

Ken Follett

From: Daniel Starer [dstarer@researchforwriters.com]
Sent: 21 November 2000 17:46
To: Ken Follett

Dear Ken,

Making progress on several fronts, though still no gold mine in France. We do, however, have permission to interview a noted French telecom historian, probably next week. Our translator will conduct the interview.

Look for three packages to arrive in next few days:

1. a Fedex package from me (airbill # 8109 6557 5257) with a various books on cars, uniforms, and photocopies on the Reichsbahn.
2. a package of published proceedings from CHiDE (the Centre for the History of Defence Electronics, in the UK) which contains a paper presented by Authur Bauer, entitled 'Some Aspects of Military line Communications as Deployed By the German Armed Forces Prior to 1945' ". I've exchanged email with the author, who offers to help us when he finishes a project middle of December. I have not seen his paper. If it has any good leads for other experts, or a bibliography with useful items, could you please fax me a copy?
3. A book from a UK dealer called Signal Venture, by L.H. Harris. See especially the fold-out map facing page 199, which shows telecommunications lines north of Paris. Also see the Index under topics such as automatic telephones, cable, cables, circuits, repeater stations, telephone exchanges, and others. The book is certainly not comprehensive, but adds bits and pieces to the research.

Our translator has made preliminary notes based on the first two packages of French materials. His notes, verbatim:

>From Reims:

Addresses. CNET, but also the Amis de l'Histoire des P.T.T. d'Alsace, and the médiathèque d'histoire des Sciences à La Villette

Long extract from Bertho, Histoire des communications en France
-automatic exchanges possible in larger population centers after 1920
-rural automatic exchanges at least possible after 1934 with the Rotary patent (p137)
-Probably a good reference:
Georges LETELLIER, "Histoire du téléphone automatique," dans Documents techniques des télécommunications, réédition CNET, 1982

Photocopy of a title page:
Histoire des systèmes de télécommunication. Avec fil ou sans fil. Des inventions pour communiquer. By Nowakowski, Claude; Roux, Alain.
Maybe get table of contents, see if anything interesting appears?

Photocopy of section of Carré's Découvertes Gallimard book
Carré, Patrice A., Le Téléphone: un monde à portée de voix, 1993
-Stuff on Keller, including long passage straight from Combaux, nothing essential

Peillard, Leonce, "La Source K" in Historia, mars 1986
Pretty good article, learned more details of how they tapped into the cables.

>From Cazenove:

Dissertation, "Histoire des P.T.T. pendant la deuxième guerre... M. Paul, 1956

Not useful: about the status of Jews, how they were not allowed to use or own telephones

Interesting fact: 380,000 subscribers to telephone service in Paris in 1943. (p405)

Article: Scalisi, Christine, et Rouquet, François, "PTT Libre ou une vision de la résistance par elle-même (Nov 1944-Juin 1945)"

The article is about the PTT resistance newsletter, published beginning in Nov 44, after the Liberation of Paris.

Exhibition document: "Histoire de la transmission à grande distance" from 1984

p4 the Germans built 3000 km of their own cables for military use

p5 in 43, the Germans make the PTT start building Massif Central cables (non-radial from Paris), CLERMONT-MONTPPELLIER and TOULOUSE-AVIGNON

Article: Jacob, Robert, "Paris 44 et Paris Central de 1939 à 1944", mars 1993

The article focuses on resistance by PTT workers at the Paris telegraph center, where all telegrams from around France and from other countries were received and rerouted. All by underground cable.

Not very useful

Article: Michel, Henri, "La résistance dans les P.T.T.: La source K," La Revue de P.T.T. 1957

13,000 km of cable by 1940 installed- 17 main lines leaving Paris radially

All left from 2 big amplifying stations in Paris

every 60 to 70 km there had to be an amplifying station- in special buildings called "repeater stations."

The Germans took this long-distance system over, and by 44 had 3000 km of their own, but this was always insufficient and they used the French system throughout the entire occupation.

The head of German long-distance in Paris was entitled Feldschalt-Abteilung Z.B.V.2, at 97, av. des Champs-Élysées, under General Kersten

All amplifying stations were heavily fortified, guarded, barb wire, etc. All French technicians supervised by Germans, and at first, all teams always included a German, but this slackened once confidence gained.

-All of this comes summarized from two articles, "Câbles et transmissions" jan 1949, by J. Mailey, and "La Revue des transmissions" oct. 47, by M.L. Simon (ostensibly in the Revue de PTT, since no other mag title is given?).

p15 interesting speculation- the exact cause of Keller's arrest was never known- they don't think the Germans ever had any damning documents, because this would have pointed to Combaux, who was never suspected. Thus there is speculation that Keller could have belonged to another, secret resistance group, and caught by his activities there. At any rate, it is fairly certain that the wiretapping was not uncovered by a technician. The most plausible hypothesis is that he was denounced [This is what is simply asserted in more recent accounts of Keller]

[KEN: we are trying to get copies of these two articles in Revue de PTT]

Article: "La Source K: un épisode extraordinaire de la résistance..."

[Col. Combaux's speech]

The source of many details given in other articles. Nothing technically

interesting.

Article: "Keller et la 'Source K', by Georges Clavaud, Revue Française des Télécommunications (12) juillet 1974.

Summary article about Keller, nothing new.

Photos:

no descriptions given- just the images and a filing number on the back of each

An additional package from France Telecom arrived today and our translator is looking it over.

Best,

Dan