autres - et c'est à nous Français de faire le premier pas - on peut résoudre le problème en un délai de temps très court et en sauvant des milliers de vies humaines.

Et moi, en tant que Français, je veux d'abord très simplement dire : je m'excuse de mon manque de sens de responsabilité jusqu'à présent. C'est ce que je dis de tout coeur à nos amis Marocains et Tunisiens qui sont ici. Je veux dire ensuite de tout coeur que je sens que, côte à côte, sur la base de ce que nous avons ici, nous pouvons trouver une solution. Et moi-même je m'engage à le faire de toutes mes forces.

M. Masmoudi est délégué du Néo-Destour à Paris et va maintenant nous parler.

M. Mohamed MASMOUDI

Je suis venu samedi à Caux, après maintes difficultés. Le Réarmement moral est intervenu pour aider à ces démarches. Ma présence parmi vous a pour moi un sens de gage et un sens de symbole, qu'avec l'honnêteté absolue on peut permettre un dialogue d'où pourrait naître une solution idéale.

J'ai été d'abord frappé par ce foyer intense d'amour, de confiance, et resplendissant de pureté et de désintéressement. J'ai vu la pièce Jotham Valley et j'ai pensé irrésistiblement aux frères indiens et pakistanais, le Cachemire étant l'eau. J'ai vu la pièce les Vraies Nouvelles et j'ai saisi la responsabilité des journalistes qui trafiquent de la vérité et surtout leur responsabilité de transformer le monde s'ils se laissent véritablement illuminer par la pureté et la vérité. J'ai vu hier la pièce, combien bouleversante, du "Patron". J'ai vu que la Patron pourrait changer et offrir à l'Ouvrier d'être moins sectaire, moins haineux, et d'obtenir ensemble, par un dialogue sincère, basé sur l'honnêteté, une solution. J'ai vu que la solution n'a surtout pas été le paternalisme, mais la recherche ensemble des solutions. J'ai entendu les jeunes frères Colwells si résolus, radieux de dynamisme et de confiance, fermer la porte de derrière sur l'hiver et l'ouvrir sur le cœur qui chante le "Printemps".

- 2 -

M. MASMOUDI (suite)

J'étais méfiant, suspicieux et d'une susceptibilité malade. J'étais à sec, ma matière humaine était stérile et si je me recueillais, rien ne venait. Aujourd'hui, grâce à mon ami qui partage ma chambre, Matt Manson, je me suis recueilli avec lui. Hier, tard dans la nuit, quand il était revenu, il m'avait trouvé en train d'écrire une lettre à ma mère qui m'avait annoncé qu'elle priait pour moi, qu'elle priait pour me bénir et pour maudire les Français à la suite d'une démarche des gendarmes qui ont menacé d'abattre ses fils à Paris ou ailleurs. Je lui ai écrit pour lui dire de continuer à me bénir et de cesser de maudire les Français. C'est là à mon avis le commencement du changement.

Masmoudi, speaking in Caux:

' I was suspicious, untrusting, and very prickly... my mother told me in a letter that she was praying that God would bless me and curse the French (some French policemen had threatened her that they planned to kill me). I told her, « pray for blessings on me, but stop cursing the French. » In my opinion, this is the start of change.'

**A letter from Lawson
Wood, describing the meal
in the IofC centre in Paris,
where Masmoudi met the
French negotiator Jean
Basdevant**

Then he went back to the problems of France and said that he felt that the MRP was fifty years behind times and really needed to break the moulds of its thinking. He sent affectionate messages to you and we then went down to Lawson's car and drove off to the Chambre des Députés.

Metzdorf, his private secretary and an official of the Ministry of Finance, has just asked if I could meet him on Monday afternoon at 4.30. To win Metzdorf is certainly a very important factor. I found Schuman welcoming but tired and obviously under the weight of too many details. He has aged but has kept his great integrity of judgement and vision.

On Tuesday evening Banerjee was a great hit with Diomède Catroux who had invited two of his closest collaborators and Gabriel Ardant and his wife. This couple seems to be the closest to the Mendès-Frances and he is in charge of productivity. Although the group was mostly composed of rather leftist intellectual, sceptical people the very real conviction of Banerjee won Catroux's heart who made himself a champion for MRA and said he felt it was the last chance of saving the civilisation that we have.

