

anthologised poems is 'Hoquet', a convulsive attack on the internalised ^{RACISM} of the mixed-race Caribbean bourgeoisie. (Mary Gallagher)

Debbouze, Jamel Born MOROCCO, 1975. Comedian and actor. Shares with ANELKA a love of fast cars and a childhood in Trappes, a North Parisian ^{BANLIEUE}. Hit by a train aged 13, he lost the use of his right arm. His *tchatch* (backchat) was encouraged by the director of a local theatre company, and eventually earned him a daily spot on Radio Nova and sketches for Canal Plus television. 1995 saw his first one-man show and he has subsequently starred in the sitcom 'H' (for hospital) on Canal Plus, appeared in films, and had sell-out runs in stand-up. Films include *Le Ciel, les oiseaux et... ta mere!* by Djamel Bensalah (1998); *Astérix et Obélix: mission Cléopâtre* by Alain Chabat (2001). (Samantha Neath)

Decolonisation Unlike Britain, which decolonised its former white dominions by transferring power to local political leaders, France had no such tradition. As a result, when pressures for decolonisation grew after the Second World War, there was no precedent in French history to which France's governing élites could turn. Thus, at a conference organised in BRAZZAVILLE in 1944 to discuss the future of France's African empire, any possibility of self-government for the colonies was specifically ruled out, and the term 'decolonisation' itself only began to be used in French in the 1950s. The other key factor that framed the French approach to decolonisation after the war was the perception of France's post-war governing élites, of both right and left, of the key importance of the empire for France. Its preservation was seen as essential if France was to retain its great-power status in a new world order dominated by the two new superpowers, US and USSR. As a result, the French approach to decolonisation was framed by a mindset that saw decolonisation taking place through closer ^{INTEGRATION} with France rather than secession from it. The French Union, the new name given to the empire, was established in 1946 to enable this to happen. However, under pressure from external events and an increasingly active nationalist movement, the French Union rapidly began to disintegrate. Indochina never fully joined and other parts of the empire, increasingly frustrated with the slowness of the reform process, rapidly began to demand greater autonomy and eventually independence. The mindset described above led France into two wars of decolonisation, first in Indochina, from which France was expelled following its defeat at DIEN BIEN PHU in 1954, and then in ALGERIA, which became independent following a war which lasted from 1954 to 1962. In other parts of the world, however, notably TUNISIA and MOROCCO (which became independent in 1956), and Black Africa (1960), the transition to independence took place largely without violence and bloodshed and France was able to transfer power to local ^{ÉLITES} that were friendly to France. (Tony Chafer)

De Gaulle, Charles 1890–1970. French general and statesman who headed the Free French government in exile during World War II, founder and the first President of the Fifth Republic. Born in Lille to a conservative and strongly Catholic family, he graduated from the Saint-Cyr military academy (1912) and served with

distinction under Pétain in World War I. Between the two wars, he taught military history at Saint-Cyr and acquired a reputation for his new ideas about the deployment of mobile armoured divisions instead of relying on static defensive fortifications (Maginot Line). After the fall of France, he escaped to London and on 18 June 1940 broadcast his historic appeal, inviting his compatriots to join him in a Free French resistance movement against the enemy. This June broadcast was the founding moment of the de Gaulle legend and gave him a sense of mission to represent and defend the 'greatness of France'. After the liberation of France, he returned to Paris and headed the Provisional Government. After twelve weeks in office, he resigned in 1946 because his proposals for a strong presidential government were rejected by the Constituent Assembly. He remained in a solitary self-imposed exile awaiting the call back to power. This occurred in 1958 when, following a military rebellion in ALGERIA, the National Assembly elected him Prime Minister and granted him emergency powers to solve the Algerian problem and restore political stability. He drafted a new constitution based on the principle of executive authority, had it approved by referendum, and was elected President of the Fifth Republic in 1959. Once in office, he disowned the defenders of *Algérie Française* when he realised the Algerian FLN could not be militarily defeated, and agreed to Algerian independence in the EVIAN AGREEMENTS (1962). Re-elected in 1965, he resigned in 1969 and worked on his memoirs until his death in 1970. (Naaman Kessous)

Further reading

Lacouture (1986) – a magisterial biography by the best authority on De Gaulle; Letwidge (1982) – an excellent biography in English.

Délégation générale à la langue française The existence of bodies such as the *Délégation générale à la langue française*, which flourished in France from the 1960s onwards, reflects the long-standing tradition in Francophone culture of attempts by the public authorities to influence linguistic developments by direct intervention. In response to an upsurge of concern about the future of the French language, DE GAULLE set up the *Haut comité pour la défense et l'expansion de la langue française* (1966). Successive reorganisations gave rise first to the *Commissariat général de la langue française* (1983), replaced in 1989 by the *Délégation générale à la langue française*. Since 1996 this committee of approximately 30 members is attached to the Ministry for Culture.

The *Délégation* plays a central role in devising, implementing, co-ordinating and monitoring governmental LANGUAGE POLICY. As part of its mission to promote the use of French within France, it oversees the implementation of the *Loi TOUBON*. It also co-ordinates the proposals of the ministerial *Commissions de terminologie* responsible for devising new terminology in specialised fields such as electronics, finance or medicine or suggesting appropriate alternatives to borrowings from other languages. The *Délégation* periodically brings together the lists of new terms, after they have been approved by act of Parliament, in dictionaries of official terms (*Dictionnaire des termes officiels*).

Since the mid-1990s the promotion of French as an international language has