

Feeding ‘the sacred fire’:

Le Courrier Australien and France Libre

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The *Courrier Australien* has chosen to place itself very clearly under the leadership of General de Gaulle, and has offered to act as his mouthpiece amongst all Frenchmen in Australia ... Its task is now to feed the sacred fire, to maintain and infuse in everyone’s heart this devotion to a Great Cause. This is meant not only for French people, but for all those whose determination it is to continue the fight to the end.¹

On 14 June 1940, the German army invaded Paris. Four days later, General Charles de Gaulle, leader of the French government-in-exile, made a radio address urging his countrymen to resist the German occupation.² Sydney-based *Le Courrier Australien* responded on 2 August with a pledge of support telegraphed to de Gaulle.³ Thus began a four year campaign of the newly renamed ‘journal of the Free French Movement in Australasia.’⁴ This article will explore the involvement of *Le Courrier Australien* in the resistance during the first nine months. This period has been chosen as it represents the initial wave of enthusiasm which tapered off in April 1941 due to financial constraints.⁵ Three key strategies were employed to promote *France Libre* (the branch of the French Resistance led by de Gaulle) to the Australian public: the shift from a monolingual to bilingual publication, special events and fundraising efforts including Free French Day, and an awareness of the international and national context in which the paper was operating. One difficulty in evaluating the impact of *Le Courrier Australien*’s involvement is the comparative wealth of information from the paper itself, with fewer independent assessments; as such, my conclusions will be inevitably shaped by the self-promotion of the articles. In this article, I will argue that the first nine months were a highly successful period in the promotion of France Libre to the Australian public, attracting a readership beyond the French community, significant fundraising, and recognition by the Australian government and General de Gaulle.

1 ‘To Our Subscribers,’ *Le Courrier Australien*, 9 August 1940, 1.

2 Raymond Aubrac, *The French Resistance 1940-1944*, trans. Louise Guiney, (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1997), 9.

3 ‘To our subscribers,’ *Le Courrier Australien*, Friday 2 August 1940, 1.

4 Title-head of *Le Courrier Australien* (from 22 November 1940 onwards).

5 That is: August 1940 to April 1941. ‘The Courrier Australien,’ *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 April 1941.

Le Courrier Australien was established in 1892 in Sydney as a cosmopolitan weekly newspaper for the French expatriate community.⁶ The majority of articles discussed arts and culture. Although it began as a ‘multicultural Australian’ newspaper, from 1898 influence from the French Consul General Georges Biard d’Aunet led to the newspaper embracing French nationalism and defending French commercial interests in Australia.⁷ This turn inward was to remain until 1940. Interestingly, *Le Courrier Australien* continues today, no longer a weekly newspaper but a monthly magazine, as a once-more Francocentric niche publication.

Although involvement in France Libre radically transformed *Le Courrier Australien*, who in turn provided strong support for the resistance, very little has been written on this topic. Margaret Barrett has recently completed a Masters of Philosophy thesis studying the history of the Free French in Australia, including the contribution of *Le Courrier Australien*; it is currently unpublished.⁸ Ivan Barko wrote a three-page article covering the history of *Le Courrier Australien* from 1892 to 1945, as well as a longer chapter on the earlier years to 1905.⁹ The shorter article was incorporated into a multi-media bilingual DVD *Vive La Différence*, based on an exhibition at the State Library of NSW on the history of the French in the state.¹⁰ One article has been written on Australia’s relationship with Vichy France; this did not, however, cover the resistance, nor make any mention of *Le Courrier Australien*.¹¹ Anny Stuer wrote a comprehensive monograph in 1982: a demographic study of the French in Australia. Her section on the war barely mentions *Le Courrier Australien*, yet does provide a clear picture of the French expatriate community in Australia.¹²

The story of *Le Courrier Australien* and the Free French is but one part of the rich history of the French in Australia, from the early French explorers to the ongoing French investment in Australian wool, to the Alliance Française sponsored French film festival (which is the largest of its kind outside France).¹³ Nevertheless, the consistent significance of the French presence in Australia should be represented by a richer field of French-Australian historical studies than currently exist.

6 Ivan Barko, ‘Bref historique du *Courrier Australien* de 1892 à 1945,’ in *Vive la différence !: The French in NSW: Celebrating French Settlers, Their Culture and Contributions to Business and Society*, eds. Margot Riley, Ivan Barko and Jacqueline Dwyer, (S.L. [NSW]: La Vie en Rose Productions, 2006), 1. Ivan Barko, ‘The *Courrier Australien* and French-Australian relations.’ during the Biard d’Aunet Years (1892-1905),’ in *The Culture of the Book: Essays from Two Hemispheres in Honour of Wallace Kirsop*, ed. David Garrioch, (Melbourne: Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, 1999), 430-445.

7 *Ibid.*, 1.

8 For a discussion of her thesis, see Margaret Barrett, ‘Jean Trémoulet: The Unloved Consul-General,’ *Explorations*, no. 51 (2011), 15-32. Margaret Barrett, ‘Tug of War: The Free French in Australia 1940-1944’ (MPhil thesis, University of Sydney, 2012).

9 Barko, ‘Bref historique du *Courrier Australien* de 1892 à 1945.’ Ivan Barko, ‘The *Courrier Australien* and French-Australian relations.’

10 Valerie Etienne, ‘Vive la différence!’ *Les Français en Nouvelle-Galles de Sud (Exposition à la Bibliothèque d’État de la Nlle-Galles de Sud)*, (Sydney, State Library of NSW: 2004).

