

Looking Back

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Looking Back is a nostalgic reflection on the shortwave scene of yesteryears, written from the personal experience of the author, who has been DXing the shortwave bands for over seven decades.

The French Colonial Empire

If you were to take a public opinion poll of Anglosaxons, I think you would be surprised to find that most people would have difficulty in appreciating how far flung the colonial world of France was, especially on the African continent.

Many woud find it difficult to remember the old French possessions in the Indian Ocean and Pacific region. The various countries of that old empire gained their independence at different times, but 1960 was a "popular" year for many of the African territories.

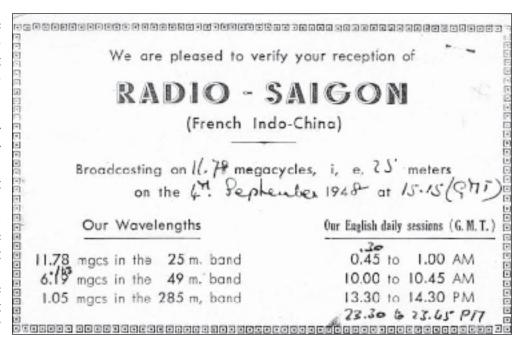
Separation from Mother France was not an easy matter and even today many ties of different kinds re-

main, to varying degrees. I am thinking of economic and military arrangements (e.g. Tchad), not to mention the influence of French culture and language. On a personal level, I can still remember one day after World War II, walking into the French Club in Ismalia, Egypt. It was a hot, dry day and I heard someone playing beautiful classical music on a piano in an adjacent room. I enjoyed a cool drink along with that music and immediately felt at home. One cannot lightly

dismiss the effects of culture peremptorily!

The tensions between various racial groups in the African region are still important political factors today, as can be seen from the problems of North Africans residing in France.

Some of the status and terminology relating to the different countries surfaced in World War II when certain colonies sided with the Vichy government and others with the (Flighting) Free Fench forces who fought alongside the Allies. For example, one had broadcasts from Vichy supporters in Algeria and Senegal and support for the Free French from Lebanon and Brazzaville. Some of the wording chosen to represent the French position in respect of a country



RADIODIFFUSION TELEVISION FRANÇAISE	Saint-Denis, le 22 Maurie 1964
Services de la Rámion	
BG/JR - N2 /REU/6	
	Le Chef des Services de la Radiodiffusion Télévision Française à la Réunion
	à
	Monsieur T. B. WILLIAMSON

PROTECTORAT DE LA REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE AU MAROC

RADIO - MAROC -:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-:-

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was a little vague, such as "Protectorate", "High Commision of the Government in French West Africa", and so on.

In the early colonial days, territories were simply designated as part of France. The official broadcasting organisation of France, Radiodiffusion Television

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Dr T.B. WILLIAMSON 15 Clarence Road Harpenden Herts. -ANGLET

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Inform :

Cher Monsieur,

Je vous accuse réception tre at vous remercie des rem donnés.

Je serais toujours très lire et je vous prie d'agré sieur, l'expression de mes meilleurs

timents,

DE LA C DIODIFFUSION

LEBANESE BROADE DITB. Williamson M. O. Q. Hill and Haspital

> Française, used the designation RFO (Radioduffision Française d'OUTRE MER, i.e. OVERSEAS) to describe broadcasting groups in official colonies. This is still seen today, e.g. RFO Guyane.

Another abbreviation is FR3, France Regions Trois,

for overseas territories.



To attempt to cover the vast region of the old colonial empire would be impossible, so I have chosen a few **QSLillustrations** to remind you of earlier times. QSLs from Saigon, Brazzaville, Madagascar, Reunion and Algeria are much treasured by yours truly. Enjoy!