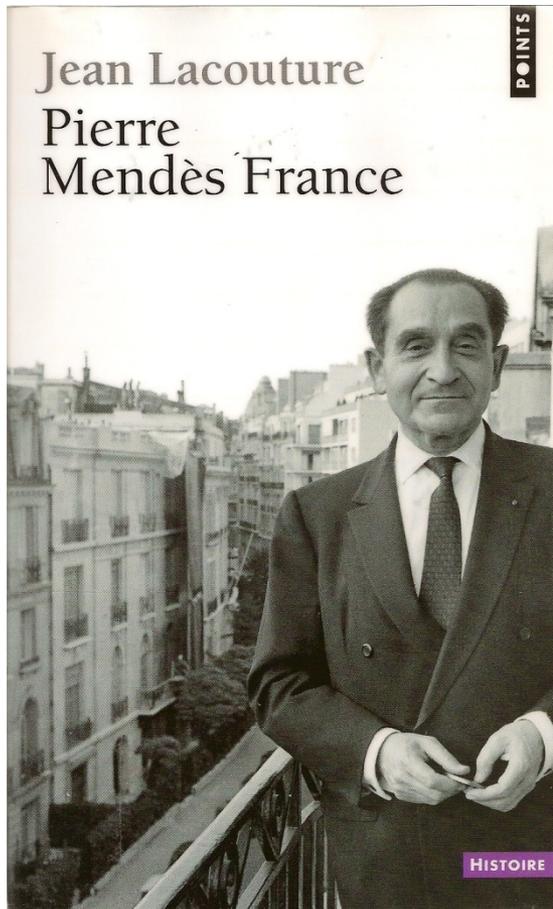
He was the only one to be clear about the communist manoeuvres in Asia. As we left towards midnight he came up to me and said: "I wish that we could keep in contact - whenever you have anything that might interest me in Paris I would like to know about it, and do come to see me and inform me. This I insist on very much as we must work together." He then said that he would be available to come to Caux, not for a long time, but for any specific encounter and also indicated that it would be easier for him to do so either at the end of August or early in September.

Last night our friends from South Africa did unique work in a difficult situation, as Mendès-France had called a cabinet meeting for 8 o'clock and Chevallier had to excuse himself, so Masmoudi and Basdevant, who is the man who Catroux said was wholly responsible for all Moroccan and Tunisian decisions, found themselves facing one another at a round table without any catalyst. Moerane entertained and won everyone's heart at dinner. Towards the end of the meal we put the question freely on Tunisia and at dessert Masmoudi poured out his heart during fifteen to twenty minutes in a way which gave an entirely new vision of the possibilities of North Africa and moved deeply Mr Basdevant.

After dinner our friends, Daneel and Moerane, joined Basdevant and Masmoudi who were talking and gave them the full picture of what happened in South Africa. As Moerane completed it with very straight and simple truths about the ambitions of men and their way of working together, Masmoudi, when I drove him back, was able to say that the evening had been for him a tremendous lesson. He realised the need of keeping perspective and said many other things which I feel are worthy of a separate note. He then said as we were in front of his home that he was planning to come to Caux probably twice; this week is crucial, but he wants to come for a quick week-end around the 10th or 12th and then later for a longer period earlier in September. He may well be Minister in the next Government, or so the press has hinted.

He mentioned you very warmly and said he felt he had much to learn from you and said he hoped during his stay in Caux to have leisurely conversation with you. He said: "I feel that Frank Buchman has accumulated an