11 Lyn Gorman, ‘Australia and Vichy: The Impact of Divided France 1940-1944,’ *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 43, No. 2, (1997), 135-152.

12 Anny P.L. Stuer, *The French in Australia*, (Canberra: Dept. Of Demography, Insitute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University, 1982), 170-190.

13 See for example Robert Aldrich, *The French Presence in the South Pacific 1842-1940*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1990). Colin W. Nettelbeck, *The Alliance Française in Australia 1890-1990: An Historical Perspective*, (Canberra: Fédération des Alliances Françaises en Australie Inc, 1990). Anne-Marie Nisbet and Maurice Blackman, eds., *The French Australian Cultural Connection: Papers from a Symposium Held at the University of New South Wales 16-17 September 1983*, (Kensington NSW: School of French, University of New South Wales, 1984). Colin Dyer, *The French Explorers and Sydney 1788-1831*, (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 2009).

Significant inroads have been made in French-Australian studies by a small journal, *Explorations*, which recently attained peer-reviewed status.¹⁴ Yet, curiously, this journal has made minimal effort to engage with broader scholarly debates, as a 'comparatively narrow specialist field.'¹⁵ This article will seek, therefore, to bring to light one aspect of the French presence in Australia which has not previously been studied. Broader research on France Libre has proliferated despite a recent revisionist trend to focus on collaboration rather than resistance.¹⁶ Unfortunately, however, none appear to even mention *Le Courrier Australien*. Thirdly, studies of ethnic media in Australia and America proliferated in the 1980s.¹⁷ Although none of these investigated *Le Courrier Australien*, and few even looked at the same time period, they were helpful in informing the possibilities of this style of research. Finally, the Australian engagement with France Libre was but one aspect of the home front during World War Two, an area which has been extensively studied.¹⁸

An ever-growing link between *Le Courrier Australien* and France Libre

Although the French Consul General Jean Tréboulet was loyal to the Vichy government, the proprietor of *Le Courrier Australien* Léon Magrin pledged his loyalty, and that of his paper, to General Charles de Gaulle.¹⁹ Consequently, on 26 July 1940, an editorial advised that *Le Courrier Australien* would put 'all its time and energy at the disposition to the French cause.'²⁰ The next week, an appeal for cooperation was placed on 'all Frenchmen and all true friends of France.'²¹ The following week, this appeal expanded with a list of what readers could contribute: personal articles; cuttings from newspapers, magazines or books; letters to the editor and criticisms or suggestions.²² Although the strategy for reader participation shifted towards financial giving and fundraising, the appeal for literary contributions and specialised collaboration continued.²³ One of the most prolific contributors was Ivy Moore. The paper's official archives included four books, mostly poetry, written by her.²⁴ Her poetry was frequently published in *Le Courrier Australien*, including

14 For digitised online archive, see 'Archives,' *Explorations: A Journal of French-Australian Connections*, <http://www.msp.unimelb.edu.au/index.php/explorations/issue/archive>.

15 Ivan Barko, Email, 11 September 2010.

16 See for example Aubrac, *The French Resistance 1940-1944*. Margaret Atack, *Literature and the French Resistance: Cultural Politics and Narrative Forms*, (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1989). H R Kedward, *Resistance in Vichy France: A Study of Ideas and Motivation in the Southern Zone 1940-1942*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

17 See for example Abe Wade Ata and Colin Ryan, eds., *The Ethnic Press in Australia*, (Melbourne: Academia Press and Footprint Publications, 1989). Maria D Tenezakis, *The Content of Three Sydney-Based Ethnic Newspapers*, (Sydney: Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1982). Sally Miller, ed. *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

18 See for example Jim Haynes, *On All Fronts: Australia's World War II*, (Pymble, NSW: ABC Books, 2010). Michael McKernan, *The Strength of a Nation: Six Years of Australians Fighting For the Nation and Defending the Homefront in WWII*, (Crowns Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2006). Michael McKernan, *All In!: Fighting the War at Home*, (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1995). John Hilvert, *Blue Pencil Warriors: Censorship and Propaganda in World War II*, (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1984).

19 Barko, 'Bref historique du *Courrier Australien* de 1892 à 1945,' 2.

20 'Tout son temps et toute son énergie sont à la disposition de la CAUSE FRANÇAISE' (capitalisation in the original) 'Avis,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 26 July 1940, 1.

21 'To Our Subscribers,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 9 August 1940, 1.

22 *Ibid.*

23 'Charity Begins at Home,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 29 November 1940, 1.

24 Ivy Moore, *Flags of Freedom*, Mitchell Library Manuscripts Collection [hereafter MLMSS], *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965. Ivy Moore, *Australian Violets*, MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965. Ivy Moore, *Flags of Freedom*,

'À la France,' 'L'Appel' and 'O Heart be Strong.'²⁵ The regular contributions of Moore, a single woman, indicate that gender was not a barrier for participation in the France Libre movement. Rather, women such as Moore seem to have been valued and active participants. Poetry from other contributors was also published as a way to mobilise readers' creativity for the cause of France Libre, along with letters to the editor which expressed support of the newspaper and of de Gaulle's movement.²⁶ The opportunities for reader involvement most likely permitted a sense of ownership of the paper.

The increasing level of support for France Libre slowly changed the style and layout of *Le Courrier Australien*. The 'blue, white and red' band appeared for the first time on 26 July 1940.²⁷ On 22 November 1940 a new subheading was added to the banner, stating that *Le Courrier Australien* was the 'journal of Free French.'²⁸ This was only published on page five, however, and did not change the overall style. It was not until 3 January 1941 that a completely new masthead (Image 1) was adopted, incorporating the phrase 'weekly journal of the Free French Movement in the Pacific,' a map of France with the slogan 'France even now,' and the phrase 'France Libre' juxtaposed on a flag with La Croix de Lorraine (de Gaulle's chosen symbol).²⁹ This bold style change was significant, designed to grab attention at newsstands to reach a broader audience, as well as to encourage and mobilise present readers. Moreover, the size of the paper fluctuated: beginning at four pages per issue, increasing to six or eight during the initial height of enthusiasm before tapering to the original four pages in April 1941.³⁰



Image 1: New masthead of the paper
Le Courrier Australien, 3 January 1941, p. 3.

MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965. Ivy Moore, *Glimpses of Old Sydney and N.S.W.*, MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965.

25 Ivy Moore, 'A La France,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 27 November 1940, 4. Ivy Moore, 'L'appel,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 17 January 1941, 5. Ivy Moore, 'O, Heart Be Strong,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 29 November 1940, 6.

26 See for example Eileen Johnson, 'France Shall Rise Again,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 10 January 1941, 4. Paul Rival, 'It's Up to Us,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 24 January 1941, 1. Patricia Lloyd, 'To France,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 31 January 1941, 3.

27 'Courrier Australien New Style,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 July 1941, 4.

28 'Journal des français libres'

29 'Journal hebdomadaire de la France Libre dans le Pacifique,' 'France Quand Même'. 'Le Courrier Australien - Journal Hebdomadaire de la France Libre,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 3 January 1941, 1.

30 'Editorial,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 14 April 1941, 1.

On 23 August, the new 'double mission' of *Le Courrier Australien* was launched: to 'co-ordinate all efforts in favour of General de Gaulle' and to 'maintain and extend its propaganda in order to stimulate in everyone's heart the will to win.'³¹ The new mission led to a change in editor. Although originally directed and edited by Léon Magrin, at a public meeting on 20 August 1940 Magrin chose to 'pass the baton' to the resistance.³² As such, from December 1940, the representative of General de Gaulle in Australia, André Brenac, took over the management of the newspaper and contributed the weekly editorial, whilst Albert Sourdin became the editor. The change in focus also led to a price increase, with the annual subscription rising from 10/- to 15/- from 1 October, although high school and university students received a reduced tariff to encourage their readership.³³ As such, the paper moved from a cosmopolitan periodical for expatriates to the nationalist mouthpiece of France Libre seeking to garner support.

First strategy: An extended readership

Firstly, *Le Courrier Australien* attracted a readership beyond the French community. It is difficult to precisely measure circulation as the archived membership subscriptions did not begin until 1946.³⁴ A few snippets of information were published which indicate the progress in this first year. Within the first two months, there were one hundred new subscribers while overall sales had almost doubled.³⁵ At the one year review, on 4 July 1941, Brenac remarked that it had increased from a 'quiet little paper printing six hundred a week (and half of them were probably never read)' to 'the medium of defence and propagation of a great principle' with a circulation of two thousand five hundred 'and rising.'³⁶ This four-fold increase was made possible by the deliberate strategies to reach a broader Australian public. These strategies clearly succeeded: the total nationwide French community was barely over two thousand, composed no doubt of households which only bought one copy.³⁷ Moreover, the advertising investment in *Le Courrier Australien* increased from sixteen accounts in December 1939, to forty-four accounts in September 1940, to one hundred accounts in May 1941.³⁸ Although an inaccurate measure, this does indicate a significant increase in proprietary interest in *Le Courrier Australien*.

A related third quantitative measure of success is individual membership of *Français Libre d'Australie*. On 27 December 1940, an article encouraging readers to become members was published.³⁹ From 3 January 1941, a pledge to join 'Le Mouvement France Libre' was published in

31 'A Mission for the 'Courrier Australien,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 23 August 1940, 1.

32 Barko, 'Bref historique du *Courrier Australien* de 1892 à 1945,' 2. 'Meeting of 20/8/40,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 30 August 1940, 4.

33 'Avis important,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 6 September 1940, 1.

34 'Subscription Cards,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1946-1980, box 12 of 17.

35 'Faisons le point,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 13 September 1940, 1.

36 'Courrier Australien New Style,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 July 1941, 4

37 Stuer, *The French in Australia*, 170. It is difficult to be precise – we do not know the precise breakdown ratio of subscriptions between French and Australian readers.

38 'Advertising Records,' MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965.