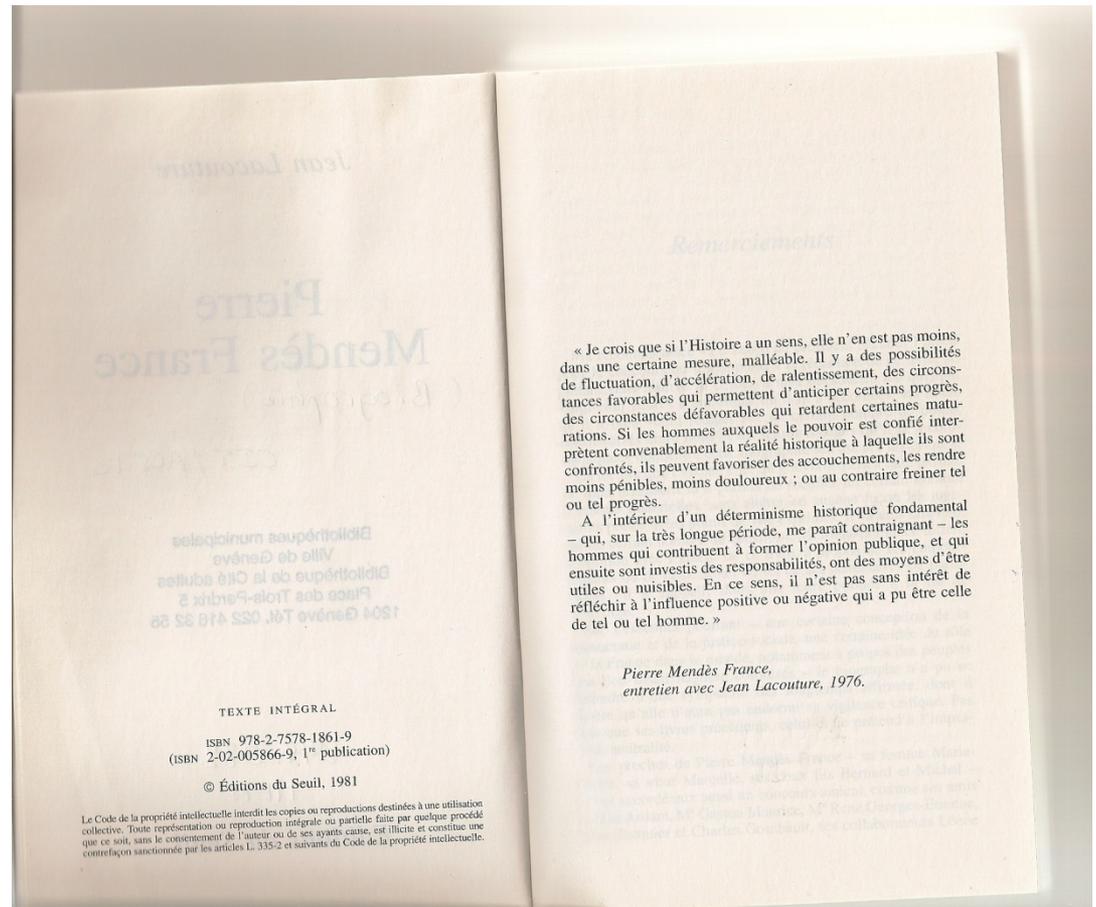
'a contract of trust'



« L'entretien d' Amilly permettra de poser les principes de la négociation, principes résumés par Bourguiba, Savary et Masmoudi dans la formule 'contrat de confiance'. Aux périodes les plus dures de la négociation - a laquelle Savary restera associé, directement ou non - la formule reviendra, utilisée surtout par Mohammed Masmoudi. La conversation d' Amilly restera une référence constante pour les trois interlocuteurs. »

Pierre Mendès-France, French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, 1954-55, speaking to Jean Lacouture, 1976:

'I believe that if there is a sense to history, then it may be, to some extent malleable. It holds possibilities of fluctuations, accelerations, and slowing down, and a coming together of circumstances that allow us to anticipate some progress, or unfavourable circumstances that slow down a maturing process. If the men to whom political power is entrusted correctly interpret the historical reality that confronts them, they can help this bringing to birth, make it less painful, less difficult – or put the brakes on this or that progress.'





Initiatives of Change

Building trust across the world's divides

Tunisia, what happened:

- Two men met and built a relationship of trust, Masmoudi and Basdevant.
- A small army of people were working behind the scenes.
- This trust helped to change the course of history.
- The war in next door Algeria (perhaps 700,000 dead in 8 years of violence).

Tunisia, what happened:

- Masmoudi became the first Ambassador to France.
- In December 1956, while leading the first Tunisian delegation after independence to the United Nations in New York, President Bourguiba declared, 'The world must be told what Moral Rearmament has done for our country.'
- Robert Schuman wrote to Buchman, 'There can be no doubt that the history of Tunisia and Morocco would have been different if it had not been for Moral Rearmament.'
- Masmoudi, now a member of the Tunisian Cabinet, said, 'Without Moral Rearmament, we would be involved today in Tunisia in a war to the death against France ... Tunisia would now be a second Indo-China.'