39 'Nos forces individuelles sont faibles en regard de buts d'un tel ordre de grandeur. Ces mêmes forces, « unies » sous le signe de la Croix de Lorraine prennent une valeur singulière, la râleur d'un maillon ajoute à la chaîne toute puissante qui, finalement, enserrera l'ennemi. Il faut que ce maillon soit parfaitement forgé. Nous devons nous connaître, coordonner nos énergies, les rendre utilisables sous leurs formes diverses par les Chefs que nous reconnaissons : le General de Gaulle et ses Représentants qualifiés.' André Brenac, 'Ralliement des Français Libre,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 27 December 1940, 1.

each issue. Readers thus 'formally declared to be in favour of continuing the fight against Germany and Italy until the liberation of France' and 'engaged themselves to help in all their power the common cause of Great Britain, France Libre and their allies.'⁴⁰ Reinforcing the link between France Libre and Britain was a deliberate political strategy to reassure Australians that their allegiance was not being split. By June 1941 there were more than seven hundred members with one thousand by August.⁴¹ Men were also encouraged to join the Free French Army, although it is difficult to tell how many Australian-Frenchmen did so.⁴²

The primary method used to attract readership outside the French community was in the newfound bilingualism of *Le Courrier Australien*. For the first time, editorials were published in French and English, along with thirty to fifty percent of other articles written only in English. This broke the tradition of the previously monolingual paper, and was an intentional tactic employed to engage with a wider audience amongst Australian readers, to increase the breadth and depth of the impact of *Le Courrier Australien*, and to heighten support and awareness of the cause of France Libre. Published in both languages, editorials were carefully crafted to motivate support for the ideals of France Libre. One of the first exhorting editorials was published on 16 August, personifying the ideas of 'Justice, Right and Truth' in de Gaulle.⁴³ Readers were instructed using imperatives that 'we must listen to him [de Gaulle] and we must follow him, because his Cause is true.'⁴⁴ In this quasi-religious exhortation, patriotism was deliberately linked with France Libre rather than the Vichy State. An editorial two months later continued the themes of 'Justice, Right and Truth', which became a rallying rhetorical triplet.⁴⁵ A similar recurring image was of exalting in liberty: for example, 'We are Free Frenchmen, we glory in this fact but we must deserve this liberty,' using 'we' to enmesh the readers with Brenac and France Libre.⁴⁶

Brenac used radio appeals, the transcripts of which were frequently published in *Le Courrier Australien*, to reach a broader cross-section of the Australian public. Brenac made one such radio address the day after his appointment as General de Gaulle's representative and Leader of the Free French Forces in Australia. In this, he provided a brief biography of de Gaulle to 'prove he is not an adventurer who sprung up from nothing' and to encourage Australians to support his movement.⁴⁷ The following week, he published his programme for 1941: for all readers to become individual members of the Movement, for subscriptions to the 'Tanks and Planes for de Gaulle' fund to be established, and for a nation-wide 'Free French Day.'⁴⁸ In this editorial, he used the poignant metaphor of a boxer punched out with the warning that 'you cannot remain groggy forever –

40 'Je soussigné (nom et adresse) déclare formellement être en faveur de la continuation de la lutte contre l'Allemagne et l'Italie jusqu'à la libération de la France. Je m'engage à aider de tout mon pouvoir la cause commune de la Grande Bretagne, de la France Libre, et de leurs alliés.' 'Mouvement France Libre,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 3 January 1941, 4.

41 Unfortunately dates for the first nine-month period have not been accessible. 'Plans for Free French Day,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1941, 7.

42 'Sydney Embarkation with André Brenac,' in *Free French Forces*, (S.L.: Council of Defence of the French Empire, 1941), pagination unknown.

43 'Our Duty,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 16 August 1940, 1.

44 *Ibid.*

45 'Reasons for Hope,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 October 1940, 1.

46 'The Free Man,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 February 1941, 1.

47 André Brenac, 'News Commentary - Broadcast from 2FC Sydney,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 27 December 1940, 1.

48 André Brenac, 'Attention 1941: Forward GO!,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 3 January 1941, 1.

you must wake up.⁴⁹ This metaphor sought to garner the enthusiasm of the reader through a personal appeal. The Hobart *Mercury* quoted one of Brenac's radio appeals, indicating its success in reaching out to the Australian public, in which he informed the 'people of Australia' that 'the Free French are your surest and truest allies, that their ideals are the immortal principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and that their national anthem remains the splendid and martial accents of *La Marseillaise*.'⁵⁰ Similarly, some publicity posters were used to raise awareness of the French resistance, as in the case of Image 2 (France Libre was renamed France Combattante on 13 July 1942).⁵¹



Image 2: Publicity poster
Mitchell Library Manuscripts Collection, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965. State Library of NSW.
Used with permission.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ 'Cause of Free French,' *The Mercury*, 11 July 1941, 3.

⁵¹ 'La France Combattante en Australie,' MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965.

Second strategy: Fundraising for France Libre

Editorials and public addresses often sought to raise funds. During an appeal to a Melbourne radio station, for example, Brenac outlined the 'Tanks and Planes for de Gaulle' fund, asking for 'the co-operation of *all* those in Australia, regardless of their nationality.'⁵² This was part of broader fundraising efforts coordinated by the paper in support of the resistance. Beginning in March 1940, fundraising was originally conducted by *La Ligue Franco-Australienne de Secours*.⁵³ Regular updates were published in *Le Courrier Australien*, listing the individual, group or fundraising function and the amount raised.⁵⁴ By 27 December 1940, the last collection, a total of £4,563.16.9 had been given.⁵⁵ The annual meeting on 28 November 1940 marked a turning point for this organisation, affiliating with the Free French Forces Fund to allow 'greater co-operation' with the movement.⁵⁶ A similar tactic was adopted by the subsequent *Tanks & Planes for De Gaulle Fund*, run directly by *Le Courrier Australien*, with regular subscription updates published to encourage more readers to give, and to give more generously.⁵⁷ This fund was launched on 22 November 1940; between this date and 5 March 1941, the tenth subscription list, £813.14.6 had been raised.⁵⁸ Another strategy employed to encourage donations was the regular publication of a facsimile certificate issued to those who donated to this fund.⁵⁹ When combined with the amount raised on Free French Day, the total of almost £8000 was the equivalent to the annual wage of eighteen people.⁶⁰

Numerous small ideas were employed to raise funds for the movement. Readers were encouraged to purchase a three, six or twelve month subscription of *Le Courrier Australien* as a Christmas or New Year's gift for their friends or family.⁶¹ They were also urged to remain indoors on New Year's Day 1941, between 2 and 3pm, to spend the time 'in meditation over our country's unhappiness and hardships', as part of a 'world-wide manifestation' and 'silent protest against the policy of capitulation of the Vichy government.'⁶² The one year anniversary of the 'unleashing of Germany's terrible offensive which brought about the downfall of France' on 19 May 1941 was marked by

⁵² André Brenac, 'Talk from 3.L.O. Melbourne,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 28 February 1941, 1.

⁵³ French-Australian League of Help

⁵⁴ See for example 'La Ligue Franco-Australienne de Secours,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 27 December 1940, 2. 'List of Donations,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 8 November 1940, 4. 'French-Australian League of Help,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 8 November 1940, 4.

⁵⁵ 'La Ligue Franco-Australienne de Secours,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 27 December 1940, 2.

⁵⁶ 'French Australian League of Help,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 6 December 1940, 1.

⁵⁷ 'La France Combattante en Australie,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1925-1965. 'Planes for De Gaulle,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1925-1965. 'Support Your Journal and Support The Cause,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1925-1965. 'Tanks for De Gaulle,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1925-1965. 'Plane, Flag and Soldier,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1925-1965. 'Swastika and De Gaulle,' MLMSS, Sourdin Papers, 1925-1965.

⁵⁸ 'Des Tanks et des Avions pour de Gaulle,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 22 November 1940, 3. 'Tanks & Planes for de Gaulle Fund (20/12/1940),' *Le Courrier Australien*, 20 December 1940, 4. 'Tanks & Planes for De Gaulle Fund (3/1/1941),' *Le Courrier Australien*, 3 January 1941, 4. 'Tanks & Planes for De Gaulle Fund (10/1/1941),' *Le Courrier Australien*, 10 January 1941, 4. 'Tanks & Planes for de Gaulle Fund (31/1/1941),' *Le Courrier Australien*, 31 January 1941, 5. 'Tanks & Planes for de Gaulle Fund (7/3/1941),' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 March 1941, 4.

⁵⁹ First published André Brenac, 'This is to Certify,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 3 January 1941, 5.

⁶⁰ A. B. Atkinson and Andrew Leigh, 'The Distribution of Top Incomes in Australia,' Discussion Paper no. 514, (Canberra: Centre for Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, 2006).

⁶¹ 'Chaque semaine, le rappel de votre attention viendra toucher, de la façon la plus délicate et à la fois la plus utile à la Cause.' 'Cadeaux de Noel,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 13 December 1940, 2.

⁶² 'Hour of Meditation for Frenchmen,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1941, 7. See also 'France's Hour of Silence,' *The Argus*, 31 December 1940, 4.

urging readers' to donate their daily income.⁶³ Just as women were active contributors to the newspaper content, gender was also a significant mobilising force for fundraising. The ladies' committee, along with individual women, ran lectures, dances, cocktail parties, an ice carnival, and a film party.⁶⁴ One of the most novel fundraising ideas, which simultaneously raised awareness, was undoubtedly the 'De Gaulle Matches': with the slogan 'Strike now!' A triplet of pithy incentives, using the second-person to engage readers, was published alongside it: 'you create light, you arouse interest, you make propaganda.'⁶⁵

Readers were urged to purchase and wear the France Libre badge: small, blue and with a Croix de Lorraine.⁶⁶ A facsimile of the badge was regularly published to entice readers to purchase it.⁶⁷ The Croix de Lorraine, Joan of Arc's symbol, was chosen by General de Gaulle because it represented 'a Christian symbol as opposed to the pagan symbol of the swastika.'⁶⁸ By juxtaposing Hitler, 'the hatred of Christ,' with the Croix de Lorraine, the movement was able to appeal to the strong Christian demographic at the time.⁶⁹ The Croix de Lorraine was also embroidered on a battle flag for the French Legionnaires who left for the front from Australia, and a civilian flag for the linked association *Les Amis de la France*.⁷⁰

One of the most significant events was the nation-wide Free French Day, held on 11 July 1941. Although this event falls outside the time frame chosen for the article, it is important to consider, because planning for it began in early December 1940.⁷¹ The purpose of this day was to 'demonstrate to the Australian public' that 'Free Frenchmen have pledged themselves to give and sacrifice everything to help Britain to win the war.'⁷² This appeal to Britain was a deliberate point of engagement with the Australian audience, given the political allegiance, historic links and emotional ties between Australia and Britain at this stage of the war. To achieve this, businesses were requested to fly the Australian flag, the French tricolour and the Croix de Lorraine together in their shop windows as a visual montage of unity.⁷³ The second aim was to 'encourage our Australian friends' to provide 'financial and moral support' to the resistance.⁷⁴ In Sydney, the 'great attraction' was the French Market Fair at Town Hall, with stalls of special goods during the day and an evening concert.⁷⁵ In Melbourne, a gala concert and ballet on the theme of 'Spirit of France'

63 André Brenac, 'Meeting of the 14th May,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 9 May 1941, 1.

64 'Ice Carnival Aids Free French,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 1941, 7. 'Aux français et sympathisants de Sydney,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 February 1941, 1. See also 'Guests wore «France Libre» Badge,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1941, 7. 'Dance for Free French Day,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1941, 7. 'A Sydney - Activities of the Lady Members,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 25 April 1941, 4. 'For Free French Movement,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 1941, 9.

65 'Strike Now,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 6 June 1941, 4.

66 'Guests wore "France Libre" Badge,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1941, 7.

67 'Free France Badge,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 20 December 1940, 4.

68 'The Free French Flag,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 December 1940, 2.

69 'L'auumonie des forces françaises libres vous parle,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 22 November 1940, 6.

70 'Free French Soldiers from Australia,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1941, 20. 'Holding the Free French Flag,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1941, 7. 'The Free French Flag,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 December 1940, 2.

71 'Appeal Day for Free French,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 December 1940, 11.

72 André Brenac, 'Free French Day,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 July 1941, 1. See also 'The Significance of Free French Day,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 11 July 1941, 1, which similarly linked Australia, Britain, Free France and the Free French Day.

73 Brenac, 'Free French Day,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 July 1941, 1.

74 *Ibid.*

75 'Free French Demonstration & Appeal Day - Sydney,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 4 July 1941, 1. See also 'The Day of Days,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 18 July 1941, 1.

was held, along with a 'People's Afternoon' at Foy's Radio Hall.⁷⁶ Free French Day in Sydney alone raised £2,100.⁷⁷ The international connection was particularly important. The day received messages of patronage from the Governor-General of France Libre in the Pacific, M. Henri Sautot, along with General de Gaulle.⁷⁸ Messages of support were published from Winston Churchill to General de Gaulle and from the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, to France Libre.⁷⁹ The choice of these British leaders reinforced the significance of the connection between Britain and de Gaulle, and appealed to the loyalty to the British of many Australian readers.

Third strategy: reinforcement of the broader context

Indeed, *Le Courrier Australien* frequently sought to provide an international context for their work. Official documentation concerning agreements between England and France Libre were regularly published in special documentary supplements and articles.⁸⁰ These were important, as part of the deliberate effort to reinforce the three-way links between England, France Libre and *Le Courrier Australien* and to capitalise upon the patriotism of a broader Australian audience. Moreover, regular reports were made on the activity of the Free French Army to inform the Franco-Australian public of the cause which they were supporting.⁸¹ The overseas territories of France Libre were reported on, most notably in a book on the resistance in New Caledonia, published by the paper in 1940.⁸²

Le Courrier Australien took steps to connect with other France Libre newspapers throughout the world. An article on 9 May 1941 indicated awareness of France Libre associations in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Mexico and Egypt.⁸³ Indeed, *Le Courrier Australien's* official archives at the State Library of NSW contained publications of *Les Cahiers de Libération*, *Tam*, and *Alger Républicain* from Algeria, *France et De Gaulle* from Canada, *Le Mauricien* from Mauritius, *Le Progrès Égyptien*, *The Egyptian Gazette* and *La Bourse Égyptien* from Egypt, *L'Veil de Cameroon* and *Le Cameroon Libre* from Cameroon, *France Libre* from Mexico, *Volontaire pour la cité chrétienne* from England, *Le Courrier Français aux États-Unis* from America, and *La France Australe* from New Caledonia.⁸⁴ It can be assumed that these different newspapers would have shared strategies for success. These archives also contained the *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, which consisted of orders, decrees and arrests from the Gaullist movement. This journal began in 1848, and continues to this day. Ivan Barko suggests it was as a legitimising process, that 'the Gaullists wanted to avail themselves of the continuity of the Third Republic, whilst waiting to create the Fourth in 1946 and then the Fifth in 1956.'⁸⁵ This clear evidence of external connections indicates

76 'Free French Demonstration & Appeal Day - Melbourne,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 11 July 1941, 1.

77 'Nazi Regime Resentment,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1941, 5. See also 'Free French Demonstration & Appeal Day,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 8 August 1941, 7.

78 'Plans for Free French Day,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1941, 7.

79 'The Day of Days,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 18 July 1941, 1.

80 'Accord Churchill - de Gaulle: Supplement Documentaire,' *Le Courrier Australien*, November 1940, 1. 'Important accord entre Angleterre et la France Libre,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 March 1941, 3. 'Mr Churchill's declaration,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 2 August 1940, 1.

81 Such as 'Activity of the Free French Forces - The Free French Army,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 11 April 1941, 3.

82 'Le Territoire de La France Libre,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 March 1941, 2. 'Le Territoire de La France Libre - cont'd,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 22 March 1941, 2. 'La France Vivante, La France Libre,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 18 October 1940, 1. *Resistance française aux colonies: La Nouvelle-Calédonie se rallie à la France libre*, (Sydney: Les éditions du Courrier Australien, 1944).

83 'Free French Committees Overseas,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 9 May 1941, 7.

84 'Printed Material re World War Two,' MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965.

85 It is curious that this journal presented itself as of *La République Française*. Ivan Barko suggests this was a deliberate strategy

the context within which *Le Courrier Australien* was produced, and also suggests that Brenac was influenced by the international context of the France Libre movement.

Specifically, articles were published in *Le Courrier Australien* from foreign sources. For example, a two-part series narrating 'When Paris took Flight,' published in April 1941, was written by an American journalist.⁸⁶ Similarly, an article by a French journalist based in England described the risks workers took in sabotaging German aircraft, whilst a message to 'the children of the Empire' from Princess Elizabeth was also published, reinforcing the links between England, France Libre and *Le Courrier Australien*.⁸⁷ Articles were also published from national sources, including a detailed account of Australian involvement in the war produced by the Australian Government and written in French, regular serials from the Department of Information, and rhetoric-laden articles published in other Australian media sources.⁸⁸

The awareness of the international context, seen in the regular publication of correspondence from de Gaulle, simultaneously legitimised *Le Courrier Australien* in its recognition from the movement's leader. This correspondence can be separated into two categories: those specifically addressed to *Le Courrier Australien*, and other speeches reproduced in the newspaper. The first telegram received from General de Gaulle was in response to one sent by *Le Courrier Australien* 'putting itself at your disposal for the transmission to the French colony in Australia of your messages and instructions.' De Gaulle responded with thanks, assuring the readers that he was 'writing to you personally.'⁸⁹ This telegram had an enormous impact on *Le Courrier Australien*, as it made their allegiance with France Libre official, a position which was to transform the paper for the next four years. Another personal telegram was sent in December 1940, seeking the 'names of all volunteers' for the France Libre forces and suggesting recruitment strategies.⁹⁰ Speeches and other general correspondence were also published from General de Gaulle. One significant speech by de Gaulle, concerning the 'moral conflict' and 'revolution' which they were engaged in, was published not only in *Le Courrier Australien* but also in Melbourne's *Argus*, thus raising the broader public awareness of the role Australia was playing in the international movement.⁹¹ In an editorial in the new London-based journal of France Libre, de Gaulle exhorted readers worldwide that 'their duty is simple: one must fight.'⁹² The personal archives of Sourdin also reveal that during the war *Le Courrier Australien*

to portray the continuity of the Third Republic, presumably to legitimise their authority (before creating the Fourth in 1946 and Fifth in 1956). Ivan Barko, Email, 16 October 2010.

86 'When Paris Took Flight - Chaos in the Southern Towns,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 18 April 1941, 2. 'When Paris Took Flight - Eyewitness of the Exodus,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 11 April 1941, 2.

87 'Servir, Servir Quand Meme! Risk Life to Ruin War Plants!,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 20 December 1940, 3. Princesse Elizabeth, 'Un Message aux enfants de l'empire,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 18 October 1940, 1.

88 See for example 'Ce Que Fait L'Australie,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 11 October 1940, 1. Commonwealth of Australia Department of Information, 'Emission Radiophonique,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 22 November 1940, 4. Walter Murdoch, 'Let's Stop Fooling Ourselves with Empty War Slogans,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 March 1941, 2.

89 "Courrier Australien" to General de Gaulle, London; General de Gaulle to "Courrier Australien," *Le Courrier Australien*, 9 August 1940, 4.

90 General de Gaulle, 'Veuillez cabler les noms,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 20 December 1940, 4.

91 'Daily Digest,' *The Argus*, Friday 12 June 1942, 3.

92 'Le devoir est simple et dur: IL FAUT COMBATTRE.' Capitalisation in the original. 'Le Général écrit,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 15 November 1940, 1. Other publications from General de Gaulle include General de Gaulle, 'Discours Radiodiffuse du General de Gaulle,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 22 November 1940, 5. General de Gaulle, 'Vous Priez Publier et Diffuser,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 7 March 1941, 4. 'General de Gaulle's appeal,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 2 August 1940, 1. General de Gaulle, 'Principales nouvelles de la semaine,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 6 September 1940, 4.

received numerous speeches from de Gaulle.⁹³ The publication of material from de Gaulle reinforced the status of the newspaper as his organ, and created a sense of personal involvement in his cause.

Some editorials were directly based around the ideas of General de Gaulle. For example, on 25 October, a Gaullist telegram, concerning 'a principle,' to 'respect liberty,' a 'method' of 'friendliness,' and an 'ideal' to 'do something useful for France,' was elaborated upon.⁹⁴ By structuring the editorial in this way, it was clear the guiding principles of this article, and *Le Courrier Australien*, were from de Gaulle himself. This enhanced the reader's understanding of the international context in which the paper and their efforts were operating. Similarly, the Educational Supplement of October 1940 was launched with the General's famous proclamation that 'France has lost a battle but France has not lost the war.'⁹⁵ A later editorial in December was inspired by a broadcast given by de Gaulle on the basis of a 'New Order' which was elaborated on, with the instruction to 'answer the call of our glorious leader, General de Gaulle, be prepared to follow him, without hesitation – soon he will need you. Be ready.'⁹⁶ Again, the use of an imperative triplet was strategic in reinforcing the message and motivating strong conviction.

Correspondence between General de Gaulle and Prime Minister Robert Menzies also took place and was published in the newspaper.⁹⁷ This official relationship between Australia and France Libre was a mark of success, as it encouraged Australians not to hesitate in their support of the movement. Communication between the Australian government and *Le Courrier Australien* was also published. A telegram to Senator McEwen, Minister for External Affairs, informed the government of the newspaper's intention to 'continue the struggle beside General de Gaulle, Free French Men and the British Empire until victory is achieved.'⁹⁸ This appeal to the three-way relationship between France Libre, Britain and *Le Courrier Australien* is a significant recurring image.⁹⁹ Two months earlier, *Le Courrier Australien* had written to Prime Minister Menzies on behalf of General de Gaulle to express condolences for a plane accident which resulted in the death of three Ministers; a response to which was received a week later.¹⁰⁰ The publication of correspondence with the Australian government thus legitimised *Le Courrier Australien* as relevant to Australian citizens, who could thus support the Free French as part of their war effort without worrying that they were diverting efforts from the British (and thus Australian, in this pre-fall of Singapore context) cause.

The Australian press repeatedly acknowledged the activities of *Le Courrier Australien*, which no doubt increased the general awareness of the paper's struggle.¹⁰¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald* took a particular interest on the Free French, publishing fourteen articles in this period, split between

93 'Printed Material re World War Two,' MLMSS, *Le Courrier Australien* Papers, 1925-1965.

94 'A Principle, A Method, an Ideal and a Retriification,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 25 October 1940, 1.

95 'La France a perdu une bataille, mais la France n'a pas perdue la guerre.' 'Presentation - Supplement Universitaire,' *Le Courrier Australien*, October 1940, 1.

96 'Our Idea of A New Order,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 6 December 1940, 1.

97 General de Gaulle, 'Two Telegrams,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 17 January 1941, 1.

98 'La Colonie Française de Sydney,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 11 October 1940, 4. Also commented upon in 'Free French Movement,' *The Mercury*, 15 October 1941, 5, and 'Support for De Gaulle,' *The Argus*, 14 October 1940, 4.

99 See for example André Brenac, 'Comments on the Situation,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 17 January 1941, 1.

100 'The Right-Honourable R G Menzies,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 23 August 1940, 1. R G Menzies, 'My colleagues and I...' *Le Courrier Australien*, 30 August 1940, 1.

101 See for example 'Support for De Gaulle,' *The Argus*, 14 October 1940, 4. 'Free French Stronger,' *The Argus*, 26 April 1941, 2. 'Fight by Free French,' *The Mercury*, 11 July 1941, 5. 'Free French In Australia,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December 1940, 9.

reports on their fundraising and support-raising activities and recounts of speeches by Brenac.¹⁰² Writing in an optimistic and affirming tone, *The Sydney Morning Herald's* support for Free French and *Le Courrier Australien* indicates the movement's achievement in broadcasting their message pervasively to the Australian community. The recognition of Brenac and *Le Courrier Australien* marks a point of success in the paper's efforts to promote France Libre to the Australian public.

Articles published in *Le Courrier Australien* also repeatedly revealed an engagement with the broader Australian context. A fascinating article, 'An Australian viewpoint of the Free French Movement,' acknowledged criticism of the French in the broader Australian community and exhorted the readers to turn this criticism into support of France Libre. A powerful rhetorical triplet asked 'What are we doing to help France? How many of us support the Free French? How many of us could help in countless ways, but are too lazy to do so?'¹⁰³ The tone of this article, and the use of pronouns 'we' and 'us' indicate that its intended audience was not the Australians who were already supporting France Libre, through a subscription to *Le Courrier Australien*, but their friends, family and acquaintances who had failed as yet to take this step. Another crucial article, 'France will never forget the Diggers,' appealed to the patriotism of the readers and their pride in the achievements of World War One, linking this to their situation.¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, this article has shown that *Le Courrier Australien's* first nine months of involvement in France Libre were marked by passionate support of the movement with remarkable results. Specifically, it increased the readership, raised a large amount of money, and was recognised and legitimised externally by the Australian Government and General de Gaulle himself. The three key strategies used in this time have been examined in this article. Firstly, the newfound bilingualism and persuasive editorials increased the readership, and were frequently reported on by mainstream media. Secondly, numerous special events were held, marketing strategies employed and funds raised. Finally, *Le Courrier Australien* was consciously placed in its broader international and national context. In undertaking this project, I have been convinced of the opportunities for further research on this topic. While this article was intentionally restricted to the first period of enthusiasm, further research could easily be done studying the progression of the journal during the entire war and also on its contextual impact. In the same manner that this article has uncovered the previously untold story of how a small expatriate newspaper sought to change Australian public opinion, financially support a noble cause and engage with its broader context, the possibilities for future extensive study are truly exciting.

102 Articles relating to fundraising and support-raising (including activities associated with Free French Day): 'The Free French Flag,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 December 1940, 2. 'Pacific Troops for de Gaulle,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 January 1941, 13. 'Free French Soldiers from Australia,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1941, 20. 'For Free French Movement,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 1941, 9. 'Guests wore "France Libre" Badge,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1941, 7. 'Holding the Free French Flag,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1941, 7. 'Dance for Free French Day,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1941, 7. 'Ice Carnival Aids Free French,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 1941, 7. 'M Brenac's Appeal,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 1941, 4. 'Plans for Free French Day,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1941, 7. Articles recounting speeches or other political activities: 'Free French In Australia,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December 1940, 9. 'Appeal Day for Free French,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 December 1940, 11. 'Hour of Meditation for Frenchmen,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1941, 7. 'Vichy's Agreement with Nazis,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1941, 8.

103 'An Australian Viewpoint of the Free French Movement,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 6 June 1941, 2.

104 Armande Radcliffe, 'France will never forget the diggers,' *Le Courrier Australien*, 3 January 1941, 7.
